

MEMORANDUM

To: Students enrolled in FI 3300 uLearn Course
From: Dr. Richard J. Fendler
Date: August 10, 2009
Re: Course Overview and Assignments for First Week of Class

According to the GSU Registrar, you are registered for my section of FI 3300 (Computer Number **81801**) for the fall 2009 semester.

Contrary to the course bulletin and other information that may have been previously distributed, there will **NOT** be a first day meeting for this class. This letter essentially serves as a substitute for the first day of class. It will provide you with a basic overview of the course and help you to get started.

Overview:

As noted in the fall 2009 course bulletin listing, this is a uLearn (formerly WebCT) based online course. We will only officially physically meet one time during the semester – to take the common in-class final exam on **Saturday, December 5**, from 2:45 pm to 4:45 pm (early ID check-in will start at 2:15 pm). All other aspects of the class will be conducted online. This may be your first “true” online course. If so, you have nothing to fear (even if you do not consider yourself to be computer literate). uLearn is very user friendly, I am well experienced in teaching online courses, the textbook for FI 3300 is easy to read and follow, and the online version of this class has received excellent reviews from prior students. In fact, in many ways you may even find this to be a better method of learning than a traditional course.

The course revolves around a uLearn homepage. The FI 3300 uLearn homepage contains a course calendar of reading assignments (updated, on average, for 2 weeks into the future), suggested problem assignments, quiz and exam dates, chat session times and dates, and so on. The page also contains links to PowerPoint lecture slides that cover many chapters in the book as well as a link to the course chat room (I will conduct weekly chat sessions during which I will “lecture” and/or answer questions). As for course structure, there will be 12 (nearly one per week) quizzes in the course, 3 online exams (quizzes remain open for approximately one week and online exams will be open over a weekend – you can complete these online activities whenever you want while they are open subject to the specified time limit which is usually one hour for quizzes and two hours for exams), three take-home problem sets and an in-class final exam.

How to Succeed In This Course:

An online course is essentially a guided self learning program. To learn the material so that you can achieve a good grade in this class, you **MUST** read the entire textbook and you **MUST** work **ALL** problems in the text as well as at the end of every chapter. Since this class is not a traditional lecture course, you cannot ‘breeze’ through the course by listening to lectures. Chat sessions are to assist and guide in the learning process; they are not where you go to learn.

The textbook for this course (**Lectures in Corporate Finance**, Revised 5th edition, by Jayant R. Kale and Richard J. Fendler, published by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company) is a

near perfect book to promote self learning – but only IF you read it and IF you work all in text and end of chapter problems. The book is written in a study guide/textbook format with many problems interspersed within chapters and space provided where you can work out solutions to problems. If you work these problems as you carefully read each chapter, you will learn the material. If you merely breeze through the book and skip the in-text problems, you will find this course to be very difficult. Answers are provided for all in-text problems so you can check your work. If you cannot get to the answer provided, ask during chat session and I will demonstrate the correct solution. Solutions to most end of chapter problems will be posted on uLearn. Again, if you merely look at the solutions without first working the problems, you will not learn and you will struggle in this course.

I strongly suggest that you buy a new book for this course and that you get the correct edition of the book (the REVISED 5th edition). If you have a book where someone already wrote in the space to work problems, I can almost guarantee that you will skip working problems on your own as you read through the book. The working of problems in the text as you read is the main way that you will confidently learn the material in this course. For the relatively low price of the book and the investment you make in taking this course, I believe you will find purchasing a new book to be worthwhile.

Getting Started

It has been my experience that the most important aspect of an online course is to make certain that everyone understands how to use the technology before the course actually begins. Accordingly, during the first week of the class we will set up and work out the bugs in the system. The following is a step-by-step list of what I need for you to do:

1. Starting on **FRIDAY, AUGUST 14** (but not before!!!), verify that the class is in your uLearn Course List. When you log onto uLearn, you should see a link to "**CORPORATION FINANCE - Fall Semester 2009 FI-3300-050**." If this course does not appear in your uLearn listing, send me an e-mail message noting so – in the Subject area write the words "FI 3300 Student - uLearn Log-in Problems." Include your uLearn login ID in the body of the email (usually the first letter of your first name, your last name and a number – also the part before the @ symbol in your GSU email address).

NOTE WELL: The course uLearn page will not be ready for this semester until FRIDAY, AUGUST 14. Anything on the site prior to that date is useless. Do NOT even try to access the site prior to that date so that I will be able to work on the site during the week as I have time.

2. I need to communicate with you via e-mail throughout the semester. I will usually use the uLearn announcement and bulletin board functions, but occasionally I will need to contact you via your GSU email address. In this event, I will send all messages via my GSU GroupWise account. Messages must be sent to your GSU account only. (According to the GSU legal department, the only email address to which I can send global messages is your GSU address. It is actually illegal for me to include an alternate email address in the list. I can respond to a private email address on an individual basis, but I cannot send group notes to private addresses). Thus, you need to check your personal GSU email often **OR** you need to set up your GSU email account to forward mail to your personal and/or work address (see Addendum Item 1 for instructions concerning email format).
3. Get a copy of the textbook for the class (should be in all bookstores that sell GSU textbooks) and begin reading chapter one. The textbook for the course is: **Lectures in**

Corporate Finance (*Revised 5th* edition) by Jayant R. Kale and Richard J. Fendler, published by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Lectures in Corporate Finance is a book that was written specifically for FI 3300 by two GSU professors - you are encouraged to read the textbook Preface. Essentially, the main reason for writing the book was to design a book specific to the material covered in FI 3300 in a combination textbook/study guide style. As stated above, the book is ideal for an online course and you should find the book relatively easy to read, follow and understand.

4. On or after FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, download the course syllabus from the uLearn class page. Read the ENTIRE syllabus carefully. The syllabus is a contract. Failure to follow the procedures and policies outlined in the course syllabus constitutes full acceptance of liability on your part.
5. Plan to participate in a chat session on TUESDAY, AUGUST 18 starting at 5:00 PM (see Addendum Item 2 for chat room rules of conduct). This will be an introductory chat session during which I will answer any and all questions about the course. I will hold chats every Tuesday during regular class hours throughout the semester. Though I will not officially take attendance for chat sessions, I **strongly** suggest you attend all chat sessions. I will discuss my reasons for this in more detail during the first chat session on Tuesday.
6. Be sure that you can access the Chat Room prior to this session (click chat room and see if a chat room window opens). If not, run a "Browser Checkup" to be sure you have the correct version of Java and other browser settings are correct, try a different browser (Mozilla seems to have fewer uLearn issues than Explorer), or contact the uLearn help desk.

I hope you enjoy the course. "See" you soon.

Addendum Item 1

I only use the uLearn mail function to send global email reminder notes to the class. I do NOT regularly read uLearn email or regularly read uLearn Bulletin Board postings. If you want to contact me, please send an email to my GSU email address (fncrij@gsu.edu).

The main form of communication in an online class is email. There are 170 students in this class. Also, I receive 50 – 70 emails per day from junk mail, to professional emails, to emails from students in this as well as the other 2 classes that I teach. I make every effort to read my email several times per day and to respond as soon as possible. To reduce the number of emails from students that get trapped as junk mail or get accidentally deleted by me, please write the following in the subject line of **all** emails sent to me: "FI 3300 uLearn Student." If you want, also include something to let me know what you are asking about, such as "FI 3300 uLearn Student – Quiz 1."

I have set up my inbox to move all emails with this subject line to a separate cabinet. This will allow me to more efficiently address your questions and hopefully to not accidentally delete any of your emails. If I do not respond to an email from you within 24 hours, please resend.

Addendum Item 2

Before the first session, be sure you can enter the chatroom. Some popup blockers and some firewalls will **NOT** allow the chat window to open. The main reason for trying to enter the room **PRIOR** to the session is to make sure your computer will allow you access.

If you cannot access the chat room, run a browser check (from the WebCT logon page). If this does not fix the problem, try accessing WebCT using Netscape or Mozilla. For some reason, students seem to have fewer problems accessing WebCT pages from Netscape and Mozilla than from Explorer. If that does not work, you will need to contact WebCT Help to see if they can figure out the problem or you will have to use a different computer to attend the chat sessions. Since I do not know the specific configurations of your computer, I cannot help you access the chat room. The sooner you test your connection, the more likely you will be able to resolve the problem in time to attend the sessions.

Chat Room rules of conduct are simple:

1. The instructor (me) types in **CAPS** and you type in lower case.
2. BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS!!! Keep the "chatter" to a minimum and stick to the topic at hand. The purpose of chats is for me to answer questions, demonstrate solutions, provide guidance, and sometimes to briefly lecture. Do NOT ask questions about other topics, about other classes, about the weather or how you are feeling, or about anything other than the topic and/or question at hand, unless specifically asked by your instructor. You can communicate with me personally via email. Chats are for everyone, not just one. I encourage you to ask questions about topics or problems you do not understand similar to what you would ask and how you would ask in a regular classroom.

3. Do NOT send me private messages during the chat session. If you click on my name in the “Users Logged On” list (right hand side of the chat screen) and highlight my name, any message you send will come to me only as a private message. Private messages cause popup screens on my computer, which distract me and cause delays in my response time. Make sure that no name in the Users Logged On list is highlighted. If a name is highlighted, click the name and the highlight will turn off.
4. If I ask a question in the chat session that I want answered, I will write several question marks after the questions. For example, “Do you like having class via a chat session as opposed to meeting physically in class???????” If I ask a question with only a single question mark, the question is meant to make you think but not to type in an answer.
5. You will really only benefit from chat sessions if you have read the textbook material and worked through most of the in-text and end of chapter problems before the session. As I stated above, chats are not traditional lectures. Chats SUPPLEMENT your learning. Even when I ‘lecture’ in a chat, these are merely to clarify chapter topics or more often than not to demonstrate finance in action by discussing current events.