

**BUSINESS B715
PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP
Fall 2026 Course Outline**

**Human Resources and Management Area
DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this course is to prepare students to take on increasingly higher levels of leadership in their organizations, creating career paths for personal success, organizational effectiveness and contribution to society at large. **Education with Purpose.**

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Tuesday 7-9:50 pm
Professor
Helen Chen, PhD
Chenh227@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

TA: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE ELEMENTS

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course reviews the key concepts, approaches, models and theories of leadership, with real practical opportunity to apply them. Fundamental leadership skills will be introduced with opportunities for student self-assessment and development planning. The objective of the course is to prepare students to a career of leadership in and of organizations. Basic knowledge is delivered through readings and lectures. Students will be exposed to leadership experiences in a number of ways, including but not limited to case analysis, class discussion, experiential activities & self-reflection, simulations and peer coaching.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Understand key principles of leadership and theories and frameworks;
 - Understand the progression and changing nature of leadership at different levels;
 - Gain self-awareness of own strengths and weaknesses and build plan for continuous development in leadership roles;
 - Learn practical skills leading in ambiguous and challenging situations;
 - Been exposed to coaching, having difficult conversations and developing talent
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REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Required Readings:

Case Studies & Simulation

\$34.90CAD

Cases and simulation materials need to be purchased by the student from Harvard Business Publishing via this link: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1452790>

Articles

No Cost

A reading list of and citation information is posted on Avenue.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who 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.degroot.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages 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 normally conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors normally provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

EVALUATION

Components and Weights

Leadership Learning Portfolio (Individual)	40%	Dec. 7
Simulation & Reflection (Group+Individual Component)	15%	Nov. 24 & Nov. 30
In-Class Leadership Sprint (Group)	20%	Sept. 29 & Oct. 27
Real-world Leadership Consulting Project (Group)	20%	Dec. 1
Participation & Engagement (Individual)	5%	Various

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+	77-79	9
B	73-76	8
B-	70-72	7
F	00-69	0

COURSE DELIVERABLES

LEADERSHIP LEARNING PORTFOLIO (INDIVIDUAL WORK) (40%)

This assignment is the culmination of the learning from the course demonstrated through self-reflection, course takeaway, point-of-view statement and leadership development actions. Deliverables will include (a) in-class component of a 2-minute “Leadership Point of View” speech and (b) a portfolio synthesizing course takeaway, self-reflection, personal development actions and leadership values.

SIMULATION AND REFLECTION (GROUP WORK) (15%)

In this assignment, teams will navigate a high-stakes leadership-in-crisis simulation during class time, working collaboratively to make real-time strategic decisions. Following the simulation, teams will submit a 750–1,000 word reflection report evaluating their team's dynamics, identifying key leadership successes and failures, and outlining actionable improvements for future crisis scenarios, alongside a peer evaluation.

IN-CLASS LEADERSHIP SPRINT (GROUP WORK) (20%)

Team will complete two (10% each) in-class “Leadership Sprint” activities throughout the term, analyzing a leadership challenge and developing a recommended course of action. Teams will present their analysis in a recorded video supported by 5-7 slides. Where perspectives differ, teams may present both a majority view and a dissenting view, demonstrating consideration of alternative approaches.

REAL-WORLD LEADERSHIP CONSULTING PROJECT (GROUP WORK) (20%)

In this assignment, teams will act as leadership consultants to an Executive Board, tackling a real-world organizational challenge in an industry/company, or higher education, with which you have experience. Teams will reframe the challenge, diagnose its root causes, and recommend a practical, actionable solution to the executive board. Each team will deliver a 12–15 minute executive presentation supported by a maximum 20-slide deck, followed by a Q&A.

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT (INDIVIDUAL WORK) (5%)

You are expected to come prepared for class and actively engage in various class activities such as discussions, case analyses, and other in-class activities. Participation and engagement will be assessed in multiple classes throughout the term on a 0–2 scale: 0 = no or very limited participation; 1 = average participation; 2 = full and consistent participation. The average score across assessments will be count towards 5% weight of the total course mark.

NOTE:

1. Detailed guidelines and rubrics for the course assignments are posted on AVENUE and will be discussed in class.
2. The use of GenAI is strictly prohibited in submitted assignment deliverables. In every document you submit, please include a signed disclaimer:

I (we), _____, confirm that the writing is my (our) original work and reflects my (our) own thinking.

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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.

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

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE 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.

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.

ATTENDANCE

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.

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 which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the [DSB Student Services – Academic Office](#) (DSSAO (DSB Student Services 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 DSSAO (DSB Student Services 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 DSSAO ([DSB Student Services 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 deferred examination period as set by the [Office of the Registrar](#).

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 must activate their accommodation(s) (e.g., extra-time, alone room, etc.) via [mySAS](#) portal at the beginning of each term, normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes. 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

- Student Accessibility Services (SAS) now uses the online [mySAS](#) Portal for graduate students to share accommodation letters with their instructors and Faculty/Program. Students are responsible for activating their accommodations each term through the [mySAS](#) Portal. Once

activated, an approved accommodation letter will be automatically sent to the instructors associated with the student's enrolled courses for that term.

- Students must engage the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) to implement their accommodation(s) (e.g., extra-time, alone room, etc.) for each upcoming test, midterm, or exam, at **least two weeks in advance**. Students can do this by emailing DeGroote MBA SAS scheduling office at DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca or completing the [Accommodation Implementation form](#). 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. 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, alone room, 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 implement 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 DSSAO (DSB Student Services 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.

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 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

I encourage the responsible use of generative GenAI as a tool to support your learning. You may use GenAI to brainstorm ideas, clarify concepts, simulate Q&As, explore different perspectives, and support reflection on your own ideas and experiences. For example, you may use AI to help you identify questions you might consider in a reflection, challenge your thinking, or suggest alternative perspectives that you can then think critically about.

However, GenAI should not be used in any assignment submitted for grading. The purpose of assignments is for you to demonstrate your mastery of course content, reflect your own thinking and judgment and application of course concepts in solving real-world problems. Using AI to generate responses, write your analysis, reflection, slides or other substantive components of an assignment submitted for grading is strictly prohibited and constitute a violation of academic integrity.

BUSINESS B715: PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

Fall 2026 Course Schedule

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ACTIVITY & READING ASSIGNMENT
1	9/8	Course Overview Leadership Introduction	Reading (reference): Leadership Guide for First-Time Managers
2	9/15	The Characteristics of Effective Leaders Cultivating self-awareness	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. Learning charisma. Transform yourself into the person others want to follow. 2. Narcissistic leaders: The incredible pros, the inevitable cons.
3	9/22	Being a Good Leader: Credibility, Ethics and Value	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. Why should anyone be led by you?
4	9/29	In-Class Leadership Sprint	Teams will be working to complete a leadership problem solving exercise.
5	10/6	Communication Influencing & Persuasion	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. Harnessing the science of persuasion. 2. The necessary art of persuasion.
6	10/13	Coaching & Developing People	Case – read and prepare before class: Leaders as Coach
7	10/20	Leadership in Context: The Situation & Organization Culture	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. The New Analytics of Culture
8	10/27	In-Class Leadership Sprint	Teams will be working to complete a leadership problem solving exercise.
9	11/3	Decision Making	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. Understanding hubris and heuristics in CEO decision-making. 2. Delusion of success.
10	11/10	Leading Change	Case – read and prepare before class: Averting a Hard Landing
11	11/17	The Darkside of Leadership Leadership Legacy	Required Reading to be done before class: 1. Could your personality derail your career? 2. How will you measure your life.
12	11/24	In-Class Leadership Simulation	Teams will be working to complete the online leadership simulation and the reflection. *Note Due Dates* Virtual Leadership Simulation DUE by end of class Reflection DUE following week on Monday, Nov. 30 @ 11:59pm
13	12/1	Group Presentation	Team will present the Real-World Leadership Consulting Project Leadership Learning Portfolio DUE last day of class Dec. 7 @ 11:59pm