

ACCT 742 – ACCT 242 Problems in Financial Reporting

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Spring 2014 SYLLABUS – Preliminary

Note: The syllabus will likely be updated as the semester goes along

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Course Overview

Financial statements are a primary means for firms to communicate information about their performance and strategy to investors and other groups. In the wake of numerous accounting scandals and the recent financial meltdown (which accounting both helped and hindered), it is more important than ever for managers and investors to understand (i) the financial reporting process, (ii) what financial statements do and do not contain, and (iii) the types of discretion managers have in presenting transactions they have undertaken. This course is designed to help you become a more informed user of accounting numbers by increasing your ability to extract, interpret, and analyze information in financial statements.

We will focus on many of the biggest problem areas of financial reporting: While this is not a course in equity valuation *per se*, equity valuation is one of the most common uses of financial statement data. Accordingly, we will examine the relation between stock prices and financial statement information. We will also study the use of financial ratios and forecasted financial statement data in models of distress prediction.

The course assumes a solid understanding of basic financial accounting (at the level of Acct 611 or A613).

Course Materials

Bulkpack The bulk pack is available at Study.net. In addition, virtually all of the material will be available in the eRoom for Acct 742 on Canvas.

Text: Revsine, Collins, Johnson, Mittelstaedt, *Financial Reporting and Analysis*, 5th ed., Prentice Hall, 2011. This text serves as a reference on accounting and disclosure topics. Note that the course is not a textbook-based course. The text readings provide supplementary information and information useful for preparing the problems and cases.

Canvas The course has a room on Canvas that you can log onto with your User name and Password.

The ASSIGNMENTS folder provides links to the notes, readings, cases, etc for each class session.

Within the FILES folder is all the Course Material. There is a sub-folder for each class session, as well as one for the syllabus and the exams. Inside the folder for a given class session, you will see three or four subfolders:

Bulk Pack Material: This includes notes, problems, cases, and readings that were included in the bulk pack.

Pre Class Material: New readings, problems, and cases (ones not included in the course pack) are contained here. This folder will also have any spreadsheets available to help work the problems and cases. Finally, this folder will contain power point slides that will be constitute the outline of what we'll cover in class that day. Many students find that printing out the slides before class helps them follow along better. Two to three slides per page is a good compromise between not using up too much paper and having room to jot down notes.

Solutions and Post Class Material: This is where I'll post solutions, corrections, etc

Office Hours

Feel free to call with questions or contact me via email at the address above. E-mail is often an easier and quicker way to get your questions answered. Office Hours are by appointment.

Grading and Course Requirements

Your grade for the course will be determined on the basis of :

Class Participation	20 %
Midterm Examination	20 %
Group Project	25 %
Final Exam	<u>35 %</u>
Total	100 %

Class Participation

The amount of learning that takes place in the course will depend on how active the class discussions are, which is dependent on the amount of preparation you do before class. Class participation will be based on your contribution to the class discussions and analyses, not simply on the amount of time you talk. If necessary, I will cold call students.

Because entering or leaving the classroom during class time is disruptive to the learning environment, your fellow classmates and I expect that you will not do so, except in an emergency.

Please bring to each class a Name Card, with your name printed in **LARGE DARK LETTERS**. This will facilitate my getting to know your names and my ability to reward you for class participation.

Midterm Exam:

The Midterm Exam is scheduled to be available by Monday March 3 at noon (online) and is to be handed in (to the Accounting Suite – SH-DH 1300) by Wednesday March 5 at 4:00 pm. It is an open book-open notes exam. The Midterm Exam will cover material covered in class through Wednesday, February 26th.

More details on the exam will be provided as the time gets closer.

You must work on the exam individually. You are not permitted to discuss the exam with anyone else, including other students, former students, or people in the real world. However, you are permitted to use any written resource, such as your notes, the textbook, information on the company you find on the web, etc. Violations of these procedures will constitute cheating and could result in receiving an F for the course.

Questions and solutions from prior exams will be available on Canvas.

Group Project:

Your group must identify a firm that has been the subject of an accounting controversy (alleged or real). You can use internet search engines to help you pick your firm, SEC actions, etc. Choose a firm and accounting issue you are interested in.

Groups can be composed of up to 4 students (no exceptions). Groups many contain a mixture of students from my different sections. Group composition must be finalized by March 17 (just after we return from Spring Break). In addition each group must obtain approval for the company they're going to work on by that date. The earlier you decide on a company, the more time you'll have to work on it. I strongly encourage you to form your teams sooner than this and to get started on your project before this date as well.

Group Projects must be turned in by Monday April 7th at 4:00 pm. A hard copy must be turned in to the accounting suite. In addition an electronic copy should also be sent to me (by that same time).

Once you have identified a firm and its accounting controversy, send me an email letting me know who and what you've selected. Include a brief statement for what you believe the accounting issues for that firm are. An article from the financial press describing the controversy would probably work here. If I feel the firm/controversy is inappropriate, not complex enough, or too complex, I will veto it.

More details are provided below, and additional information will be provided during class and on the course web page.

First, find a company that has been criticized or investigated for some questionable *accounting practice*.

- Good places to search include popular press articles, analysts reports, or the SEC accounting enforcement page (http://www.sec.gov/divisions/enforce/friactions.shtml). In addition, short seller reports (or lists of companies with a lot of short sellers) can also be useful.
- Make sure that you choose a firm with questions about its accounting practices and/or
 judgments rather than a firm that has committed outright fraud. For example, a firm that
 ships empty boxes and books revenue is a fraud. A firm that ships actual product and
 books all of the revenue without any provision for bad debts has questionable accounting
 practices. Many controversies may include elements of fraud, but they should not be
 exclusively fraud.
- Do *not* choose Enron, WorldCom, AOL, Sunbeam, or Microstrategy.
- Do not choose any firm and their accounting controversy that we will be covering in class. For example, it's perfectly OK to pick a firm that has been found to have pension accounting, but don't pick American Airlines because that's the pension case we'll be doing in class.

- It's perfectly fine to pick a non-US company for your project. You might need to learn the local country (or IFRS) rules in more detail to do a non-US company. Financial statement details might also be harder to come by.
- Multiple groups can investigate the same company, but they *must* work *independently*!
- The degree of difficulty will be taken into account in grading your project. Thus, you are *encouraged* to investigate accounting issues that are difficult and that we haven't covered, or won't cover, in class.
- Companies with problems that have occurred within the past 5 years will be given more credit than problems that occurred longer ago.
- You will need to find financial statements for the company. Search for the company on the SEC Edgar system (which can be accessed through the Lippincott Library page) or check out the company's web site to ensure you have access to financial statements.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to talk to me about your choice of company to investigate.

Once you have chosen a company, write a report on the company that addresses the following issues:

- 1. Describe the economic transaction(s) underlying the questionable accounting. Discuss the transaction in the context of the company's business and strategy (you may need to look in the company's annual report for this material).
- 2. Describe the accounting procedure used by the company and the accounting procedure that "should" have been used according to the critics of the accounting practice. Journal entries may be helpful here in laying out the accounting. What is the basis or justification for the company's accounting practices and for the alternative accounting practices in terms of accounting rules and concepts? How detailed or forthcoming about the accounting procedure was the company in its annual report prior to the controversy?
- 3. What indications were there (if any) of the problem that an astute analyst might have seen in advance?
- 4. Do you agree with the critics that the company's accounting practices were wrong, given your answers to the above questions? Why or why not? Note that, just because a company gets criticized for its accounting, it is not necessarily doing the wrong thing. Microsoft has been investigated by the SEC numerous times for questionable accounting practices and has been cleared every time. Are there changes to accounting or auditing standards you would recommend based on what happened?
- 5. If the company were to restate its financial statements using the accounting procedure that "should" have been used, what would be the effect on the a) income statement, b) balance sheet, and c) statement of cash flows? You do not have to replicate the entire statement; you just need to indicate changes (e.g., accounts receivable would increase, net income would decrease, etc.)
- 6. Why do you think the alleged problem occurred?

- 7. What were the consequences of the revelation/resolution of the problem? What happened to the firm's stock price? Did anyone get prosecuted or sent to jail? Were any fines levied? Etc.
- 8. Does the revelation of the company's alleged flawed accounting practices change your assessment of the company's long-run value? If so, how? If not, why not? Here I want something more substantive than the statement "value is based on cash flow, not on accounting numbers."

Hand in the following:

- A written report which addresses these issues. There is no page or word limit on your write up of this assignment, but please use 12 pt. font and at least a 1" margin on each side.
- The article, analyst report, or SEC enforcement bulletin that alerted you to the situation.
- Any other exhibits or material to support your analysis.
- The most relevant set of financial statements issued by the company prior to the controversy should be made available electronically

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home exam. It will be open-book and open-notes. While it is "officially" cumulative, it will concentrate on material covered since the midterm exam.

The final exam is a take home that will be distributed shortly after the last day of class – roughly Monday May 5th. It is due (in the accounting suite- 1300 SH-DH) on Friday May 9th at 4 pm.

As with the midterm exam, you must work on the exam individually. You are not permitted to discuss the exam with anyone else, including other students, former students, or people in the real world. However, you are permitted to use any written resource, such as your notes, the textbook, information on the company you find on the web, etc. Violations of these procedures will constitute cheating and could result in receiving an F for the course.

Questions and solutions from prior exams will be available on Canvas.

Grading Disputes

All grading disputes must be appealed within two calendar weeks following the return of the assignment or exam (unless otherwise noted). A request for a regrade will not be considered if it is submitted more than two week after the return of the assignment or exam (or after the specified deadline). To have an assignment or exam regraded, you must submit the original (with no modifications) and a written description of your disagreement with the initial grade.

Preliminary Course Outline

Session	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	Problem/Case
1	Wed Jan 15	Introduction	Enron and Cisco
	Mon Jan 20	No Class – Martin Luther King Jr Day	
2	Wed Jan 22	Accounting Earnings Quality	Corbomax
3	Mon Jan 27	Earnings Per Share and Dilution	Ciber Inc
4	Wed Jan 29	Cash Flow Quality	SCF - Alpha and Beta SCF - Epsilon and Omega
5	Mon Feb 3	Revenue Recognition – Concepts	Revenue Recognition Vignettes Merck
6	Wed Feb 5	Revenue Recognition and Cash Collected	HP and Autonomy
7	Mon Feb 10	Revenue Recognition – Returns, Repurchases, Recourse	Lehman
0	Wed Feb 12	Fair Value and Unrealized Gains and Losses	Mongon Stanlay
9	Mon Feb 17	Derivatives	Morgan Stanley American Airlines
10			Cisco Systems
11	Wed Feb 19 Mon Feb 24	Risk Disclosures	,
12	Wed Feb 26	Stock Option Accounting	Google – part 1 Google – Part 2
12	wed red 20	Valuing Stock Options	Valuing a Stock Option
			Valuing a Stock Option
13	Mon Mar 3	Income Taxes (not on Midterm 1)	General Motors
		Midterm Exam	
14	Wed Mar 5	No Class	
	Mar 8 - 16	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
15	Mon Mar 17	Income Taxes	EBIX
16	Wed Mar 19	Long Term Assets - International	Land Securities
17	Mon Mar 24	Intangible Assets	Sun Microsystems
18	Wed Mar 26	Long Term Debt – Market vs Book Values	Royal Bank of Scotland
19	Mon Mar 31	Leases, and Convertible Debt	CVS-Caremark
20	Wed Apr 2	Pensions and OPEB	American Airlines
21	Mon Apr 7	NO CLASS - GROUP PROJECT DUE	
22	Wed Apr 9	Consolidations	Coca-Cola
23	Mon Apr 14	SPE's and Variable Interest Entities	Citigroup
24	Wed Apr 16	Multinationals and Foreign Currency Translation	Eyepass Worldwide
25	Mon Apr 21	Segmental Reporting and EVA	Pepsi
26	Wed Apr 23	Other Performance Measures	Millennium
			Pharmaceuticals
27	Mon Apr 28	Compensation and Governance Disclosures	TBA
28	Wed Apr 30	Course Summary	None

Preliminary Schedule of Assignments

RCJM refers to Revsine, Collins, Johnson, Mittelstaedt, *Financial Reporting and Analysis*, 5th edition

Session 1 Wednesday January 15 Introduction

Read: RCJM: Chapter 1 (skim)

Notes on Audit Report

Notes on Sarbanes Oxley Law – Sections 302 and 906

MD&A: Revealing the Soft Numbers

Skim these:

The Rise and Fall of Enron

Timeline of the major Enron-related events

Timeline of key events leading to Andersen demise

An Enron Primer

The New Breed of Fraudster

Prepare: Cisco Systems

Session 2 Wednesday January 22 Accounting Earnings Quality

Read: RCJM: Chapter 2 pp. 57-83; Chapter 3, pp. 152-164; Chapter 5, pp. 249-252,

Chapter 7, pp. 396-399

Notes on Structure of the Income Statement

Notes on Accounting Changes

Comparison of Methods

Changes in Accounting For Changes

Prepare: Corbomax

Session 3 Monday January 27 Earnings Per Share and Dilution

Read: RCJM Chapter 15 (Concentrate on pp. 905-911)

Class Notes – Dilution and Earnings Per Share

Dilution of Employee Stock Options

Accounting for Accelerated Share Repurchase Programs

Skim These

New EITF Pronouncement Aims to Close CoCo Loophole

Ciber Declares it will Settle at least 30% of its Convertible Debt in Cash

Helps Mitigate FASB Stance Ciber's Money Where Its Mouth Is Move Over CoCo's: Net Shares Will Do

Practice Problems: Earnings Per Share Illustrations

Accelerated Share Repurchase (ASR) Illustration

Prepare: Ciber, Inc – Stock Options, Convertible Debt, and Dilution

Session 4 Wednesday January 29 Cash Flow Quality

Read: RCJM: Chapter 17 (this should all be review, concentrate on pp. 1041-1051).

RCJM: Chapter 4, pp. 208-220

Class Notes on Cash Flow Statement

Skim These:

Cash Flow Never Lies, Or Does It?

How Comcast Does Its Counting - 'Cash Flow' Looks Better Using Non-GAAP

Metric

Cash Flow? It Isn't Always What it Seems Testimony of Richard Roach on Enron Prepays

Prepare: Alpha and Beta

Omega and Epsilon

Session 5 Monday February 3 Revenue Recognition – Concepts

Read: RCJM Chapter 2, pp. 61-69, Chapter 3, pp. 149-152

Notes on Revenue Recognition

Gross versus Net Presentation of Revenue

Skim These:

All Revenue is Not Created Equal

Rulemakers Launch Revenue Recognition Makeover Revenue Recognition – Will a Single Model Fly

New Revenue Recognition Rules – The Apple of Apple's Eye

Yahoo, Google, and Internet Math

Accounting Change Cuts Groupon's Revenue

Xerox Settles SEC Enforcement Action

Prepare: Revenue Recognition Vignettes

Merck

Session 6 Wednesday February 5 Revenue Recognition and Cash

Read: RCJM Chapter 3, pp. 142-146

RCJM Chapter 8, pp. 425-435

Class Notes on Revenue Recognition and Cash Collected

Installment Method – An Example

Skim These:

Hewlett's Loss – A Folly Unfolds, By The Numbers

How HP's Meg Whitman is Passing the Buck

HP's Explanation Still Makes No Sense

With Autonomy, HP Bought an Old Fashioned Accounting Scandal, Here's how

it worked.

Prepare: HP and Autonomy

Session 7 Monday February 10 Revenue – More Concepts

Read: RCJM: Chapter 12 (skim – esp. pp 693-722 and pp. 727-729)

The Origins of Lehman's "Repo 105"

Report Shows How, Collapsing, Lehman Hid Woes MF Global Proves Enron-Era Accounting Lives On Subprime Mess Fueled by Crack Cocaine Accounting

Once Upon a Time, in the Land of Subprime

Practice Problem: Three Banks

Prepare: Lehman Brothers

<u>Session 8 Wednesday February 12 Fair Value – Unrealized Gains and Losses</u>

Read: RCJM: Chapter 11, pp. 611-640; Chapter 16, pp. 949-961; Chapter 8, p. 439-440.

Class Notes on Fair Value Accounting (Mark to Market)

Fair Value Measurements

SEC – Fair Value Savior Fair Value Roundtable

Fair Value Accounting is Alive and Well

Financial Reporting and the Financial Crisis: The Case for Measuring Financial

Instruments at Fair Value in Financial Statements

Skim These:

It's Time to Get Real About Realizations

FASB's New Draft on Values: Good News and ...

Prepare: Morgan Stanley

Session 9 Monday February 17 Derivatives

Read: RCJM: Chapter 11, pp. 643-661.

Class Notes On Hedging and Derivatives

Derivative Wars

Skim These:

Southwest Hedges Curb Rising Fuel Cost

Airlines Try To Hedge the Cost of Fuel They Buy Months in Advance

Southwest Posts First Loss in 17 Years" Goldman Sachs' Report on Porsche

IASB and FASB issue common offsetting disclosure requirements

Practice Problem: Global Candy Company

Prepare: American Airlines

Session 10 Wednesday February 19 Risk Disclosures

Read: RCJM: None

Summary FAS 161

SEC-Market Risk Disclosures: Enhancing Comparability (concentrate on

pp. 62-67)

Skim These:

Value at Risk

Risk Mismanagement VAR – Point Counterpoint

Lost in the Maze

Prepare: Cisco Systems and Microsoft

Session 11 Monday February 24 Employee Stock Options

Read: RCJM: Chapter 15, pp. 911-924

Class Notes on Employee Stock Options, Dilution, and Notes on Earnings Per

Share

Accounting for Stock Options

Buffet vs Grove

Skim These:

"From FASB and IASB to Managers: Don't Stop Feeding at the Option Trough"

"Google's Optional Windfall"

Prepare: Google – Part 1

Session 12 Wednesday February 26 Valuation of Employee Stock Options

Read: RCJM: Chapter 7, pp. 385-396 (skim)

The Best Way of Valuing Options,

New Valuation Model could dampen the controversy over expensing employee

stock options

Deciding Value of Stock Options May Be Tricky --- Lack of Universal Method

For Determining Amount Poses Dilemma for Firms,

Using the Black Scholes Model How To Excel at Option Valuation

Skim These

Google Creates Options Market

Are TSO's A New Trend?

Expected Life After SAB 107 and SAB 110" (skim only)

Prepare: Google - Part 2

Valuing an Employee Stock Option (see spreadsheet on Canvas)

Session 13 Monday March 3 Income Taxes – Part 1

Read: RCJM: Chapter 13 (especially pp. 773-786)

Class Notes on Income Taxes

Accounting for the Income Tax Consequences of Share based Compensation

Tech Titan's Tax Picture is Clouded by Options

Prepare: General Motors

Session 14 Wednesday March 5 NO CLASS

Session 15 Monday March 17 Income Taxes – part 2

Read: Class Notes On Income Taxes – part 2

Reporting Uncertain Tax Positions

Skim: Fin 48: Standing Naked Before the IRS

Uncertainties Created by Fin 48

Understanding Fin 48

Lost in Translation: Detecting Tax Shelter Activity in Financial

Statements

How Apple Sidesteps Billions in Taxes Apple's Response on its Tax Practices

Practice Problem: Accounting for Taxes: Illustrative Example and Solution

Prepare: EBIX

Session 16 Wednesday March 19 Long Term Assets – International

Read: RCJM: Chapter 10, pp. 586-591

Knight Frank Report - Land Securities Group

Practice Problem: Reidl Realty Trust

Prepare: Land Securities

Session 17 Monday March 24 Intangible Assets

Read: RCJM: Chapter 10, pp. 564-571

Valuing Intangibles: A Primer A Primer on Goodwill Impairment

Skim These:

In-Process R&D in Business Acquisitions" Corporate writedowns may hit \$1 trillion Measuring the Intangible Assets of a Firm

Brand Valuation – Interbrand The Top 100 Global Brands - 2013

Prepare: Pfizer

Session 18 Wednesday March 26 Long Term Debt – Market vs Book values

Read: RCJM: Chapter 11, esp. pp. 611-635

RCJM: Chapter 15, pp. 924-929

Practice Problem: Historical Cost vs Market Value of A Bond

Practice Problem: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc

Prepare: Royal Bank of Scotland

Session 19 Monday March 31 Leases and Convertible Debt

Read: RCJM: Chapter 12 (skim); Chapter 15, pp. 924-930

Class Notes on Accounting for Leases

Skim:

Hidden in Plain Sight

Open Secrets: How Leases Play a Shadowy Role in Accounting

Out of the Footnotes, Into the Spotlight

IASB and FASB Announce Intention to Re-examine Leasing Proposal

Read: Class Notes on Accounting for Convertible Debt

Skim: Convertibles: Get Ready to Lever Up

Practice Problem: Accounting for Convertible Debentures – An Example

Accounting for Convertible Debentures – Solution

MGM

Prepare: CVS

Intel

Session 20 Wednesday April 2 Pensions and OPEB

Read: RCJM: Chapter 14

Class Notes on Pensions

Skim These:

Pensionphobia Strikes Again

Pension Accounting Change Could Make Company Profits Less Predictable

Stock Options, Yes. Pension Coffers, No

Public Pensions Cook the Books

Detroit Ruling Reverberates Around Country

Practice Problems:

Pension Accounting - An Example and Solution

Prepare: American Airlines

Session 21 Monday April 7 NO CLASS

Session 22 Wednesday April 9 Consolidations

Read: RCJM: Chapter 16, pp. 961-977

Class Notes on Business Combinations - New Rules

Class Notes on Accounting For and Presentation of Noncontrolling

Interests

Skim These:

Mishmash Accounting

Coke Acquires North American Unit of Bottler

Practice Problem: Goodwill and Noncontrolling Interests in Acquisitions Examples

Consolidation and Equity Method Illustration

Prepare: Coca-Cola (see spreadsheet)

Session 23 Monday April 14 Organizational Structure - SPE's and VIE's

Read: RCJM: Chapter 11, pp. 641-643

RCJM: Chapter 16, pp. 980-981

Update on Consolidation of Variable Interest Entities: Changes to criteria

for Primary Beneficiaries, definition of variable Interest entity,

disclosures

Summary of FAS 167

Skim These:

Enron and the Raptors (SKIM)

Practice Problems: Expected Losses Residual Returns Example

Find the Primary Beneficiary Example

Prepare: Alza

Session 24 Wednesday April 16 Multinationals and Foreign Currency Translation

Read: RCJM: Chapter 16, pp. 982-988

Class Notes on Foreign Currency

Skim These:

As Exchange Rates Swing Carmakers Duck

Natural Performers

Practice Problem: Hyperana

Prepare: Eyepass Worldwide

Session 25 Monday April 21 Segmental Reporting and EVA

Read: RCJM: None

Class Notes on Segmental Reporting

Class Notes on EVA as a Performance Measure

Skim These:

At last! The light at the end of the corporate performance tunnel Accounting Standard for Segment Reporting Mostly Working

Prepare: Pepsico and EVA

Session 26 Wednesday April 23 Other Performance Measures

Read: RCJM: None

Class Notes on Alternative Definitions of Earnings

Skim These:

A Clear Look at EBITDA The Evils of EBITDA

EBITDA's Foggy Bottom Line Top 10 Limitations of EBITDA

Six Letters That Should Spell Danger To Investors

Out, by \$100 billion - How Pro Forma Accounting Boosts Profits

New SEC Requirements For Pro Forma Statements and Annual Reports

Lies, Damn Lies, and Pro Forma

Non-GAAP Measures- Love Them or Hate Them?

Pro Forma Numbers Are Alive and Well

Stock Options, Meet Pro Forma Analysts – Expensing Isn't Optional

How Groupon's accounting changes hide what's really going on at the company

Prepare: TBA

<u>Session 27 Monday April 28 Compensation and Governance</u> <u>Disclosures</u>

Read: TBA

Prepare: TBA

Session 28 Wednesday April 30 Summary

Read: RCJM: Chapter 1

Brief Summary of SOX

International Financial Reporting Standards FASB and IASB's Irreconcilable Differences

The Future of Financial Reporting: A Market Perspective

Standing on Principles

The Top 10 Reasons to Fix the FASB's Conceptual Framework

Prepare: None