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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Paulina Ruta (paulinar@wharton.upenn.edu)

Classroom & Time

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

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

- The Costs of Financial Distress, by Kevin Kaiser, lecture note
- Chapters 3 & 4, from *The Blue Line Imperative*, by Kaiser and Young, 2013
- Statement of James H.M. Sprayregen to the ABI Commission for the Reform of the Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code
- Brian K. Tester, *et al.*, *Need for Speed: Prepackaged and Prenegotiated Bankruptcy*
Managing Financial Distress, by Kevin Kaiser, lecture note


Hon. Christopher S. Sontchi, Valuation Methodologies: A Judge’s View, 20 AM. BANKR. INST. L. REV. 1 (Spring 2012)


Caesars Entertainment Corporation, Columbia Business School case CU65

Chapter 11, Corporate Credit Scoring – Insolvency Risk Models, from Corporate Financial Distress and Bankruptcy, 3rd 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)


Pinewood Mobile Homes, HBS case 9-915-547


Citigroup Exchange Offer, HBS case, 9-210-009

• 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