

Moravian College
Economics 392: Current Topics in Finance
Syllabus - Spring 2009

Professor: Dr. James West

Comenius Hall 215

Office Hours: M W 9:30 -10:30; Th 10:30 -11:30, 1:30 -2:30.

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Course Description:

Current Topics in Finance will assess contemporary issues in financial markets and institutions, corporate finance, investments, and the global economy. Topics will vary and be chosen to reflect the dynamic and often revolutionary nature of financial markets in a globalizing and technologically sophisticated environment. The regulatory and ethical environment of finance will be included among the issues studied. This course is designed for upper level Economics–finance majors as well as others with appropriate course background and interest by approval of the instructor. The course will also serve as one of the controlled electives required in the Economics-finance track.

Required prerequisite – MGMT 231; recommended – ECON 320

Course Objectives: This seminar will engage students in high level thinking about current financial topics in varied finance areas (managerial, markets and institutions, investments, personal finance, international finance, public finance and development finance). The course will build on knowledge gained in prerequisite courses with a particular focus on how the current financial, economic and political environment impact finance. To this end the course will employ current periodicals, websites, relevant scholarly articles and books, outside speakers and media to help students develop an in-depth understanding of the causes, ramification and proposed solutions to the revolutionary financial environment in which we live. Student will build a portfolio documenting their learning throughout the course.

Required Reading: The Wall Street, Journal, Barron’s and The Economist. (This list will grow throughout the semester.

Reference and Recommended Reading:

- Cecchetti, Stephen, Money, Banking and Financial Markets 2nd Edition McGraw Hill 2008.

- Ross, Westerfield, and Jordan, *Essentials of Corporate Finance*, 6e, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2008
- Weaver, Samuel and J. Fred Weston, *Strategic Financial Management*, Thomson Southwestern, 2008.
- Bodie, Kane & Marcus, *Essentials of Investments*, 7th edition, Irwin/McGraw Hill
- Frasca, Ralph R. *Personal Finance: An Integrated Approach*, Prentice Hall, 2009.

Research Tools Art Reeves Library:

- [Business Source Elite](#)
- [BizSeer.ist](#)
- [EconLit](#)
- [FirstResearch](#) – available on campus only
- [Hoover's Online](#)
- [S&P's NetAdvantage](#)
- [ValueLine](#) – available on campus only

Grading and Course Policies:

Class attendance and prepared participation are essential components of this seminar. There will be two semester exams and a portfolio which is due in preliminary form midterm week and final form at the beginning of the last week of classes. The exams will count 25% each toward the final grade. Class performance (including participation, quizzes and presentations will count for 20%. The portfolio project will count for 30%, is due by the first day of final exams. More than two absences will result in the drop of a letter grade. More than four two letter grades. Policies on Academic Honesty, as outlined in the student handbook, will be enforced. No food should be brought to class.

** Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Class Schedule

- 1/20- Revolutions in Finance: What's going on? The economics, ethics and social/political impact of the financial crisis of 2008/9.**

- 1/27 The financial crisis and personal financial planning.**

- 2/3 The financial crisis and money and capital markets.**

- 2/10 The financial crisis and financial institutions.**

- 2/17 The financial crisis and public finance.**

- 2/24 Test 1 – Portfolio review**

- 3/3 Spring Break**

- 3/10 The financial crisis and corporate finance**

- 3/17 The financial crisis and investments management.**

- 3/24 International dimensions of the financial crisis**

- 3/31 The financial crisis and economic development.**

- 4/7 Big and small lessons for the financial crisis.**

- 4/14 Exam 2: Student Presentations and discussions 1**

- 4/21 Student Presentations and discussions 2**

4/28 Student Presentations and discussions 3.

Final Exams – Portfolios due the first day of final exams.