

Financial Accounting and Reporting

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In general terms, financial accounting is the measurement of economic activity for decision-making. Financial statements are a key product of this measurement process and an important component of firms' financial reporting activities.

The objective of this course is not to train you to become an accountant, but rather to help you develop into an informed user of financial statement information. While financial statement users face a wide variety of decisions, they are often interested in understanding the implications of financial statement information for the future cash flows and earnings potential of a firm. We will focus on understanding the mapping between underlying economic events and financial statements, and on understanding how this mapping affects inferences about future profitability. Because annual reports are somewhat formidable, we will spend time familiarizing ourselves with how firms present the information for various accounts in the financial statements, including the footnotes. We also will discuss the role of the various institutions involved in the reporting process. By understanding the environment in which financial reporting takes place you will be in a better position to evaluate critically the disclosures made by firms in published financial statements.

Several features of the course are used to facilitate these learning objectives. The textbook provides a conceptual foundation for the course by introducing the accounting framework and by characterizing accounting principles and alternative methods. Class time will be allocated to a combination of short lectures and discussions of the assigned materials. The assigned cases serve as a basis for class discussion and provide a challenging test of your understanding of the topic. They are based on corporate financial statements and illustrate the issues associated with various accounting methods and the manner in which the related information is disclosed. In addition, the assigned cases demonstrate the “real life” magnitude of income and balance sheet differences under alternative accounting methods, as well as a variety of financial reporting discretion practices.

Organizational Matters

Textbook:

Hanlon M., R. Magee, G. Pfeiffer and Dyckman, T., Financial Accounting, 6th Edition, Cambridge Business Publishers, 2020 (eBook or printed textbook).

Given the high cost of textbooks, you can use older editions of the textbook, however, there might be some slight differences in the assigned reading (and older editions are not up-to-date with Revenue recognition standard). For most classes there will be assigned reading.

Grading:

At NYU Stern, we strive to create courses that challenge students intellectually and that meet the Stern standards of academic excellence. To ensure fairness and clarity of grading, the Stern faculty has adopted a grading guideline for core courses in which up to 35% of students can receive an “A” or “A-“ grade.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Homework Assignments	15%
Midterm exam	30%
Final exam	45%
Classroom Performance	10%

Exams:

The exams will be closed book and closed notes.

Although the final exam is cumulative, it will focus on materials covered after the midterm exam.

Classroom performance:

Classroom performance comprises participation in class discussions, preparation for class, and attendance during class. I view class discussion as an integral part of the learning experience of the course. Your class participation grade will be based on contribution to class discussion, not based on the amount of time you talk. I recognize that students with different backgrounds will contribute differently to class discussion. Contributions can take many forms, including, but not limited to, insightful comments and thoughtful questions.

Meaningful class participation requires adequate preparation of the assignments for each class. In the rare instance that an emergency precludes you from preparing adequately for a particular class, you should notify me before the class begins. Attendance is expected for all sessions. However, if for some reason you will miss class or will be late for class, send me an email before class. Tardiness, entering or leaving during class, and/or lack of attendance will have a negative effect on your classroom performance grade.

Homework Assignments:

Homework assignments will be posted on NYU LMS (Brightspace).

Homework assignments need to be submitted on Brightspace, before the beginning of class. Your write-up of homework should be concise and computer generated. The assignments will be graded based mostly on effort displayed. You are allowed to discuss the homework assignments and prepare the write-ups in groups of no more than three students. By having your name on a submitted assignment, you confirm that you contributed to the homework assignment.

Please also bring an extra copy of your homework to class for the case discussion.

Electronic devices and class notes:

Electronic devices are not allowed during the class.

Experience and research have shown that use of electronic devices during class significantly disrupts learning, both for the students using the device and for others in the class.

Course Website:

All course material will be posted on NYU LMS (Brightspace). Prior to each class, I will post the handouts for the class (which I will also distribute in class). After each class I will post my slides from class. The homework assignment and templates for some of the assigned cases will also be posted on Brightspace.

Office Hour:

My office hour for the first part of the semester will be via zoom, on Tuesdays 11:00am - 12:00pm (zoom link will be provided). We may later move the office hour to in-person.

Teaching Assistants:

TBD

Course Overview (Subject to changes)

Session	Date	Topic	Homework
1	Sep 13	Introduction to Course and Financial Reporting	
2	Sep 20	Fundamentals of Financial Statements Statement of Cash Flows – Direct Method	Hewlett Packard
3	Sep 27	From Economic Transactions to Financial Statements	Radiation Shields - Part 1
4	Oct 4	Financial Statements as a Management Planning Tool Revenue and Expense Recognition	Hanson Ski Products
5	Oct 11	Revenue and Expense Recognition Integrating Financial Statements Review Session	Radiation Shields - Part 2
6	Oct 18	Midterm	
7	Oct 25	Statement of Cash Flows – Indirect Method Accounts Receivable	Read - Statements of Cash Flows: Three Examples (do not hand in)
8	Nov 1	Accounts Receivable Fixed Assets	Radiation Shields - Part 3 Sears, Roebuck & Co.
9	Nov 8	Accounts Receivable Fixed Assets	Depreciation at Deutsche Lufthansa
10	Nov 15	Intangible Assets Overview - Accounting for Inventories and Liabilities Shareholders' Equity	
11	Nov 22	Shareholders' Equity Financial Securities and Fair Value Accounting	BMC Software Inc.
12	Nov 29	Financial Securities and Fair Value Accounting Financial Ratios	Dell Computer
13	Dec 6	Catch-up and Review	
	TBD	Final Exam	

Financial Accounting & Reporting Specific Assignments (Subject to Change)

1: Sep 13
Introduction to Course and Financial Reporting

Reading

Chapter 1, Chapter 2 (5th edition –same pages)

2: Sep 20

2.A Fundamentals of Financial Statements

Reading

Chapter 3 (pp. 100-116, skim pp. 116-126) (5th edition –same pages)

Assignment

Hewlett Packard

2.B Statement of Cash Flows – Direct Method

Reading

Chapter 4 (pp. 156-163) (5th edition –same pages)

3: Sep 27

From Economic Transactions to Financial Statements

Assignment

Radiation Shields Inc. - Part 1

4: Oct 4

4.A F/S as a Management Planning Tool

Assignment

Hanson Ski Products

NOTE: Don't be intimidated by the sea of numbers. Most of the numbers you need to construct the balance sheets are directly given in the case. You don't need to forecast future sales, develop a schedule for collections, or re-calculate interest expense, etc. All of this has been (implicitly) done for you in the projected balance sheets, income numbers, etc. There are only a few numbers you actually need to derive.

An Excel spreadsheet with a useful format for completing the assignment is included with the case and is also available on the course web site.

4.B Revenue and Expense Recognition

Reading

Chapter 6 (pp. 270-280) (5th edition - 272-278)

Chapter 7 (pp. 328-329) (5th edition - 328-329)

5: Oct 11

5.A Revenue and Expense Recognition

5.B Integrating Financial Statements

Assignment

Radiation Shields Part 2

5.C Review Session

6: Oct 18 – Midterm Exam

7: Oct 25

7.A Statement of Cash Flows – Indirect Method

Reading

Chapter 4 (from pp. 162) (5th edition – from 163)

Assignment

Read - Statements of Cash Flows: Three Examples (do not hand in)

7.B Accounts Receivable

Reading

Chapter 6 (pp. 283-291) (5th edition – 281-294)

8: Nov 1
8.A Statement of Cash Flows – Indirect Method

Assignment
Radiation Shields Part 3

8.B Accounts Receivable

Assignment
Sears, Roebuck & Co.

8.C Fixed Assets

Reading
Chapter 8 (pp. 372-387) (5th edition – 374-387)

9: Nov 8

9.A Fixed Assets

Reading
Chapter 8 (pp. 372-387) (5th edition – 374-387)

Assignment
Depreciation at Deutsche Lufthansa AG

9.B Accounting for Inventories

Reading
Chapter 7 (pp. 326-344) (5th edition – 329-344)

9.C Intangible Assets

Reading
Chapter 8 (pp. 388-394) (5th edition – same pages)

10: Nov 15

10.A Overview of Accounting for Inventories and Liabilities

Reading
Chapter 7 (pp. 326-344) (5th edition – 329-344)

Chapter 9 (pp. 412-423) (5th edition – 414-421)

10.B Intangible Assets

Reading

Chapter 8 (pp. 388-394) (5th edition –same pages)

10.C Shareholders' Equity

Reading

Chapter 11 (pp. 528-544) (5th edition – 516-535)

11: Nov 22

11.A Intangible Assets

Assignment

BMC Software, Inc.

11.B Shareholders' Equity

11.C Financial Securities and Fair Value Accounting

12: Nov 29

12.A Shareholders' Equity

Assignment

Dell Computer

12.A Financial Securities and Fair Value Accounting

Reading

Chapter 12 (pp. 580-594) (5th edition – 562-575)

12.B Financial Ratios

Reading

Chapter 5 (pp. 220-227, skim the remainder of the Chapter) (5th edition –same pages)

13: Dec 6

Catch-up and Review

TBD - Final Exam