MFIN6201
Empirical Techniques and Applications in Finance

Course Outline
Semester 2, 2015

Part A: Course-Specific Information
Part B: Key Policies, Student Responsibilities and Support
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PART A: COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1  STAFF CONTACT DETAILS
Lecturer-in-charge: Konark Saxena
Room 316, UNSW Business School
Phone No: 9385 5863
Email: k.saxena@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Times –Mondays 10:00am to 11:00am (Week 8 to Week 12)

Lecturer: Pavle Radicevic
Room 348, UNSW Business School
Phone No: 9385 6730
Email: p.radicevic@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Times – Wednesday 12pm-1pm

2  COURSE DETAILS

2.1  Teaching Times and Locations
Lectures start in Week 1 and the last lecture is in Week 12. The Time and Location are:

SECTION A:
Lectures: Thu 6:00PM - 9:00PM, Colombo Theatre C
Lab classes: Quad Lab 1

2.2  Units of Credit
The course is worth 6 units of credit.

2.3  Summary of Course
Introduces students to financial econometrics, the science of combining finance theory and statistical techniques to analyse financial data. Theoretical tools necessary to do applied econometric research in finance are discussed. Focus is on probability, statistical models, and statistical optimization and estimation techniques. The least squares methodology for single explanatory and multiple explanatory variables is covered. Students are introduced to implementing these analysis techniques using appropriate software.

2.4  Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses
The course aims to develop skills for applying econometric techniques as well as mathematical and statistical software, such as Excel, SAS, and Stata to conduct research in finance. This course helps students build a foundation for courses such as MFIN6210 that discuss how the techniques learned in this course are applied in the empirical finance literature.
2.5 Student Learning Outcomes

The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to DO by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Learning Outcomes in this course also help you to achieve some of the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes for all postgraduate coursework students in the Business School. Program Learning Goals are what we want you to BE or HAVE by the time you successfully complete your degree (e.g. ‘be an effective team player’). You demonstrate this by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes - what you are able to DO by the end of your degree (e.g. ‘participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams’).

For more information on the Postgraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see Part B of the course outline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Assessment Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This course helps you to achieve the following learning goals for all Business postgraduate</td>
<td>On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:</td>
<td>This learning outcome will be assessed in the following items:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course

The course focuses on learning fundamental principles of least squares analysis, the most commonly used methodology in econometrics. Understanding the concepts and developing econometrics intuition are very important to apply the knowledge to empirical research on financial markets. The course also covers the probability theory to help students build a rigorous foundation for learning econometrics. The course will deal with many examples of how least square analysis is used to study interesting issues in financial markets.

The course will also use the case method, which has been found to be one of the most suitable pedagogical devices for illustrating the myriad complexities of the real business world in which strategic and financial decisions are made. The case situation provides a realistic context within which one can identify the major issues facing the firm and reason one’s way through to appropriate responses and recommendations for...
action. All the data necessary for reaching a decision about required courses of action are presented in the case. The data are not complete, but nor are they in a real world situation. You simply have to make the best judgment you can on the basis of the available information. This is the reason too that cases can rarely be 'outdated'. The specific time period (or company or product) covered in the case is often no more than an interesting sidelight. Rather, the principles illustrated by the case are key to learning.

3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies
Lectures are conducted in 3-hour blocks. Students are required to attend class lectures and to prepare the relevant cases and readings before class. Adequate preparation is essential for the case method to be effective, it is important that you prepare thoroughly for each class by discussing the case and the discussion questions with your study group. This is the main purpose of the short case discussion report. Students can choose groups of five people for case presentation, case discussions, and a group project.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Formal Requirements:
In order to pass this course, you must:
- achieve a composite mark of at least 50;
- achieve a final exam mark of at least 40; and
- make a satisfactory attempt at all assessment tasks (see below).

Assessment Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Presentation (Group)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5 slides</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project (Group)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10 slides</td>
<td>Week 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3 Hours</td>
<td>University Exam Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links to the case studies and discussion questions for each case will be posted on the course website on Moodle as a guide to case preparation. Students can select their groups of up to 5 members and choose an available group number in Moodle. Students are expected to thoughtfully and honestly evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses relative to their peers and try to form a group that has complementary skills such as computing skills, analytical skills, and communication skills. This group will be important in your learning and assessment throughout the course.

Assignments:
Weight: 15% of the Final Grade
Three question sets will be assigned during the semester, each will count as 5% of the final grade.
Class Participation:
Weight: 10% of the Final Grade
The case method relies heavily on effective participation by students. You will be expected to present and defend your point of view in class, as well as to draw on contributions to the discussion that others have made. Reflecting the importance of class participation in the course, considerable weight is attached to thoughtful and effective contributions. However, simply monopolizing 'air time' without adding to the learning of the class will not garner credit and may even detract from it – in other words, it is quality rather than merely quantity that will be rewarded.

Supporting material such as excel files and/or word documents with tables and a brief recommendation/answers to case questions should be submitted to Moodle by 8 am of the week the case is to be discussed. The purpose of this document is to support recommendations and comments during the case discussion – it will NOT be graded as a substitute for class participation (only to prepare for and support it).

Grading is from no credit (not submitted), lower than average, average, good, and excellent (perfect score). Grading depends on a number of things, such as the analysis, the communication of the analysis, as well as application of techniques taught in the course, or related courses.

The supporting material should be succinct, professional, and to the point. A maximum of three pages, including tables is allowed, though students should be able to summarize their analysis in less. The font size should not be less than Arial size 11.

Case Presentation:
Due: Depends on case assigned to group
Weight: 5% of the Final Grade

Each group will be assigned to a case based on preference and demand. These groups will be asked to prepare a presentation to discuss an aspect of the case (max 5 slides). In addition to quality of the analysis, the quality of the presentation and ability to clearly articulate various dimensions of the case will also be assessed. Individual contribution to the case presentation will also be assessed through the class participation component.

Project:
Due: 27 October, 11:59pm
Weight: 20% of the Final Grade

DETAILS: This group project will apply concepts and techniques covered in the course. The final submission should include a report up to a maximum of 10 pages. Any tables, outputs, figures, or code can be included as an appendix (up to a maximum of 10 pages, Arial size 11 font). The corresponding data, including aggregation and analysis code, should also be submitted (this will not necessarily be referred to or graded). Grading is from no credit (not submitted), lower than average, average, good, and excellent (perfect score). Grading depends on a number of things, such as application of techniques taught in the course, interpretation of statistics, and presentation of the results including tables, figures, and main texts.
Final examination:

Due: Held during the UNSW Final Exam Period (date and location to be determined centrally)
Weight: 50% of the Final Grade

Details: The final examination tests material covered in the text, the lecture notes, the lecture, the group assignments, and other assigned readings during weeks 1-13. It will be comprised of long answer, short answer, as well as multiple choice questions. The examination is closed book.

4.2 Assessment Format
The font size should not be less than Arial size 11.

4.3 Assignment Submission Procedure
The submission procedure will be specified along with the instructions for each assignment.

4.4 Late Submission
Late submissions will not be accepted unless exceptional medical or compassionate circumstances occur. Medical certificates or the evidence of extreme misfortune must be provided.

Quality Assurance
The Business School is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential.

5 COURSE RESOURCES
The website for this course is on UNSW Moodle at: https://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au. Resources useful for the course are:

- Introduction to Econometrics, 2012, 3rd Edition, Stock and Watson, Pearson, Also:
  - Links to access notes and Harvard Business School case studies will be posted on Moodle.

6 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT
Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the School and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process is one of the ways in which student evaluative feedback is gathered. In this course, we will seek your feedback through Semester 2, 2015.
## 7 COURSE SCHEDULE

### LECTURE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 27 July</td>
<td>• Introduction to Financial Econometrics</td>
<td>Note: Convincing Empirical Research in Ten Steps, SW 1, 2, and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 3 August</td>
<td>• OLS Regressions</td>
<td>Reading: Regression Basics SW 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 10 August</td>
<td>• Multivariate Regressions</td>
<td>Note: Log vs. Linear Specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 17 August</td>
<td>• <em>Case: Hollywood Rules</em></td>
<td>SW: 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5 24 August</td>
<td>• Panel Data and Fixed Effect Regressions</td>
<td>SW: 10, AHS: 13, 16, PK: 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6 31 August</td>
<td>• Binary Response Models</td>
<td>SW: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 7 September</td>
<td>• Assumptions about the Return Process</td>
<td>B: 9, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 14 September</td>
<td>• APT and Linear Multi-Factor Models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9 21 September</td>
<td>• Time-Series Regressions on Benchmark Factors</td>
<td>B: 11, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alpha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Asset Pricing Tests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fama-MacBeth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mid-semester break: Saturday 26 September - Monday 5 October inclusive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10 5 October</td>
<td>• <em>Case: Pedigree vs. Grit: Predicting Mutual Fund Manager Performance</em></td>
<td>Mutual Fund Performance Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11 12 October</td>
<td>• <em>Case: Samoa Tala</em></td>
<td>SW 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 19 October</td>
<td>• Time Series Econometrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13 26 October</td>
<td>• Course Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• NO LECTURES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The Business School Program Learning Goals reflect what we want all students to BE or HAVE by the time they successfully complete their degree, regardless of their individual majors or specialisations. For example, we want all our graduates to HAVE a high level of business knowledge, and a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business. As well, we want all our graduates to BE effective problem-solvers, communicators and team participants. These are our overall learning goals for you and are sought after by employers.

You can demonstrate your achievement of these goals by the specific outcomes you achieve by the end of your degree (e.g. be able to analyse and research business problems and propose well-justified solutions). Each course contributes to your development of two or more program learning goals/outcomes by providing opportunities for you to practise these skills and to be assessed and receive feedback.

Program Learning Goals for undergraduate and postgraduate students cover the same key areas (application of business knowledge, critical thinking, communication and teamwork, ethical, social and environmental responsibility), which are key goals for all Business students and essential for success in a globalised world. However, the specific outcomes reflect different expectations for these levels of study.

We strongly advise you to choose a range of courses which assist your development of these skills, e.g., courses assessing written and oral communication skills, and to keep a record of your achievements against the Program Learning Goals as part of your portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Postgraduate Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Knowledge: Our graduates will have current disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to identify and apply current knowledge of disciplinary or interdisciplinary theory and professional practice to business in local and global environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Critical thinking and problem solving: Our graduates will have critical thinking and problem solving skills applicable to business and management practice or issues.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to identify, research and analyse complex issues and problems in business and/or management, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Communication: Our graduates will be effective communicators in professional contexts.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Produce written documents that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Produce oral presentations that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and reflect on your own teamwork, and on the team’s processes and ability to achieve outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Our graduates will have a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business issues and practice.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| a. Identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-
making and practice, and
b. Consider social and cultural implications of business and/or management practice.

9 ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

The University regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, and has very strict rules regarding plagiarism. For UNSW policies, penalties, and information to help you avoid plagiarism see: https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism as well as the guidelines in the online ELISE tutorials for all new UNSW students: http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise

To see if you understand plagiarism, do this short quiz: https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism-quiz

For information on how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, see: https://student.unsw.edu.au/harvard-referencing

For the Business School Harvard Referencing Guide, see the Business Referencing and Plagiarism webpage (Business >Students>Learning support> Resources>Referencing and plagiarism).

10 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to university policies in relation to class attendance and general conduct and behaviour, including maintaining a safe, respectful environment; and to understand their obligations in relation to workload, assessment and keeping informed.

Information and policies on these topics can be found in UNSW Current Students ‘Managing your Program’ webpages: https://student.unsw.edu.au/program.

10.1 Workload

It is expected that you will spend at least nine to ten hours per week studying this course. This time should be made up of reading, research, working on exercises and problems, online activities and attending classes. In periods where you need to complete assignments or prepare for examinations, the workload may be greater. Over-commitment has been a cause of failure for many students. You should take the required workload into account when planning how to balance study with employment and other activities.

We strongly encourage you to connect with your Moodle course websites in the first week of semester. Local and international research indicates that students who engage early and often with their course website are more likely to pass their course.

Information on expected workload: https://student.unsw.edu.au/uoc

10.2 Attendance

Your regular and punctual attendance at lectures and seminars is expected in this course. University regulations indicate that if students attend less than 80% of scheduled classes they may be refused final assessment. For more information, see: https://student.unsw.edu.au/attendance
10.3 General Conduct and Behaviour
You are expected to conduct yourself with consideration and respect for the needs of your fellow students and teaching staff. Conduct which unduly disrupts or interferes with a class, such as ringing or talking on mobile phones, is not acceptable and students may be asked to leave the class. More information on student conduct is available at: https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct

10.4 Occupational Health and Safety
UNSW Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For more information, see http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/.

10.5 Keeping Informed
You should take note of all announcements made in lectures, tutorials or on the course web site. From time to time, the University will send important announcements to your university e-mail address without providing you with a paper copy. You will be deemed to have received this information. It is also your responsibility to keep the University informed of all changes to your contact details.

11 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
You must submit all assignments and attend all examinations scheduled for your course. You should seek assistance early if you suffer illness or misadventure which affects your course progress.

General information on special consideration for undergraduate and postgraduate courses:
1. All applications for special consideration must be lodged online through myUNSW within 3 working days of the assessment (Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services > Online Services > Special Consideration). You will then need to submit the originals or certified copies of your completed Professional Authority form (pdf - download here) and other supporting documentation to Student Central. For more information, please study carefully in advance the instructions and conditions at: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration
2. Please note that documentation may be checked for authenticity and the submission of false documentation will be treated as academic misconduct. The School may ask to see the original or certified copy.
3. Applications will not be accepted by teaching staff. The lecturer-in-charge will be automatically notified when you lodge an online application for special consideration.
4. Decisions and recommendations are only made by lecturers-in-charge (or by the Faculty Panel in the case of UG final exam special considerations), not by tutors.
5. Applying for special consideration does not automatically mean that you will be granted a supplementary exam or other concession.
6. Special consideration requests do not allow lecturers-in-charge to award students additional marks.

Business School policy on requests for special consideration for Final Exams in undergraduate courses:
The lecturer-in-charge will need to be satisfied on each of the following before supporting a request for special consideration:

1. Does the medical certificate contain all relevant information? For a medical certificate to be accepted, the degree of illness, and impact on the student, must be stated by the medical practitioner (severe, moderate, mild). A certificate without this will not be valid.
2. Has the student performed satisfactorily in the other assessment items? Satisfactory performance would require at least 50% and meeting the obligation to have attended 80% of tutorials.
3. Does the student have a history of previous applications for special consideration? A history of previous applications may preclude a student from being granted special consideration.

Special consideration and the Final Exam in undergraduate courses:
Applications for special consideration in relation to the final exam are considered by a Business School Faculty panel to which lecturers-in-charge provide their recommendations for each request. If the Faculty panel grants a special consideration request, this will entitle the student to sit a supplementary examination. No other form of consideration will be granted. The following procedures will apply:

1. Supplementary exams will be scheduled centrally and will be held approximately two weeks after the formal examination period. The dates for Business School supplementary exams for Semester 2, 2015 are:
   8th December – exams for the School of Accounting
   9th December – exams for all Schools except Accounting and Economics
   10th December – exams for the School of Economics
If a student lodges a special consideration for the final exam, they are stating they will be available on the above dates. **Supplementary exams will not be held at any other time.**

2. Where a student is granted a supplementary examination as a result of a request for special consideration, the student’s original exam (if completed) will be ignored and only the mark achieved in the supplementary examination will count towards the final grade. Failure to attend the supplementary exam will not entitle the student to have the original exam paper marked and may result in a zero mark for the final exam.

If you attend the regular final exam, you are extremely unlikely to be granted a supplementary exam. Hence if you are too ill to perform up to your normal standard in the regular final exam, you are strongly advised not to attend. However, granting of a supplementary exam in such cases is not automatic. You would still need to satisfy the criteria stated above.

12 STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
The University and the Business School provide a wide range of support services for students, including:

- **Business School Education Development Unit (EDU)**
  https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/learning-support
  The EDU provides academic writing, study skills and maths support specifically for Business students. Services include workshops, online resources, and individual consultations. EDU Office: Level 1, Room 1033, Quadrangle Building. Phone: 9385 5584; Email: edu@unsw.edu.au.

- **Business Student Centre**
  https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/student-centre
  Provides advice and direction on all aspects of admission, enrolment and graduation. Office: Level 1, Room 1028 in the Quadrangle Building; Phone: 9385 3189.

- **Moodle eLearning Support**
  For online help using Moodle, go to: https://student.unsw.edu.au/moodle-support. For technical support, email: itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au; Phone: 9385 1333.

- **UNSW Learning Centre**
  www.lc.unsw.edu.au
  Provides academic skills support services, including workshops and resources, for all UNSW students. See website for details.

- **Library training and search support services**
  http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html

- **IT Service Centre**: Provides technical support for problems logging in to websites, downloading documents etc. https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/index.html Office: UNSW Library Annexe (Ground floor). Ph: 9385 1333.

- **UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services**
  https://student.unsw.edu.au/wellbeing Provides support and services if you need help with your personal life, getting your academic life back on track or just want to know how to stay safe, including free, confidential counselling. Office: Level 2, East Wing, Quadrangle Building; Phone: 9385 5418; Email: counselling@unsw.edu.au

- **Student Equity & Disabilities Unit**
  http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au
  Provides advice regarding equity and diversity issues, and support for students who have a disability or disadvantage that interferes with their learning. Office: Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building; Phone: 9385 4734; Email: seadu@unsw.edu.au