FIN 394.1 Advanced Corporate Finance

Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Course Overview

The objective of this course is to develop an understanding of the decisions financial managers face. In this course we will approach problems from the perspective of the Chief Financial Officer. We will focus on decisions concerning raising money (equity, debt, convertible bonds, etc.), and spending money (project valuation, acquisitions). The first part of the course will deal with real investment decisions, while the second part will address decisions about how to finance those investments. In the final part we will talk about M&A and the market for corporate control.

Understanding CFO-type decisions will be helpful long before you become a CFO. For example, if you are working at a treasury group of a corporation, the material is directly relevant. If you are an investment banker you need to understand the rationale for designing and issuing securities. If you are in marketing or production, evaluating projects and understanding how the CFO makes her decisions are important. Finally if you are in consulting, capital budgeting and capital structure decisions will be the main agenda in many of your contracts.

Much of the material will be presented using simple examples designed to demonstrate how financial decisions can create, destroy, or modify value. Homework assignments will expand on these examples. However, the main issues we cover are conceptual. This is not the sort of class where solving a lot of exercises is useful; rather, it is important to master the main concepts.
Books and Materials:


- The book is available in several different formats:
     - A custom book that includes only the chapters that we will cover or are relevant for this class (ISBN: 9781121971905)
     - The whole book that includes the remaining chapters as well (ISBN: 9781121971967).
  2. You may find a new or used copy of the hardcover version online (e.g., on Amazon.com) for a good price

(Required) **Course Packet**

- You can obtain the course packet from the copy center on the third floor of GSB.

(Required) **Lecture Notes and Class Handouts**

- These will be available on Blackboard as the course develops.

The following books are **NOT** required. I have listed them here in case you wish to get a different perspective on a topic.


**Other Sources**

- The *Wall Street Journal, Financial Times*, the *New York Times* business section, the *Economist, or Business Week* are all recommended. We will cover the conceptual material to help you think through financial decisions. However, details of a particular issue a recruiter might ask your thoughts on may come from the press.
Grading:

Homework Assignments 15%
Case Write-ups and Discussions 10%
Class Attendance and Participation 10%
Midterm Exam 25%
Final Exam 40%

• There is one exception to the above grading rule. **If your final exam score is in the top 20% of the score distribution, you will get an A in this course, regardless of your midterm and assignment scores.** The only condition for this is that you have been a “good citizen,” that is, participated in lectures, handed in homework assignments and case write-ups, and took the midterm exam.

• You may work in groups of **up to five** for homework assignments and cases. Please submit one write-up per group, and make sure to indicate all group members’ names on the first page. There is no need to work with the same group of people throughout the term. Assignments must be handed in **at the start** of the class in which it is due. Make sure that your assignment write-ups are legible; typed write-ups are preferred.

• Homework assignments include applied problems and exercises. Case write-ups should be memos of about five double-spaced pages (excluding exhibits and appendices). For each case, I will assign some specific questions to be addressed. Grading of case reports will be based on how well you justify your arguments and support them with detailed and careful analysis. You should think of case reports as presentations you make to a board; to receive credit, your arguments must be convincing.

How to do well on the exams:

• Problem sets and in-class exercises provide the best preparation for the exams.

• The exams will be closed book. The final exam will cover the entire course, although it will be weighted toward the material we will cover after the midterm.

Schedule:

A tentative schedule appears below.
Articles and Cases Included in the Course Packet

**Articles**


**Cases**

1. Dixon Corporation (HBS 9-298-165)
2. Arundel Partners (HBS 9-292-140)
3. Massey Ferguson, 1980 (HBS 9-282-043)
4. Paramount Communications Inc. 1993 (Casenet South-Western College Publishing)
Class Schedule & Assigned Readings

Date | Topic (numbers represent sections in Grinblatt & Titman’s textbook)

August

PART I: VALUATION

Tue. 18  Valuation of Corporate Assets: Basic Concepts and Methods (10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.5, 11.1)


Tue. 25  DCF Valuation – continued

Thu. 27  DCF Valuation – continued

September

Tue. 1  DCF Valuation – continued

Thu. 3  Relative Valuation Methods in Corporate Finance (7.1 (pages 216-221 only), 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 (pages 261 to 264), 8.6, 8.7, 11.8, 12.1, 12.2)

Tue. 8  Relative Valuation Methods in Corporate Finance – continued – Homework 1 due

Thu. 10 Relative Valuation Methods in Corporate Finance – continued

Tue. 15 Relative Valuation Methods in Corporate Finance – continued – Homework 2 due

Thu. 17 Relative Valuation Methods in Corporate Finance (Articles 1 and 2, Article 3 [Pages 187-209] for all topics covered in Part I)

Tue. 22  Case 1: Dixon Corporation: The Collinsville Plant

PART II: CAPITAL STRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL POLICY

Thu. 24  Capital Structure I (14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 15.2)

Tue. 29  Case 2: Arundel Partners
October

Thu. 1  Valuation Review – *Homework 3 due*
Tue. 6  **Midterm Exam – 2 pm – 4 pm, room TBA**
Thu. 8  **No class**
Tue. 13 CS I – continued
Thu. 15 CS I – continued
Tue. 20 Capital Structure II (14.4, 14.5, 15.3, 15.5, 15.6)
Thu. 22 CS II – continued, Capital Structure III (16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, Ch. 17)
Tue. 27 Capital Structure III – continued
Thu. 29 Capital Structure III – continued – *Homework 4 due*

November

Tue. 3  Capital Structure III continued (Articles 4, 5)
Thu. 5  Corporate Risk Management (21.1 through 21.7, 21.9)
Tue. 10 Corporate Risk Management - continued (Article 6) – *Homework 5 due*
Tue. 17 Information Conveyed by Financial Decisions – continued (Article 3 [Pages 209-243] for all the topics covered in Part II)
Thu. 19  **Case 3: Massey-Ferguson**

PART III: MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, AND THE MARKET FOR CORPORATE CONTROL

Tue. 24  M&A and the Market for Corporate Control (Chapter 20)
Thu. 26  **No class - Thanksgiving**

December
Tue. 1        M&A and the Market for Corporate Control – continued (Articles 7, 8, 9)
Thu. 3        Case 4: Paramount 1993
Mon. 7        Homework 6 due