Welcome to Business Finance

I am Mark Sunderman and I will be your guide on this exciting journey this semester. Even though I feel like an "old timer" when it comes to online education (I have been teaching online since Spring 1999), I am still learning more every semester (I try not to make the same mistake twice). Since many of you are new to online instruction, I am sure this will be a learning experience for all of us. One thing I have learned while teaching online - that is to be FLEXIBLE. I have also learned how critical communication (i.e., e-mail, the class message center, threaded discussion, chat room) is in online education.

FIR 3410 provides an introduction to corporate financial management. Throughout the course we will consider the topic from the viewpoint of the financial manager of a corporation. Although financial decision making may be centered in a separate area, financial decisions are closely related to decisions made throughout the firm. In its simplest form, financial decisions are involved in managing the cash inflows and outflows of a firm. Because the objective of financial management is to maximize the long-run value of a firm's common stock, the primary decision areas are focused on operations, working capital, investment and financing.

Let me stress that online education has many benefits. But it is still in many respects self-directed learning. It requires a high level of responsibility, dedication and self-discipline on your part. Even though we do not have class meetings, there are still weekly assignments and deadlines to meet. In this class you will be responsible for your own work, your own progress, and your own grade. What you get from this class will be in direct relationship to what you put in! I really enjoy the flexibility of online education, but it is also VERY easy to get behind.

Before we get started, a few words about myself. I am a Professor and Holder of the Morris Fogelman Real Estate Chair of Excellence at the University of Memphis. Even though this is my second year in Memphis, I have been teaching in higher education for 30 years. I hold a Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Even though my degrees are in Finance with specialties in real estate and insurance. Prior to coming to the University of Memphis, I taught 22 years at the University of Wyoming. I have also taught at Spring Arbor College, Northwest Missouri State University, and Illinois State University. I like to believe that I bring to my classes a blend of theory and application.

In addition to my teaching obligations, I am very active in academic research - I love to write. Consulting, primarily in the area of real estate valuation and as an expert witness in real estate related cases, has also been an important part of my career.
Syllabus

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Calculator:  A calculator in this class is required. A financial calculator is not mandatory, but one is helpful (if you are planning to purchase one, the HP-12C is recommended). Calculators will be needed to work the quizzes and the problems assigned in class.


Course Requirements

1. There will be 7 quizzes (there will be a quiz for each unit of material). Each quiz will be worth 50 points and can be taken up to two times. Your grade with be your highest score. When the quiz is retaken, most of the questions will be new so there is no guarantee that you will do better. Feel free to use your text / notes while taking these quizzes. Again, these quizzes are individual assignments -- teamwork is not permitted. These quizzes are part of the Homework Manager that comes with our text.

2. An important aspect of this class will be communication. Your involvement in this class, through conference threads, will be evaluated at the end of each unit. 25 points are available for Units 1 through 7 (and the Introduction Thread) for a total of 200 points for the course. To receive credit for your threaded discussion, your posts must be made by 10:00 PM on the due date of the unit of material. Threads will not only be used for discussion, but I will also use the threads to cover questions about the subject material.
3. Problem solving is critical in Business Finance. I have set up homework for Units 2 - 6 that need to be completed. This is part of the Homework Manager. This homework will be completed online and will be computer graded. Each of these assignments will be worth 50 points. More on this later.

4. In addition to the above, there will be 6 case studies due during the semester. Each case study will be worth 75 points. These are individual assignments -- team work is not permitted. After the due date, the solutions to the case study will be posted. It is suggested you make a copy of your assignment prior to turning it in. Instructions on how to turn this assignment in will be discussed later.

**Course Outline**

- **Topic 1 -- Introduction**
  - The Goals and Functions of Financial Management (Chapter 1)
  - Review of Accounting (Chapter 2)

- **Topic 2 -- Financial Analysis and Planning**
  - Financial Analysis (Chapter 3)
  - Financial Forecasting (Chapter 4)
  - Operating and Financial Leverage (Chapter 5)

- **Topic 3 -- Time Value of Money and Business Valuation**
  - The Time Value of Money (Chapter 9)
  - Valuation and Rates of Return (Chapter 10)

- **Topic 4 -- Capital Budgeting**
  - Cost of Capital (Chapter 11)
  - The Capital Budgeting Decision (Chapter 12)
  - Risk and Capital Budgeting (Chapter 13)

- **Topic 5 -- Long Term Financing (Part 1)**
  - Capital Markets (Chapter 14)
  - Investment Banking: Public and Private (Chapter 15)
  - Long-Term Debt and Lease Financing (Chapter 16)

- **Topic 6 -- Long Term Financing (Part 2)**
  - Common and Preferred Stock (Chapter 17)
  - Dividend Policy and Retained Earnings (Chapter 18)

- **Unit 7 - Assorted Topics**
  - Convertibles, Warrents, and Derivatives (Chapter 19)
  - External Growth through Mergers (Chapter 20)
**Grading Policy**

This course will have a total of 1300 possible points. The breakdown of these points are:

- Unit Quizzes = 350
- Conference Threads = 200
- Unit Homework = 300
- Cases = 450

Total points earned by the student will determine the grade assigned. I intend to use a 90 / 80 / 70 / 60 percent grading scale. Individual assignments may be curved; however, at no time will the final grading scale exceed the above listed scale.

**Course Policies**

As with any course, there are policies that need to be followed. With an online class, since we never meet face to face, these policies tend to be even more important.

**Communication Expectations**

Since this class meets over the Internet, it is critical that constant communication is maintained. For my part, I will check my e-mail daily (Monday through Friday), usually late afternoon, and will check theThreaded Discussions at least three times a week. From past experience, e-mail communication works best since I am not always in my office (I also enjoy the flexibility of online teaching!) and my TA will have access to my e-mail. To better serve you, PLEASE include in the subject line of your e-mail "FIR 3410" (I am teaching THREE online classes this semester). Also, please make sure to include your name in your message - it is often hard knowing who you are when all I have is an e-mail address! This makes it easier to identify each of you. If at all possible, I will respond to your questions / problems within 36 hours.

Don't be surprised if you hear from one of my TAs. They will be helping me teach this class this semester.

**E-mail Policies**
To contact me (or my TAs), please e-mail me from within the course shell. This makes sure that ALL my online e-mail communication goes to one location. This way it makes it easier for me (and my TAs) to have access to JUST my online class correspondence. PLEASE do not use my University of Memphis e-mail address - it is too easy for me to lose track of your correspondence!

E-mail can be a valuable tool; however, it can be easily abused. Each of you has the option to e-mail the entire class; however, PLEASE keep these messages related to course content. Also, I suggest that you do not give the entire class your phone number or address. If you want to share this selectively, that is fine. These policies are designed so each of you are not inundated with junk mail and you are able to maintain some degree of privacy. Further, often posting your question / comment in the threads is better than sending an e-mail message to the entire class.

Finally, please realize that the University of Memphis or this instructor cannot and will not be held responsible for the content of any personal messages which are sent from one student directly to another student using the online e-mail delivery system. It is expected that all students will adhere to accepted codes of ethical, personal, and civil conduct when conversing online using e-mail or engaging in any real time online chat sessions. Failure to abide by such codes of conduct and etiquette will result in expulsion from the course with a failing grade.

**Threads Policies**

I will not place limits on the use of conference threads other than to clearly state that I will not tolerate rudeness or inconsiderate comments being posted. Please treat each others views with the same amount of respect that you would want your views handled. Remember, it is VERY easy to be guilty of "flaming" in a thread situation. If handled properly, you may find that the "threads" are the most enjoyable aspect of the class.

**Grammar / Spelling**

There is a tendency to become lax when posting responses to threaded discussions and when sending e-mail. This is not an English class; however, I still expect proper grammar and spelling to be used. I do not intend to grade participation based on the quality of your writing style; however, it is disconcerting when it is HARD to understand what someone is expressing because their writing is unclear. As a suggestion, you may want to compose your threaded comments or e-mail messages in a word processing program where you can check spelling, edit, and revise your writing. Once you are finished, you can cut and paste the work into the threaded discussion or into e-mail.

**File Format of Assignments**
When I deliver material to the class for downloading, I will save text files in "pdf" format. This is an easy format to read with a free Adobe Acrobat reader. You can download this reader at http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html. Non-text files will be saved in Microsoft Office format. To send files to me, you can send files in either WordPerfect / Word / Adobe Acrobat or Excel format. If you have any concerns regarding my ability to read a file, please contact me. Again, I am very flexible!

**Technical Problems**

If you have technical problems with the course platform, there is information on the initial login screen at eCourseware. In essence, you can contact the ITD help-desk at 901-678-8888. If you have continual problems, please let me know.

If you have problems with the course content, please contact me.

Unfortunately, Internet Service Providers (ISP) periodically have problems. I have also found that all ISPs are not "created equal" - many class problems have resulted from an inferior ISP. These problems are not an excuse for failing to complete assignments or for turning them in late, not being involved in threaded discussion, or having no e-mail access. Since computer crashes and disasters are bound to happen, I encourage you to make hard copies of your assignments and communication. If you have problems with your ISP, notify them immediately. If problems persist, you may have to access this course from another computer or through another ISP. Keep in mind that your ISP is your only link to this class.

**Access to Course**

The way this class is designed, you are not permitted to work ahead; however, I have provided some overlap of the units for flexibility (please check out the schedule shown under "Class Schedule"). After each unit is completed, you will still have access to it; however, work done on prior units (involvement in past threads and quizzes) will not be graded.

**Personal Involvement and Time**

There is often a misperception that taking a course online is easier since you don't have to physically go to a classroom. It is true that there are some things that become easier for online students. However, it is also easier to get behind. Even though you have flexibility in attending class, the work still needs to be done. Further, you have to take more responsibility for your learning. Finally, an online course requires more personal involvement where participation is the KEY. For success, don't put off your assignments. When possible, get an early start on each unit of material.

How much you learn in this class will be in direct relationship to the amount of time spent on this material. Even though this class will be a lot of work, I also hope it can be an enjoyable experience!
Finally, I ask that you check your e-mail daily. I may be making adjustments to the course from time to time depending on the needs of the class. I will use e-mail and the message center to keep you informed. Also, I ask that you access conference threads several times during the week. Don't be surprised if you find most of your learning results from this form of communication.

**Class Attendance / Involvement**

This is NOT A CORRESPONDENCE class! We don't have class meetings, but we have weekly assignments AND deadlines! We will move through this material AS A CLASS, not as individuals. You will find that I stress communication. This is not possible if everyone is at a different place in the material. My TAs and I are here to help you, but you will likely find your classmates can help a lot as well! Get to know them.

I would suggest that you set aside a time each day that you plan on working on this class. If you need to miss a day, that is fine, but the work still needs to be done! The way this class is designed, you have approximately 17 days to complete a unit of material. Even though this may sound like a lot of time, it really isn't considering the amount of material that needs to be covered in each unit. I had considered breaking these units up into smaller pieces; however, leaving them larger gives each of you more flexibility (or more rope to hang yourself with!).

I realize that problems occur. I am usually fairly flexible; however, if you are having problems (technical or otherwise) it is **YOUR responsibility to contact me**.

**Course Schedule**

Shown below is the schedule we will be following this semester. Remember, you cannot enter a unit until the "Beginning Date". Even after a unit is completed, you can still access it; however, any work done AFTER the "Ending Date" will not be graded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic - Material Covered</th>
<th>Beginning Date (at 8:00 AM)</th>
<th>Ending Date (at 10:00 PM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic 1 - Chapters 1 and 2</td>
<td>Friday, 1/15</td>
<td>Monday, 2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 2 - Chapters 3, 4 and 5</td>
<td>Friday, 1/29</td>
<td>Monday, 2/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New units will open on Friday and are due 17 days later, on a Monday (by 10:00 PM). Due to Spring Break, I have allowed for an extra week in Unit 4. Note that there is some overlap in the units to provide more flexibility - however, please do not leave the material to the last day! Even though I have attempted to have these units approximately of equal size, you will find that some are harder than others - SORRY.