ARTSSCI 4ST3 — Selected Topics in Inquiry:  
Course Outline Winter 2023

Room: KTH/B104, Thursdays 2:30pm-5:20pm

Instructor: Noel Brett

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| **Email**: [brettn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:brettn@mcmaster.ca)   * Always put “[ARTSCI 4ST3]” in the subject header * Always use McMaster Email * Emails that do not follow these guidelines might be missed | **Office hours:** Thursday 1:30pm-2:20pm   * Location: LRW-3038 (Jenkins Room) * Alternative timeslots may be requested |

# Calendar Description

This upper-level Inquiry course offers students an opportunity to engage in detailed, scholarly investigation of a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary topic and/or issue of social concern. In 2022-23, the focus will be on coding as both a technical and a social practice. Students will have an opportunity to learn and apply basic coding skills; to consider the intersections between coding and user experience; and to explore ways in which software design might contribute to addressing (or exacerbating) social challenges.

# Course Description

The subtitle of this course is: *Where Game Design Meets Culture: A Critical Dive into Videogames*

Game design is usually taught and practiced under computer science departments. However, videogames are inherently interdisciplinary. Videogames are an intersection of coding practices, narrative and experience design, and socio-cultural systems. In this course, students will learn how to play, critique, and make games informed by social and cultural practices.

*No prior programming or gaming knowledge required; however, it would be an asset.*

# Course Aims & Goals

The course speaks **to four questions**. The student should refer to these questions every week to interpret the readings and start thinking about applying the concepts to the areas of digital media, digital production, and social challenges:

* How does videogame development embed social and cultural practices?
* How are players moved to experience the social and cultural practices when playing videogames?
* How do videogames challenge or recreate social and cultural norms?
* And how might we subvert oppressive practices or create resistances when developing videogames?

The course aims to develop skills that the student will find useful after the course is over. Specifically, the students will learn to:

* Understand elements of videogame design and player experience
* Learn the flow of game design, design intent, and player experience
* Consider how oppression, resistances, and other social practices get embedded in videogame design and player experience
* Design and develop games informed by social and cultural critiques

# Textbook and Course Readings

There is no mandatory textbook for the course. Course readings will be made available online.

# Game Engines

We will be using two different game engines to develop games for the course.

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| **Bitsy**  <https://ledoux.itch.io/bitsy> | **GameMaker Studio**  <https://gamemaker.io/en> |
| **Description**  Bitsy is a minimalistic open-source video game designer created for beginners with little to no coding necessary.  Game assets are made using their bit editor.  **Free Resources**:   * [www.shorturl.at/azIX7](http://www.shorturl.at/azIX7) * <https://bitsy.fandom.com/wiki/Tutorials>   **Free Assets:**  <https://itch.io/game-assets/tag-bitsy>  **Games made with Bitsy:**  <https://itch.io/games/made-with-bitsy> | **Description**  A powerful engine for creating 2D videogames. This engine has a drag-and-drop no-code workflow for beginners, as well as a code editor for making more powerful and intricate games.  There is a large library of game assets.  **Free Resources**:   * <https://gamemaker.io/en/gamemakerresources> * <https://gamemaker.io/en/tutorials>   **Free Assets:**  <https://itch.io/game-assets/tag-gamemaker>  **Games made with GameMaker:**  <https://itch.io/games/made-with-gamemaker> |

# Game Platforms

We will be using a variety of game platforms. All the games in the course will be FREE.

## Steam

Steam is a video game digital distribution service and storefront*.* Steam has a large library of games created by AAA studios as well as indie developers. Steam includes many free games.

We will be playing many games hosted on Steam. Please download the platform at: <https://store.steampowered.com/about/>

## Itch.io

From their website: “Itch.io *is an open marketplace for independent digital creators with a focus on independent video games.”* Itch.io has a large collection of games, game assets, boardgames, and more. Many Itch.io games are hosted right on their webservers (no need to download their games). However, many games will require to be downloaded. The games we will be playing in the course from Itch.io are free or have a sliding scale for donations from $0 to pay what you want.

<https://itch.io/docs/general/about>

# Other Resources

## Lyons New Media Centre

<https://library.mcmaster.ca/spaces/lyons>

The Lyons New Media Centre has a gaming room equipped with an ample set of consoles and library of videogames. Individual or groups may book this room for 2 hours per day.

Room policies:

* Maximum capacity: 3 people for console, 1 person for PC gaming
* This room is not soundproofed so be mindful of volume levels.
* All persons in the room must be gaming. No spectators permitted.
  + All persons gaming in the room must sign out their own controller (and therefore must have their own McMaster ID card with them).
  + No external visitors permitted in gaming room without *advance permission* from the manager.
  + As this is an academic space, only games owned by Lyons are permitted for play. Do not login to your own Steam account on the PC and do not bring your own games for the consoles.

Location: Mills 4th Floor

Booking: <https://library.mcmaster.ca/services/MediaBookings>

# Land Acknowledgement

## We acknowledge the traditional territories upon which we gather; McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement. For many thousands of years, the first people sought to walk gently on this land, offering their assistance to the first European travelers and sharing their knowledge for survival in what was at times a harsh climate. We seek a new relationship with the original peoples of this land, one based in honour and deep respect. May we be guided by love and right action as we transform of our personal and institutional relationships with our indigenous friends and neighbours.

# Class Structure

* 70-80-minute lecture period (Week 1 and 2 this will be closer to 2 hours)
* 5-minute break
* 30-40 minutes for student presentations and discussion
* 5-minute break
* 30-40 minute In-class exercises, either
  + Game reflections:
    - 15-20-minute gameplay
    - 5-10-minute preparation
    - 10-20-minute class discussion
  + Game Design
    - 10-15-minute tutorial by instructor
    - 15-30-minute work period

# Course Breakdown and Evaluation

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| Paper Presentation & Critique [15%] |
| Presentation [80% of the total Paper Presentation & Critique grade] – Starting week 3, there will be 1-2 assigned readings. Students can pair up or choose to present individually and will create a 10-minute presentation about one of the readings. **Students are expected to sign up and present one paper during that week**. Presentations will take place during the middle hour of the lecture.  The presentations should include:   * An explanation of what the paper is about * The main point(s) of the paper * Any critiques * A showcase of part of a game related to the paper’s topics and explanation of how it relates.   + This can be live gameplay or a video of part of the gameplay (from either YouTube or from the student’s playthrough).   + The game should be a different game than the ones played in-class. * A 5-minute discussion period led by the student(s).   + Bring questions and further inquiry about the paper to generate discussion.   Other students are expected to participate (please see discussion participation below). The instructor will do a practice presentation on Week 2.  There will be a sign-up sheet starting Week 1. **Students are expected to sign up by Week 2 as presentations will start on Week 3.** All readings will be made available on Avenue for students to choose from. Please check the course schedule for the required papers.  Paper Reflection [20% of the total Paper Presentation & Critique grade] – Students will also sign up to submit a single reflection about one (1) of the papers. The paper chosen by the student **cannot be the same paper that the student is presenting**. The critique should be one page (Times New Roman, 12-pt font, double spaced) without citations. The student can take up to more space for their critique if they deem it necessary. The paper reflection should include:   * One (1) paragraph summary of the paper, * One (1) paragraph of the main takeaways, * Either a critique of or reflection on the paper’s themes.   + The critique or reflection may discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the paper, or it may be about the student’s relationship with the material.   The submission will be due right before the presentation day (i.e., if the paper chosen is from week 8, then the submission is due Thursday 2:30pm of Week 8.) |
| In-class Game Reflections and Game Development Exercises [15%] |
| Every week (starting Week 2) there will be either a **game reflection or a game development exercise during the last hour of lecture time.**  **Game Refection** — Students will partner up and each play about 5-10 minutes of games chosen for the day. The games list for the week will be posted alongside the course schedule and will be made available on avenue. All games are free and should work with any platform. **After the gameplay sessions, the student pair will write a half-a-page (Times New Roman, 12-pt font, double spaced)** about their experience with the game. Students should relate their reflection to the themes of the course. This will be due at the end of the week.  **Game Development —** Students will partner up and follow the development exercises of the week. These exercises will include familiarity with the game engine, small coding exercises (variables, conditionals, loops, etc.), solving a coding problem, or making a 30-second to 1-minute game in **Bitsy**. The instructor will give a tutorial about the game engine or coding language during class.  Note:   * These are meant to be quick and simple to get the students to practice thinking about and developing games * Both will generally be marked for completion. No marks will be lost for style.   + For example:     - Students will be evaluated on if they included a reflection of the course’s themes in their submission,     - Or, on if they completed all the programming requirements. * Students can miss submitting **one reflection and one development** **exercise** without penalty   + Meaning: students can skip the submission of one of each and get full marks |
| Discussion Participation [5%] |
| Students are expected to **contribute significantly to the discussions in seminar, paper presentations, and in-class exercises.** Students should prepare notes in advance for the seminar readings. |
| Assignments x 2 [30%] |
| **Assignment 1: Short Answers** — Students will answer two short questions regarding the oppressive or resistive practices within games. The student should choose two (or more) games of their choosing an at least one of the games should be a game that is not from the game’s reflections. Each answer should be one (1) page, Times New Roman 12pt font, and double spaced.  **Assignment 2: Game Development** — Students will make a short game (1-2 minutes of gameplay – or longer if the students wish) in **Bitsy**. Students may choose to work individually or with a partner. The student(s) should first submit a design document (a template of this design document can be found on avenue). Note, for this assignment, there is a specific template. Students should then follow their design document to implement their game.  *Students may wish to incorporate diagrams, artwork, tables, etc, in their design document submission.*  **A more detailed description for both assignments will be posted on Avenue and will be discussed in class.** |
| Final Project [35%] |
| One major component of this course is the **creation of a game or interactive simulation that is in line with the course's themes.** Students will pair up to develop their final project. Note, this project **will not be code intensive**, however, students are required to fill a small coding criterion (please see the rubric.)  The instructor will show students how to use **GameMaker** in class. GameMaker is an easy platform that allows game development with little code. Students are welcome to use any tools to create their game or interactive simulation (e.g., Processing Max/MSP, Godot, Unity, etc); however, the tool should require the student pair to include *some* code (Bitsy submissions will not be accepted for this final project.) If the students decide to use a platform that is outside the instructor’s area of expertise, they should be prepared to do their own research about design and troubleshooting.  This game project is divided into **3 milestones**:   1. **Proposal/Design Intent Document [15% of the total Project grade] – Students will submit a one-page to two-page proposal (Times New Roman, 12-pt font, double spaced,** **not counting citations) outlining the design and goals for their term project.** Students may use the assigned readings, supplementary readings, and games in their proposal. Students are welcome to bring in other critical tools and resources from different courses, games, or other media. Please see the design intent document for assignment 2 as this submission will be the same. 2. **Design Document [25% of the total Project grade]—** Students will submit a design document which will outline the intended player experience and design choices**.** The instructor will provide a design document template for students to follow. The instructor will provide feedback on the design document for students to apply for their final submission. 3. **Final Submission [60% of the total Project grade] —** Students will submit their final game the last week of class.   **A more detailed description of the project will be posted on Avenue on the first week of class and will be discussed in class.** |

# Course Schedule

* **Required readings:** Students should read at least one of the required papers for the week. These will be the papers presented in-class.
* **Supplementary readings:** Extra readings that students may choose to read. These might be helpful for essays or presentations. These will also be part of the week’s lecture.
* **Other games:** You may choose to play some of these other games in class and use them for your reflections or essay.

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| **Week 1 — What is a game? What is game design? (Jan 9-13)** | |
| **Readings**  Supplementary:   * + - Adams, E. (2014). Fundamentals of game design. Pearson Education.     - Chess, S., & Consalvo, M. (2022). The future of media studies is game studies.     - Flanagan, M. (2009) Designing for critical play. Critical Play: Radical Game Design. Cambridge. | **Activity**  Intros by students  Gameplay:   * Kissing Simulator – Kavkaz Sila Games * Loneliness – Jordan Magnuson   Other games you might want to check out:   * Doki Doki Literature Club – Team Salvo |
| **Lecture will take up roughly 2 hours**  Please sign up for paper presentations  Gameplay reflection submission is not necessary. We will have a discussion in class.  Available on avenue: Project outline, reading list, games list, and assignment 1 outline. | |
| **Week 2 — How to critique and play games like a feminist (Jan 16-20)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Chess, S. (2020). *Play like a Feminist*. Chapter 1: Playing like a Girl. <https://playlikeafeminist.com/>   Supplementary:   * Fernández-Vara, C. (2019). Introduction to game analysis. | **Activity**  **Gameplay**:   * Life is Strange (free demo on Steam) |
| **Lecture will take up roughly 2 hours**   * Students will need to sign up for the **paper presentations starting next week**.   + Instructor will do a paper presentation example * Students should check out the following games studies roundtable video:   + <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cp2022/program/indigo/7/> | |
| **Week 3 — #GamerGate and playing with politics (Jan 23-27)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Stenros, J. (2014). In defence of a magic circle: the social, mental and cultural boundaries of play.   Supplementary:   * Consalvo, M. (2009). There is no magic circle. * Salter, M. (2018). From geek masculinity to Gamergate: the technological rationality of online abuse. * Brett, N. (2021). Moments of Political Gameplay: Game Design as a Mobilization Tool for Far-Right Action * Schubert, S. (2021). Playing as/against Violent Women: Imagining Gender in the Postapocalyptic Landscape of The Last of Us Part II. | **Activity**  Gameplay   * We Become What We Behold – Nicky Case * An Obituary – Aidan Babidan   Other games you may want to explore:   * Democratic Socialism Simulator (Paid) – Paolo Pedercini |
| **Paper Presentations Start** | |
| **Week 4 — The Gay in Games (Jan 30- Feb 3)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Ruberg, B. (2019). *Video games have always been queer*. NYU Press. Chapter: "Loving Father, Caring Husband, Secret Octopus": Queer Embodiment and Passing in Octodad * Halberstam. J. (2017). Queer Gaming: Gaming, Hacking, and Going Turbo. In Queer Game Studies   Supplementary:   * Stang, S. (2022). Too close, too intimate, and too vulnerable: close reading methodology and the future of feminist game studies. * Ruberg, B. (2020). The queer games avant-garde: How LGBTQ game makers are reimagining the medium of video games. * Welch, T. (2018). The Affectively Necessary Labour of Queer Mods. | **Activity**  Gameplay:   * Dys4ria – Anna Anthropy * Rinse and Repeat – Robert Yang   Other games you may want to explore:   * Bottom’s up – Mo Cohen * how do you Do It – Nina Freeman |
| **DUE: Project Proposal**  **February 5th 11:59PM EST** | |
| **Week 5 — Subjectivity and Race (Feb 6 – 10)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Richard, G. T., & Gray, K. L. (2018). Gendered play, racialized reality: Black cyberfeminism, inclusive communities of practice, and the intersections of learning, socialization, and resilience in online gaming. Frontiers * Nakamura, L. (1995). Race in/for cyberspace: Identity tourism and racial passing on the Internet.   Supplementary:   * Fletcher, A. (2022). Black Gamer’s Refuge: Finding Community within the Magic Circle of Whiteness.   + - Mukherjee, S. (2018). Playing subaltern: Video games and postcolonialism. | **Activity**  Gameplay:   * Dot’s Home – Weathered Sweater, Aerial\_Knight, Titan ARX Interactive * Yellowface – Mike Yi Ren   Other games you might want to check out:   * SweetxHearts – Cattsmall * Hair Nah – Momo Pixels |
| **Week 6 — Flow and Creating Player Experience (Feb 13-17)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Chen, J. (2007). Flow in games (and everything else). * Mäyrä, F., & Ermi, L. (2011). Fundamental components of the gameplay experience.   Supplementary:   * Wiemeyer, J., Nacke, L., Moser, C., & Floyd’Mueller, F. (2016). Player experience. * Abeele, V. V., Spiel, K., Nacke, L., Johnson, D., & Gerling, K. (2020). Development and validation of the player experience inventory: A scale to measure player experiences at the level of functional and psychosocial consequences. * Hunicke, R., LeBlanc, M., & Zubek, R. (2004, July). MDA: A formal approach to game design and game research. | **Activity**  Game dev activity in Bitsy:   * Exploring the interface * Make a 30-sec – 1-minute game   Bitsy Tutorial led by instructor |
| **DUE: Assignment 1**  **February 19th 11:59 PM EST** | |
| **Week 7 (Feb 20-26)** | |
| **No Classes! Reading Break!** | |
| **Week 8 — Affect, Narrative, And Procedural Rhetorics (Feb 27 - March 3)** | |
| **Readings**  Required   * Ruberg, B., & Scully-Blaker, R. (2021). Making players care: The ambivalent cultural politics of care and video games. * Tancred, N., Vickery, N., Wyeth, P., & Turkay, S. (2018, October). Player choices, game endings and the design of moral dilemmas in games.   Supplementary:   * Bogost, I. (2008). *The rhetoric of video games* * Mekler, E. D., Rank, S., Steinemann, S. T., Birk, M. V., & Iacovides, I. (2016, October). Designing for emotional complexity in games: The interplay of positive and negative affect. | **Activity**  Gameplay:   * Coming Out Sim – Nicky Case |
| **DUE: Project Design Document**  **March 5th at 11:59 PM EST** | |
| **Week 9 — Me, Myself, and Interface (March 6 – 10)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * McArthur, V., Teather, R. J., & Jenson, J. (2015, October). The avatar affordances framework: mapping affordances and design trends in character creation interfaces.   Supplementary:   * Brett, N. (2018). Revision of Queer Bodies: Modifications of Sexual Affordances in World of Warcraft. * Dietrich, D. R. (2013). Avatars of whiteness: Racial expression in video game characters. * McArthur V. (2018). “Challenging the User-Avatar Dichotomy in Avatar Customization Research.” | **Activity**  **Gameplay:**   * Compare avatar Customization Interfaces for:   + Avatar Maker   + Fotor   + Pocket Camp (Phone game)   + Ready Player Me   + Any other games or interfaces you wish to use (e.g., Avatars from: Facebook, iOS, etc) |
| **Week 10 — Full Day Tutorial on GameMaker (March 13-17)** | |
| **Readings**   * No Readings | **Activity**  **Game dev activity in GameMaker:**   * Exploring the interface * Rudimentary programming practices   GameMaker tutorial led by instructor |
| **DUE: Assignment 2 - Game Development**  **March 17th at 11:59 PM EST**  **Other notes:**   * Game dev tutorial will be closer to 2 hours * Any missing presentations will be presented | |
| **Week 11 — Virtual Reality & Beyond Empathy (March 20-24)** | |
| **Readings**  Required:   * Ruberg, B. (2020). Empathy and its alternatives: Deconstructing the rhetoric of “empathy” in video games.   Supplementary:   * Gerling, K., & Spiel, K. (2021). A critical examination of virtual reality technology in the context of the minority body. * Brett, N. (2019). “Hetero-Comfortable Avatars.” | **Activity**  **Game Dev activity in GameMaker:**  GameMaker tutorial led by instructor |
| **Week 12 — Masculinities in Play (March 27-31)** | |
| **Readings**  Supplementary:   * Burrill, D. (2018). “We’re Going to Have to Do Things That Are Unthinkable”: Masculinity/Games/Torture. * Taylor, N., & Chess, S. (2018). Not So Straight Shooters: Queering the Cyborg Body in Masculinized Gaming. | **Activity**  Gameplay   * Hard Lads – Robert Yang   No presentations. Work Period of Project |
| **Week 13 – Final Week (April 3– 7)** | |
| **Work Period for Projects**  **Any last presentations**  **Due: Final Project**  **April 10th 11:59PM EST** | |

# Student Expectations and Administration

## MSAF

If an MSAF is used for:

1. An assignment, a five (5) day extension will be issued from the original due date.
2. A paper presentation, the student will have to make up their paper presentation at a later date decided by the instructor.
3. An in-class game design, game discussion, or discussion session, the marks will be re-distributed
4. Students may not MSAF the final project submission.

## Late Penalty

Students will be given a total of five (5) free days for late submissions. Students can use these extra days only for assignments, in-class game reflections and game design exercises, the project proposal, and the design document of the project. Students must email the instructor at least three days prior to the submission deadline. The student must include in their email how many days they wish to spend for each submission. Note that these **days are shared between all submissions**. Meaning that if the student chooses to use all five for one submission, then they will not have any more for subsequent assignments.

The late penalty on submissions is 10% per day to a total of 50%. **Submissions will not be accepted after 5 consecutive late days.** Any further extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis and must be discussed with the instructor before the scheduled due date.

# Senate-Approved Advisory Statements

## 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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [*Academic Integrity Policy*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf)*,* located at [https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures- guidelines/](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-%20guidelines/).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* improper collaboration in group work.
* copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/personal/rbishop_mcmaster_ca/Documents/www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## Courses with an Online Element

**Some courses may** use 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. 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*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf) (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.

## Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [*Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Accommodations-Policy.pdf) policy.

## Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [*Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work*](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Requests-for-Relief-for-Missed-Academic-Term-Work-Policy-on.pdf).

## 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](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done either by 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.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## Notes for all Arts & Sciences Courses

1. Some of the statements above refer to a “Faculty Office”; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list.
3. For additional information regarding requests for accommodation, relief for missed term work (e.g. MSAF), deferred examinations, etc., students should read carefully the [Requests](https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/) and [Resources](https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/) pages on the Arts & Science Program website.