

**MBA M752
Digital Marketing
Winter 2025 Course Outline**

**Marketing Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

Digital marketing is a burgeoning area of marketing practice. The course aims to provide students fundamental knowledge and training on digital marketing components, including web marketing, email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing, and help students develop a comprehensive understanding and strategic thinking in integrating these components into digital marketing solutions for business. The course is composed of lectures, case discussions, self-study and practice assignments, guest speeches, and a field group project. Students are expected to gain from an experiential learning approach: proactively studying and researching the relevant knowledge and developing in-depth understanding by completing practice assignments and the project.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Thursday 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm
Ron Joyce Centre 313**

Instructor

Dr. Ruhai Wu

wuruhai@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: one hour before class
or by appointment

Tel: (905) 525-9140 x23048

Teaching Assistant

Lan Yu

Yu47@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: one hour before class or by
appointment

Course website:

- Avenue to Learn (A2L): for lecture slides and readings, assignment submission
- [HBP course package](#): for case study and assignments

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	I.T. skills: No	Global view: Yes
Avenue: Yes	Ethics: No	Numeracy: Yes	Written skills: No
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: Yes	Final Exam: No	Guest speaker(s): Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Class sessions will consist of lectures, case discussions, guest speakers, assignments, and projects. The lectures and case discussions focus on conceptual understanding, fundamental knowledge, and strategic concerns in various digital marketing fields. Besides, students will gain preliminary practical know-how through assignments, projects, and self-learning. The materials used in the course encompass digital marketing issues in diverse businesses, industries, and countries in order to provide the maximum depth and breadth of the learning experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- To understand the scope of digital marketing and rethink marketing strategies in the digital era.
- To know the principles, tools, and KPIs of prevalent digital communication strategies.
- To learn basic digital advertising operations.
- To gain a conceptual understanding of frequently used data sources, techniques, and applications of digital marketing analytics.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content and readings	FREE
➤ http://avenue.mcmaster.ca	
Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack for case study	USD 25.90
➤ https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1245289	

EVALUATION

In this course, learning results from in-class lectures and discussions, as well as out-of-class readings, assignments, and a field project. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except in some instances where group work is expected. In these cases, group members will share the same grade adjusted by peer evaluation. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

A.	Class participation	10%
B.	Quizzes	15%
C.	Individual assignments	25%
D.	Digital marketing project	50%
	• Website Audit	20%
	▪ Preparation Report	5%
	▪ Web Audit Report	15%
	• Digital Ads Campaign	30%
	▪ Preparation Report	5%
	▪ Ads Campaign Proposal +Presentation	25%
	▪ Digital promotion implementation (Bonus)	up to 10%
TOTAL:		100% + 10% bonus

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy at the following URL:

www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/UndergraduateExaminationsPolicy.pdf

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course, your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

Course Deliverables

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Readings	Asynchronous	Content of assigned readings may be discussed in classes	Available on A2L
Lectures	In-person	Live in-person lectures	In person
Quizzes	In-person	Conducted in classes	A2L
Case Discussions	In-person	Students should read the case carefully before the class discussion.	Harvard Business Courseware
Guest Talks	In-person or through Zoom	Guest talks by industry experts on specific digital marketing topics	In person or Zoom
Assignments	Asynchronous	Individual and group assignments	Submitted to A2L
Presentation	In-person	All group members should participate in the group presentation	In-person
Project Reports	Asynchronous	Students will work in a group to help a business partner to improve its digital marketing performance.	At each group's discretion

A. Class Participation (10%)

You are encouraged to raise questions and present your own views and insights during lectures. In case discussions, comments and further discussion on classmates' opinions will be appreciated. Your class marks are based on your participation and contribution to class communication. The teaching assistant will evaluate your performance in each class and will calculate an overall participation mark by the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your participation mark before then, feel free to check with her about your historical performance.

B. Quizzes (15%)

In-class quizzes on important digital marketing concepts and principles will be held in the same class in which the concepts and principles have been taught. The quiz questions are either multiple-choice questions or short-answer questions. Most in-class quizzes will be conducted via Avenue to Learn during the class time.

C. Individual Assignments (25%)

There will be about seven assignments that you are required to complete individually after classes, including case preparation questions, practice questions of digital marketing principles, and two online simulations. The assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn. The two simulations are included in the Harvard Business Publishing coursepack.

Unless otherwise specified, the default due time of an assignment is midnight before the class dates which are specified in the Course Schedule on the second last page of the course outline. The assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn in the week before due date.

D. Digital Marketing Project: (50%)

Several business partners have committed to collaborating in this course. Students will work in a group for an assigned partner to improve its digital marketing performance. Each partner will work with several groups.

The project is composed of two tasks: 1) to complete a web audit report to help the partner company to refine its website; 2) to design (and maybe implement) a two-week digital promotion campaign for the partner.

Web audit report (20%): The business partner will explain its business and provide access to its Google Analytics account. Students will investigate and assess its website and provide a website audit report to help the partner improve its web design.

- By **Jan. 30th**, each student group will submit a “**web audit preparation report**” (5%), which addresses the objectives of the website, its target audience, and expected website offerings. This work will help students better audit the partner’s website.
- By midnight of **Feb. 12th**, each student group will submit a **formal web audit report** (15%) in PowerPoint format. The report should
 1. Summarize the website's main objectives, functionalities, and target users.
 2. Evaluate the website's strengths and weaknesses from perspectives including navigation structure, page layout, contents, and search engine optimization. (Using Google Analytics data to justify your analyses and recommendations.)
 3. Offer suggestions to improve the website.
- In the class on **Feb.13th**, each student group will give a five-minute presentation to the business partner summarizing the key insights of their web audit report to the business partner.

Detailed format/structure requirement of the two reports will be provided separately.

Digital promotion plan (30%+10% bonus): Students will design a two-week digital ads campaign for the partner company. The partner will outline its expectations and needs for the campaign, commit an advertising budget, and provide information content and historical data of its previous digital advertising activities. Based on these resources, student groups will develop a detailed proposal for the ads campaign.

- By **Mar.6th**, each group will submit a “**Digital ads campaign preparation report**” (5%), which addresses the campaign objectives, target audience, and channel selections.
- By midnight of **Tuesday, March 18th**, each group will submit a **campaign proposal** in PowerPoint format. The proposal should:
 1. Identify quantitative objectives and the metrics to measure the campaign's success.
 2. Select appropriate advertising channels and strategically allocate the budget.

3. Specify detailed operational settings for each selected channel (e.g., keywords/audience selection, bidding and daily budget settings, key features of advertisements, etc.).
 4. Explain how the proposed campaign will meet the partner company's expectations.
- In the class on **March 20th**, each group will have 25 minutes to **present** their proposal. In most cases, the presentation slides are a subset of the proposal slides. The proposal slides and the presentation will be graded together, and totally account for 25% of your overall average.
 - Each business partner will select one proposal and will implement it with the assistance of the selected group. The ads campaign should start no later than March 31st.
 - The selected group will work with the business partner to set up and manage the ad campaign. It is expected to take the group a substantial time and effort. The selected group will trace the campaign performance and will present the outcome and relevant experience/lessons to the business partner and the professor in the week of April 14th to 18th. Each student in this group will gain up to 10 bonus points which depend on the campaign outcome. Basically, up to 4 points for helping the partner to implement the campaign, up to 3 points if the campaign reaches the partner's initial goal(s), and up to 3 points if the campaign performs better than the partner's expectation.

Detailed format/structure requirement of the report, the proposal and the presentation will be provided separately.

Group Work Issues:

- **Group Sign-up:** Each group will consist of **four to five** students (exceptions may be made by the professor given the class enrollment). After you form a group, please name your group and email the teaching assistant with your group members' names and IDs, as well as your group name. The teaching assistant will create a group for you on Avenue to Learn. All groups should be formed by the end of the second week.
- **Peer Evaluation:** Peer evaluation will be used to assess each group member's work. A peer evaluation form is provided on the last page of the course outline and **is required** to be submitted **by April 11th** no matter if the workload distribution is equal or unequal. The evaluation form will be valid only if all the group members sign it or send a confirmation using their McMaster email accounts. (If you fail to do so, I will assign your evaluation marks at my discretion based on information at my disposal.)

The result of the peer evaluation process will reflect each group member's true contribution to the project. Students are expected to resolve any residual conflicts based on fairness. Members who contribute more may see an increase in their overall grades, while those who contribute less may see a decrease. It is highly recommended that you discuss the collaboration schedule and reward system during your first group meeting.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degrootemcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or T.A.s directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their

work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. email, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ON-LINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students

share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Please do not use the online [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic Office (SEAO), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the SEAO within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#), can be found on the DeGroote MBA Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors (askmba@mcmaster.ca).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

Missed Final Examinations

Students must be available for the duration of the posted exam period regardless of their personal exam schedule. This is to ensure student availability throughout the entire exam period in the event that an exam must be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances (university closure, power outage, storm policy, etc.). A student who misses a final examination without valid reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

Students who have missed a final exam for a valid reason can apply to the SEAO to write a deferred examination by submitting an [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) with supporting documentation. The application must be made within five days of the scheduled exam.

The [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#) can be found on the DeGroote MBA Current Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca)

Deferred examination privileges, if granted, are normally satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following semester. In select cases, the deferred examination may be written at a time facilitated by the SEAO and agreed to by the course instructor.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

Students who are leveraging accommodation for tests and exams are supported by the SEAO. These exams are written at the Ron Joyce Centre and do not take place in the Tim Nolan Testing Centre. Correspondence for accommodations is managed via the DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca email address. Students must communicate their intent to leverage accommodations on a test or exam a minimum of 10 business days prior to the assessment.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

ONLY IF APPLICABLE

Research involving human participants is premised on a fundamental moral commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge, and understanding. As a research intensive institution, McMaster University shares this commitment in its promotion of responsible research. The fundamental imperative of research involving human participation is respect for human dignity and well-being. To this end, the University endorses the ethical principles cited in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans:

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca>

McMaster University has mandated its Research Ethics Boards to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. The University is committed, through its Research Ethics Boards, to assisting the research community in identifying and addressing ethical issues inherent in research, recognizing that all members of the University share a commitment to maintaining the highest possible standards in research involving humans.

If you are conducting original research, it is vital that you behave in an ethical manner. For example, everyone you speak to must be made aware of your reasons for eliciting their responses and consent to providing information. Furthermore, you must ensure everyone understands that participation is entirely voluntary. Please refer to the following website for more information about McMaster University's research ethics guidelines:

<http://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Organizations that you are working with are likely to prefer that some information be treated as confidential. Ensure that you clarify the status of all information that you receive from your client. You **MUST** respect this request and cannot present this information in class or communicate it in any form, nor can you discuss it outside your group. Furthermore, you must continue to respect this confidentiality even after the course is over.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA 752 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates	Lecture Content	Individual Assignments	Group Project Assignments
		<i>The assignments are due at midnight before the class date if not specified</i>	
Jan. 9 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 		
Jan. 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Design and Web Analytics • Google Analytics 	Assignment 1: Fundamentals of Online Marketing (2%)	
Jan. 23 rd	<i>Digital Marketing Project: Meeting with clients for the web analysis project</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search Engine Optimization 	Assignment 2: Google Analytics (4%)	
Jan. 30 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search Engine Advertising 		Web audit preparation report
Feb. 6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case: GiveIndia • Guest talk: TBD 	Assignment 3: GiveIndia (4%)	
Feb. 13 th	<i>Digital Marketing Project: Meeting with clients for the digital promotion project</i>		Web audit report (PPT format)
Feb. 20 th	Mid-term recess	Assignment 4: Online Paid Advertising (2%)	
Feb. 27 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Marketing Principles 	Assignment 5: Social Media Marketing Practices (4%)	
Mar. 6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Social Media Marketing vs. Social Media Advertising 		Digital ads campaign preparation report
Mar. 13 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Concerns in Social Media Marketing • Case: Synapse 	Assignment 6: Synapse Content Design (5%)	
Mar. 20 th	<i>Digital Marketing Project: Presentations on digital promotion campaigns</i>		The campaign proposal is due at midnight Tuesday Mar. 18th
Mar. 27 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Marketing and Online CRM • Guest talk: TBD 		The ad campaign starts by Monday, Mar. 31 st .
Apr. 3 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Analysis • Case: Rocket Fuel 	Assignment 7: Rocket Fuel (4%)	
Apr. 10 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecommerce, Digital transformation, and AI applications 		Peer evaluation form is due on Apr. 11 th
Apr. 14 th – 18 th	<i>Digital Marketing Project: Presentations and feedback on campaign implementations</i>		

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The above schedule is to be considered tentative and can be changed by the professor during the semester. You will be informed through Avenue to Learn if such a change is made.*

APPENDIX

M752 Digital Marketing Group Evaluation Form

Instructions:

1. Please assign each person in your group an amount of money which represents each individual's contribution to the project and the assignment. You may each wish to complete a form individually and then share these forms at a group meeting but only ONE FORM is to be submitted for each group and it must be signed by all group members.
2. Your total budget to distribute among the people in your group is \$600 * (the number of people in your group). For example, if there are 5 people in your group, then pretend that you have \$600 * 5 = \$3,000 to pay to the group.
3. If everyone contributed equally, then pay each person \$600.
4. Adjust the fee according to your honest personal assessment of the value of each person's contribution. In our example, the fee could be as low as \$0 or as high as \$3,000.
5. The factor arrived at for each team member as a result of the peer evaluation will be applied to the group work in this course.
6. TREAT THIS EVALUATION SERIOUSLY.
7. MAKE SURE THAT THE FEES PAID ADD TO \$600 * GROUP SIZE.

Group Name: _____

GROUP MEMBER	SIGNATURE	FEE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____