FINANCIAL DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Spring 2024

ACCT-GB.2350 (Sections M1 and M2)

# Instructor Travis Ringger

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# Course Description

The practice of accounting is fundamentally tied to data and our ability to analyze them. Whether the data reside in spreadsheets, databases, documents, or web sites, we can use them to gain valuable insights into the financial performance of a business. You may also hear popular terms like data science, big data, machine learning, or generative AI and wonder what they mean for a career in industry or professional services. This course provides concepts and tools for making sense of data and performing data analysis. From simple calculations, to Excel macros and sophisticated statistical models, data analysis calls for (1) asking the right questions, (2) acquiring and transforming data, (3) analyzing data, and (4) effective presentation of results. We introduce concepts in data management and analysis including Excel VBA, SQL (Structured Query Language), Python, and introduce tools for visual analytics and programming. We discuss how to apply these skills to accounting-related areas such as fundamental analysis, management consulting, and auditing. In addition, we survey topics such as machine learning, generative AI, and unstructured data analytics, considering the impact of data analytics in industry and on the accounting profession. The course concludes with a final project to demonstrate end-to-end data analysis and presentation skills.

The objectives for the course are:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of terms, methods, and tools for data management and analysis
2. Demonstrate knowledge of trends in data management and analysis
3. Demonstrate how to acquire, transform, analyze, and visualize data
4. Demonstrate how to solve problems in accounting using data and analytics

# Course Materials

The course will require the following software which will be provided on Apps@Stern, but you may also install them on your own computers:

* Microsoft Excel or equivalent spreadsheet software
* SQLite (open source)
* Power BI Desktop (free, Windows only)
* Notepad++ or equivalent text editor (open source)
* Anaconda Navigator (open source)

**Brightspace:** I will be using Brightspace regularly to post class materials such as lecture slides, data, codes, and homework assignments, and to communicate with you throughout the term. Please make sure you are correctly registered and checking the course site on a regular basis.

# Grading Policy

Final grades will be determined as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignments, Midterm, Quizzes | 50% |
| Final Project | 35% |
| Class Participation | 15% |

**Homework Assignments:** There will be assignments and a midterm to practice the application of key tools (Excel, SQL, Python, and Power BI) to data analysis problems. You must submit your completed work via Brightspace just prior to the beginning of class; late work will not be accepted. I will not accept assignments in my mailbox, over the web, through e-mail, etc. Solutions to assignments will be posted to Brightspace. Quizzes will be announced one week before they are given in class.

**Final Project:** Students will be assigned to groups of 5-6 to collaborate on a final project that demonstrates end-to-end data analysis skills. Details of this project will be introduced following the midterm. Students can expect that successful projects will involve the following:

* + Data preparation on a sample data set
  + Execution of analytics on a sample data set
  + Original analysis of the sample data set
  + Presentation of novel insights based on the team’s analysis
  + Supporting documentation, scripts, and files

**Class Participation:** I encourage you to participate fully and contribute to in-class discussions to get the most out of the curriculum. I will consider your level of participation and professionalism in your final grade. Because this curriculum incorporates in-class exercises, case studies, demonstrations, and discussions, your success depends on your attendance. Although we understand there are times when you may not be able to attend a class, habitual absences will hurt your performance. **During class, please silence all mobile devices.**

# STERN POLICIES

**General Behavior:** The School expects that students will conduct themselves with respect and professionalism toward faculty, students, and other present in class and will follow the rules laid down by the instructor for classroom behavior.

**Code of Conduct:** As a student at Stern, you are expected to conduct yourself as a young business professional. The Stern School does not tolerate cheating, nor does your future employer. Please know that the penalty for cheating is an automatic grade of F for the course and appearance before the Student Disciplinary Committee. I am very strict on this issue. I will do what I can to help you learn the material in this course. All I ask is that you do not cheat yourself, your fellow classmates, or the Stern School. Please see [www.stern.nyu.edu/uc/codeofconduct](http://www.stern.nyu.edu/uc/codeofconduct) for more information.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation, please contact the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) and provide me with a letter from them verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. Please see [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd) for more information. If you will need to take an exam at the CSD, you must submit a completed Exam Accommodations Form to them at least two weeks prior to the scheduled exam time to be guaranteed accommodation.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule of classes, readings and assignments. I will make adjustments as circumstances require.

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| **CLASS#** | **DATE** (M2, M1) | **TOPICS** | **DUE** |
| 1 | February 6, 7 | Introductory Concepts | Reading Assignment 1 |
| 2 | February 13, 14 | Getting Started with Excel VBA | Reading Assignment 2 |
| 3 | February 20, 21 | Excel VBA and Data Tools | HW1: Excel VBA |
| 4 | February 27, 28 | Excel Shortcuts | Reading Assignment 3 |
| 5 | March 5, 6 | Relational & NoSQL Databases | HW2: Excel Data Tools |
| 6 | March 12, 13 | SQL and Data Preparation with Python | Midterm |
| **SPRING BREAK** | | | |
| 7 | March 26, 27 | Data Preparation & Analysis with Python | Reading Assignment #4 |
| 8 | April 2, 3 | Data Analysis with Python | HW3: Python Data Preparation |
| 9 | April 9, 10 | Data Visualization with Power BI | HW4: Python Data Analysis |
| 10 | April 16, 17 | Unstructured Data | HW5: Power BI |
| 11 | April 23, 24 | Natural Language Processing | HW6: Unstructured Data |
| 12 | May 30, 31 | Final Project Presentations | Final Project |