I. Objectives of the course

The objective of this course is to develop your ability to critically evaluate and conduct empirical research on a variety of contemporary accounting and corporate finance topics. Our discussions will highlight the following:

• A good understanding of research designs in accounting and finance research.
• The skills to design and conduct your own empirical research.
• Opportunities for future research in selected areas that might fit your research interests.

II. Textbook (recommended, not required)

As we try to cover new research papers in this course, textbook is not required. However, it is beneficial to have some reference books. Below I list three of them.


(Note: The library has these three books either hard copy or electronic version. The one by Min is more related to accounting and finance research, and I shared electronic version on Blackboard).

Weisbach, M. S. (2021). The Economist’s Craft: An Introduction to Research, Publishing, and Professional Development (I will share a PDF version of this book, which the author provided early on his website).

III. Format of the course

The course will be taught face-to-face in a seminar format, unless the COVID situation becomes worse and requires remote teaching. Class attendance is mandatory. You are expected to participate actively in the classroom through reading required materials, presenting assigned papers, asking/answering questions, etc. You will also be asked to write referee reports and research proposals and conduct empirical analyses to get preliminary results of your proposed studies.
In general, for each class, we will focus our discussion on three/four papers in an area with several papers as supplemental and background readings. It is expected that each of you will read critically and carefully and think deeply about the assigned papers before class and be prepared to discuss the readings in detail. For each assigned reading, a student will be assigned as the discussion leader. The presenter needs to prepare the slides and send out to the instructors and classmates by **10:00 pm** on the night before the next day morning class. To make sure that everyone reads the paper, non-presenters need to prepare a list of questions and send out to the instructors (only) by the same time. The instructors (or a student appointed) will facilitate the discussion of papers with these questions. Students are expected to ask questions and provide criticisms of the paper during the session. The quality of these questions and discussions will be considered into your class discussions and participation grade.

### IV. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class presentations and participation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee report (due week #10)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (about 4, each 5 points)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replication + extension (due week #12)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 short research proposals (5 points each)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final research proposal and presentation (due week #15)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>(10 points for proposal and 10 points for presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
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### V. Tentative class schedule (may change when necessary)

**Class #1 (1/18/2022)**
1. Overview of the course: syllabus, course expectation, grading, etc.
2. Generating research ideas
3. Promoting research ideas with figures
4. Writing the paper

**Method #1 Descriptive statistics**

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


Chochrane, J. H., Writing Tips for Ph.D. Students, Working paper, 2005

**Class #2 (1/25/2022)**
Method #2: Review of OLS/Logit models, fixed effects, and clustering standard errors

*Class discussion papers:*
Review of OLS regression (*group #1 lecture*)

Review of Logit regression (*group #2 lecture*)

Mitton, T. Methodological Variation in Empirical Corporate Finance. *The Review of Financial Studies.* (Yun Ke will cover this paper)

**General readings:**


**Class #3 (2/1/2022)**
Method #3: Difference-in-Differences (DID) and its applications

*Class discussion papers:*
Research, Forthcoming. *(you should be able to replicate this paper as there is no special data required)*


**General readings:**


**Class #4 (2/8/2022)**
Method #4: Instrumental variable (IV) approach

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #5 (2/15/2022)**
Method #5: Propensity score matching (PSM) and its application (Dr. Valbona Sulcaj)

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #6 (2/22/2022) (the time can be changed to early semester)**
Method #6: Regression discontinuity (RD) and its application in tax research (Dr. Bo Gao)

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #7 (3/1/2022)**
Research topic #1: Supply chain stuff (Dr. Aaron Nelson)

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


Class #8 (3/8/2022)
Research topic #2: Non-GAAP earnings

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #9 (3/22/2022)**

Research topic #3: The effect of social network (or social connection)

*Class discussion papers:*


*General readings:*


**Class #10 (3/29/2022)**

Research topic #4: The effect of media/social media

*Class discussion papers:*


**General readings:**


**Class #11 (4/5/2022)**
Research topic #5: various topics

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #12 (4/12/2022)**
Research topic #6: Textual analysis

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #13 (4/19/2022)**

Research topic #7: The use of interesting data in accounting and finance

**Class discussion papers:**


**General readings:**


**Class #14 (4/26/2022)**
Research topic #8: Machine learning/artificial intelligence

*Class discussion papers:*


*General readings:*


**Class #15 (5/3/2022) (Last class for student presentations)**
Presentation of students’ research proposals (no data work) (25 minutes each x 7 = 175 minutes)

15 minutes presentation + 10 minutes Q&A (may subject to change if I feel it is necessary to give your more time to present, but I will discuss with you on this)

*Note that your instructor(s) reserve the right to adjust the syllabus and/or class sequence when it is necessary and to better fit guest speakers’ schedule.*