MFIN6201
EMPIRICAL TECHNIQUES AND APPLICATIONS IN FINANCE

Course Outline
Semester 1, 2015

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PART A: COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Availability; times and location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer-in-charge</td>
<td>Min Kim</td>
<td><a href="mailto:min.kim@unsw.edu.au">min.kim@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
<td>TBA; Business School, Room 368</td>
<td>9385-5984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are encouraged to visit me during the office hours and contact me by email or phone.

2 COURSE DETAILS

2.1 Teaching Times and Locations
Lectures start in Week 1 (to Week 12): The Time and Location are:

Thursdays 2pm-5pm in Business School 216 and QUAD Lab 1
Fridays 6pm-9pm in Business School 119 and QUAD Lab 1

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

2.3 Summary of Course
Introductory econometrics course with applications for financial markets

2.4 Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses
This course introduces students to financial econometrics, the science of combining finance theory and statistical techniques, to analyze financial data. The course is designed to provide students with the theoretical tools and practical experience necessary to do applied econometric research on financial markets. The course focuses on the least squares methodology for single explanatory and multiple explanatory variables. The course also aims to develop skills for using mathematical and statistical software, such as Matlab, EViews, and SAS.

2.5 Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand fundamental probability concepts used in econometric analysis;
2. Describe key classical econometric assumptions and the effects of the violations of those assumptions;
3. Describe the principles of least squares analysis and the properties of least squares estimators;
4. Understand properties of variables observed in financial markets, such as stock prices and interest rates.

5. Combine finance theory and econometrics tools to design research on financial markets, in particular, developing, estimating and analysing least square regressions to study relations among financial variables;

6. Collect, interpret, and organize financial data;

7. Write programming codes for statistics/mathematics software, such as Matlab;

8. Interpret and analyse key statistics and diagnostics generated by the software;

9. Explain verbally and in writing implications of empirical results for finance theory; and

10. Collaborate with other students to study issues in financial markets using econometrics tools.

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 Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see Part B of the course outline.

<table>
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<th>Business Postgraduate Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
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</tr>
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b. Produce oral presentations that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.

4. **Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.**
   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.

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.**
   You should be able to:
   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.

The following table shows how your Course Learning Outcomes relate to the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, and indicates where these are assessed (they may also be developed in tutorials and other activities):

<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 coursework students:</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>
| 1 Knowledge | 1-5 | • Quiz  
• Group assignment  
• Exams |
| 2 Critical thinking and problem solving | 6,7,9 | • Group assignment  
• Exams |
| 3a Written communication | 9 | • Group assignment |
| 3b Oral communication | 9 | • In-class presentation |
| 4 Teamwork | 10 | • Group assignment |
| 5a Ethical, environmental and sustainability responsibility | Not specifically addressed in this course. | |
| 5b Social and cultural awareness | Not specifically addressed in this course. | |
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.

3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies

Lectures and lecture slides cover the main material. Students are required to attend the lectures. Lecture slides are based on the textbook and the recommended readings. Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard. Students are encouraged to print out lecture slides and take notes on them in class. At the end of each lecture, students will solve quizzes (not graded) and discuss the answers.

The textbook provides an intuitive description of technical econometrics methodologies. Students are required to study the textbook along with lecture slides.

Students will conduct empirical research on financial markets in groups. Group members are expected to discuss potential topics for their projects. All members are also expected to contribute to the final report equally through the following activities: design empirical research, gather data, conduct least squares analyses, interpret the results, and discuss implications of the results. Therefore, rigorous understanding of the course materials and good teamwork are critical for successful projects.

There will be at least two lab sessions for learning Matlab. Matlab is a mathematics software, which is widely used in finance and economics and requires good knowledge of econometrics. Students are required to use the software to solve some of the assignment questions and conduct empirical analysis for the group project.

Students need to study all materials covered in class for the final exam.

4 Assessment

4.1 Formal Requirements

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

4.2 Assessment Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>10 minutes</th>
<th>See Section 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>See Section 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework group Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>See Section 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework group Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>About 15 minutes</td>
<td>See Section 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework group self reflection</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>University Exam Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Midterm exam will help students understand materials covered prior to Matlab lab sessions. The weight of the exam for the final grade is 25%. Closed-book. Most of questions will ask to explain concepts and principles and interpret analysis results. Answers must be clearly written.

A group project combines econometrics techniques covered in the course and finance knowledge. Examples discussed in class will be good samples of group projects. Students need to form groups of at least 3 members but no more than 5 members. The project is worth 35% of the final grade (30% for the report including 5% for self reflection and 5% for oral presentation). Grading is from no credit (not submitted), credit, lower than average, average, good, and excellent (perfect score). Grading depends on a number of things, such as application of econometrics techniques to issues in financial markets, programming skills for Matlab, interpretation of the software outputs, and presentation of the results including tables, figures and main texts. Homework group self and peer evaluation will be conducted online through questionnaires. You will be asked to rate yourself and your peers out of 5 and the final grading for the evaluation is the average of the ratings.

The final exam will cover all materials learned in class except for Matlab lab sessions. The weight of the exam for the final grade is 40%. Most of questions will ask to explain concepts and principles and interpret analysis results.

4.3 Assessment Format

See Section 4.2.

4.4 Assignment Submission Procedure

Students are required to form groups of 3-5 members for the group project and designate a representing member. The representing members must report the names of their group members to min.kim@unsw.edu.au by 9pm on 31 March. Students who cannot join a group are advised to contact me for help. Each group must discuss potential project topics and submit a project proposal by 9pm on 30 April. I will provide feedbacks on the proposals (not graded) and can advise to change the topics if needed. Each group is also required to present the project in class. A group project report must be submitted to min.kim@unsw.edu.au in the week 13 by the due date (TBA).
4.5 Late Submission

A late submission of the group project is subject to penalty of 5% out of 100% for the final grade. A submission after a week from the due date is considered as non-submission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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 programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential and will not be related to course grades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Course Resources

Prescribed text
- Introduction to Econometrics, Stock and Watson, 2nd Edition

Recommended texts
- Introductory Econometrics: a modern approach, Wooldridge, 3rd edition

6 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year, we seek feedback from students and other stakeholders about the courses we offer in the Australian School of Business. We evaluate and use your course-level feedback, both quantitative and qualitative, to guide our continuing monitoring and redesigning of the course.

Change is not automatically linked to any one piece of feedback as our teaching reflects on a range of feedback sources over time, including our evaluations of assessment performance. This continual improvement process can affect one or more particular areas of the course, whether this has to do with structure, content, resources, delivery or assessment.

The UNSW Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process (http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/ref4-5-1_catei_process.cfm) is one of the ways in which we gather student evaluative feedback. As in this case, we communicate significant changes within the course to subsequent cohorts of students.
# 7 COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Lab Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Other Activities/Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 2 March</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>NO Lab</td>
<td>Handouts Ch. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 9 March</td>
<td>Statistics/Probability/Mathematics</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Handouts Quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 16 March</td>
<td>Statistics/Probability/Mathematics</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Handouts Quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 23 March</td>
<td>Criteria for estimators</td>
<td>NO Lab</td>
<td>Handouts Ch. 2 Quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5 30 March</td>
<td>Linear regression model</td>
<td>NO Lab</td>
<td>Handouts Ch. 3, 6 Quiz Group formation due at 9pm on 31 March</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mid-semester break: Good Friday 3rd April - Sunday 12 April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6 13 April</th>
<th>Linear regression model review</th>
<th>NO Lab</th>
<th>Handouts Ch. 10, 12, 15 Quiz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 20 April</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 27 April</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Handouts Group project Proposal due at 9pm on 30 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9 4 May</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10 11 May</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Matlab</td>
<td>Handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11 18 May</td>
<td>Group project presentation Panel data overview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 25 May</td>
<td>Fama and Macbeth regression Fixed effect regression</td>
<td>Ch 18 (1)(2)(3)</td>
<td>Group project due (TBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13 1 June</td>
<td>NO LECTURES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(2) Fama and French, 1992, "The cross-section of expected stock returns," Journal of Finance (Smith Breeden Prize 1st winner, cited by 5531)
(3) Lemmon, Roberts and Zender, 2008, "Back to the Beginning: Persistence and the Cross-Section of Corporate Capital Structure," Journal of Finance (Brattle Group Prize 2nd winner, cited by 251)
PART B: KEY POLICIES, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

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 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.

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</table>
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 website. 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.
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.

- **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