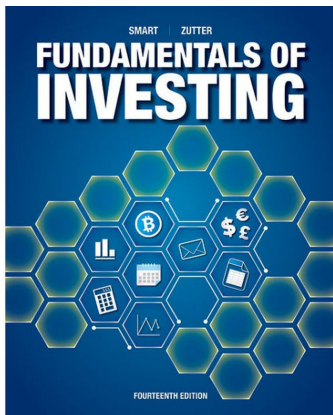


FIN4504-2802 Investments: Spring 2024
Course Dates: March 18 – May 10

My Professor

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Instructor | Dr. Aaron DeSpain |
| Title | Finance Professor |
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| Course Credits | 3 |
| Notes | Students should anticipate a response to MyCourses email within 24 hours, but I typically respond very quickly. If MyCourses is down or you are unable to upload your assignments, or if you have questions not related to this class, please send correspondence to my main SPC email account above. Assignment grading is normally completed within 3 days after submission due date . Email availability 7 days/week. |

Textbook, Online Finance Lab (Pearson), and StockTrak—all required



Fundamentals of Investing, 14th Edition, by Smart & Zutter (Pearson).

Pearson lab and e-Text only (no physical textbook): ISBN 8220123787769. Once lab access is established, a **loose-leaf** version of the text can be purchased for \$39.99 via the **Purchase Options** module inside the lab course. See lab setup instructions and Course ID in **MyCourses**.

Also register for **StockTrak** via the registration link provided in MyCourses.

Student cost for StockTrak is \$31.95 (Silver level). No Book Code is needed at registration.

Excel for Time Value of Money

For Time Value of Money calculations (chapter 4a), the use of Excel is required. As with the FIN3403 Financial Management course, Excel is the preferred tool for solving these types of problems. It is also utilized in several other statistics and finance courses at SPC, so it is best to continue working and gaining proficiency with it. There is a module of Excel resource videos in MyCourses and students are encouraged to review these prior to attempting the chapter 4a assignments.

Course Description

This course examines the nature of the modern capital markets, investments and portfolio management. It is intended to blend theory with appropriate application to create strategies to achieve successful value creation. The characteristics and valuation of equity, fixed income, and derivative securities will be addressed.

Prerequisites: FIN 3403 and admission to Banking BAS or Business Administration BS program

Course Objectives

1. The student will understand the nature, requirements, and characteristics of the capital markets.
2. The student will understand the disciplines and strategies for creating and managing portfolios.
3. The student will gain an understanding of research methods, securities analysis, and securities selection disciplines and methods.
4. The student will gain an understanding of the characteristics, valuation, and application of equity, fixed income, and derivative securities.
5. The student will gain an understanding of 'risk' as it relates to different classes of investment securities and how it impacts personal investment decisions.

Course Structure

The course is designed with 8 weekly modules designed to provide the student with both theory and practical application of a variety of investment strategies within a modern portfolio. Topics include Markets and Transactions; Risk and Return; Time Value of Money; Modern Portfolio Concepts; Stocks and Valuation; Fixed-Income and Valuation; Mutual Funds and ETF's; Portfolio Management; and, Derivative Securities. Learning activities include the following:

1. **PowerPoints** -- Presentations provide the student with an overview of weekly lessons.
2. **Readings** – Students are assigned weekly readings from the textbook. Readings are required to support students in developing the knowledge and skill needed to apply the key concepts, principles, analysis and computational techniques of this course. Students need to complete the readings to adequately prepare for class assignments/activities.

Students are encouraged to pursue further research within StockTrak (online trading simulation).

3. Dynamic Study Modules (DSM) – Question sets assigned and available in the Pearson finance lab homework section. (Additionally, they can be accessed from the main course page of the lab for further practice. But they should initially be completed in the homework assignment section.) These are great memory refreshers after reading the corresponding textbook chapter and significantly enhance knowledge retention. They are pre-requisites to the quizzes for each chapter, meaning the chapter DSM must be completed with a score of 80% or better before the quiz will open and be available for completion. **0 points towards grade but unlock the quiz for the same chapter.**

4. Quizzes - Administered in the Pearson finance lab for each chapter to test student knowledge of key concepts associated with the fundamentals of Investing. Each quiz has 9 question. Two attempts are allowed, with a 30-minute time limit for each (only best attempt is counted for course grading). **9 points per quiz.**

5. Homework (problems) – Administered in the Pearson finance lab for each chapter to give students practice with the fundamental concepts, analysis and computational techniques. Unlimited attempts given with no set time limit. Students will also receive automated feedback while working the problems. **1-2 points per question; number of questions varies by assignment.**

5a) **Excel Projects** – Most of the homework assignments include one or more Excel project questions. These questions require students to download an Excel file and complete question parts using Excel formulas and cell references. Two submissions are allowed for each project. The submissions are auto graded. Review detailed grading feedback immediately in the **Results** module of the lab. Students should be familiar with these projects from other courses such as FIN3403 (Financial Management) and QMB3200 (Business Statistics). **3 points each.**

6. StockTrak – StockTrak is an online trading simulator for stocks, bonds and other financial assets. Weekly exercises are completed via the StockTrak website. Students will complete fifteen trading exercises during the course, which include videos and articles within the website. The simulation will guide students through a multi-step process to create a well-diversified portfolio of investment securities. Although the money invested will be fictitious, the concepts learned, and theories tested will be real. **5-12 points per exercise.**

7. Discussion forums – Weekly discussion posts are required. Students will post written commentary, and other required items when applicable, directly related to the StockTrak trading exercises for that week. **10 points per post.**

****STOCKTRAK ASSIGNMENTS ARE IN LIEU OF MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS**NO MID-TERM OR FINAL EXAM WILL BE GIVEN****

Grading

Standard final grading scale will be used (see below). The textbook contains 16 chapters, and all will be covered. The textbook will be emphasized heavily in Pearson lab Quizzes (one per chapter) and homework assignments. The course uses a *weighted average* grading policy. **Quizzes (including DSM pre-req's) are weighted 10% of the final grade, homework assignments (problems and Excel projects) are weighted 40%, StockTrak trading exercises are weighted 40%, and StockTrak discussion posts are weighted 10%.**

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

60 – 69% = D

<60% = F

Assignment Schedule

Weekly assignments are broken down for students in the **Assignment Schedule and Due Dates** module in MyCourses. Please print the document out and use it as a Quick Reference Guide to the course. Students should reference this frequently to make sure they are submitting work on time and are prepared for Quizzes and Assignments.

Late Assignment Policy

No late submissions are accepted unless the student provides a documented excuse (i.e. family death certificate, doctor's note, etc.). After verification of this documentation, a late submission may be accepted if it is completed within one week (or sooner if determined by the professor) from the due date. Advance notice should be given to the instructor whenever possible to arrange for further alternatives. Please note that forgetting, work schedule, computer problems, vacation/travel, and lack of planning do not constitute an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline. Students should review the assignment schedule and carefully plan their study time each week to complete the action items on time.

Attendance Policy

Participation in the course is essential to avoid being withdrawn for non-attendance. It includes completing and submitting ALL assignments on time and taking part in all other course communications in a timely manner. The **Assignment Schedule and Due Dates** document provides an overview of all assignments and due dates for this course, which are required for active participation.

Excused absences, of course, will not count against students. However, students must contact the professor to make appropriate arrangements and provide supporting documentation accordingly. Advance notice should be given to the instructor whenever possible to arrange for alternatives.

This course will adhere to an **80-70 rule for participation**. This means that at least 80% of the lab *homework* assignments (not quizzes) need to have been *attempted* and at least 70% of the questions/problems within those assignments also *attempted* in order to be marked 'attended' when attendance is required. *Attempted* means there is a graded result (correct or incorrect). Attendance is reported to the college after Week 1, Week 2 and the 60% point of the course (typically Week 5). Note that the 80-70 rule is applied to all previous lab assignments up to that date, not just that particular week.

Additionally, failing to complete multiple StockTrak trading exercises (3 or more) prior to the 60% course attendance deadline (typically Week 5) may result in the student being withdrawn with a grade of 'WF'.

Lack of attendance can result in students being administratively withdrawn. Students are given a 'W' grade in the course if consecutive issues occur in Weeks 1 and 2, and a 'WF' for insufficient attendance/participation through the 60% point of the course (see last date to withdraw in the SPC academic calendar to avoid this issue as it can result in serious financial aid and GPA consequences). Students in their third attempt at completing a course will be given a 'WF' grade at any point in the term if failing to meet attendance requirements.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty and plagiarism fall under the Academic Honesty Policy of the college. The College of Business has a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty and if the student is in violation, an "F" in the course can be applied.

Understand that not properly giving credit to the sources used in your work, even when paraphrasing, is considered plagiarism and can result in not only a zero for that assignment, but an "F" in the course. Also a direct violation of the Academic Honesty Policy is copying and/or submitting Excel work that is not the original work of the current student. Review the policy here: <https://go.spcollege.edu/AcademicHonesty/>

Assignments in this course are to be completed *individually*. Contact your professor with questions regarding course content or assignment instructions.

Please note that utilizing so-called tutor sites like Course Hero, Chegg, Bartleby and Quizlet is strictly prohibited in this course. Students may not post documents, screenshots or other questions for help to these websites or similar ones. These sites do nothing more than facilitate cheating. Students should seek out additional help from their professor, the lab study resources and/or SPC tutors, if available. Use of these sites will result in a zero for the applicable assignment(s) and may also result in an automatic 'F' grade in the course, particularly when assessment or Excel information is shared.

Learner Support

View the [Accessibility Services](#) site for additional accommodations.

View the [Academic Support and Student Success](#) site for additional learning resources.

Library and additional learning resources can be found [Here](#).

Additional Resources

As an SPC student it's vital that you know Titans Care. You can access resources through [SPC's Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#), a collaborative resource for students with mental health or general life issues. SAP provides help and education in suicide prevention, mental health, substance abuse awareness and more. It is SPC's belief that supporting mental wellness is everyone's charge and that one loss as a result of substance abuse, mental illness, or suicide is one too many. If you or a loved one are considering suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

See additional support and other resources in the SPC Resources section of your *Course Home* page.

Syllabus Addendum

Syllabus addendum information can be found [Here](#). Once on the page, click the Additional Addendum link above the "How to be a Successful Student" title. The link will enable a PDF document download. General attendance information and Covid-19 guidelines are included in the document.