BUSADMIN P615A
Management Consulting
Fall 2025 Course Outline

Strategic Management Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course is designed to provide students with diverse, practical learning experiences to build and refine their management consulting skills. Through the application of key frameworks in strategy, marketing, and innovation, students will learn to diagnose business challenges, identify opportunities, and develop structured, evidence-based solutions. The course also emphasizes the importance of clear, persuasive communication with clients and internal stakeholders. Beyond core consulting skills, students will work on cultivating executive presence, leadership abilities, and the professional mindset essential for success in advisory roles.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Section 1: Wednesdays 08:30 – 11:20

Dr. Amir Taherizadeh (Instructor)	**Miss. Simran Shakeel (Teaching Assistant I)**
amir.taherizadeh@mcmaster.ca	shakes15@mcmaster.ca
Office: RJC 218	Available by appointment
Office Hours: Right after class	
Tel: (905) 525-9140 x23015	
Class Location: RJC 249	

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT 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:	No	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to develop students' management consulting skills across a variety of business contexts. Students will apply management theory and consulting frameworks as tools to diagnose organizational challenges, identify opportunities, and develop practical, actionable recommendations for clients. The course emphasizes cultivating a consulting mindset and strategic problem-solving capabilities. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper understanding of how to improve business performance through strategy refinement, customer insight, and targeted innovation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
- Critically evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of main business strategies in industry context through analyzing management case studies
- Apply management theories dynamically and creatively to analyze business dilemmas.
- Apply management consultancy frameworks to problem contexts through directly interacting with problem stakeholders.
- Develop pragmatic data-informed recommendations for enterprise clients by collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from the problem setting.
- Develop management consultancy grade communication skills through lab and workshop training
- Improve your leadership skills through leading client consultancy sessions
- Conduct market (and marketing) research, analyze trends, and identify potential consulting offerings
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses as a management consultant
- Build resilience and adaptability by managing shifting timelines, unforeseen challenges, and learning to recalibrate strategies, adjust priorities, and realign team efforts to maintain project momentum and client value.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Title	Price	Note
Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials http://avenue.mcmaster.ca	N.A.	
Course Textbook (This is available digitally via OMNI) Garrette, B., Phelps, C., & Sibony, O. (2018). Cracked it! How to solve big problems and sell solutions like top strategy consultants (1st ed. 2018.). Springer Int. Publishing.	Paid by McMaster	
Business Cases & Readings ➢ Electronic access here: ➢ https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1319953	Paid by DeGroote	
Do Your Students Know How to Analyze a Case—Really? Read from https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/a-framework-for-using-cases-to-help-students-become-better-decision-makers	Gratis	Optional

EVALUATION

Learning in this course is driven primarily by active in-class discussions and participation in the analysis of comprehensive business cases, complemented by out-of-class preparation and research. Additional learning comes through lectures on strategic concepts, assigned readings, and the development of presentations, case analyses, simulation decisions, and consulting projects. Most work will be assessed on an individual basis. However, in cases where group collaboration is required, all members of the team will receive the same grade, subject to adjustment based on peer evaluations. Your final grade will be determined as per the following breakdown:

Grade Component	I/G	%	Description	Due Date
Participation - Developing Your Executive Voice and Presence	I	15%	Participation is assessed weekly through a variety of in-class and out-of-class activities. A portion of this grade (2%) is based on feedback from the leadership coach, Miss Corrin Whiteway, during the one-on-one coaching component.	Weekly
MBB Pitch – *Building Client-Ready Decks*	I	10%	Create a polished executive presentation modeled on McKinsey, Bain, and BCG (MBB) standards, demonstrating clear, data-driven storytelling and structure.	Sep 30, Upload by 23:59
Individual Research Project – *Identifying a Consulting Niche*	I	15%	Select an industry and business function of interest (e.g., Finance, Marketing, Operations, HR) and develop tailored consulting service offerings through applied primary and secondary research.	Oct 30, Upload by 23:59
MDTRC Lab	I	5%	Students will deliver a 3-minute executive presentation in a state-of-the-art lab while wearing smart glasses and biometric sensors that track gaze, posture, and physiological signals. Presentations will be assessed by AI, with each student receiving a comprehensive performance report highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.	TBD
Book Oral Report	G	15%	Students will work in teams of two to deliver an oral report on a book about a CEO, demonstrating their ability to analyze leadership character, decision-making, and executive mindset.	Dec 3, 8:30 – 11:30
Reflection 1 – MDTRC Lab	I	5%	Students will analyze the report they receive from the MDTRC Lab, reflect on their performance, and review the key dimensions on which they were evaluated. Based on this, they will write a two-page personal reflection (without the use of AI assistance) discussing their insights, strengths, areas for improvement, and action steps for future development.	TBD
Reflection 2 – The Self-Aware Leader Workshop	I	5%	Students will analyze their experience and key takeaways from the workshop. The goal is to deepen personal insight by critically examining how self-awareness influences leadership effectiveness. Students are expected to connect workshop concepts to their own behaviors, decision-making, and leadership style. The reflection should include specific examples, insights gained from activities, discussions, and potential strategies for personal growth. This is an individual, two-page reflection and must be written *without* the use of *AI* assistance.	TBD
Consulting Project's Industry Analysis	G	15%	Deliver a strategic industry analysis and presentation for your consulting client as part of Phase 1 of the team project.	Nov 30, Upload by 23:59
Case Exam	I	15%	Demonstrate your mastery of course concepts and consulting frameworks through a timed case exam, simulating real-world business advisory scenarios.	TBD

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

Assessment #1 – Participation - Developing Your Executive Voice and Presence (Individual)

The purpose of this assessment is to develop your executive voice and presence.

Effective communication is a prerequisite to success in the business world. For that reason, all participation marks in this course will be based on both the substance of your work and the quality of your written and oral communication. Each week, students will be given a participation challenge to develop their executive voice and presence. These challenges will be based on the cases and current issues in the Canadian business landscape.

In the past, students who have received the highest grades in this course also had the highest participation marks. They were also the students that contributed high quality insights several times during class. The key to a high participation mark is making numerous quality contributions during every case discussion.

Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared. The case-method requires students to be cooperative in sharing their views. Instructors and TAs will feel free to cold call on anyone at any time. Hence, it is imperative that you prepare for each and every case and reading.

In general, case contributions are evaluated in an ascending order from basic ideas and opinions, to quite substantial comments, to case-cracking contributions. Debate and challenge are important activities that help in the learning process and the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates is appreciated. However, using airtime involves an obligation to actually contribute. None of us has time for recitation of case facts, bland summaries of prior discussion, and so on, that are devoid of implications. Before you speak, always ask yourself:

1) How you can your contribution advance the conversation?
2) How can you link this discussion to a framework or analysis that has been conducted earlier in the course? Can you connect-the-dots with other topics in a meaningful way?

3) Can I succinctly describe the impact of my analysis on the business decision. What recommendation would you make as a consultant?

To be clear, while attendance for each class is mandatory, attendance does NOT constitute participation. Additionally, participation will NOT be graded by counting each contribution a student makes. Participation will be graded by examining the QUALITY of contributions in each class.

General speaking, student participation in each class will be assessed according to the following scale:

Participation Description

Level 0   Attended class but didn't talk or contribute to the open class or case discussion. Executive presence was not demonstrated.

Bronze   Conducted analysis of the case and contributed several times with little context. Need to strengthen the analysis and recommendations. Executive Presence is at the early stage of development.

Silver   Participated multiple times throughout the class with several quality contributions. Demonstrated expertise on the 'what, and so what', but needs to further develop the 'now what' portion of their analysis.   Executive presence developing but not fully manifested.

Gold   Made several memorable contributions that connected ideas and brought clarity to the issues. Succinctly described the 'what, so what, now what'. Made case-cracking contributions with empirical backing and provided detailed implications and context. Executive presence was demonstrated consistently.

Here are ways to achieve Gold standard participation and develop your executive presence:

• Shape the discussion through the meaningful introduction of theoretical concepts, current events, financial calculations, or alternative analysis
• Triangulate case discussions with current events or readings and by matching or referring to previous points made during the class
• Link or contrast the main highlights of this particular case with previous cases
• Change or reverse the direction of the discussion when appropriate and support the alternative hypothesis or opposing view, and
• Summarize and bridge the comments of others without undue repetition
• Great contributions use the following structure: What, So What, Now What.
    o **What** – Share the pertinent context to frame the issue/dilemma/analysis
    o **So What** – Share the INSIGHTS from your analysis
    o **Now What** – Share what should the protagonist in the case do with this information? What are their next steps?

How to develop your case analysis skills
• Immerse yourself in each discussion case by reading it twice, the first time to obtain an overview, the second to flesh out the detail.
• Make notes to facilitate your contribution to the class discussion.
• Work with other students when preparing for a case discussion in order to learn from each other.

Final thoughts on Participation

You will get next to nothing out of a case discussion (or the broader class discussions) if you are not fully prepared, and you run the risk of being embarrassed if you are called upon to contribute. Please note participation marks may also be evaluated for homework assignments. Case discussion marks and homework assignments cannot be made up if you miss a class. An interim participation grade will be posted mid-term.

Assessment #2 – Building Client-Ready Decks - MBB Format (Individual Project)

The purpose of this assignment is to assess your current ability to make client ready decks. Students will create an executive presentation in the McKinsey, Bain, Boston Consulting (MBB) Group style.

To do this, you will select your favorite celebrity, athlete, or business icon. Build a 4-slide presentation (in the MBB style) that answers the following:
  • Slide 1: Overview/highlights of their career. Overview of their financial success (sources of their revenue, amount per revenue stream, etc.)
  • Slide 2: Competitive analysis – how do their accomplishments compare to their peers?
  • Slide 3: Threats and challenges to their current dominance. Recommend a path forward.
  • Slide 4: Reflective exercise: utilize the content-process-premise framework to self-reflect on what you learned through this exercise

Assessment #3 – Identifying a Consulting Niche (Individual Research Project)

The purpose of this assignment is to accelerate your identification of capability gaps in the industry and job function that aspire to have a career in, and *to use this information to position yourself as an ideal candidate to close the gaps you have identified*.

Students will select an industry and role that they aspire to have a career in. They will engage in primary and secondary research on the key issues/trends/opportunities/need in their target industry/role. They will identify key gaps that organizations are facing relative to overcoming the gaps. They will develop a plan on how they can use the MBA to develop the skills to be an ideal candidate for this job.

The final output will be an MBB style deck (5- 10 slides) that synthesizes their findings into an MBB style presentation that outlines the following:
  • Background Information
  • Gaps/Opportunities identified
  • 3   Recommendations on how they should use the MBA to become the ideal candidate
  • Reflective exercise: utilize the content-process-premise framework to self-reflect on what you learned through this exercise.

Assessment #4 – MDTRC Lab (Group Project)

The purpose of this assignment is to learn how to use experimental data to inform the design and evolution of digital services.

Students will form teams to engage in a hands-on user experience lab at the McMaster Digital Transformation Research Centre (MDTRC). In this lab, student teams will work through a series of tasks to analyze user experience data, develop recommendations on how to improve the product/service, and pitch their recommendations. Details of the lab will be provided later.

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Assessment #5 – Consulting Project Industry Analysis (Group Project)

In this assignment, student teams will deliver a consulting presentation to their client, summarizing key insights and findings from Phase 1 of their project. Through a series of stakeholder sessions, students will develop a deep understanding of *the business context*, clearly articulate the central issues, and propose a pragmatic, well-structured project plan for the Winter term.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Effective use of consulting tools, frameworks, and course concepts to support issue identification.
- Practicality and relevance of the recommended project plan.
- Professional quality and clarity of the presentation slides.
- Strength and professionalism of presenting skills during the client pitch.
- Depth and thoughtfulness of the lessons learned reflections.
- Client feedback on the team's overall performance and deliverables.

Assessment #6 – Book Oral Report (Teams of two)

In this assignment, students will work in teams of two to select and read a biography or leadership-focused book about a CEO of their choice. The goal is to go beyond the surface of the leader's business achievements and develop a nuanced understanding of their character, leadership philosophy, decision-making style, and executive mindset.

Each pair will deliver a concise oral report capturing key insights from the book and connecting them to themes of leadership, strategy, resilience, and consulting practice. Your oral report should include:

- A brief overview of the CEO's background and career.
- Key leadership moments and decision points from their career.
- Insights into their character, leadership philosophy, and business worldview.
- Lessons learned and implications for aspiring consultants and leaders.

Presentation Length: 8–10 minutes

Assessment #7 – Case Exam (Individual)

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate what the student has learned through this course. Students will be provided a case which they will analyze through the lenses taught in the course. It will be a 3-hr closed-book exam.

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.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs 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 INTEGRITY

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

Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Such behaviour includes:

- following the expectations articulated by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work;
- asking for clarification of expectations as necessary;
- identifying testing situations that may allow copying;
- preventing their work from being used by others (e.g., protecting access to computer files); and
- adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

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.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

All courses use some online elements (e.g. e-mail, 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 e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

Students may be required to use the Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. The Respondus LockDown Browser is a downloadable program that allows a student to take an Avenue to Learn quiz in a secure environment. Quizzes can be set to use LockDown Browser or LockDown Browser.

For more details about McMaster's use of Respondus Lockdown Browser please go to https://avenuehelp.mcmaster.ca/exec/respondus-lockdown-browser-and-respondus-monitor/

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.

ONLINE 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, Teams, 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.

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ATTENDANCE

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Arriving late or missing class disrupts the learning experience for both you and your peers. Punctuality and attendance are crucial to maintaining a respectful, professional, and productive environment for everyone, including our faculty. Attendance will be recorded in each class to help identify students who may be at risk or in need of additional support.

Instructors will be using Top Hat to capture attendance in their classes. Attendance is recorded by submitting a unique 4-digit code displayed in your physical classroom using your personal device.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

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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 (Student Experience Academic Office)), 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 (Student Experience Academic Office) 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 (Student Experience Academic Office) 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 (Student Experience Academic Office) (Student Experience Academic Office) and agreed to by the course instructor.

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

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR 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

Use of Test Accommodations at McMaster University Burlington Campus Ron Joyce Centre

Whereas Student Accessibility Services (SAS), on Main Campus, determines all MBA student accommodations, the MBA Faculty Office manages the coordination of accommodations for tests, midterms, and exams at the Ron Joyce Centre in Burlington.

Process for Students

- Students must activate their accommodation(s) (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.) for each upcoming test, midterm, or exam, at least two weeks in advance. Students can do this by emailing their Instructor and the DeGroote MBA SAS scheduling office at DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca. If a student cannot meet this deadline, they should contact DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca to discuss alternative arrangements. The program is committed to exploring flexibility where possible to support students.

- All tests, midterms, and exams are booked synchronously with the class's start time. Any deviations from the start time (e.g. start earlier than the class to enable completion at the same end time) requires a discussion with their instructor on protocol at the time of accommodation activation.

- Students will leverage the accommodation (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.), in a designated testing room. Rooms will be booked according to the student's SAS accommodation. Unless the accommodation states otherwise, students should expect that they will be writing in a room with other students. One or more invigilators will always be in the room.

- Following the request to activate the accommodation(s), dsbsas@mcmaster.ca will reach out to the student with their test, midterm, or exam details, including the date, time, and room number. As there may be other students writing tests in the room, we ask that students enter the room quietly and leave all personal items at the front of the room.

All policies and procedures, including restroom access, how extra-time is allocated for assessments under Universal Design, and the submission of memory aids in advance, are consistent with those of SAS on Main Campus. The only variance in procedure is communication around, and physical location of, assessment. There is not a dedicated testing space at RJC. Existing classrooms and lecture halls will be used for most testing. All SAS-approved accommodations will be honoured by our staff; however, core testing elements are not eliminated in alternative testing formats. Students should expect and plan for invigilation, incidental noise, and other potential distractions.

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 the SEAO (Student Experience Academic Office) *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA P615A 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.
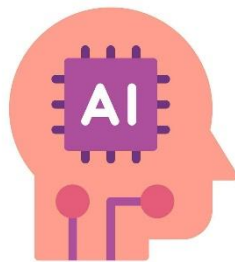

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI Policy for Course Submissions

Purpose:
The purpose of this policy is to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI tools in academic work submitted for this course. While AI tools can be valuable for certain aspects of the writing and research process, it is crucial to maintain academic integrity and ensure that all content reflects the student's original work.

1. Levels of AI Usage:

Each assignment or deliverable in this course will be clearly marked with the level of AI usage permitted.

Level of AI Usage	Description	Symbol on Assignments
Level 1: Full AI Use Permitted	All forms of AI are allowed for use, including content creation, idea generation, editing, and grammar checks. **Requirement:** Students must include an AI Acknowledgement statement specifying where and how AI tools were used in their work.	
Level 2: Limited AI Use	AI tools may only be used for editing and grammar checks. **Requirement:** An AI Acknowledgement statement is required, indicating that AI was used solely for editing and grammar improvements.	
Level 3: No AI Use	No AI tools are allowed. All content and responses must be entirely human-generated. **Requirement:** An AI Acknowledgement statement confirming that no AI tools were used in the creation of the submission.	

2. AI Acknowledgement Requirement:
All submissions must include an AI Acknowledgement statement, regardless of the level of AI usage permitted.

The statement should be placed at the end of the document and should specify the tools used and the nature of their use.

Examples include:
- *Level 1:* "AI Acknowledgement: I used ChatGPT to generate ideas and improve readability in this document."

- *Level 2:* "AI Acknowledgement: I used ChatGPT to assist with grammar and readability improvements in this document. No AI tools were used for content creation."

- *Level 3:* "AI Acknowledgement: I confirm that no AI tools were used in the creation of this submission."

3. Citing Generative AI Content:
If any generative AI content is included in a submission (e.g., images created with DALL-E or text generated by ChatGPT), it must be properly cited using the APA style format. The citation should include the name of the AI tool, the version (if applicable), and the date of generation.

For example:
- **Text Generated by AI:**
  OpenAI. (2024). Response generated by ChatGPT (Version GPT-4) on August 26, 2024. Retrieved from [OpenAI ChatGPT].

- **Image Generated by AI:**
  OpenAI. (2024). Image generated by DALL-E on August 26, 2024. Retrieved from [OpenAI DALL-E].

4. Compliance:
Failure to adhere to this AI Policy, including the specific level of AI usage allowed for each assignment, may result in penalties, including but not limited to grade deductions, resubmission requirements, or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Experiential Learning Activities	Readings and Notes
Learning Loop 1: Fundamentals of Strategy Consulting: Critical Thinking, Problematization, and Developing a Differentiated Strategy				
1	Wed. Sep 10	- Course Overview - Consulting Basics - Cross Cultural Leadership (and Consulting) Behaviors - Communicating as a Consultant - Building an MBB slide - Mezirow's Reflective Framework	In-Class Exercises	- Chapters 1 and 2 from Ramo, B., & Gielis, C. (2018). *Cracked it: How to solve big problems and sell solutions like top strategy consultants*. Bloomsbury Business. - Meyer, E. (2014). Navigating the Cultural Minefield. *Harvard Business Review*, 92(5).
2	Wed. Sep 17	- Consulting Process: Overview of 4S Process. - State the Problem (TOSCA Framework) - Consulting Frameworks & Concepts: 3-Circles Analysis, Play to Win	Wiesner, F., Chen, J., & Williams, C. (2020). *A.T. Kearney Inc.: The push to become a management consulting titan*. Ivey Publishing. Taherizadeh, A. (forthcoming). EVA: Business Model Innovation for Sustainable Growth and Profitability. Ivey Publishing.	- Cracked It! (Chapter 3,4) - Introduction and Chapter 1 from Lafley, A. G., & Martin, R. L. (2013). *Playing to win: How strategy really works*. Harvard Business Review Press.
3	Wed. Sep 24	- Consulting Process: Structure the Problem: Pyramids and Trees - Consulting Frameworks & Concepts: Blue Ocean Strategy, Strategy Canvas, 4 Actions Framework - MDTRC Orientation and Lab Prep	Taherizadeh, A. (2025). Hatley: Overcoming Growth Challenges for Global Expansion. Ivey Publishing.	- Cracked It! (Chapter 5) - Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. A. (2005). Blue Ocean Strategy: From Theory to Practice. *California Management Review*, 47(3), 105–124. https://doi.org/10.2307/41166308
Learning Loop 2: Building a Customer-Centric Approach to Strategy Consulting				

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Experiential Learning Activities	Readings and Notes
4	Wed. Oct 01	- Consulting Process: Structure the Problem: Analytical Frameworks, Eight Degrees of Analysis - Consulting Frameworks & Concepts: Pathway to Purchase; Know Your Customer and their Journey; Developing Customer Personas; Customer Journey Mapping and Analysis	Chang, V., and Zhu, Q. (2019). Freshippo: Data-Driven Business Model Innovation. Harvard Business Publishing Education.	- Cracked It! (Chapter 6) Structure the Problem: Analytical Frameworks - Cracked It! (Chapter 7). Solve the Problem: Eight Degrees of Analysis - How to Create a Realistic Customer Journey Map
5	Mon. Oct 6, or Fri. Oct 3	MDTRC Lab	Lab Activity	- You will receive instructions in advance. - The exact hours for the lab activity will be coordinated one week prior. - This is a graded activity yet may happen outside classroom hour
6	Wed. Oct 08	The Self-Aware Leader Workshop	Different individual/group activities will be performed during the session.	- Cecchi-Dimeglio, P. (2024, February 14). How self-awareness elevates leadership effectiveness. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/paolacecchi-dimeglio/2024/02/14/how-self-awareness-elevates-leadership-effectiveness/ - Caldwell, C., & Hayes, L. A. (2016). Self-efficacy and self-awareness: Moral insights to increased leader effectiveness. *Journal of Management Development*, 35(9), 1163–1173. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-01-2016-0011
7	Wed. Oct 15	GRIT Week – October 14-17 (*No Midterm Recess for MBA Candidates)		
8	Wed. Oct 22	Consulting Process: Solve the Problem	Elsworth, J. et al. (2020). **The Home Depot Inc.: A Digital**	- Cracked It! (Chapter 8). Redefine the Problem: The Design Thinking Path

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Experiential Learning Activities	Readings and Notes
			Transformation for Customer Experience. Ivey Publishing	Taherizadeh, A., & Beaudry, C. (2023). An emergent grounded theory of AI-driven digital transformation: Canadian SMEs' perspectives. *Industry and Innovation*, *30*(9), 1244–1273.
Learning Loop 3: Develop Growth Strategy Rooted in Business Model Innovation and Disruption				
9	Wed. Oct 29	- Consulting Process: Structure and Solve the Problem Using Design Thinking - Consulting Frameworks and Concepts: Fundamentals of Design Thinking	In-Class Exercises	- Cracked It! (Chapter 9) Structure and Solve the Problem Using Design Thinking - Kolko, J. (2015). Design Thinking Comes of Age. HBR - Bason, C., and Austin, R.D. (2019). The Right Way to Lead Design Thinking. HBR
10	Wed. Nov 5	- Consulting Process: Sell the Solution: Core Message and Storyline - Consulting Frameworks & Concepts: S-Curves, Three Horizons Framework, Types of Innovation	CASE - TBD	- Cracked It! (Chapters 10 and 11) - Christensen, C.M., Hall, T., Dillon, K., Duncan, D.S., Duncan, D. (2016). Know Your Customers' "Jobs to Be Done". HBR
Learning Loop 4: From Frameworks to Practice, Consulting Project Kickoffs				
11	Wed. Nov 12	Consulting Project Working Session	In Class Coaching	The pedagogical material for this session will be provided through A2L.
12	Wed. Nov 19	Consulting Project Kick-Off	In Class Coaching	The pedagogical material for this session will be provided through A2L.
13	Wed. Nov 26	CEO Book Oral Report	In Class Feedback	N/A

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