

# ECON 2Q03: ECONOMICS OF BAD BEHAVIOUR

## Section C01

Faculty of Social Science – Department of Economics  
McMaster University  
Fall 2017

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### Course Description:

This course will apply economic principles to analyze human behaviour. Topics include criminal behaviour, legal but risky behaviour, and the behaviour of corporate and public sector organizations.

**Required Materials:** Custom Courseware

**Course Website:** A2L, or "Avenue" (terms will be used interchangeably)  
<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>

### Course Objectives:

By the end of the course you should be able to

- Engage in critical discussion about how economists analyze decision-making by individuals and organizations.
- Identify and explain how incentives affect decision-making in the real world.
- Apply the concepts of marginal benefit and marginal cost to social issues.
- Predict the unintended consequences that might arise from a given economic policy.
- Explain how economists measure "welfare" and describe how individual household and firm decisions impact it.
- Develop analytical skills and written communications skills through writing short papers and discussion posts.

### Where to Get Help:

I will hold office hours (in person) on Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:00 and on Thursdays from 9:00 to 10:00. I will do my best to respond to emails within two business days. Please refer to the course outline and the main discussion forum before you email or post questions regarding the course. Support for A2L is available at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/help/>.

<b>Evaluation:</b>	<b>A) Opinion Statements</b>	<b>75</b>
	<b>B) 2 Opinion Analysis Papers</b>	<b>150</b>
	<b>C) Quizzes (5)</b>	<b>300</b>
	<b>D) Participation</b>	<b>150</b>
	<b>E) Critical Reflections and Report</b>	<b>75</b>
	<b>F) Final Exam</b>	<b><u>750</u></b>
	<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:</b>	<b>1500</b>

#### **A) Opinion Statements:**

This short written assignment will be completed at the end of Module 1. You will be given a series of statements and will choose two to respond to. Each response should be no longer than 200 words. An assignment sheet which will outline instructions, submission details and guidelines will be provided.

#### **B) Opinion Analysis Papers:**

You will submit two short papers (maximum 500 words), based on the content learned in Modules 2 and 3. An assignment sheet which will outline instructions, submission details and guidelines will be provided. Papers will be due on Fridays.

#### **C) Quizzes:**

At the end of each module you will complete a multiple choice quiz online. You will be given a time frame during which you can access the quiz. The quiz will be time-limited. There are 10 questions and you will have 16 minutes to complete the quiz. Because you are taking the quiz on your own, we cannot invigilate the same way that we invigilate in-person tests. So you can use your notes and any other resources at your disposal. However, the short time frame means that you should prepare (meaning study) ahead of time. You are expected to complete this quiz without the aid of other students. Quizzes will be due on Wednesdays.

#### **D) Participation:**

During Week 2 of the course you will be asked to introduce yourself to some peers via the discussion board. During the remainder of the course you are expected to actively participate in online discussion forums. An assignment sheet which will outline instructions, submission details and guidelines will be provided. Each "Discussion Post Response Set" includes a "Personal Response" to a question, which will be due on Tuesdays and a "Peer Response" to the same question, which will be due on Thursdays.

#### **E) Critical Reflections and Report:**

You will complete a brief questionnaire at the end of each module then use those to write and submit a final critical reflection report of 400 to 500 words. An assignment sheet which will outline instructions, submission details and guidelines will be provided. Critical Reflection Questionnaires must be completed in order to access the Module Quizzes.

## **F) Final Exam:**

The final exam will be held in person during the final exam period. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

## **Submitting Assignments Electronically:**

Individual assignments submitted electronically must follow the naming conventions indicated in the assignment sheet.

- Always save a copy of your work to your hard drive or print a hard copy of all assignments uploaded or sent through email.
- Save a copy of any important email that you send to your computer. Things have been known to get lost in cyberspace!

## **Due Dates and Late or Missed Assignment Policy:**

All work is due by 11:59pm on the due date. Quizzes will be due on Wednesday evenings, discussion post response sets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and papers on Friday evenings. Specific due dates for each assignment can be found on the Assignment Sheets and the schedules for each unit, which are linked to the homepage. Due dates are also provided at the end of this course outline. A late penalty of 20 percent per business day will apply after the due date.

## **McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF):**

This on-line self-reporting tool is for undergrad students to report one absence of up to 3 days per term. The MSAF gives you the ability to request relief for any missed academic work during that one absence.

You may submit only 1 MSAF per term. This form should be filled out as soon as possible before you return to class after your absence. It is **\*your\*** responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately (within 48 hours of submitting the MSAF) in person or by email regarding the nature of the relief that is possible for the missed work.

If you are absent more than 3 days or exceed 1 request per term you **must** visit the office of the Associate Dean in your Faculty. You may be required to provide supporting documentation to the Faculty office. You must **not** submit any medical or other relevant documentation to your instructor. Your instructor may **not** ask you for such documentation. All documentation requests will only come from the Faculty office. The MSAF "Self Report" and "Missed Work" forms are available in the Student Centre in Mosaic. Submission of MSAF will result in a new due date. Weight will **\*not\*** be transferred to the final exam.

## **The Golden Rule of Netiquette:**

Do not do or say online what you would not do or say offline.

## **The Core Rules of Netiquette:**

- 1. Be Friendly, Positive and Self- Reflective**

- Think before you write and edit before you post
- 2. Use Proper Language and Titles**
  - Do not use caps lock as this insinuates yelling
  - Do not use profanity or slang
  - Address your instructor and fellow students respectfully
- 3. Use Effective Communication**
  - Say what you mean to say clearly and thoughtfully
- 4. Professionalism**
  - Leave instant messaging abbreviations and characters (☺) out
- 5. Ask for Clarification**
  - If you are unsure of what was said, ask again (I did not understand...)

**A Note about the Use of Avenue to Learn in this Course:**

This course will be delivered through Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, 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. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

**Student Code of Conduct:** <http://studentconduct.mcmaster.ca/pdf/SCC.pdf>

**University Policy on 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 which 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 <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

**Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy:**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including to TAs), and from

students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

**Access Copyright Regulations:**

McMaster University holds a licensing agreement with Access Copyright, the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency. Information on current regulations for copying for education purposes can be found at the following website:

<http://www.copyright.mcmaster.ca/>

**Student Accessibility Services (SAS):**

If you have an accommodation letter from SAS, you are required to provide a copy of that letter to your instructor. Please be sure that you arrange academic accommodations through SAS as early as possible in order that the instructor can receive the accommodation letter as early as possible in the term.

**What are my responsibilities as a student registered at SAS?**

Students are responsible to identify themselves to Student Accessibility Services on an annual and regular basis in order to receive accommodations and services. Students are responsible for:

- meeting their SAS Program Coordinator prior to, or at the start of each academic term (September, January and summer sessions);
- providing their SAS Program Coordinator with relevant and professional medical or psychological documentation;
- notifying their SAS Program Coordinator if courses are dropped or added, or if accommodations require a change;
- meeting with individual course instructors to discuss specific needs in relation to the course and their disability; and
- providing the course instructor with their accommodation letter from SAS.

For more information, see the SAS website: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>

**Class schedule:**

The class schedule follows. The semester is divided into five “modules”. Each module consists of two or three units and we will work through one unit each week. You should expect to spend approximately 8-10 hours per week on the course. Each unit has a schedule with items listed sequentially – you should do the readings, activities, lessons, and assignments in order. The content for each unit will appear at the beginning of each week and can be linked to from the home page. At the bottom of each unit schedule I list all assignments related to the unit that are due the following week.

Module	Unit	Dates
1 –Economic Concepts and Models	1 – What to Expect from an Online Course	Sept. 5 – 8
	2 – Review of Economic Concepts and Models	Sept. 11 – 15
2 – Individual Criminal Behaviour	3 – An Economist’s Take on Crime	Sept. 18 – 22
	4 – Illegal Drugs and Prostitution	Sept. 25 – 29
	5 – (Crime and) Punishment – guest contributor Mike Veall	Oct. 2 – 6
3 – Individual Legal but Risky Behaviour	6 – Obesity (guest contributor Jerry Hurley)	Oct. 16 – 20
	7 – Risky Pastimes	Oct. 23 – 27
	8 – Smoking (guest contributor Phil DeCicca)	Oct. 30 – Nov. 3
4 – Corporate Bad Behaviour	9 – Insider Trading, Corporate Governance, Pollution (guest contributor Mike Veall)	Nov. 6 – 10
	10 – Sweatshops and Child Labour	Nov. 13 – 17
5 – Good Behaviour	11 – Redistribution (guest contributor Kate Cuff)	Nov. 20 – 24
	12 – Charitable Giving (guest contributor Abigail Payne)	Nov. 27 – Dec. 1
	No new content – Remaining Module 5 work due	Dec. 4 – 6

**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 his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.**

Week	Item	Due Date
1	<i>Nothing due, drop/add date is Wednesday, Sept 13</i>	
2	Introduction Discussion Post	Thurs., Sept. 14
	Bonus Course Outline/Success Guide Quiz	Thurs., Sept. 14
	Opinion Statements Assignment	Fri., Sept. 15
3	Discussion Post Personal Response #1	Tues., Sept. 19
	Discussion Post Peer Response #1	Thurs., Sept. 21
	Module One Critical Reflection Questionnaire	Wed., Sept. 20
	Module One Quiz	Wed., Sept. 20
4	Discussion Post Personal Response #2	Tues., Sept. 26
	Discussion Post Peer Response #2	Thurs., Sept. 28
5	Discussion Post Personal Response #3	Tues., Oct. 3
	Discussion Post Peer Response #3	Thurs., Oct. 5
FALL BREAK		
6	Module Two Critical Reflection Questionnaire	Wed., Oct. 18
	Module Two Quiz	Wed., Oct. 18
	Opinion Analysis Paper #1	Fri., Oct. 20
7	Discussion Post Personal Response #4	Tues., Oct. 24
	Discussion Post Peer Response #4	Thurs., Oct. 26
8	Discussion Post Personal Response #5	Tues., Oct. 31
	Discussion Post Peer Response #5	Thurs., Nov. 2
9	Module Three Critical Reflection Questionnaire	Wed., Nov. 8
	Module Three Quiz	Wed., Nov. 8
	Opinion Analysis Paper #2	Fri., Nov. 10
10	Discussion Post Personal Response #6	Tues., Nov. 14
	Discussion Post Peer Response #6	Thurs., Nov. 16

11	Discussion Post Personal Response #7	Tues., Nov. 21
	Discussion Post Peer Response #7	Thurs., Nov. 23
	Module Four Critical Reflection Questionnaire	Wed., Nov. 22
	Module Four Quiz	Wed., Nov. 22
12	Discussion Post Personal Response #8	Tues., Nov. 28
	Discussion Post Peer Response #8	Thurs., Nov. 30
13	Module Five Critical Reflection Questionnaire	Wed., Dec. 6
	Module Five Quiz	Wed., Dec. 6
	Critical Reflection Report	Wed., Dec. 6
FINAL EXAM – Dec. 8 – Dec. 21		