



Ontario eSecondary School Course Outline 2026 - 2027

Ministry of Education Course Title: Challenge and Change in Society	
Ministry Course Code: HSB4U	
Course Type: University Preparation	
Grade: 12	
Credit Value: 1.0	
Prerequisite(s): Any university of university/college preparation course in social sciences and humanities, English, or Canadian and world studies	
Department: Social Science and Humanities	
Course developed by: S. Cowden-Roe	Date: April 1, 2021 Revised: August 1, 2026
Length: One Semester	Hours: 110
This course has been developed based on the following Ministry documents: 1. <i>The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12 Canadian and World Studies, 2013 (Revised)</i> 2. <i>Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)</i> 3. <i>Learning for All (2013)</i>	

COURSE DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE

This course focuses on the use of social science theories, perspectives, and methodologies to investigate and explain shifts in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour and their impact on society. Students will critically analyse how and why cultural, social, and behavioural patterns change over time. They will explore the ideas of social theorists and use those ideas to analyse causes of and responses to challenges such as technological change, deviance, and global inequalities. Students will explore ways in which social science research methods can be used to study social change.

OVERALL CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Research and Inquiry Skills

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Exploring: explore topics related to the analysis of social change, and formulate questions to guide their research;
2. Investigating: create research plans, and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science research and inquiry methods;
3. Processing Information: assess, record, analyse, and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry;
4. Communicating and Reflecting: communicate the results of their research and inquiry clearly and effectively, and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry, and communication skills.

Social Change

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Foundations for the Study of Social Change: demonstrate an understanding of the major theories, perspectives, and methodologies related to social change;
2. Causes and Effects of Social Change: demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of social change;
3. Technological Change: demonstrate an understanding of patterns and effects of technological change from a social science perspective.

Social Patterns and Trends

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Demographics: demonstrate an understanding of the importance of demographics as a tool for studying social patterns and trends, both nationally and globally;
2. Forces That Shape Social Trends: demonstrate an understanding of how forces influence and shape social patterns and trends;
3. Social Deviance: demonstrate an understanding of social science theories about social deviance, and of how various responses to deviance affect individuals and society.

Global Social Challenges

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Global Inequalities: demonstrate an understanding of how various social structures and conditions support or limit global inequalities;
2. Globalization: assess the impact of globalization on individuals and groups;
3. Exploitation: analyse the impact of unfair or unjust exploitation of people or resources, locally and globally.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit	Length
Unit 1: Social Science Perspectives and Research	26 hours
Unit 2: Social Change and its Theories	27 hours
Unit 3: Social Patterns, Trends, and Demographics	26 hours
Unit 4: Social Challenges	23 hours
Unit 5: Final Project and Final Exam	8 hours
Total	110 Hours

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

Unit 1 - Social Science Perspectives and Research

In this Unit, students will be introduced to the purposes, major concepts, terminology, research methods, and practitioners of the three social science disciplines. They will explore research questions and methodological approaches, including formulating research questions and plans to help locate and select information relevant to chosen topics using appropriate social science research and inquiry methods.

Unit 2 - Social Change and its Theories

In this unit, students will understand the importance of major theories and perspectives related to social change, while demonstrating an understanding for the cause and effect of social change. Students will analyze the importance of technological change and the patterns that are caused by technology on social change. Finally, this learning will be demonstrated through a social change project.

Unit 3- Social Patterns, Trends, and Demographics

In this unit, students will examine the nature of Canadian society from the perspective of the three social science disciplines. They will examine positive social change and the role of various social institutions and policies in promoting or impeding change. The issues of generation theories, population trends, social deviance and conformity are analysed for their impact on Canadian society. Students will end the unit with a social issue presentation.

Unit 4 - Social Challenges

In this unit, students will examine and debate different views of progress. They will examine the causes and effects of contemporary positive global change in technology, medicine, social justice and human rights issues, ecological knowledge and resource management, legal and political developments, and the role Canadians have played in promoting or impeding change in these areas. The impact of Globalization and the concept of Inequality will be investigated as it relates at home and on the global level.

Unit 5 - Culminating Activities

Students will complete a final culminating research project before writing a timed and proctored exam to finish the course.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

In this course, students will experience the following activities.

Participation activities are seven standardized, course-wide prompts (Teach the Teacher, Concept in Action, Spot the Error, Concept Connections, Take a Position, Claim/Support/Question, and a culminating Course Takeaways video) embedded at set points throughout the course. They build metacognitive engagement with unit concepts and contribute to the course's participation grade.

Presentations with embedded videos are utilized to outline concepts, explain theory with the use of examples and practice questions, and incorporate multi-media opportunities for students to learn more (e.g. online simulations, quizzes, etc.).

Reflection is an opportunity for students to look back at concepts and theories with new eyes, to relate theory to practice, and to align learning with their own values and beliefs.

Discussions with the instructor are facilitated through video conferencing, discussing the concepts and skills being studied. This enables two-way communication between the student and the instructor, to share ideas and ask questions in dialogue. This also helps to build a relationship between the student and instructor.

Discussion forums are an opportunity for students to summarize and share their ideas and perspectives with their peers, which deepens understanding through expression. It also provides an opportunity for peer-to-peer feedback.

Practical extension and application of knowledge are integrated throughout the course. The goal is to help students make connections between what they learn in the classroom and how they understand and relate to the world around them and their own lives. Learning becomes a dynamic opportunity for students to be more aware that their learning is all around them and enable them to create more meaning in their lives.

Individual activities/assignments assessments are completed individually at a student's own pace and are intended to expand and consolidate the learning in each lesson. Individual activities allow the teacher to accommodate interests and needs and to assess the progress of individual students. For this reason, students are encouraged to discuss IEPs (Individual Education Plans) with their teacher and to ask to modify assessments if they have a unique interest that they feel could be pursued in the assessment. The teacher plays an important role in supporting these activities by providing ongoing feedback to students, both orally and in writing.

Research is an opportunity to apply inquiry skills to a practical problem or question. Students perform research to gather information, evaluate quality sources, analyze findings, evaluate their analysis, and synthesize their findings into conclusions. Throughout, students apply both creative thinking and critical thinking. New questions are also developed to further learning.

Writing as a learning tool helps students to think critically about course material while grasping, organizing, and integrating prior knowledge with new concepts. Good communication skills are important both in and out of the classroom.

Brainstorming, charts, and graphs are a great way for students to synthesize their knowledge of subject matter visually through graphic organizers, pictures, and texts.

Readings are an opportunity for students to gain insight from a variety of texts online and further develop literacy skills. Students may print out the reading material to use it to highlight, take notes, and have with them when a computer is not available.

Cases are summaries of real-life situations wherein students relate theories and concepts towards understanding a real-world context. This helps students to understand the application and use of knowledge.

Articles are examples of concepts and theories being discussed in the public realm and with respect to current events. They are snapshots not only of why theories/concepts/applications are relevant but also provide a window into the broader context of subject matter knowledge and understanding. Students learn through reading and analysis that the subject matter is deeply related to, and intertwined with, society and the diverse perspectives of lived experience.

Oral presentations in an online environment are opportunities for students to present live or record presentations, expressing their ideas and understanding orally.

Reflective/comparative analysis and evaluation of written work is very important in this course. Concepts and skills are modelled in examples (exemplars), which students can refer to and utilize to self-evaluate their own work. A variety of texts are shared, and students are encouraged to make comparisons with different texts, real life situations, and their own writing.

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Assessment: The process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the identified curriculum expectations. Teachers provide students with descriptive feedback that guides their efforts towards improved performance. These assessments are not for marks.

- In assessment for learning (AFL), teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement.
- In assessment as learning (AAL), teachers help students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.

Evaluation: Assessment of Learning (AOL) focuses on evaluation which is the process of making a judgement about the quality of student work on the basis of established criteria over a limited, reasonable period of time.

Reporting: Involves communicating student achievement of the curriculum expectations and Learning Skills and Work Habits in the form of marks and comments as determined by the teacher's use of professional judgement.

Assessment & Evaluation at OES: Triangulation of Learning

In alignment with the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* policy, student achievement across all high school courses at Ontario eSecondary School (OES) is evaluated through the **triangulation of evidence: observations, conversations, and student products**.

OES courses incorporate each of these evidence sources in a variety of ways to provide every student with equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning:

- **Observations:** Collected through video recordings, interactive digital tools, learning logs, and synchronous task demonstrations.
- **Conversations:** Gathered via teacher-student conferences, oral defenses, virtual check-ins, and reflective feedback dialogues.
- **Products:** Demonstrated through major projects, essays, lab reports, performance tasks, and final assessments.

By evaluating a balanced variety of evidence, OES teachers apply professional judgment to ensure accurate, fair, and comprehensive assessment of each student's progress.

STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment practices can nurture students' sense of progress and competency and information instruction. Many diagnostic tools, e.g. checklists and inventories, are used at regular intervals throughout the units to

encourage students' understanding of their current status as learners and to provide frequent and timely reviews of their progress. Assessment of student acquisition of listening and talking, reading and viewing and writing skills also occurs regularly through unobtrusive teacher observation and conferencing.

Units conclude with performance tasks that build towards and prepare students for the end-of-course culminating task in Unit Five. Teachers are encouraged to share goals with students early in the course and to connect unit learning experiences frequently and explicitly with big ideas, overall expectations, and performance tasks, i.e. check bricks; teacher-adapted generic rubrics available in many sources, including the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) Profile*, so that they are more task-specific. The teacher might ask: "What does the criteria look like for this particular task?" Or "What does limited effectiveness look like?" The teacher could involve students in the discussion, modification, or creation of rubrics, and teach students to use rubrics as a learning tool that can support the writing process and practice.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- Discussion forums
- Homework assignments
- Individual conference meetings
- Writing tasks
- Reflections
- Reading Activities and Case studies
- Oral presentations
- Test
- Quizzes
- Research skills
- Essay Writing
- Final exam

EVALUATION

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 65% of the grade will be based on evaluation conducted throughout the course. This portion of the grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration will be given to more recent evidence of achievement.
- 25% of the grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at the end of the course. This evaluation will be based on evidence from a culminating task and a final written examination, both comprehensive of the course. The final evaluation is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate comprehensive achievement of the overall expectations for the course.
- 10% of the grade will be based on the student's attendance and participation throughout the course, assessed according to Ministry criteria.

(*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools*. Ontario Ministry of Education Publication, 2010 p.41)

HSB4U Challenge & Change in Society

Grade 12 · University

How the final mark is calculated from September 2026



TERM WORK EVALUATIONS (65%)

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Unit 1 Short Survey Assignment	Students must create and distribute a short sample survey, analysing the data following the inquiry method.	K, T, C, A	7
Unit 1 Research Architect	Students will design a methodological blueprint for how a social scientist would study a recent social trend	K, T, C, A	9
Unit 2 Social Change Project	In a critical essay or presentation, students will examine a current social issue by incorporating social change theories	K, T, C, A	9
Unit 2 Test	Students will complete a timed test to evaluate their knowledge on the unit	K, T, C, A	7
Unit 3 Changes in Canada One-Pager	Students will compare two generations in a visual presentation to show the comparison of impacts of social patterns and trends	K, T, C, A	8
Unit 3 Social Trends Seminar	Students conduct a seminar-based presentation on a social trend analysis, with connection to how society and the paradigm has been impacted	K, T, C, A	8
Unit 4 Country Comparison	Students will investigate the standard of living by comparing Canada to another country through quantitative and qualitative analysis, and present their findings in an infographic and write-up	K, T, C, A	9
Unit 4 Rant Assignment	Students must create an informational rant via a video or radio broadcast format that informs public about the negative or positives of globalization, based on a focus topic	K, T, C, A	8

FINAL EVALUATIONS (25%)

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Final Task	A comprehensive project, covering all overall curriculum expectations for the course.	K, T, C, A	10
Final Exam	A final, written examination, covering all curriculum expectations for the course.	K, T, C, A	15

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

Evaluation Item	Description	Category	Weight
Attendance	Assessed according to the Ministry's attendance criteria (Growing Success, September 2026 update), based on the proportion of unexcused absences over the course.	N/A	5
Participation	Assessed according to the Ministry's participation criteria (Growing Success, September 2026 update), based on engagement in class discussions and activities throughout the course, including the standardized participation prompts (see Teaching and Learning Strategies).	N/A	5

AAL/AFL/AOL TRACKING SHEET

Unit 1: Social Sciences Perspectives and Research

AAL	AFL	AOL
1.1 Benefits of Research Forum	1.1 Social Sciences Perspectives	1.5 Short Survey
1.2 What is Research Forum: Observation	1.2 Stanford Prison Experiment Case Study	1.6 Research Architect
1.3 Research Methodologies Quiz	1.3 Pros and Cons of Research Forum	
1.6 Learning Log	1.4 Identifying Bias Forum	
	1.4 Coding Practice	

Unit 2: Social Change and its Theories

AAL	AFL	AOL
2.1 Social history in Canada	2.1 Tipping Point Summary	2.4 Social Change Project
2.2 Technology and Change Forum	2.2 Theories of Change Graphic Organizer	2.5 Unit 2 Test
2.3 Media Experiment Forum	2.3 Comparison Chart	
2.4 Canadian Catalysts	2.4 External Factors of Social change	
2.5 Discussion Forum	2.5 Paradigm Shift Conversation	

2.5 Learning Log		
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Unit 3: Social Patterns, Trends, and Demographics

AAL	AFL	AOL
3.1 Comparing Generations	3.1 Demography Forum	3.3 Changes in Canada One-Pager
3.2 Baby Boom Discussion	3.2 Generational Interview	3.6 Social Trends Seminar: Conversation
3.3 Generation Forum	3.3 TedTalk handout	
3.4 Immigration Forum	3.4 Trends Summary Worksheet	
3.4 Fertility MindMap	3.5 Strain Theory Activity	
3.5 Youth and Social Deviance	3.6 Collective Behaviour Propaganda	

Unit 4: Social Challenges

AAL	AFL	AOL
4.1 WTF/IMF Forum	4.1 Inequality in Canada	4.2 Country Comparison
4.2 Literacy Rates vs Standard of Living	4.2 Treaties Activity	4.5 Rant Assignment
4.4 Exploitation Issues Forum: Observation	4.3 Environmental Justice Snapshot	
4.5 End of Course Conference	4.4 Exploitation Article	

Unit 5: Cumulative Assessments

AAL	AFL	AOL
		Final Project
		Final Exam

CONSIDERATION FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

PLANNING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

OES teachers are the key educators of students with special education needs and have a responsibility to help all students learn. Program planning for students with special education needs is guided by the principles set out in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013): all students can succeed; each student has their own unique patterns of learning; successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience; and universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students. Where a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the accommodations identified in the IEP — instructional, environmental, and assessment — are implemented within the course, and the online learning environment is adapted accordingly. The asynchronous structure of OES courses provides built-in flexibility that supports many common accommodations, including extended time for assignments and assessments, breaks as needed, access to assistive technology, and the ability to review instructional material multiple times.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Ontario schools have some of the most linguistically diverse student populations in the world, and OES serves English language learners across Ontario and internationally. English language learners may be Canadian-born or newcomers; they may have experience of highly sophisticated educational systems or may have come from regions where access to formal schooling was limited. In planning this course, teachers consider the strengths and needs of English language learners and provide appropriate adaptations consistent with

English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2007). Supports within the online environment include modification of instructional language without modification of curriculum expectations, use of visual and multimedia supports, opportunities to replay and review lesson content, extended time where appropriate, and teacher feedback that models academic English. Assessment accommodations, such as granting additional time and permitting the use of bilingual dictionaries, are provided where appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Consistent with *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (2009) and *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (2017), environmental education is embedded across the curriculum rather than treated as a separate subject. Teachers help students acquire knowledge about the environment, develop skills to address environmental issues, and foster attitudes that motivate responsible environmental action. As an online school, OES also models environmental responsibility through paperless course delivery and the elimination of daily commuting. In this course, students examine the relationships between individuals, families, communities, and their environments, including patterns of consumption and sustainable practices, supporting the integration of environmental education within the social sciences.

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This course is planned and delivered in accordance with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools* (2013). OES is committed to an inclusive learning environment in which all students feel welcomed, respected, and able to succeed, regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, or socio-economic status. In this course, teachers select learning materials that reflect the diversity of Ontario and the wider world, address bias in texts and resources where it arises, and ensure that assessment practices are fair and free of cultural assumptions. Because OES students learn from communities across Ontario, Quebec, and around the world, discussion activities and teacher feedback are moderated to maintain a respectful, harassment-free environment for all learners.

FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

In accordance with *A Sound Investment: Financial Literacy Education in Ontario Schools* (2010) and current Ministry direction on financial literacy, students are provided with opportunities to build the knowledge and skills needed to make informed financial decisions, understand their roles as consumers and citizens, and think critically about the economic forces that affect their lives. OES also supports students in meeting the Ministry's financial literacy graduation requirement, as described in the OES School Course Calendar. In this course, students examine economic influences on individuals, families, and society, including household resource management and consumer decision-making, supporting the development of financial literacy in authentic social contexts.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT EDUCATION

Program planning in this course aligns with the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), which supports improved outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and promotes awareness and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contributions among all students. Where appropriate to the curriculum expectations, teachers incorporate Indigenous perspectives, authors, and content, and approach these topics with accuracy and respect, drawing on Ministry-recommended resources. All OES students benefit from opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the histories and contemporary realities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, including the legacy of the residential school system and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action related to education.

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Information and communications technology (ICT) is integral to every OES course: instruction, learning activities, assessment, and teacher-student communication all take place through the school's learning management system. ICT tools — including multimedia lessons, digital texts, simulations, video conferencing for proctored assessments, and word-processing and productivity software — extend and enrich instruction and allow students to collect, organize, and present their learning in a range of formats. Teachers help students develop digital citizenship skills, including responsible and ethical use of technology, critical evaluation of online sources, protection of personal information, and academic integrity in digital environments, consistent with OES's Acceptable Use, Academic Honesty, and Artificial Intelligence policies as published in the School Course Calendar.

CAREER EDUCATION

Consistent with *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools* (2013), teachers support students in answering the four questions at the centre of education and career/life planning: Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals? Expectations in this course include many opportunities for students to apply their skills to work-related situations, explore educational and career options, and become self-directed learners. OES guidance staff support students in course selection, postsecondary application planning (including OUAC, CEGEP, and international pathways), and the development of individual pathways plans. This course supports pathways into social work, psychology, sociology, education, community services, counselling, and related human services fields, and these career connections are highlighted throughout the course.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Planned learning experiences in the community, including job shadowing, work experience, and cooperative education, provide students with opportunities to see the relevance of their classroom learning, explore careers of interest, and develop essential workplace skills consistent with *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Cooperative Education* (2018). Students may earn up to two cooperative education credits toward their compulsory credit requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students interested in experiential learning opportunities related to this course are encouraged to contact OES guidance staff to discuss options available to them.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Although OES students learn remotely, health and safety remain integral considerations in program planning. Teachers model and promote safe and healthy practices for online learning, including sound ergonomics, balanced screen time, regular breaks, and strategies that support positive mental health and well-being. OES maintains a safe and respectful virtual learning environment consistent with the school's codes of conduct, bullying prevention expectations, and privacy practices as published in the School Course Calendar, and students are provided with clear channels for reporting concerns to their teachers, guidance staff, or the Principal.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations will be based on meeting with parents, teachers, administration and external educational assessment reports. The following three types of accommodations may be provided:

- ☐ **Instructional accommodations:** such as changes in teaching strategies, including styles of presentation, methods of organization, or use of technology and multimedia.
- ☐ **Assessment accommodations:** such as allowing additional time to complete tests or assignments or permitting oral responses to test questions.

Other examples of modifications and aids, which may be used in this course, are:

- ☐ Provide step-by-step instructions.

- ☐ Help students create organizers for planning writing tasks.
- ☐ Allow students to report verbally to a scribe (teacher/ student) who can help in note taking.
- ☐ Permit students a range of options for reading and writing tasks.
- ☐ Where an activity requires reading, provide it in advance.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for enrichment.