

Business P700
Managing Geopolitical and Social Risk
Winter 2026 Course Outline

Strategic Management Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course expands the firm's environment beyond the boundaries set out in traditional strategy models. It provides students with the latest tools to assess, map, and quantify sociopolitical factors and stakeholder opinions to effectively integrate them into strategy formulation and implementation on a multinational scale. It also offers behavioral skills critical for engaging public and private stakeholders, including trust building, strategic communications, and shaping organizational culture.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. François Neville
Instructor
nevillef@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: by appointment
Tel: (905) 525-9140 x21463

C01: Thur. 14:30-17:20

C02: Thur. 19:00-21:50

Bita Pejam
Teaching Assistant
pejamb@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: by appointment

Course website: <https://avenue.cllmcmaster.ca/d2l/home/754206>

COURSE ELEMENTS

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course equips students with an understanding of the domestic and international that shape the environments facing business, not-for-profit, and public service organizations. This understanding comprises historical and current contexts, theory, and the ability to devise strategic responses to the environment. Major topics include the structure and roles of government, culture and business ethics, international trade and investment, and foreign exchange.

CLASS FORMAT

This is an in-person 3-hour course. The three hours will consist of rapid problem-solving, mini-lectures, lengthier discussions, and more in-depth applied exercises (not necessarily always in this order). There will be a short break partway through at a convenient time based on what we are working on. Please use this time to take care of personal needs of various kinds.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

No electronic devices (e.g., laptops, cellphone, tablets) are permitted in class, besides for logging attendance, and unless specifically stated by the instructor (i.e., to complete an in-class exercise, etc.). If you have an accommodation that requires the use of an electronic device, please inform me immediately (nevillef@mcmaster.ca).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Apply theoretical concepts and evaluate how historical and current events shape geopolitical and social risk for business;

- Assess, map, and quantify the impact of sociopolitical factors and stakeholder opinions on multinational strategy formulation;
- Exercise due diligence to insulate the firm from geopolitical and social risk;
- Evaluate the business case for stakeholder initiatives and collaborations;
- Become an engaged and informed critical reader/analyst of the media in its various forms; and
- Work effectively/collaboratively in teams to achieve key deliverables – presentations, strategy documents, and reports.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

AVENUE for course content, readings, and other materials.

\$ FREE

- <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

OPTIONAL COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Henisz, W. J. (2017). ***Corporate Diplomacy: Building Reputations and Relationships with External Stakeholders***. Routledge.

\$ FREE

- [Available through McMaster University Library](#)

McCaffrey, C. R., Henisz, W. J., & Jones, O. (2024). ***Geostrategy by Design: How to Manage Geopolitical Risk in the New Era of Globalization***. Disruption Books.

\$21-45

EVALUATION

Learning in this course results primarily from discussion and participation in activities. This results from the lectures, related readings, and completing your deliverables. You will be evaluated through a combination of individual and group work. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights (Chronological Order)

	Participation	In-class Contribution (individual)	30%
Geopolitical and Social Risk Analysis Proposal		Minor Project (group)	2.5%
Geopolitical and Social Risk Analysis		Minor Project (group)	12.5%
Stakeholder Relations Plan Proposal		Major Project (group)	5%
Crisis Communications Brief		Brief (individual)	5%
Stakeholder Relations Plan		Major Project (group)	20%

Stakeholder Relations Plan Presentation	Presentation (group)	10%
Quiz	Online Quiz (individual)	5%
Memo to the CEO	Memo (individual)	10%
Total		100%

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

Grade Curve

Final grades in this course will be adjusted to target a class average of 80% (equivalent to an A-). If the average calculated from raw scores differs from this benchmark, a uniform adjustment—either upward or downward—will be applied to all students' final grades (e.g., If the average is 76%, all final grades will be increased by 4 points, subject to a cap at 100% and floor of 0%). This approach helps ensure consistency across course sections and maintains fairness in assessment. Please note that the curve may result in a final grade below 60% (a failing grade) for students whose performance falls significantly below the class distribution.

COURSE DELIVERABLES

LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadline (typically 7 am on the due date). Late submissions will receive a grade of 0%. Compensatory work will only be considered for the Major Project, as per Missed Academic Work policy (outlined later in this document).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Arriving after the start of class will result in a 50% deduction from your participation grade for that session. Departing before class ends will also result in a 50% deduction. If you both arrive late and leave early, you will receive a 0% participation grade for that session. If you must arrive late or depart early due to one of the [approved reasons for missed work](#), you must notify the instructor in advance to avoid the above-specified grade deduction.

If you are absent, you will receive a 0% participation grade for that session, unless you notify the instructor of your absence in advance and the absence is due to one of the [approved reasons for missed work](#).

These deductions reflect the importance of being present for the full duration of class discussions, where your insights and your presence shape the collective learning experience. This policy will be strictly adhered to for all students.

Participation

In-class participation accounts for **30%** of your final grade and will be marked individually.

To stimulate a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, you are expected to be an active participant and to make meaningful comments on the material being discussed. Hence, participating adequately contributes to developing and improving abilities to present and defend positions, as well as competencies related to managing the process of evaluation and debate—skills and competencies that have practical implications for future managers and leaders.

Each session has an assigned participation weight, listed in the course schedule. You are expected to participate **about twice per class**, but frequency alone is not sufficient. What matters is the quality and relevance of your contribution. At the same time, participation is not graded based on having the “right” answer, but on your ability to engage meaningfully with the topic at hand. The goal is to foster a rich, rigorous, and collaborative learning environment.

Toward the end of the term, if you have identified a particular lecture where your participation performance does not reflect the value you believe you have added, you are invited to book office hours with me. You’ll be expected to reflect on key frameworks, cases, or contributions you’ve made *during the class where your participation grade is lacking*. This, alongside instructor observation, will help ensure that all students are evaluated fairly. Participation grades for classes that were missed cannot be made up.

If you feel at any point that you are prepared but not being given sufficient opportunity to contribute, please contact me **directly and immediately** (nevillef@mcmaster.ca)—I want to ensure every student can thrive in this course.

In-Class Activities (Extra Credit)

I recognize that some students may have fewer natural opportunities to contribute due to class dynamics or time constraints. As such, throughout the course, you will participate in a number of in-class activities intended to illustrate important concepts discussed during the course. These activities may present opportunities for extra credit toward participation. This extra credit can only be earned if you were present in class for the activity.

Geopolitical and Social Risk Report – Minor Project

The geopolitical and social risk report and presentation account for **15%** of your final grade. It will consist of a formal proposal (**2.5%**) and final formal report (**12.5%**).

Randomly assigned groups of 4-6 students are asked to select and report on one of the following scenarios:

- 1)** A Multinational Enterprise (MNE) that currently does not have a presence in Canada as part of its global operations but that the group believes should enter Canada; or
- 2)** A MNE that does not have a presence in a specific developing country or an emerging market as part of its global operations but that the group believes should enter the said market;

Report Proposal

Due Date: Thursday, January 22 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

Your proposal should briefly describe:

- The firm you've selected
- The scenario you intend to analyze
- Why you have chosen this firm and scenario (i.e., why it is relevant)
- Team member names

This is not a full analysis—just a clear articulation of your intended focus to ensure you're on the right track. Feedback will be provided to help shape your final project.

Proposal Format

Upload to Avenue in PDF format. Maximum 250 words.

Final Report

Due Date: Thursday, February 12 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

Groups will then have to conduct a comprehensive geopolitical and social risk assessment for the MNE that will inform recommendations for how they should manage geopolitical and social risk, specifically as it relates to entering a new market. The report (see below for formatting guidelines) should include (but is not limited to) the following core elements:

- 1) Company Synopsis and Overview**

This section consists of a summary of the company and the value of the host market to the company. This section should, for example, implicitly answer some of the following questions:

- What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the company?
- In which countries does the company operate?
- How does entering the host market add value to the company?

2) Scan: Identify and Categorize Geopolitical and Social Risks

This section consists of comprehensively identifying geopolitical, country, regulatory, and societal risks that the company faces with its possible expansion into a new market. Groups are strongly encouraged to conduct exhaustive, fact-based, research, and employ theoretical frameworks discussed in class or recommended readings to organize this section of the report. This section should, for example, include:

- Analysis and comparison of the cultural environment of business in the home and host countries;
- Analysis and comparison of the regulatory/political environment (basic political institutions/type and structure of government) in both countries; and
- Appropriate figures and tables to facilitate reader comprehension.

3) Focus: Assess and Analyze How Key Geopolitical and Social Risks Affect the Company

This section consists of revealing key insights into how the risks identified through the scan can impact the company. Here again, groups are strongly encouraged to employ tools and frameworks discussed in class or recommended readings to conduct their focus exercise. This section should, for example, include:

- A comprehensive identification and explanation of key sources of disruption, disruption vectors, and their impact on key functions of the business; and
- Appropriate figures and tables to facilitate reader comprehension.

4) Management and Strategic Recommendations

This section consists of a recommended strategy for the company to enter the host market. Here again, groups are strongly encouraged to employ tools and frameworks discussed in class or recommended readings to conduct their focus exercise. This section should, for example, include:

- A sociopolitical risk matrix with accompanying explanation;
- A recommendation on how the company can successfully enter the host market without negatively affecting operations in its home country; and
- Brief description of where, when, and how to enter the host market.

5) Strategic Foresight Considerations

This section consists of anticipating key uncertainties and risks that might arise as the company moves into a new market and a succinct recommendation on how to mitigate those risks.

6) Conclusion

Report Format

The report should be between 25-30 pages double-spaced ALL IN (12 font, 1-inch margins, including title page, references, appendices, etc.). The report should be well-organized and integrated. All external research sources should be correctly cited. Refer to the APA Manual or the Academy of Management Journal (AMJ) style guide for the styles of citations and references (<http://aom.org/publications/amj/styleguide>).

The general structure and timeline of this assignment will be as follows:

Week	Description
3	Topic proposal due.
4	Consultation with instructor on preliminary report for feedback
6	Final report and presentation

Strategic Communications Brief

Due Date: Thursday, March 2 by the end of class. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

The strategic communications brief accounts for **5%** of your final grade and will be marked individually. Students will be placed in a scenario that raises an issue of concern for a company or government entity and in which they are tasked with preparing written brief for a key spokesperson (i.e., CEO) that will form the basis for strategically communicating with the media and other key stakeholders in how the company intends to address the issue.

Note: This will be completed as part of an in-class crisis communications simulation. If you are absent for the simulation, you forego the opportunity to earn marks toward this deliverable.

Brief Format

Briefs will be one-page documents and the specific details on the format and a helpful checklist of things to look for will be provided, explained in class, and found on Avenue.

Stakeholder Relations – Plan and Presentation

The stakeholder relations plan and presentation account for **35%** of your final grade. It will consist of a formal proposal (**5%**), final formal report (**20%**), and presentation (**10%**).

Self-selected groups of 4-6 students (preferably maximizing diversity in background, functional expertise, etc.) will identify a company facing a political and/or social challenge in a specific country at a specific point in time, either past or present. Each team will outline how the firm should address this challenge by developing a stakeholder relations plan.

Report Proposal

Due Date: Thursday, February 26 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

Your proposal should briefly describe:

- The firm you've selected

- The scenario you intend to analyze
- Why you have chosen this firm and scenario (i.e., why it is relevant)
- Team member names

This is not a full analysis—just a clear articulation of your intended focus to ensure you're on the right track. Feedback will be provided to help shape your final project.

Proposal Format

Upload to Avenue in PDF format. Maximum 500 words.

Final Report

Due Date: Thursday, March 26 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

Groups will then have to compile a report in which they conduct due diligence, integrate operational and financial considerations, outline strategies for engaging and communicating with key stakeholders/government officials related to a specific political and/or social challenge. The report (see below for formatting guidelines) should include (but is not limited to) the following core elements:

1) Company Synopsis and Issue Diagnosis

This section consists of a summary of the company and outlines the specific social and/or political challenge that involves a (potential) conflict government and/or a set of external stakeholders, and an explanation of the root causes of this problem.

2) Goals and Objectives

This section lists/describes the overall goal and four specific objectives of the stakeholder engagement/government relations plan, as well as two possible strategic directions that the company could take.

3) Due Diligence

This section presents the group's choice of stakeholder/government official and the issue-mapping tools used to generate insight into understanding and prioritizing which stakeholders/government officials to focus on, assess the degree of support for the strategic options outlined earlier, and set realistic goals for shifting that position in the company's favor based on their preferences and connections within the network. Long lists and detailed descriptions of each stakeholder/government official rarely yield an insightful analysis. Stronger insight is typically provided through complementary visuals and concise textual analysis of the assumptions and data input that informed those visuals.

4) Integration: Assessment of the Relative Financial Impact of the Proposed Strategies

This section presents an assessment of the relative operational and financial impact of the proposed strategies. The primary focus of the assignment is not how accurate your numbers are for the specific setting. Your analysis should distinguish between short versus long-term and tangible versus intangible costs/benefits, and explain how the group went about estimating these. You should also attempt to identify the key assumptions of contingencies that impact your

recommendation. This assessment should culminate in a specific actionable recommendation as to which strategy will be implemented.

5) Engagement and Communication Strategy

This section outlines the key aspects of the stakeholder engagement/government relations plan implementation of the recommended strategy including:

- Tactics: How you plan to build interpersonal trust with stakeholders/government officials identified above;
- Communication strategy: A description of the key messages (3-4) that will form the basis for communicating with stakeholders/government officials; and
- How the company will ensure internal support for these initiatives?

6) Summary and Conclusion

This section presents key takeaways of the report (i.e., what lessons can other firms facing similar challenges take from your analysis and recommendations).

Report Format

The report should be between 30-35 pages double-spaced ALL IN (12 font, 1-inch margins, including title page, references, appendices, etc.). The reports should be well-organized and integrated. All external research sources should be correctly cited. Refer to the APA Manual or the Academy of Management Journal (AMJ) style guide for the styles of citations and references (<http://aom.org/publications/amj/styleguide>).

Presentation

Due Date: Thursday, March 26 by 7:00 am for ALL GROUPS (even if not presenting on March 26). Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

Presentation Format

The presentation is 15-20 minutes (plus Q&A) and—as a guideline—between 15-20 slides (plus appendices, if desired). Every member of the group should present a relatively equal portion of the presentation. Presentation day and order will be randomly assigned.

The general structure and timeline of this assignment will be as follows:

Week	Description
8	Student groups must be formed, and report topic submitted
11	Consultation with instructor on preliminary report for feedback
12	Final report and presentation due

Memo to the CEO

Due Date: Thursday, April 9 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

The strategic memo to the CEO accounts for **10%** of your final grade and will be marked individually. This assignment is designed to strengthen your ability to communicate strategic insight clearly and concisely to senior decision-makers. You will craft a focused, action-oriented memo to a real or fictional CEO, advising on a pressing strategic issue. The exercise emphasizes clarity, synthesis, and practical relevance—key skills for general managers.

1) Choose a Firm and a Socio-political/Stakeholder-facing Issue

Select a real firm (public or private) and identify a current or plausible socio-political/stakeholder challenge it faces. The issue should require a decision with meaningful trade-offs (e.g., revenue consequences, reputational consequences, etc.).

a. Write a Strategic Memo

Address your memo directly to the firm's CEO. Your tone should be professional, direct, and solution-oriented. Use the memo to:

- i. Define the issue succinctly
- ii. Lay out the strategic options (briefly)
- iii. Recommend one clear course of action

b. Support your recommendation with 2–3 concise arguments grounded in strategic reasoning

2) Keep it Tight

You are writing as a trusted internal advisor. Aim to inform and influence—not overwhelm. Use headings, bullets, and short paragraphs to structure your memo for maximum clarity.

3) Use Course Concepts

Draw explicitly on tools and frameworks from class where relevant

Memo Format

Max 1,000 words (excluding references). 12-point font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins (This should equal to 2 pages maximum). Include a memo header (To/From/Subject/Date). References optional but encouraged (APA or Chicago)

Online Quiz

Due Date: Thursday, April 9 by 7:00 am. Late submissions receive a grade of 0%.

The quiz accounts for **5%** of your final grade and will be marked individually. The quiz will be administered online through Avenue and will be marked individually. It will cover material from readings, lectures, and class discussions, and will be **closed book**. The quiz is cumulative. The quiz will be made available during week 10 and can be completed at any point between then and the end of the term (April 9 by 7:00am).

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.degrote.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 before 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., a 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 the 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

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 the 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.

ATTENDANCE

Arriving after the start of class will result in a 50% deduction from your participation grade for that session. Departing before class ends will also result in a 50% deduction. If you both arrive late and leave early, you will receive a 0% participation grade for that session. If you must arrive late or depart early due to one of the [approved reasons for missed work](#), you must notify the instructor in advance to avoid the above-specified grade deduction.

If you are absent, you will receive a 0% participation grade for that session, unless you notify the instructor of your absence in advance your absence is due to one of the [approved reasons for missed work](#).

These deductions reflect the importance of being present for the full duration of class discussions, where your insights and your presence shape the collective learning experience. This policy will be strictly adhered to for all students.

Instructors may use Top Hat in their course in a variety of ways, including 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

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 that 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 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.degrotee.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 a 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 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 coursework at the outset of the 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 flexibilities 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., starting earlier than the class to enable completion at the same end time) require 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 the procedure is communication around, and physical location of, the 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 **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of the 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 authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voices and/or images 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 an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites 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 P700 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during the 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.**

A 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

Students may use generative AI for editing/translate/outlining/brainstorming/revising their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside use without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. Further, the use of generative AI outside of editing, translating, outlining, brainstorming, and revising (i.e., writing portions of the report) will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use, and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference, and to do so appropriately.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Business P700
Managing Geopolitical and Social Risk
Winter 2026 Course Schedule

Week¹	Discussion Focus	Assignments/Readings²
1 (Jan. 8)	Course introduction	Course Outline Participation weight: 1%
2 (Jan. 15)	Identifying, monitoring, and assessing geopolitical and social risk	Grant, A., Haider, Z., & Levy, A. 2021. How global companies can manage geopolitical risk . <i>McKinsey & Company</i> . Participation weight: 3%
3 (Jan. 22)	Strategizing around geopolitical and social risk	Kenny, B. (Host). 2020. Is there a winner in Huawei's digital Cold War with the U.S.? <i>Cold Call (Podcast)</i> , Episode 115. Participation weight: 4% Assignments 1. Geopolitical and Social Risk Report Proposal due (7:00am)
4 (Jan. 29)	Group Consultations	<i>No class but each group should meet for 10 minutes with the Professor to discuss and receive feedback on Geopolitical and Social Risk Analysis progress.</i> Participation weight: 1%
5 (Feb. 5)	Stakeholder due diligence and analytics	Kenny, B. (Host). 2024. Amazon in Seattle: The role of business in causing and solving a housing crisis . <i>Cold Call (Podcast)</i> , Episode 229. Participation weight: 5%

¹ This schedule provides a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary.

² The reading list will be on A2L and will be regularly updated.

6 (Feb. 12)	Operational and financial integration	<p>Henisz, W. J., & Gray, T. 2012. Calculating net present value of sustainability initiatives at Newmont's Ahafo mine in Ghana (A). <i>Wharton ESG Initiative Case Study Series</i>.</p> <p>Kenny, B. (Host). 2023. BMW's decarbonization strategy: Sustainable for the environment and the bottom line. <i>Cold Call (Podcast)</i>, Episode 220.</p> <p>Participation weight: 4%</p> <p>Assignments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geopolitical and Social Risk Report due (7:00am)
7 (Feb. 19)	READING WEEK – NO CLASSES	
8 (Feb. 26)	Stakeholder communications, engagement, and trust	<p>Kenny, B. (Host). 2024. The importance of trust for managing through a crisis. <i>Cold Call (Podcast)</i>, Episode 231.</p> <p>Participation weight: 4%</p>
9 (Mar. 5)	Crisis communications simulation	<p>Assignments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crisis communications brief due by end of class 2. Teams finalized and names communicated to instructor for Stakeholder Engagement Plan (7:00am)
10 (Mar. 12)	Political, social, and CEO activism	<p>Chatterji, A. K., & Toffel, M. W. 2018. The new CEO activists. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, January-February Issue: 78-89.</p> <p>Kenny, B. (Host). 2024. Should businesses take a stand on societal issues?. <i>Cold Call (Podcast)</i>, Episode 221.</p> <p>Participation weight: 3%</p> <p>Assignments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan Proposal due (7:00am)

11 (Mar. 19)	Group Consultations	<i>No class but each team should meet for 10 minutes with the Professor to discuss and receive feedback on Stakeholder Engagement Plan progress.</i> Participation weight: 1%
12 (Mar. 26)	Stakeholder engagement presentations (Day 1)	Participation weight: 2% Assignments 1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan due (7:00am) 2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan Presentation Slide Deck due (7:00am)
13 (Apr. 2)	Stakeholder engagement presentations (Day 2)	Participation weight: 2%
14 (Apr. 9)	Course wrap-up	Assignments 1. Memo to the CEO (7:00am) 2. Quiz (7:00am)