

FIN 3315
Investments
Department of Economics and Finance
Woody L. Hunt College of Business
The University of Texas at El Paso

1 General Information

Instructor: Spencer Barnes, Ph.D.
Email: scbarnes@utep.edu
Office: BUSN 235
Office Hours: Virtually by Appointment (9 am to 5 pm; any weekday)
Dates: 01/20/26 to 03/13/26

Course: FIN 3315
Location: Online
Time: Asynchronous

2 Course Objectives

This class offers an introduction to the field of modern investments and security analysis. It includes an examination of investment instruments, the investment environment, the concept of risk and return, and the interactive forces between the economy, industries, and individual firms. Investments is the study of the behavior of the market and assets. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the central questions in the field and the main ideas institutional investors use to think about those questions. We will review standard investment concepts, and then combine them into simple but powerful models that can be used to analyze asset classes. The core models are simplified versions of theoretical and quantitative models used by banks, institutional investors, and in cutting edge academic research.

Note: Since this is an 8 week course (and a normal semester is 16 weeks), that means you are expected to devote *at least 16 hours per week* to reading, studying, completing assignments, watching lectures, and preparing for class.

3 Course Resources

Textbook: This course will primarily draw from *Smart, Scott and Lawrence J. Gitman and Michael D. Joehnk. Fundamentals of Investing. Pearson Publishers; thirteenth edition. ISBN-13:978-0134083308*. However, certain topics may be presented from other sources, which will occasionally be posted on the course website. Students will only be responsible for material covered in class, but I will follow the textbook quite closely, so I strongly recommend that you obtain a copy.

Course Website: When you are officially registered for the course, you should see “FIN 3315, Investments,” listed on your course homepage. This is your link to the course website and all course materials.

Communication: Administrative announcements will be placed on the announcements page of the course website and/or distributed via e-mail. This is my primary means of communication with you as a class. I consider this sufficient notification. For this reason, you should check the announcements page and your e-mail regularly throughout the semester.

Note: Students are not excused from assignments because they do not have the textbook or because they have ordered it by mail but it has not arrived yet; it is your responsibility to obtain access to

the required resources in a timely manner.

4 Tentative Outline

Dates	Subject	Book Chapters
01/20/26 - 01/25/26	Investments Overview	1, 2, 3
01/26/26 - 02/01/26	Return, Risk, and MPT	4, 5
02/02/26 - 02/15/26	Stocks	6, 7, 8
02/16/26	Midterm Exam	
02/17/26 - 03/01/26	Market Efficiency; Fixed Income; Bonds	9, 10, 11
03/02/26 - 03/08/26	Mutual Funds; Portfolio Management	12, 13
03/09/26 - 03/13/26	Options; Futures	14, 15
03/13/26	Final Exam	

5 Assignments

This course will employ participation and exams as evaluation methods.

- **Participation:** The objective of this asynchronous online case study discussion is to provide students with a flexible platform to analyze and discuss real-world finance scenarios independently. This activity aims to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the application of theoretical concepts in a self-paced manner. We will cover seven case studies from MIT that relate to finance and accounting.
 - Individual Contribution: Provide written individual contributions such as your analysis, critical thinking, and engagement in discussions. For full credit, your initial review and thoughts of the case study will need to be 500 words.
 - Grading is as follows:

Task	Points
Quality of Analysis (at least 500 words)	6
Application of Theoretical Concepts	2
Critical Thinking and Insight	1
Clarity of Expression, Proper Grammar and Formatting	1

- **Homework:** You will have 15 homework assignments worth 10 points each. Students have unlimited time and attempts. No late homework assignments will be accepted.
- **Exams:** You will have a midterm and final exam. Neither of these exams will be comprehensive. You will complete the exam on the course website. Both exams are closed notes and book. Both will use Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor to ensure you follow this guideline. You have 2 hours to complete the exams. Once you start the exam you must finish it within this time frame. Your answers will automatically be submitted at the end of two hours. There are 50 multiple choice questions on each exam. Each question is worth 2 points. Each exam is worth 100 points total. **IMPORTANT:** You can only view and work on one question at a time. Each exam also prohibits backtracking. So, once you hit next on a question, there is no going back.

6 Grading

The points for computing final course grades are given below. The scale for assigning final course grades will follow the distribution given by the University. Specifically, 420-378 points result in an A, 377-336 points result in a B, 335-294 point results in a C, 293-252 points result in a D, and less than 252 points result in a F. **If you are a finance major or minor, then the passing grade for this class is a C or better; otherwise, the passing grade is a D or better.**

Assignment	Points	Due Date	Time
Discussion	10	01/25/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 1 Homework	10	01/25/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 2 Homework	10	01/25/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 3 Homework	10	01/25/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	02/01/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 4 Homework	10	02/01/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 5 Homework	10	02/01/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	02/08/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	02/15/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 6 Homework	10	02/15/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 7 Homework	10	02/15/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 8 Homework	10	02/15/26	11:59 pm
Midterm Exam	100	02/16/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	02/22/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	03/01/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 9 Homework	10	03/01/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 10 Homework	10	03/01/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 11 Homework	10	03/01/26	11:59 pm
Discussion	10	03/08/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 12 Homework	10	03/08/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 13 Homework	10	03/08/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 14 Homework	10	03/13/26	11:59 pm
Ch. 15 Homework	10	03/13/26	11:59 pm
Final Exam	100	03/13/26	11:59 pm

7 Policies

Grading Policy

I will not accept late assignments, nor will I allow for make up exams. Unless the situations are dire, with proof adhering to the University attendance policy below, these policies are strict. Adjustments in test grades will be made only within the week following the test; after one week, no grades will be changed for any reason.

It is your responsibility to monitor your grades on all activities on a weekly basis by checking your grades on the course website. If you fail to do so, and later in the semester or at the end of the semester, find an error in an earlier grade, it will not be corrected. You have one week from the time the grade for each activity is posted to the course website to check for errors or other problems with the grade. If you find an error or problem with your grade, you should bring it to my attention

as soon as possible and then you should check your grades regularly after that to ensure that it has been corrected.

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the grading statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

University Attendance Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

University Withdrawal Policy

A student may officially withdraw from this class with an automatic W at any time before the University's deadline. No withdrawals will be allowed after this date. This is University policy. Automatic withdrawals will not be made by the instructor. To be withdrawn from the class, students must take the appropriate actions on or before the University deadlines.

Academic Honor Policy

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. More information regarding UTEP policies related to academic integrity is available on HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal. If you need to discuss accommodations that are already in place, please talk to me within the first two weeks of the semester. I will do my best to provide a positive and accessible learning environment for everyone in this class.

Copyright Policy

Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with

and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act.

Free Tutoring from UTEP

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at UTEP. For more information, visit the Miner Learning Center (MLC). MLC offers professor, section based supplemental instruction and tutoring. The professors handpick the students working for MLC, so visiting students are sure to have accurate, professor based assistance. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Your continuation in this course section beyond the drop/add period is presumptive evidence that you understand and agree to all the policies and expectations set forth in this syllabus.