

**The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Economics and Finance
Syllabus**

COURSE INFORMATION

FIN-4312: Current Issues in Banking

CRN: 26926

Term: Spring 2024

Delivery Method: In-person

Meeting Day and Time: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30 pm - 2:50 pm

Location: College of Business Admin, Room 326

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Zifeng Feng

Office Location: College of Business Admin, Room 206

E-mail: zfeng@utep.edu

- Use your official UTEP e-mail.
- Include "FIN4312" in the subject line for all correspondence.

Office Hours:

- Face-to-Face: Wednesday, 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm, and Thursday, 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
- Virtual: by appointment only via Teams.




COURSE DESCRIPTION

An analysis of current problems in commercial banking from the points of view of the banks, their regulators, and the public.

The objective of this course is to equip students with the state-of-the-art essential decision-making tools and understanding of recently emerged topics and current problems in commercial banking. Ultimately, the tools developed in this course should help you understand, analyze, synthesize, and provide alternative solutions for the recent problems and topics emerged and going to emerge in commercial banking and financial services. Also, it will help you analyze them from the points of view of the banks, their regulators, and the public.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Student Learning Objective	Outcome
Understand, analyze, and synthesize the new technology that automates and improves the various financial services employed by banks, businesses, and other organizations.	 Critical Thinking Skills
Understand, analyze, and provide solution concepts to the most recently emerging, already emerged, and yet to be emerged problems of consumers, businesses, and financial service providers.	 Critical Thinking Skills
Understand, analyze, synthesize, and provide solution concepts to the above-mentioned items from a perspective of wide range of experts in banking, supervision, and regulations.	 Critical Thinking Skills

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no required textbook. For each of the topics listed below, we will have required and optional additional readings list that is available publicly on the Internet.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Calculation

Schedule 1		Schedule 2	
Course Requirements	Weight	Course Requirements	Weight
Class Attendance to Guest Speaker Sessions	13%	Class Attendance to Guest Speaker Sessions	13%
Questions to Guest Speaker Sessions	13%	Questions to Guest Speaker Sessions	13%
Homework	19%	Homework	19%
Exam 1	15%	Final Exam	45%
Exam 2	15%		
Exam 3	15%		
Group Project Presentation	10%	Group Project Presentation	10%
Total	100%	Total	100%

Letter Grade

Letter	A	B	C	D	F
Range %	90 - 100%	80 - 89	70 - 79	60 - 69	59 or less

Grade Remark:

- 1) **Grade Dispute:** Grade appeals must be submitted to me, in writing, within one week after the assignment is returned to the student. This written appeal should contain a description of the assignment question, the student's answer, and a detailed objection to the current grade. Please submit this appeal along with the graded assignment that is in dispute.
- 2) **Schedule 2:** Schedule 2 is only available to students who have taken three module exams but want to improve their grades. Schedule 2 could only improve students' grades by one entire letter grade. If a student's letter grade is D/F according to Schedule 1, the best grade the student could get via Schedule 2 is C. If a student's letter grade is C according to Schedule 1, the best grade the student could get via Schedule 2 is B.

Attendance to Guest Speaker Sessions: For each guest speaker session you attended, you will get 1 point. Please do not forget to sign the attendance list in each session. See the tentative course schedule for details and relevant dates.

Questions to Guest Speaker Sessions: Students are expected to deliver at least 1 question for each of the topics that will be covered in this class to the guest speakers. Please **submit the question via Blackboard on the date before the guest speaker lectures**. Then, the instructor will rearrange and deliver them to the guest speakers before the sessions. Once you submit your question(s) for each guest speaker, you will earn 1 point. See the tentative course schedule for details and relevant dates.

Homework: Homework assignments are collected and graded via Blackboard. At the end of each guest speaker session, students are expected to summarize the key points from the required reading list and the guest speaker's lecture on how they relate these items to the big picture in banking/financial intermediation. The subtopics and facts that they found interesting and other things they would like to add. See the tentative course schedule for details and relevant dates.

Exams: You have to take all three exams. Exams will be held in class during the class time. All exams will be closed book and notes. There will be no need for a formula sheet for exams.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you can take the exams at the scheduled week. Students who miss an exam without a valid reason will receive a zero on that exam. Make-up exams will be allowed only with pre-approval of the instructor or with an acceptable, documented reason. Acceptable reasons for makeup exams include severe illness, family emergencies or other unavoidable events including dangerous weather conditions and car accidents. Exam format for makeup exams may be different than the original exam. Exam questions will be directly from the required readings and guest speaker sessions that are covered in the lectures. The questions will be investigating the highlighted key points, definitions etc. Relevant information will be provided by the instructor before each exam in the class. There will be 3 exams where each of them is 15 points maximum. The total maximum point you can collect for this component of the final course grade is 45 points. See tentative course schedule for details and relevant dates.

Final Exam: There will also be a final exam available to students who want to improve their grades based on Schedule 1. The final exam is cumulative.

Group Projects: Students are expected to form groups of 3 to 4 students and deliver a presentation with slides. Each presentation is expected to be 15 minutes followed by 2-3 minutes of Q&A session. A written report is NOT required. Only presentation in class during the class time is required. See tentative course schedule for details and relevant dates.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Some course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

COURSE COMMUNICATION: How we will stay in contact with each other

Here are the ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- Office Hours: I will have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours are in-person, however, you can request a virtual meeting and I will send you a Teams link. Please see the days and times at the top of this syllabus.
- E-mail: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to e-mail from your UTEP student e-mail account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

- Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by the completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussions with your peers
- Other activities as indicated in the weekly modules

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

COURSE DROP POLICY

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can e-mail me your backup document as a last resort.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please

register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, e-mail them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY

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. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI allowed with proper acknowledgment.

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as [ChatGPT](#) or [DALL-E](#), is *only allowed with proper attribution given for its use*.

Students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). "Text of your query."

Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

COURSE RESOURCES: Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources.



Main Topics:

1. Crises and Finance Landscape

- Financial sector crises
- 2008 financial crisis & post-crisis reform
- COVID-19 crisis & FinTech
- Financial market reactions
- Risks & scenarios
- CAMELS ratings and Stress testing

2. Overview of Key Technological Trends in Finance Landscape and Regulations

- What is FinTech?
- How new technologies are disrupting financial services industry
- Payment systems and trends
- Disruptive tech across credit value chain
- FinTech credit competitive landscape
- Marketplace (peer-to-peer) lending
- TechFin & Embedded Finance
- RegTech
- Credit scoring & alternative data
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in financial services

3. Future of Money and Banking and Debate around Regulations

- Cryptoassets
- Blockchain and its use cases in financial markets
- Decentralized Finance (DeFi) and smart contracts
- Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and stablecoins
- Digitalization and new business models of financial services
- Web3 and Metaverse use cases in financial services
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4. Cybersecurity risks and Regulations

- Privacy and transparency in the digital era
- Cyber incidents and cybercrime ecosystem
- Financial services institutions as guardians
- Dark web and illicit supply chain
- Cybersecurity in the new era of finance
- Vendor and third-party cybersecurity risk management
- Regulations (BSA, AML, KYC, CFT)

5. Regulatory Framework and Diversity and Inclusivity in Financial Services

- Finance public policy framework
- Regulatory framework for different types of financial institutions
- Diversity, and inclusivity in financial services
- Consumer regulations
- Community Reinvestment Act, Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Fair Credit Reporting Act
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6. International/Global Financial Services

- Financial institution mergers & acquisitions
- Cross-border financial institutions
- Risks and opportunities with international financial institutions
- International clearing and settlements
- Global payment systems

7. Climate risk

- Financial risks and opportunities of climate change for financial institutions
- Green securities and specialized investors
- Green and sustainable bonds
- Impact investing
- Green financial institutions
- Regulations

8. Careers in Banking