

**The Wharton School – University of Pennsylvania  
FNCE 341/841  
Distressed Investing and Value Creation**

**Fall 2020**

**Preliminary Course Syllabus**

*(Please note that this syllabus is subject to change over the duration of the course; however, the general structure and content of the course will remain the same.)*

**Professor Kevin Kaiser**

**Teaching Assistants**

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**Classroom & Time**

FNCE 341: M/W 9:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m., online  
FNCE 841: M/W 10:30a.m. – 11:50 a.m., online

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the issues regarding distressed investing and valuation. Due to the very challenging nature of distressed situations, many angles are relevant to assessing an investment opportunity including:

- Ability to assess the business performance and prospects for the company – why is it in distress and does it have a future?
- An understanding of the interplay between the ‘left hand side’ of the balance sheet (the business) and the ‘right hand side’ of the balance sheet (the capital structure) – how has the capital structure helped/hurt the business and *vice versa*?
- Understanding the financial and business restructuring possibilities and likelihoods for turning around the business and facilitating operating improvement – what will it take to turn this business around and is it likely to happen under current ownership/management?
- Being able to estimate the resulting value of the business (‘size of the pie’) and the allocation of value across the capital structure (‘how the pie will be split’) – valuation skills are of critical importance in any investing effort, but in distress situations there are many complications which challenge even the most seasoned valuations expert. We will spend considerable time on this and the role of finance (theory and practice) in helping us to understand how to estimate the size of the pie
- The legal environment – understanding the size of the pie is only the first step. We must

also be able to understand how the pie gets split across the capital structure. This will require knowledge of the legal position of each investor, which will include an understanding of the credit agreements, inter-creditor agreements and how an in-court restructuring (in Chapter 11, in the USA) will treat the various creditors.

By the end of the course participants should

- be familiar with the game theory essentials of a distressed restructuring
- be familiar with the various parties, and their roles and interests, in a typical restructuring
- be comfortable forecasting cash sources and uses to assess the extent of the crisis, the likelihood of recover, the debt repayment capacity, and understand, from an investing point of view, how to identify the fulcrum security and be able to assess the recovery potential of the different levels of the capital structure
- have a deep understanding of the principles of finance and valuation and how these enhance and enable the investor to better understand the size of the pie
- be familiar with the legal environment which frames distressed restructurings in the USA and how this impacts how the pie will be split among creditors
- have insights into the different legal and negotiating alternatives for resolving differences in interests across parties to facilitate deal conclusion
- be familiar with the tools and methods for anticipating the financial distress of an organization and understand why the firm is in financial distress
- be able to assess the extent to which alternative restructuring proposals will succeed or fail to enable correction of the management errors which led to the distress in the first place
- understand how to assess both the sources and magnitude of the value creation (or destruction) potential of a restructuring event as well as the various transfers of value across parties to the restructuring.

The course will comprise three phases: lectures, case discussions, and student-driven learning (interactive and/or research projects and personal reflection).

1. The first phase of the course will be lecture classes and guest speakers. These will focus on establishing the legal framework, including the fundamental rights and obligations of debtors, creditors, and other parties in interest in the various types of major chapter 11 cases, and the conceptual framework for assessing a firm's financial viability and the causes of financial distress and the value impact of alternative restructurings. This foundation will provide critical insight into understanding the motivations, strategies, and available tools for chapter 11 participants. We will also review and deepen valuation skills, forecasting skills, Excel model-building skills, and ability to assess investment opportunities and model these opportunities in Excel to distinguish the value of the opportunity from the price in order to assess its worthiness as an investment.
2. The second phase of the course will feature a series of case exercises, and classroom discussions and reflection. The case exercises are intended to provide participants an opportunity to work in teams and discuss, analyze, and propose their recommendations for resolving the case situation.

- The Bayfield case (waterfall exercise) is to be completed by each participant **individually**. You may discuss your work with other members of your team, but you must submit your Excel files individually for grading and credit.
- The Trump Entertainment Resorts (TER) (negotiation exercise) is to be completed in teams. This exercise will require multiple submissions of both reports (in pdf format) and Excel spreadsheets. Grading will be team-based.
- Of the four remaining cases, each team must submit a ‘long’ report – each long report will be a maximum of 3 pages text plus exhibits (in pdf format – exhibits may also be submitted in Excel format)) for 2 of the 4 cases. For the other 2 cases, for which the team did not submit a ‘long’ report, each team must submit a ‘short’ report which will be a maximum of 1 page without exhibits (please do not submit exhibits). The short reports will only be ‘pass/fail’ whereas the long reports will be graded.

Some of the case assignments contain questions that need to be addressed, however you will also be graded based upon how well you identify the relevant questions and issues to be addressed. Therefore, whether there are questions for the case or not, please consider (1) what the relevant questions are in the context of each case and (2) why these questions are relevant (or not), and then (3) perform the necessary analysis to address these questions.

3. The third phase of the course will involve student-driven learning, including the TER negotiation case simulation, in which students will be assigned participant roles and challenged to apply the lessons to navigate their way through a distressed negotiation exercise. There will also be a group-based research project - participants will be expected to research a particular case/topic/event related to corporate restructuring and submit a 5-10-page report and prepare a presentation to the class on the topic/event. Finally, each participant (individually) must submit a summary of her/his personal reflections on their key learnings from the course.

Grades will be based upon individual and team performance assessed as follows:

1. PARTICIPATION: Individual (15% of final grade)
2. WATERFALL EXERCISE (Bayfield): Individual (15% of final grade)
3. NEGOTIATION EXERCISE (TER): Group (20% of final grade)
4. CASE EXERCISES: Group; Long reports for 2 of the remaining 5 case exercises, short reports for remaining cases by all teams (25% of final grade)
5. TOPICAL GROUP RESEARCH PAPER: Group; A research paper on a self-selected topical issue/event related to distressed restructuring to be presented to the class (20% of final grade)
6. INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION PAPER (5% of final grade) Learning is an effortful process and I have added this assignment in place of a final exam. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that each individual devotes some time to reflecting back on this course and trying to recall and deepen your understanding of the many topics and concepts covered. It is intended as a ‘learning’ element, rather than as a ‘grading’ element. You are expected to submit your individual reflections on what you learned during this course and the insights you gained. It is expected to be between 2-5 pages and address the following

elements: (1) Summarize and demonstrate understanding of the concepts taught in this course, (2) Summarize the insights you gained, and (3) Describe how these insights will impact you/your behavior going forward. Please do not be evaluative (e.g., please avoid statements such as "I really loved the session when we talked about..." or "I found the discussion around xxx to be very confusing...") Simply emphasize your learning by structuring your reflections as, "What I learned was ...." Grading will be based on the depth and quality of your reflections as reflected in the depth and quality of the learning and insights you share in this report.

Note: all written work must be submitted via Canvas in either Excel format (for all spreadsheet submissions) or PDF format (for all written reports) and the filename must indicate the individual's name or team number (for group assignments include both team number and names of team members) and title of the assignment. For the Case Exercises, please ensure your submission also indicates (in the filename of the pdf document) whether it is the "long" report or the "short" report in addition to the name of the case.

## Draft Course Schedule

Class #	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	Wednesday, September 2, 2020	Course Introduction	no assignment due today
	Monday, September 7, 2020	Labor Day	no class today
2	Wednesday, September 9, 2020	Games and setting the stage	no assignment due today
3	Monday, September 14, 2020	Conceptual foundation - Valuation in Distress	no assignment due today
4	Wednesday, September 16, 2020	Intro to the Waterfall - Valuing the Business	no assignment due today
5	Monday, September 21, 2020	Intro to the Waterfall - Valuing the Business	no assignment due today
6	Wednesday, September 23, 2020	Financial Analysis & Valuation Principles	BG - 1 - Financial Analysis & Liquidity
7	Monday, September 28, 2020	Forecasting Cash Generation & Valuation	BG - 2 - Forecasted Cash Flow & Valuation
8	Wednesday, September 30, 2020	Value and Valuation	BG - 3 - Valuation Methodology
9	Monday, October 5, 2020	Debt capacity & Leverage	BG - 4 - Debt Capacity/Repayment and "Waterfall"
10	Wednesday, October 7, 2020	Allocating value through capital structure	Final discussion of Bayfield
11	Monday, October 12, 2020	Speaker (Advisors - Legal)	Speaker
12	Wednesday, October 14, 2020	Speaker (Advisors - Investment Banks)	Speaker
13	Monday, October 19, 2020	Reflections on Speaker presentations	no assignment due today
14	Wednesday, October 21, 2020	Speaker (Investor)	Speaker
15	Monday, October 26, 2020	Distress Investment/Negotiation Exercise	Intro to the TER negotiation exercise
16	Wednesday, October 28, 2020	Distress Investment/Negotiation Exercise	TER Debrief (post-negotiation worksheet due)
17	Monday, November 2, 2020	Credit Agreements	no assignment due today
18	Wednesday, November 4, 2020	Distressed Investment Analysis	Caesars Entertainment (group reports due)
19	Monday, November 9, 2020	Speaker (Turnaround Management)	Turnaround Management
20	Wednesday, November 11, 2020	Speaker (Turnaround Management)	Rossignol
21	Monday, November 16, 2020	Dealing with Chapter 11 - 363 Asset Sales	Chrysler 363 Sale to Fiat
22	Wednesday, November 18, 2020	Dealing with Chapter 11	iHeartMedia
23	Monday, November 23, 2020	Exchange Offers	Pinewood
24	Wednesday, November 25, 2020	Reflection	Open session for filling gaps and reflections
25	Monday, November 30, 2020	Presentations & Reflection	Group presentations
26	Wednesday, December 2, 2020	Presentations & Reflection	Group presentations
27	Monday, December 7, 2020	Presentations & Reflection	Group presentations
28	Wednesday, December 9, 2020	Presentations & Course wrap-up	Group presentations

List of Readings (Canvas may contain additional readings)

- Chapter 16, “Financial Distress,” from *Corporate Finance*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, by Berk and DeMarzo, 2016
- The Costs of Financial Distress, by Kevin Kaiser, lecture note
- “The Expected Costs of Distress,” Glover, *Journal of Financial Economics*, 119 (2016), 284-299.
- “The Ownership and Trading of Debt Claims in Chapter 11 Restructurings,” Ivashina, Iverson and Smith, , *Journal of Financial Economics*, 119 (2016), 316-335.
- “A Market-based Study of the Cost of Default,” Davydenko, Strebulaev, and Zhao, AFA Chicago Meetings Paper, 2012
- “How Costly is Financial (not Economic) Distress? Evidence from Highly Leveraged Transactions that Became Distressed,” Andrade and Kaplan, *Journal of Finance*, October 1998, 1443-1493
- “Coming Through in a Crisis: How Chapter 11 and the Debt Restructuring Industry Are Helping to Revive the US Economy,” Stuart Gilson, *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, Fall 2012
- “Managing for Value 2.0,” by Kaiser and Young, *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, Winter 2014
- “The Hazards of Growth,” by Kaiser and Young, *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, Summer 2015
- Chapters 3 & 4, from *The Blue Line Imperative*, by Kaiser and Young, 2013
- *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005
- Schoenberg, R.; Collier, N.; Bowman, C. Strategies for business turnaround and recovery: a 396 review and synthesis. *European Business Review* **2013**, 25, 243-262
- Douglas G. Baird & Robert K. Rasmussen, *Antibankruptcy*, 119 YALE L. J. 648 (2009-2010)
- James H.M. Sprayregen, *et al.*, *Chapter 11: Not Perfect, But Better than the Alternatives*, 14 J. BANKR. L. & PRAC. 6 (Dec. 2005)
- Statement of James H.M. Sprayregen to the ABI Commission for the Reform of the Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code
- Mike Spector & Tom McGinty, *Bankruptcy Court is Latest Battleground for Traders*, WALL ST. J. (Sept. 7, 2010), *available at* <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703309704575413643530508422.html>
- James H.M. Sprayregen, *et al.*, *The Race to the Starting line: Developing Prepackaged and Prenegotiated Reorganization Plans to Maximize Value, in Navigating Today’s Environment*, The Directors’ and Officers’ Guide to Restructuring (2010)
- Brian K. Tester, *et al.*, *Need for Speed: Prepackaged and Prenegotiated Bankruptcy*

*Plans* (American Bankruptcy Institute), available at <http://www.abiworld.org/committees/newsletters/busreorg/vol9num7/pack.pdf>

- Managing Financial Distress, by Kevin Kaiser, lecture note
- Chapter 5, “Distressed Firm Valuation,” from *Corporate Financial Distress and Bankruptcy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, by Altman and Hotchkiss, 2006
- Hon. Christopher S. Sontchi, *Valuation Methodologies: A Judge’s View*, 20 AM. BANKR. INST. L. REV. 1 (Spring 2012)
- Chapter 10, Profiting from Financial Distress: The Investor’s Perspective, from *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005
- Caesars Entertainment Corporation, Columbia Business School case CU65
- Chapter 11, Corporate Credit Scoring – Insolvency Risk Models, from *Corporate Financial Distress and Bankruptcy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, by Altman and Hotchkiss, 2006
- Modelling Default Risk, KMV
- Predicting a Firm’s Financial Distress – Merrill Lynch, Ivey case W12114
- Chapter 11, Corporate Credit Scoring – Insolvency Risk Models, from *Corporate Financial Distress and Bankruptcy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, by Altman and Hotchkiss, 2006
- Modelling Default Risk, KMV
- Predicting a Firm’s Financial Distress – Merrill Lynch, Ivey case W12114
- Dealing with Distress – Paramount Equipment, HBS case 9-914-557
- Hon. Christopher S. Sontchi, *Valuation Methodologies: A Judge’s View*, 20 AM. BANKR. INST. L. REV. 1 (Spring 2012)
- Chapter 8, Causes of Financial Distress and the Restructuring Implications, from *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005
- Pinewood Mobile Homes, HBS case 9-915-547
- The Energy Patch: Where Rights Offerings are ‘Sexy’ Again, Reuters, Aug. 1, 2017 (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-bankruptcy-offerings/the-energy-patch-where-rights-offerings-are-sexy-again-idUSKBN1AH408>)
- Rights Offerings in Bankruptcy: More than New Capital, *Journal of the Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Advisors*, Dec/Jan 2011
- “A Primer on Distressed Investing: Buying Companies by Acquiring Their Debt,” Stephen G. Moyer, David Martin, and John Martin, *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, Fall 2012
- Citigroup Exchange Offer, HBS case, 9-210-009
- Chapter 9, Options for Alleviating Financial Distress: The Company’s Perspective, from *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005

- Crisis at the Mill, INSEAD case study, IN1030
- Chapter 12, Dynamics of the Workout Process: The Endgame, from *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005
- Chrysler's Sale to Fiat, HBS case 9-210-022
- Chapter 10, Profiting from Financial Distress: The Investor's Perspective, from *Distressed Debt Analysis: Strategies for Speculative Investors*, by Stephen G. Moyer, 2005