Course Objectives
This course provides an overview of financial accounting information and the role of that information in the economy. The first portion of the course presents an overview of the accrual accounting model, how financial information is presented and the mechanics of keeping track of financial accounting information. Without a solid understanding of this material, the remainder of the course will be very difficult. I urge you to do the course prework and to keep up with the course from the start.

The remainder of the course focuses on how corporate financial statements report particular economic events. By the end of the course you should feel comfortable reading the financial statements in published annual reports, and you should be able to come to a reasoned conclusion about a company’s financial health and be able to make comparisons across firms and periods of time.

Leadership and this Course
The Texas MBA program is designed to develop influential business leaders. The MBA Program has identified four fundamental and broad pillars of leadership: knowledge and understanding, communication and collaboration, responsibility and integrity, and a worldview of business and society.

In this course, you will enhance your knowledge and understanding of financial reporting (the language of business) and how financial information helps leaders understand and manage their business. Through class discussion, informal study groups, and projects you will enhance your communication and collaboration skills. You will learn how high-quality, credible financial reporting enhances the ability of managers to lead their organizations effectively and with integrity. Finally, many of the cases and examples involve international companies and reporting practices, affording you a global perspective on financial reporting.

Materials
The “Canvas” website http://canvas.utexas.edu/ for the course has everything you need for this course, including class notes (see below) practice exams, instructional videos, and more. When you first access the website read the “Announcements” posted there to better understand the website and its contents.

There are “pre-class notes” and “in-class notes” posted on-line at the Canvas website. These notes are aligned with the course schedule (below). As explained below, you are to carefully study the pre-class notes before coming to class to understand the topic for that session, and during each class session we will work our way through the in-class notes together to help you apply the material you have learned. These notes are self-contained and include everything that we will cover in the class.

There are also prior-semester exams for the past three years at the Canvas website that will be useful in preparing for exams. There are also three ungraded practice quizzes for chapters 2, 3, and 4 that will help you to make sure you understand the basics of this material.
I recommend that you acquire a financial calculator and learn how to use it. You will need it for this class and for many of your other classes in the program. The calculator I am most familiar with is the HP 10B-II(+), made by Hewlett Packard. The Texas Instruments BAII Plus is equivalent.

The class notes are very comprehensive, so there is no textbook assigned for this course. However, if you feel the need for a textbook to provide an alternative explanation of material we are covering, just about any recent introductory financial accounting textbook will serve this purpose. One good one is a recent edition of *Financial Accounting* by Dyckman, Magee, and Pfeiffer, published by Cambridge Business Publishing.

**How This Course Works**

The objective of this course is to help you to become comfortable reading the financial statements of any commercial business, from a large publicly-traded company to a small privately held company. We will achieve this in three steps. The first step is to understand the accounting concepts in general (early part of course) and as they apply to specific situations (later part of course). You will accomplish this step largely on your own by reading the pre-class notes and completing your assigned homework. The second step is to apply these accounting concepts to actual financial statements. This step can be a little tricky because there is some variation across companies and how and where they present the data you will need for any particular task. This step will be the focus of our in-class work, and you will only get the most out of it if you have done a good job of understanding the relevant accounting concepts before you come to class. The third step is practice. I can’t emphasize this enough. Learning accounting requires practice. The more you practice the more comfortable you will become with financial statements and the better you will do in the course. See my advice below for how to succeed in this course. Finally, study groups are great, use them. My only word of caution is that in the end you will take the exams by yourself, so make sure before each exam that you can succeed independent of the group.

**Class Sessions**

As you will quickly see, I like class to be very interactive. I hope you will come prepared and that you will ask questions when you don’t understand something and that you will bring up examples from your work when they are relevant, this greatly enriches the class discussion. The more you engage the more interesting class will be, the more you will get out of each class session, and the easier the course will be.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam/Quiz</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MBA Programs Committee approved the following target grade distribution for all Core and Flex Core courses: A (4.0) 25%, A- (3.67) 20%, B+ (3.33) 15%, B (3.0) 35%, B- or below (2.67) 5%. This course uses that target distribution as a guideline for establishing final grades.

To determine final grades I rank all of the students in the class from highest to lowest on the basis of total points. I then draw lines between A and A- and between A- and B+, etc., based on the guidelines described above.

**Homework**

For each class session you will have homework due before class that is detailed in the course schedule below. These problems are all from the pre-class notes for that session. Generally, they are the problems that use the Starbucks financial statements. The homework will be graded mostly for completeness, and I expect that all students will receive full credit for the homework. The homework will be turned in at the Canvas website, and instructions for how to do so are posted at Canvas under “assignments.”

Please keep in mind that the objective of the course is to become comfortable reading actual financial statements, so that these homework problems are only an intermediary step, not the goal itself. What we cover in class and old exams are your best guides to what will be asked on exams.
Final Project

You will get a chance to use your new financial reporting and analysis skills in completing a short financial statement analysis of a company of your choosing. Details on the report, including company choices and deadlines appear immediately after the course schedule in this document.

Exams

During the semester we will have a midterm exam and a final exam. Both exams are closed book and closed notes. You may bring a calculator to the exams, but it should not have emailing or text features. Each exam will be based on the actual financial statements of a real company. You will be told in advance which company and which fiscal year will be used so that you may specifically study these financial statements before the exam.

Honor Code

Collaboration is strongly encouraged outside of class. However, homework must be completed independently, and the sharing of electronic files for the final project and collaboration on exams is not permitted.

Students with Disabilities

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is housed in the Office of the Dean of Students, located on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Information on how to register, downloadable forms, including guidelines for documentation, accommodation request letters, and releases of information are available online at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/index.php. Please do not hesitate to contact SSD at (512) 471-6259, VP: (512) 232-2937 or via e-mail if you have any questions.

Advice for Success

Many of you are new to accounting, have been out of school for a while, will find the course materials confusing, and will find the pace of the course to be fast. You are all busy and each of you needs to find a rhythm to your studies for this course that is most efficient for you. That rhythm may not be the same for everyone, but here are some recommendations to get you started. You can modify from here to suit your own needs.

Most Important

- **Topics 1-4 are the most important in the course and the foundation for all that follows.** As a result it is especially important that you follow the advice below for these four chapters. In addition, at Canvas you will find three (ungraded) multiple choice quizzes that are focused on the material in topics 2, 3, and 4. These quizzes can be very useful in helping you to master this material.

Weekly

- **Before each class session you should study the pre-class notes for that session and complete the homework.** The homework will be graded on a completion basis, so it is possible to just skim the material, guess at something for the homework and get full credit. This is a really bad idea. You should read through the notes slowly and thoughtfully, doing each of the example exercises and thinking about why the answer is the right answer. Then slowly do the homework and think about what you are doing.

- **Review the in-class notes and financial statements before you come to class.** This is not required, but highly recommended. The more prepared you are for each class session the more you will get out of that class session. If you come to class knowing where your weaknesses or questions are, there is a better chance they will be asked and answered in class.

- **Come to class and engage—don’t multi-task.** Class time is an important time to fill in the gaps in your knowledge that you identified in your pre-class preparation. This is best done by paying attention and asking questions about whatever is not clear.

- **Review the in-class notes after class.** Sometimes when you watch me in class you think you understand something, but once out of class you can’t remember exactly what you thought you knew. A quick review the next day, using the annotated notes with solutions provided at Canvas, will help you to identify something you might not completely understand so that you can go back over the notes, or consult with a classmate, or send me an e-mail.
Prior to Quizzes and Exams

- **Review the in-class notes one more time.** By now you have been through these notes three previous times, so you should be quite sure of what you understand well and what you are not so sure about. For remaining questions, consult with a classmate or send me an e-mail.

- **Review prior exams.** Spend fifteen or twenty minutes familiarizing yourself with the financial statements attached to the prior exam first, and then begin to attempt the problems. Give the problems a good try before looking at the solution, but do not spend too much time trying to figure out an answer that you are unsure of. If, after you look at the solution, you are still not sure why that is the correct answer, consult with a classmate or send me an e-mail.

- **Save one prior exam to take under test-like conditions.** As you use the prior exams to study, it is easy to use the solution as a crutch and as a result overestimate what you understand. Taking one of the exams under test-like conditions and then grading it objectively will give you a better sense of what you understand and what you do not understand.

- **Study the financial statements for the quiz or exam.** It is essential that you understand the financial statements and notes that will be the basis for your exam or quiz prior to coming to the exam. If there is something you don’t understand consult with a classmate or send me an e-mail.

- **Make up exam problems using the financial statements for the quiz or exam and solve them.** This is a great way to both become familiar with the financial statements and anticipate what will be on the quiz or exam. This is also a great activity to do with a study group.
Certain modules are highlighted in green. These are modules you should complete on your own. They include material we will cover on exams. They can be completed at any time after the Austin Intensives, though the suggested times follow the flow of some related material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introducing Financial Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes – Not collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Constructing Financial Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes – Not collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adjusting Accounts for Financial Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes – Not collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Cash Flows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes – Not collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 22</td>
<td>5a, b</td>
<td><strong>Self-study:</strong> time value of money and applications (module 5 &amp; videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Revenues and Receivables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Revenues and Receivables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quiz (details to follow—covers material through 6b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Take-home and online submission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 12</td>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Long-Term (Tangible) Operating Assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 12</td>
<td>8b</td>
<td><strong>Self-study:</strong> Reporting &amp; Analyzing Long-Term (Intangible) Operating Assets (module and videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Self-study:</strong> Reporting and Analyzing Liabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 26</td>
<td>10 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Leases and Intercorporate Investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> For Chapter 10, See Pre-Class Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For Chapter 12, review items 1-7 in pre-class notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reporting and Analyzing Intercorporate Investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HW:</strong> See In-Class Notes, all problems for Chapter 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Statement Analysis Project Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your “final project” is a financial statement analysis of a company you select. The ratios you are asked to compute are discussed in the class notes and the textbook.

Your completed project should include:

- A completed table of ratios and other financial statement measures for the company you select. This table is shown on the next page.
- A brief (1-2 page single spaced) evaluation of your company’s financial ratios, comprising the following four sections:
  
  Section I — A brief (1-3 sentences) summary of your company’s business and the economic environment in which it operates.
  
  Section II — A brief evaluation over time of your company’s:
  - Return on equity (ROE),
  - DuPont ratio components (profitability, efficiency and leverage), and
  - LT Debt-to-Assets ratio

  Section III — A brief evaluation over time of your company’s:
  - Cash conversion cycle
  - Cash liquidity and Cash Sources & Uses

  Section IV — A brief (e.g., 1-2 sentence) description of the overall ratio trend and what it implies for current and future financial performance.

Each section should have an appropriate heading and the writing should be in the form of sentences and paragraphs, not bullet points.

You may confer with colleagues and any other resources, including me or the TAs, in thinking about your company financial statement analysis. However, you must individually draft your response to this assignment. The emphasis is on effort, not results—full credit is awarded for a good faith effort to complete this assignments.

You will probably be able to find all of the financial statement information you need at the company’s website. Note, that you will have to look at more than one annual report to get enough years of data to do all of the computations. If you have trouble finding the information you can pick another company.

**Company selection.** By midnight on Wednesday, September 9th, you should submit via Canvas the name of the company you have selected to analyze. To do this use the “Discussions” link at Canvas entitled “Select your company (final project)-cohort x” and follow the directions.

Each member of the class must select a different company. Company selection is on a first-come first-serve basis as established by your posting to the discussion board. Please review the discussion board to confirm that the company you wish to select has not already been selected. The company you select may be almost any publicly-traded company of your choosing. However, please ensure that the company has data for all of the ratios below. This especially means that the company has (a) accounts receivable, (b) inventory, and (c) accounts payable. This will eliminate companies in certain industries such as financial services.

**Company analysis deadline.** Your company analysis is due by midnight on Tuesday, October 6th. I strongly encourage you to chip away at the assignment during the semester, and you will find that completing it at the end of the semester prior to the final exam is not difficult. I welcome you to submit the assignment before the deadline if you have completed it early.

You should submit the assignment to me via Canvas. Please follow these instructions: (a) combine the text for your report and the table with your financial ratios into one pdf file and (b) name the file using the following convention: Smith_Jennifer_Starbucks_2015.pdf for a report covering the Starbucks Corporation (don't use Starbucks or HP) completed by Jennifer Smith in the Fall 2015 semester. It is not necessary to turn in copies of the company’s financial statements or the spreadsheet you used to compute your ratios. Calculate these ratios on
your own using the financial statement data. Do not use a commercial data service or, say, Google Finance, for the ratios.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT ANALYSIS -- YOUR COMPANY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratios and Other Analysis Measures</th>
<th>Year End (3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROE and DuPont Ratios</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROE (NI / OE$_{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability (NI / Sales)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency (Turnover = Sales / Assets$_{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage (Leverage = Assets$<em>{avg}$ / OE$</em>{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Efficiency Ratios</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Turnover (Sales / AR$_{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Receivables Outstanding (DRO) [AR$_{avg}$ / (Sales/365)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory Turnover (COGS / Inventory$_{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Inventory (DI) [Inventory$_{avg}$ / (COGS/365)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Turnover (Purchases / AP$_{avg}$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Payables Outstanding (DPO) [365 / (Purchases / Accts Payable$_{avg}$)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASH CONVERSION CYCLE (DI - DPO + DRO)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Leverage Ratio</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT Debt-to-Assets (LT Debt, including current portion / total Assets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash Liquidity and Cash Sources &amp; Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Capital (CA - CL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Ratio (CA / CL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Ratio [(Cash + ST Securities + AR) / CL]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy

The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the Texas MBA experience hinges on this.

You should treat the Texas MBA classroom as you would a corporate boardroom.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects.

The Texas MBA classroom experience is enhanced when:

- **Students arrive on time.** On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time. On time arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions.
- **Students display their name cards.** This permits fellow students and faculty to learn names, enhancing opportunities for community building and evaluation of in-class contributions.
- **Students do not confuse the classroom for the cafeteria.** The classroom (boardroom) is not the place to eat your breakfast tacos, wraps, sweet potato fries, or otherwise set up for a picnic. Please plan accordingly. Recognizing that back-to-back classes sometimes take place over the lunch hour, energy bars and similar snacks are permitted. Please be respectful of your fellow students and faculty in your choices.
- **Students minimize unscheduled personal breaks.** The learning environment improves when disruptions are limited.
- **Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in the Texas MBA program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but their peers who count on them, as well.
- **Students attend the class section to which they are registered.** Learning is enhanced when class sizes are optimized. Limits are set to ensure a quality experience. When section hopping takes place some classes become too large and it becomes difficult to contribute. When they are too small, the breadth of experience and opinion suffers.
- **Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.

**Laptops, iPads, tablets and smartphones are used to enhance the learning process and not as distractions.** When students are surfing the web, responding to e-mail, texting each other, and otherwise not devoting their full attention to the topic at hand they are doing themselves and their peers a major disservice.
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- **Phones and wireless devices are turned off.** We've all heard the annoying ringing in the middle of a meeting. Not only is it not professional, it cuts off the flow of discussion when the search for the offender begins. When a true need to communicate with someone outside of class exists (e.g., for some medical need) please inform the professor prior to class.

Remember, you are competing for the best faculty McCombs has to offer. Your professionalism and activity in class contributes to your success in attracting the best faculty to this program.

**Academic Dishonesty**

I have no tolerance for acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts damage the reputation of the school and the degree and demean the honest efforts of the majority of students. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be a zero for that assignment or exam.

The responsibilities for both students and faculty with regard to the Honor System are described on the final pages of this syllabus. As the instructor for this course, I agree to observe all the faculty responsibilities described therein. As a Texas MBA student, you agree to observe all of the student responsibilities of the Honor Code. If the application of the Honor System to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification.
As specific guidance for this course, you should consider the writing of all examinations to be an individual effort. Group preparation for examinations is acceptable and encouraged. Homework assignments are to be turned in individually but I encourage you to work together in answering the questions. You should, however, develop your own answer and not cut and paste the work of others.

**Honor Code Purpose**

Academic honor, trust and integrity are fundamental to The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business community. They contribute directly to the quality of your education and reach far beyond the campus to your overall standing within the business community. The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Honor System promotes academic honor, trust and integrity throughout the Graduate School of Business. The Honor System relies upon The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct (Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Service and Activities) for enforcement, but promotes ideals that are higher than merely enforceable standards. Every student is responsible for understanding and abiding by the provisions of the Honor System and the University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct. The University expects all students to obey the law, show respect for other members of the university community, perform contractual obligations, maintain absolute integrity and the highest standard of individual honor in scholastic work, and observe the highest standards of conduct. Ignorance of the Honor System or The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct is not an acceptable excuse for violations under any circumstances.

The effectiveness of the Honor System results solely from the wholehearted and uncompromising support of each member of the McCombs School of Business community. Each member must abide by the Honor System and must be intolerant of any violations. The system is only as effective as you make it.

**Faculty Involvement in the Honor System**

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Faculty's commitment to the Honor System is critical to its success. It is imperative that faculty make their expectations clear to all students. They must also respond to accusations of cheating or other misconduct by students in a timely, discrete and fair manner. We urge faculty members to promote awareness of the importance of integrity through in-class discussions and assignments throughout the semester.

**Expectations Under the Honor System**

**Standards**

If a student is uncertain about the standards of conduct in a particular setting, he or she should ask the relevant faculty member for clarification to ensure his or her conduct falls within the expected scope of honor, trust and integrity as promoted by the Honor System. This applies to all tests, papers and group and individual work. Questions about appropriate behavior during the job search should be addressed to a professional member of the Career Management Office. Below are some of the specific examples of violations of the Honor System.

**Lying**

Lying is any deliberate attempt to deceive another by stating an untruth, or by any direct form of communication to include the telling of a partial truth. Lying includes the use or omission of any information with the intent to deceive or mislead. Examples of lying include, but are not limited to, providing a false excuse for why a test was missed or presenting false information to a recruiter.

**Stealing**

Stealing is wrongfully taking, obtaining, withholding, defacing or destroying any person's money, personal property, article or service, under any circumstances. Examples of stealing include, but are not limited to, removing course material from the library or hiding it from others, removing material from another person's mail folder, securing for one's self unattended items such as calculators, books, book bags or other personal property. Another form of stealing is the duplication of copyrighted material beyond the reasonable bounds of "fair use." Defacing (e.g., "marking up" or highlighting) library books is also considered stealing, because, through a willful act, the value of another's property is decreased. (See the appendix for a detailed explanation of "fair use.")

**Cheating**

Cheating is wrongfully and unfairly acting out of self-interest for personal gain by seeking or accepting an unauthorized advantage over one's peers. Examples include, but are not limited to, obtaining questions or answers to tests or quizzes, and getting assistance on case write-ups or other projects beyond what is authorized by the assigning instructor. It is also cheating to accept the benefit(s) of another person's theft(s) even if not
actively sought. For instance, if one continues to be attentive to an overhead conversation about a test or case write-up even if initial exposure to such information was accidental and beyond the control of the student in question, one is also cheating. If a student overhears a conversation or any information that any faculty member might reasonably wish to withhold from the student, the student should inform the faculty member(s) of the information and circumstance under which it was overheard.

**Actions Required for Responding to Suspected and Known Violations**

As stated, everyone must abide by the Honor System and be intolerant of violations. If you suspect a violation has occurred, you should first speak to the suspected violator in an attempt to determine if an infraction has taken place. If, after doing so, you still believe that a violation has occurred, you must tell the suspected violator that he or she must report himself or herself to the course professor or Associate Dean of the McCombs School of Business. If the individual fails to report himself or herself within 48 hours, it then becomes your obligation to report the infraction to the course professor or the Associate Dean of the McCombs School of Business. Remember that although you are not required by regulation to take any action, our Honor System is only as effective as you make it. If you remain silent when you suspect or know of a violation, you are approving of such dishonorable conduct as the community standard. You are thereby precipitating a repetition of such violations.

**The Honor Pledge**

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business requires each enrolled student to adopt the Honor System. The Honor Pledge best describes the conduct promoted by the Honor System. It is as follows:

"I affirm that I belong to the honorable community of The University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of Business. I will not lie, cheat or steal, nor will I tolerate those who do."

"I pledge my full support to the Honor System. I agree to be bound at all times by the Honor System and understand that any violation may result in my dismissal from the McCombs School of Business."

The following pages provide specific guidance about the Standard of Academic Integrity at the University of Texas at Austin. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask me any questions you might have.

Excerpts from the University of Texas at Austin Office of the Dean of Students website (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

**The Standard of Academic Integrity**

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin, as emphasized in the standards of conduct. More specifically, you and other students are expected to "maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work" undertaken at the University (Sec. 11-801, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities). This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For the official policies on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty, please refer to Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.
What is Scholastic Dishonesty?
In promoting a high standard of academic integrity, the University broadly defines scholastic dishonesty—basically, all conduct that violates this standard, including any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage, such as:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized Collaboration
- Collusion
- Falsifying Academic Records
- Misrepresenting Facts (e.g., providing false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit)
- Any other acts (or attempted acts) that violate the basic standard of academic integrity (e.g., multiple submissions—submitting essentially the same written assignment for two courses without authorization to do so)

Several types of scholastic dishonesty—unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, and multiple submissions—are discussed in more detail on this Web site to correct common misperceptions about these particular offenses and suggest ways to avoid committing them.

For the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty, see Section 11-802, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

Unauthorized Collaboration
If you work with another person on an assignment for credit without the instructor's permission to do so, you are engaging in unauthorized collaboration.

- This common form of academic dishonesty can occur with all types of scholastic work—papers, homework, tests (take-home or in-class), lab reports, computer programming projects, or any other assignments to be submitted for credit.
- For the University's official definitions of unauthorized collaboration and the related offense of collusion, see Sections 11-802(c)(6) & 11-802(e), Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

Some students mistakenly assume that they can work together on an assignment as long as the instructor has not expressly prohibited collaborative efforts.

- Actually, students are expected to complete assignments independently unless the course instructor indicates otherwise. So working together on assignments is not permitted unless the instructor specifically approves of any such collaboration.

Unfortunately, students who engage in unauthorized collaboration tend to justify doing so through various rationalizations. For example, some argue that they contributed to the work, and others maintain that working together on an assignment "helped them learn better."

- The instructor—not the student—determines the purpose of a particular assignment and the acceptable method for completing it. Unless working together on an assignment has been specifically authorized, always assume it is not allowed.
- Many educators do value group assignments and other collaborative efforts, recognizing their potential for developing and enhancing specific learning skills. And course requirements in some classes do consist primarily of group assignments. But the expectation of individual work is the prevailing norm in many classes, consistent with the presumption of original work that remains a fundamental tenet of scholarship in the American educational system.

Some students incorrectly assume that the degree of any permissible collaboration is basically the same for all classes.

- The extent of any permissible collaboration can vary widely from one class to the next, even from one project to the next within the same class.
• Be sure to distinguish between collaboration that is authorized for a particular assignment and unauthorized collaboration that is undertaken for the sake of expedience or convenience to benefit you and/or another student. By failing to make this key distinction, you are much more likely to engage in unauthorized collaboration. To avoid any such outcome, always seek clarification from the instructor.

Unauthorized collaboration can also occur in conjunction with group projects.

• How so? If the degree or type of collaboration exceeds the parameters expressly approved by the instructor. An instructor may allow (or even expect) students to work together on one stage of a group project but require independent work on other phases. Any such distinctions should be strictly observed.

Providing another student unauthorized assistance on an assignment is also a violation, even without the prospect of benefiting yourself.

• If an instructor did not authorize students to work together on a particular assignment and you help a student complete that assignment, you are providing unauthorized assistance and, in effect, facilitating an act of academic dishonesty. Equally important, you can be held accountable for doing so.

• For similar reasons, you should not allow another student access to your drafted or completed assignments unless the instructor has permitted those materials to be shared in that manner.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is another serious violation of academic integrity. In simplest terms, this occurs if you represent as your own work any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it.

• Plagiarism can occur with all types of media—scholarly or non-academic, published or unpublished—written publications, Internet sources, oral presentations, illustrations, computer code, scientific data or analyses, music, art, and other forms of expression. (See Section 11-802(d) of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities for the University’s official definition of plagiarism.)

• Borrowed material from written works can include entire papers, one or more paragraphs, single phrases, or any other excerpts from a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, magazines, downloaded Internet documents, purchased papers from commercial writing services, papers obtained from other students (including homework assignments), etc.

• As a general rule, the use of any borrowed material results in plagiarism if the original source is not properly acknowledged. So you can be held accountable for plagiarizing material in either a final submission of an assignment or a draft that is being submitted to an instructor for review, comments, and/or approval.

Using verbatim material (e.g., exact words) without proper attribution (or credit) constitutes the most blatant form of plagiarism. However, other types of material can be plagiarized as well, such as ideas drawn from an original source or even its structure (e.g., sentence construction or line of argument).

• Improper or insufficient paraphrasing often accounts for this type of plagiarism. (See additional information on paraphrasing.)

Plagiarism can be committed intentionally or unintentionally.

• Strictly speaking, any use of material from another source without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism, regardless why that occurred, and any such conduct violates accepted standards of academic integrity.

• Some students deliberately plagiarize, often rationalizing this misconduct with a variety of excuses: falling behind and succumbing to the pressures of meeting deadlines; feeling overworked and wishing to reduce their workloads; compensating for actual (or perceived) academic or language deficiencies; and/or justifying plagiarism on other grounds.

• But some students commit plagiarism without intending to do so, often stumbling into negligent plagiarism as a result of sloppy notetaking, insufficient paraphrasing, and/or ineffective proofreading. Those problems, however, neither justify nor excuse this breach of academic standards. By misunderstanding the meaning of plagiarism and/or failing to cite sources accurately, you are much more likely to commit this violation. Avoiding that outcome requires, at a minimum, a clear understanding of plagiarism and the
appropriate techniques for scholarly attribution. (See related information on **paraphrasing**; **notetaking and proofreading**; and **acknowledging and citing sources**.)

By merely changing a few words or rearranging several words or sentences, you are not **paraphrasing**. Making minor revisions to borrowed text amounts to **plagiarism**.

- Even if properly cited, a "paraphrase" that is too similar to the original source's wording and/or structure is, in fact, plagiarized. (See additional information on **paraphrasing**.)

Remember, your instructors should be able to clearly identify which materials (e.g., words and ideas) are your own and which originated with other sources.

- That cannot be accomplished without proper attribution. You must give credit where it is due, acknowledging the sources of any borrowed passages, ideas, or other types of materials, and enclosing any verbatim excerpts with quotation marks (using block indentation for longer passages).

**Plagiarism & Unauthorized Collaboration**

**Plagiarism** and **unauthorized collaboration** are often committed jointly.

By submitting *as your own work* any unattributed material that you obtained from other sources (including the contributions of another student who assisted you in preparing a homework assignment), you have committed plagiarism. And if the instructor did not authorize students to work together on the assignment, you have also engaged in unauthorized collaboration. Both violations contribute to the same fundamental deception—representing material obtained from another source as your own work.

Group efforts that extend beyond the limits approved by an instructor frequently involve plagiarism in addition to unauthorized collaboration. For example, an instructor may allow students to work together while researching a subject, but require each student to write a separate report. If the students collaborate while writing their reports *and* then submit the products of those joint efforts as individual works, they are guilty of unauthorized collaboration as well as plagiarism. In other words, the students collaborated on the written assignment without authorization to do so, and also failed to acknowledge the other students' contributions to their own individual reports.

**Multiple Submissions**

*Submitting the same paper (or other type of assignment) for two courses without prior approval represents another form of academic dishonesty.*

You may not submit a substantially similar paper or project for credit in two (or more) courses unless expressly authorized to do so by your instructor(s). (See **Section 11-802(b)** of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities* for the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty.)

You may, however, re-work or supplement previous work on a topic with the instructor's approval.

Some students mistakenly assume that they are entitled to submit the same paper (or other assignment) for two (or more) classes simply because they authored the original work.

Unfortunately, students with this viewpoint tend to overlook the relevant ethical and academic issues, focusing instead on their own "authorship" of the original material and personal interest in receiving essentially double credit for a single effort.

Unauthorized multiple submissions are inherently deceptive. After all, an instructor reasonably assumes that any completed assignments being submitted for credit were actually prepared for that course. Mindful of that assumption, students who "recycle" their own papers from one course to another make an effort to convey that impression. For instance, a student may revise the original title page or imply through some other means that he or she wrote the paper for that particular course, sometimes to the extent of discussing a "proposed" paper topic with the instructor or presenting a "draft" of the paper before submitting the "recycled" work for credit.

The issue of plagiarism is also relevant. If, for example, you previously prepared a paper for one course and then submit it for credit in another course without citing the initial work, you are committing plagiarism—essentially "self-plagiarism"—the term used by some institutions. Recall the broad scope of **plagiarism**: all types of materials can be plagiarized, including unpublished works, even papers you previously wrote.

Another problem concerns the resulting "unfair academic advantage" that is specifically referenced in the University's definition of scholastic dishonesty. If you submit a paper for one course that you prepared and submitted for another class, you are simply better situated to devote more time and energy toward fulfilling other
requirements for the subsequent course than would be available to classmates who are completing all course requirements during that semester. In effect, you would be gaining an unfair academic advantage, which constitutes academic dishonesty as it is defined on this campus.

Some students, of course, do recognize one or more of these ethical issues, but still refrain from citing their authorship of prior papers to avoid earning reduced (or zero) credit for the same works in other classes. That underlying motivation further illustrates the deceptive nature of unauthorized multiple submissions.

An additional issue concerns the problematic minimal efforts involved in "recycling" papers (or other prepared assignments). Exerting minimal effort basically undercuts the curricular objectives associated with a particular assignment and the course itself. Likewise, the practice of "recycling" papers subverts important learning goals for individual degree programs and higher education in general, such as the mastery of specific skills that students should acquire and develop in preparing written assignments. This demanding but necessary process is somewhat analogous to the required regimen of athletes, like the numerous laps and other repetitive training exercises that runners must successfully complete to prepare adequately for a marathon.