

ACCOUNTING 5310
CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTING ISSUES
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
SPRING 2021

Instructor Contact Information

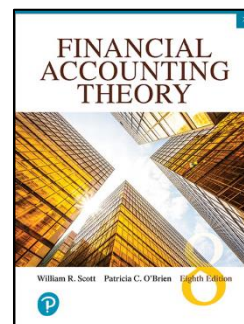
Instructor: Dr. David Folsom, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Accounting
Office: 243 Business Administration Building (Main Campus)
Telephone: (915) 747-7759
Email (best): dmfolsom@utep.edu (Please note I do not check my email on Sundays.)
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm via Zoom, or by appointment as needed (email me for an alternate appointment).
Office Hours [Zoom Link](#)
Office Hours Meeting ID: 821 4117 6572
Office Hours Passcode: Folsom21

Class Meetings: Class Meeting [Zoom Link](#)
Class Meeting ID: 862 6567 8529
Class Meeting Passcode: FASB2021

Required Course Materials

Textbook: Scott & O'Brien, *Financial Accounting Theory* 8e, Pearson, 2020. ISBN 978-0-13-416668-1.

Technology: (1) Course Webpage on Blackboard (please check often).
(2) Authorized Zoom account.
(3) Computer with web camera and microphone.
(4) Respondus Lock-Down Browser ([instructions](#)).
(5) Basic computer software (word processing, spreadsheet, pdf reader, etc.).

**Course Description**

We will study:

- Development of accounting theory.
- Controversial issues involved in the measurement and reporting of enterprise periodic income.
- Authoritative pronouncements.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will:

1. Understand the basic theoretical foundations of corporate financial reporting in a market economy.
2. Be able to discuss theories on how accounting information is reflected in security pricing.
3. Understand how information asymmetry affects financial reporting.
4. Be able to explain basic theories underlying earnings management behavior.
5. Gain increased understanding of how academic research informs accounting thought and financial reporting standard setting.
6. Show increased proficiency in critical thinking skills.

Grades

Your final letter grade will be based on the following items (weighted as follows):

Final Exam:

Final Comprehensive Exam: Due by Saturday, February 20th at 11:59 pm 400 points

Assignments:

Introduction Video: Due by Saturday, January 16th prior to class 25 points

Reading Discussion Boards (9): Due before most class meetings 225 points

Homework Assignments (4): Due before appropriate class meetings 300 points

In-Class Participation:

50 points

Total Possible Points

1,000 points

Grades are assigned using the following scale:

Grade Level	Achievement	Percentage of Points
A	Excellent	90.0 to 100.0%
B	Good	80.0 to 89.9%
C	Average	70.0 to 79.9%
D	Below Average but Passing	60.0 to 60.9%
F	Failure	< 60%

Please note that I reserve the right to relax these cut-off points depending upon class performance.

Final Exam (400 points)

The final exam will be offered online and will be available after the last virtual class meeting. Students will be required to use the LockDown browser to take the exam via Blackboard. Additional information about downloading this tool is available on Blackboard. For the exam, students should use a computer with a camera for monitoring purposes.

Students may reference hard copies of their class notes, printed out papers, and the textbook while taking the final exam. Online materials, however, are not allowed and accessing online materials will be considered cheating on the final exam. The final will be a timed exam once students begin the exam and is to be completed in one session.

Re-grading Exams: All questions regarding exam grading must be submitted ***in writing*** to me ***within three days after the exam is graded.*** Re-grading requests submitted after the deadline will not be honored ***for any reason.***

Introduction Video (25 Points)

Students will create a short video to introduce themselves to Professor Folsom and fellow students. These videos will be turned-in and accessible via Blackboard.

Reading Discussion Boards (9 * 25 points each = 225 total points)

Before all class meetings (except the first class meeting), students will be asked to briefly answer some questions about the assigned readings. Students will also be asked to respond and comment on other students' responses to these questions. Your lowest discussion board score will be substituted with a perfect score (effectively dropping your lowest reading discussion board score). Each discussion board assignment will be worth twenty-five points and will be graded on a continuous scale between zero and twenty-five points. Approximate points in this scale are as follows:

25 points	Evidence of legitimate effort made to complete all assigned questions with reasonable answers and good writing; thoughtful responses to other students' ideas are given.
10 points	All questions are not addressed or answers suggest inadequate effort and/or poor writing; little or no apparent effort in responding to other students' answers.
0 points	Discussions are not submitted on time, or answers suggest little or no effort, or answers are obviously copied or similar to another student's answers; inappropriate responses are given to other students' answers.

Homework Assignments (4 * 75 points each = 300 total points)

Four homework assignments will be due at various times during the class and will be submitted via Blackboard. **Homework will be due before the associated class period without exception (including absence or Internet connection difficulties).** The assignments are used to assess your understanding of what we have covered in class. Homework must be done individually. You will be graded on the accuracy, reasonableness, correctness, and clarity of your answers. Each homework assignment will be worth seventy-five points. No make-up assignments will be offered for any reason.

Class Participation (50 points)

Students are expected to attend virtual classes and actively participate. Participation credit will be given based on the **quality and quantity** of your participation. Generally, the more you volunteer answers or ask questions, the higher your participation credit will be. For full credit, students should average **two insightful** comments or questions per class meeting. We will have ten class meetings and students should average (at minimum) twenty **noticeable** comments or questions during the semester (worth about two and one-half points per comment). Participation should also be somewhat evenly spaced throughout the semester (rather than during just a few class meetings) for full credit.

Unexplained absences/tardiness will result in negative participation credit. If you cannot attend class for any reason, please communicate with me the reason for your absence **before** class. If you are absent without proper communication, you will lose ten participation points per absence. Even if you have a justifiable absence and have communicated with me, you cannot earn additional participation points for that class period as you are not in attendance. Due to the accelerated schedule of this course, if you are absent for more than three class periods for any reason (except university-approved absences), you will receive a failing grade (F).

Unprofessional behavior may also result in negative participation points. Please use the tools in Zoom (e.g., raising your hand) to ensure the class discussion remains professional.

Virtual Class Meeting Expectations

The course will have ten online class meetings using Zoom. Admittance to these meetings will require students to have a certified Zoom account (i.e., to have signed up for a free Zoom account).

All virtual class meetings will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard. The use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. The instructor will not share the recordings of class activities outside of course participants (i.e., students, teaching assistants, graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that are engaged during a class session). **Students may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Extra Credit – Web Cameras (30 points)

Students who have web cameras on during virtual classes tend to learn materials better. Due to privacy concerns, requiring web cameras to be on during virtual classes cannot be prescribed. However, students can earn a bonus of up to three points per class meeting (30 points) if their web cameras are on. Pr. Folsom will randomly take a screen shot of the Zoom gallery during virtual classes to assign these bonuses.

No other extra credit will be offered to any student, for any reason.

Course Timing

To receive a grade in this course, students must complete all course requirements within the term of the course according to the outline and schedule given in the syllabus.

Plagiarism and Cheating

You are encouraged to discuss homework assignments with other classmates. However, copying work from any source, including classmates, homework files, the Internet, etc. is NOT acceptable. **Submitting material that has been copied constitutes plagiarism and will be treated as cheating.** All students are expected to complete their own work and to abide by the Handbook of Operating Procedures available in the Office of the Dean of Students. The final exam will be closed book and closed note and should reflect your individual efforts. **Any suspected cheating during exams or assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.**

Two technologies may be used to ensure the integrity of student-submitted work. For uploaded assignments, the coursework will be submitted through Turn-It-In, a plagiarism detecting software. Turn-It-In is used to review assignment submissions for originality to ensure sources are properly attributed rather than paraphrased. The final exam will be administered using the Respondus Lock Down Browser and Respondus Monitor, a UTEP-approved test proctoring software. Students will need a reliable internet connection and a web camera.

Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Virtual class meetings will be held using Zoom. Students will need to be authenticated users of Zoom (i.e., have a free Zoom account) to participate in virtual class meetings. Students also need to ensure their UTEP e-mail accounts are working and that they have access to the Web using a stable web browser for other course communications. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, students should first update their browsers, clear the browser cache, or try switching to another browser.

Students will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. Students will need access to various computer software including (but not limited to) Microsoft Word, Microsoft

Excel, Adobe Acrobat Reader, and Windows Media Player (or another audio/video player). Students can download Microsoft Office for free via UTEP's [Microsoft Office Portal](#).

IMPORTANT: For technical difficulties, please contact the [UTEP Help Desk](#) to work with staff who are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. In general, the Help Desk is much better equipped than Professor Folsom to assist students!

Online Class Etiquette

Sometimes communication online can be challenging. Sometimes one may miscommunicate what is meant, or one may misunderstand what others mean because of the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe these guidelines may result in disciplinary action and reporting to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

- Always consider audience. This is a Master's-level educational forum and all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard and Zoom meetings are not public internet venues; all postings and communication should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and the professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

COVID-19 Precautions

You must **STAY AT HOME** and **REPORT** if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus – for any reason – you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let your instructor know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have or suspect a disability and need accommodations, you should contact Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 as soon as possible. You may also email the office at cass@utep.edu or visit the office in the Union Building East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Course Calendar

A *tentative* course calendar with a class-by-class description of course activities can be found below. It includes the topics to be covered each class meeting, assignments, and all due dates. Be aware that I cannot predict the precise flow of the course and these dates may have to be adjusted slightly from time to time. Modifications to the schedule and changes in course requirements will be announced in class AND/OR through Blackboard. Please check Blackboard often to be abreast of these changes.

Date	What's Due?	Before-Class Readings	Topic(s)
Wed., 1/13		Textbook Chapter 1 Waymire & Basu (2008) through Ch. 3 (pp. 1-18) & Table 1 (pp. 113-119) FASB Conceptual Framework, Chapters 1 & 3 (2018)	Course Overview History of Accounting Concepts Underlying Accounting Objectives of Financial Reporting
Sat., 1/16	<i>Meeting #2 Discussion Board Introduction Video</i>	Textbook Chapter 2 Paton & Littleton (1940) through Ch. 2 (pp. 1-23) FASB Exposure Draft Conceptual Framework, Chapter 4 (2020)	Present Value Models Concepts Underlying Accounting (Continued)
Wed., 1/20	<i>Meeting #3 Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 3 Paton & Littleton (1940) Ch. 3 – Ch. 6 (pp. 24-117) FASB Exposure Draft Conceptual Framework, Chapter 7 (2016)	Decision Usefulness Concepts Underlying Accounting (Continued) Presentation Concepts
Sat., 1/23	Homework #1 <i>Meeting #4 Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 4 FASB Conceptual Framework, Chapter 8 (2018) Gordon & Porter (2009) Li (2010), pp. 221-230	Efficient Markets Disclosure Concepts Reading Academic Research
Wed., 1/27	<i>Meeting #5 Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 5 Nichols & Wahlen (2004) Beaver (1973)	Value Relevance of Accounting Information

Date	What's Due?	Before-Class Readings	Topic(s)
Sat., 1/30	Homework #2 <i>Meeting #6</i> <i>Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 6 Watts (2003)	Measurement Approaches Accounting Conservatism
Wed., 2/3	<i>Meeting #7</i> <i>Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 7 Barth & Landsman (2018) Linsmeier & Wheeler (2021)	Measurement Applications Fair Value Measurement Goodwill Subsequent Accounting
Sat., 2/6	Homework #3 <i>Meeting #8</i> <i>Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 8 Dichev & Skinner (2002)	Efficient Contracting
Wed., 2/10	<i>Meeting #9</i> <i>Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 9 Eisenhart (1989)	Agency Theory
Sat., 2/13	Homework #4 <i>Meeting #10</i> <i>Discussion Board</i>	Textbook Chapter 11 Graham et al (2005)	Earnings Management
Sat., 2/20	FINAL EXAM DUE	Zimmerman (2015) (To be used for assessment on final exam.)	