

***Financial Accounting: Analysis and Reporting Incentives***  
***ACCT 242***  
***Prof. Stephanie Sikes – Spring 2013***  
***Syllabus***

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***Prerequisites:***

The course is designed for and is open to all majors. However, because the course requires an understanding of basic financial reporting, ACCT 101 is a prerequisite for the course.

***Course Overview:***

The course is designed to increase students' ability to extract and interpret information in financial statements. The course provides both a framework for and the tools necessary to analyze financial statements. At a conceptual level, the course emphasizes that preparers and users of financial statements have different objectives and incentives. We will spend a considerable amount of time solving problems by analyzing real financial statements. By analyzing the disclosures in a firm's annual or quarterly report, we will determine the firm's accounting policy for a particular type of transaction and determine how that policy choice not only affects the firm's primary financial statements but also reflects the underlying economics of the firm. The course should also improve students' ability to use financial statements as part of an overall assessment of a firm's strategy and the potential rewards and risks of dealing with the firm (as an investor, creditor, supplier, employee, etc.).

***Course Materials:***

*Textbook (REQUIRED):* *Financial Reporting and Analysis* by Revsine, Collins, Johnson, and Mittelstaedt, 5th edition.

For students who prefer to not buy the textbook, Lippincott Library has four copies on Reserve.

*Canvas:* This site includes all cases (except HBS cases), practice problems, lecture slides, and any optional notes and articles on each topic. Note that I will not distribute any material in class. Please download anything you need prior to class. I post the additional articles for students who want to read more about a particular topic. Only on rare occasions will I discuss the material in the additional articles in class.

*Study.Net:* The HBS cases used in the course are available on Study.Net.

### ***Preparation for Class:***

Class sessions will center around case discussions in which we will address both mechanical accounting issues and important analytical and strategic issues. I expect for you to use the resources on Canvas and/or the textbook to attempt the cases prior to class. I will not provide lectures that show you how to work problems and then expect you to work the same problems. Instead, I want to use the class time to help you understand difficult issues in solving the case and to highlight the important takeaways from the case. The bottom line is that if you do not adequately prepare for class, you will have trouble following the discussion. Thus, even if your group does not have to turn in a write-up for a particular case, I still expect for you to review the case prior to class and to be prepared to add to the class discussion. Also, I expect for all students to review the practice problems prior to coming to class. I will review most of the practice problems in class with you; however, you will get more of the class discussion if you review the problem prior to class.

### ***Grading:***

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Class Participation (Individual) | 15%        |
| Cases (Group)                    | 15%        |
| Group Project (Group)            | 15%        |
| Exam #1 (Individual)             | 25%        |
| <u>Exam #2 (Individual)</u>      | <u>30%</u> |
| Total                            | 100%       |

*Class Participation:* I expect you to come to class on time and prepared to discuss the cases for that day. Unless you request and receive permission from me to attend a different section of the course, you must attend the section for which you are registered. After each class, I will award each student up to three points based on the quality of his or her class participation that day. I will give points for anything that positively contributes to the class discussion, such as an attempt to reason through a problem (including “wrong” answers), a pertinent question, or a relevant fact from the case. There is no bonus for quantity of comments in class. *Note that if you do not speak in class at all during the term, then 15% of your final grade will be a zero, making it difficult to get an A in the class.*

*Group Formation:* Students need to form groups of at least 3 students but no more than 4 students. A group’s members can be from different sections. Email me the list of group members by 10:00 am of the third day of class (January 16). I only want one email per group. I suggest for the student who sends the email to copy his or her group members on the email. Students who have trouble finding a group will be assigned to one by me. When you email me your group members, you can specify whether your group has a preference for the A or B cases (See below). However, if there is uneven demand for the two types of cases, then I will randomly assign the A and B cases to the different groups.

*Cases:* Grading of cases is based on effort and completeness, not accuracy. All groups have to turn in the assignment for the first case (Blue Earth Technology). For the remaining cases, each group only has to turn in a write-up for the cases designated with the group’s assigned letter (A or B). Each group will have ten cases assigned to it. I will drop each group’s lowest three case grades. Thus, a group can submit a written assignment for all ten cases assigned to the group and drop the lowest three grades. Alternatively, a group can submit a written assignment for nine cases and drop the two

lowest grades of the nine. Or, the group can submit a written assignment for eight of the cases and drop the lowest grade of the eight. Finally, a group can choose to only submit a written assignment for seven cases and have the grades for all seven of these cases count.

*Groups must submit cases to the Assignments page on Canvas prior to 12:00 pm on the day the case is due. I will not accept any late assignments. Case assignments turned in after 12:00 pm on the day the case is due will receive a grade of zero.* Submit only one write-up per group, and include the names of all group members. *Making use of suggested case solutions from prior semesters of Accounting 242 or Accounting 742 or copying the case write-up of anyone outside of your group will constitute cheating and could result in all group members receiving a grade of F for the course.*

*Group Project:* Please see the Group Project Assignment document on Canvas for more details on the group project. *Groups must submit the group project to the Assignments page on Canvas prior to 5:00 pm on Wednesday, March 20.* You will complete the group project with the same group members with whom you complete the cases.

*Exams:* The exams will be administered during regular scheduled class time. *They will be administered in SH DH 350 rather than in our regular classroom. You have to take the exams in the section for which you are registered. No exceptions.*

*Grading Disputes:* All grading disputes must be appealed within one week following the return of the assignment or exam. To have a case or the group project re-graded, submit a written description of your disagreement with the initial grade. For group work, every member of the group must agree to the request for a re-grade. To have an exam re-graded, submit the original exam (with no modifications) and a written description of your disagreement with the initial grade. I reserve the right to review the entire assignment or exam; thus, your grade could go up *or* down.

### ***Office Hours:***

I will hold office hours by appointment. If you would like to meet with, please email me to schedule an appointment.

| <i>Class</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i>  | <i>Class Preparation</i>   |
|--------------|-------------|---|--|
| 1            | January 9   | Course Introduction   | Read and prepare answer to one question for in-class discussion (no written deliverable): “Enron, intelligence, and the perils of too much information,” by M. Gladwell  |
| 2            | January 14  | The Economic and Institutional Setting for Financial Reporting and the Role of Financial Information in Contracting | Readings: RCJM 1 and 7<br>(I encourage students who want a refresher on income determination and the structure of the balance sheet to read RCJM 2 and 4 (pgs. 193-208). I expect that all students are familiar with this material since it was covered in Accounting 101; however, some students might want to refresh their memory.)<br><br>Prepare for in-class discussion (no written deliverable): Identify the Industries |
| 3            | January 16  | Essentials of Financial Statement Analysis  | Readings: RCJM 5<br>Prepare for in-class discussion (no written deliverable) : Target vs. Costco<br>GROUP FORMATION DUE<br>Practice Problem: Higgins Corporation   |
| NO CLASS     | January 21  | MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY  |  |
| 4            | January 23  | Ratio Analysis  | Case: Blue Earth Technology (A, B)   |
| 5            | January 28  | Earnings Quality: Nonrecurring Items  | Case: FenceAlign (A)   |
| 6            | January 30  | Earnings Quality: EPS, Pro Forma  | Case: Intuit Incorporated (B)<br>Practice Problem: Evanston Precision Systems  |
| 7            | February 4  | Cash Flow Quality   | Readings: RCJM 4 (pgs. 208-225) and RCJM 17<br>Case: Upsilon Capital Partners (A)<br>Practice Problem: Psilos Corp.  |
| 8            | February 6  | Revenue Recognition: Gross vs. Net  | Readings: RCJM 3<br>Case: Merck (B)  |
| 9            | February 11 | Expense Recognition: Matching   | Case: Pre-paid Legal (A)<br>Practice Problem: Zeeland  |

| <i>Class</i>        | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i>  | <i>Class Preparation</i>   |
|---------------------|-------------|---|--|
| 10                  | February 13 | Stock-Based Compensation  | Readings: RCJM 15 (911-924)<br>Case: Cisco Systems, Inc. (B)<br>Practice Problems: Fairfax, Gibbon, Longhorn Corp, Jay-Jack Inc.   |
| 11                  | February 18 | Contingent Liabilities  | Case: Intel Corporation (A)<br>Practice Problem: V.G. Miller Corp.   |
| 12                  | February 20 | Income Tax Reporting:<br>Deferred Taxes                           | Readings: RCJM 13 (749-773, 778-791)<br>Case: General Motors Corporation (B)<br>Practice Problems: Caterpillar, NOL, Sarah Lee Corporation   |
| 13                  | February 25 | Income Tax Reporting:<br>Contingent Tax Liabilities<br>and FIN 48 | Readings: RCJM 13 (773-778)<br>Practice Problem: Wyeth<br>Prepare for in-class discussion (no written deliverable): G.E. Turns the Tax Man Away Empty-Handed<br>Practice Problem: Cisco  |
| 14                  | February 27 | <b>EXAM 1</b>   | <b>LOCATION: SHDH 350</b>  |
| NO<br>CLASS         | March 4     | SPRING BREAK  |  |
| NO<br>CLASS         | March 6     | SPRING BREAK  |  |
| 15                  | March 11    | Intangibles and Goodwill  | Case: The Shaw Group (A)<br>Practice Problem: Wieland Group  |
| 16                  | March 13    | Long-Lived Assets:<br>International Differences                   | Readings: RCJM 10<br>Case: Land Securities Group (B)<br>Practice Problem: Riedl Realty   |
| 17                  | March 18    | <b>GUEST SPEAKER</b>  | Marc Siegel of the FASB will speak 3 different times on 3/18. You are <u>required</u> to attend unless you have a course conflict with all 3 times. His talks from 9:00 -10:20 am and from 10:30-11:50 am will be held in <b>Vance B10</b> . His talk from 1:30 pm – 2:50 pm will be in <b>JMHH G06</b> . The regular sections of ACC 242 are cancelled on this day. |
| <b>NO<br/>CLASS</b> | March 20    | <b>GROUP PROJECTS<br/>DUE</b>                                     | No class. Projects due by 5:00 pm.   |

| <i>Class</i>    | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i>                         | <i>Class Preparation</i>   |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 18              | March 25    | Fair Value                           | Case: Morgan Stanley (A)<br>Practice Problem: Essig Bancorp                                      |
| 19              | March 27    | Long-term Debt: Market vs. Book      | Case: Royal Bank of Scotland (B)<br>Practice Problem: Metro-Golden-Mayer                         |
| 20              | April 1     | Repos and Leverage                   | Case: Lehman Brothers (A)<br>Practice Problem: Three Banks                                       |
| 21              | April 3     | Leases: Lessee and Lessor Accounting | Readings: RCJM 12<br>Case: IBM (B)<br>Practice Problems: Wal-Mart, Xerxes, Walgreens             |
| 22              | April 8     | Pensions and OPEB                    | Readings: RCJM 14<br>Case: CBS (A)<br>Practice Problem: Smith Inc., Bostonian Co., Cummings Inc. |
| 23              | April 10    | Intercorporate Investments           | Readings: RCJM 16<br>Case: Coca-Cola (B)<br>Practice Problems: P&S, General Electric             |
| 24              | April 15    | Interim Reporting/Course wrap-up     | Case: Fairmont Global (A, B)   |
| 25              | April 17    | <b>EXAM 2</b>                        | <b>LOCATION: SHDH 350</b>  |
| <b>NO CLASS</b> | April 22    |                                      |  |