The University of Texas at Arlington – Department of Accounting
EMBA 5304: Making Strategic Decisions with Financial Data
Spring 2020: various dates
Location: UTA Fort Worth

Instructor: Ramgopal Venkataraman

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Office Hours: By appointment.

Class Materials:

TEXTBOOK Spiceland Financial Accounting, 5e
Course Page: https://connect.mheducation.com/class/r-venkataram-emba-2020

Course Objectives

EMBA 5304 is the first accounting course in the MBA program. The course provides an overview of financial accounting and reporting with an emphasis on the interpretation of financial statements. Financial statements contain information used in various ways by investors, creditors, regulators and other decision makers outside and inside the firm. For most of you, your future job prospects and advancement, at a minimum, will require some ability to understand, interpret and use financial statement information.

The first third of the course presents an overview of the accounting model, its aim, and its continuing evolution. Without a solid understanding of this material, the remainder of the course will prove to be very difficult. Accordingly, I urge you to keep up with the course from the start.

The remaining portion of the course focuses on how corporate financial statements report particular economic events. We will discuss the generally accepted accounting principles for these events, their limitations and their alternatives. By the end of the course you should feel comfortable with a company’s annual report. You should be able to come to a reasoned conclusion about a company’s financial health and be able to make comparisons across firms and periods of time. You should be able to pick up a set of financial statements, understand where the numbers came from, and be able to take the statement apart and put them back together again so that they suit your individual decision making needs.

Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the nature of accounting.
2. Explain the basic concepts of accounting.
3. Perform basic financial statement analysis.
4. Identify and discuss the “real world” implications of accounting information.
Grading

The course grade will be based on the following factors:

- HW/in-class assignments/online assignments: 50 points
- Peer evaluation: 25 points
- Class Participation: 25 points
- Final Exam: 100 points
- Group Research Project: 100 points
- Total possible: 300 points

Assignments and Examinations

There are several assignments and a final exam for the course. Anyone missing the exam or assignment will automatically receive a grade of zero for that exam or assignment. The final exam will be based on both questions and a complete set of Financial Statements. The final exam will be made available on February 28th at 5 pm. It will be due on March 2nd at 5 pm.

The exam will consist of short written answers and problems. The exam is based in large part on the annual report of a particular company/companies that I will choose. Questions will rely on the actual numbers in the report as well as “made-up” numbers. It will be your responsibility to read and understand the material. I will not discuss any question related to these specific reports.

The final exams are open book, open notes, etc. However, you are not allowed to consult anyone (or any online source) other than me for any reason about the exam. Doing so will constitute academic misconduct.

Online Assignments:

Online assignments are available on the textbook website link provided. You will be able to access them once you register at the website. Assignments are designed to help you prepare for class. You have multiple attempts at each assignment and the highest score counts. Assignments can be accessed at any time. Typically, assignments are due the Sunday of the weekend when the material is covered in class. It is designed in this manner so that you have the opportunity to work on it before class in preparation for class, then use your last attempt after class to make sure you have all your questions answered and understand the material. For the first weekend alone, you are given an extra week to complete the material.

Financial Statement Analysis Research Project (Group Project)

You will assume the role of a financial analyst and present your research to a client (e.g., an individual investor or a portfolio manager). Your client has asked you to analyze the financial statements of one company. You should choose the company now so that you can obtain its annual reports and begin doing any necessary research. The research I have in mind includes searching some of the on-line databases in the library or on the Internet. You should search for information about your industry and companies. What are the major trends in the industry? Have any significant events happened at your company that will be important to consider as you analyze their results? Who are the company’s major competitors? And so on.

Following the end of the course, each group will send me a 6 page report on the company. This report will include a discussion about the firm, its’ competitors, how the firm operates, and an analysis of the firm’s performance. Your analysis should not consist merely of annotated tables of ratios. Ratio analysis is
necessary, but not sufficient, to analyze financial statements and provide a useful report or recommendation. It is not an end in itself. You must discuss concisely the subject firm’s profitability, cash flows, asset utilization, and debt servicing ability (liquidity, solvency and reserve funds). In addition, you should evaluate the company’s, profitability and risk assessment and overall assessment from an investor-creditor perspective and recommend whether I should buy or sell the stock.

At the latest this report is due on Sunday, February 23, 2019 by midnight. The format requirements of the report are:

* Six pages *maximum* for text. This will likely prove to be a significant constraint. I impose this requirement in order to bring discipline to your writing. There’s nothing more aggravating than having to read a long report that doesn’t say anything. Make your point, support it and move on. Your report should include supporting analysis as appendices to the six pages. However, the six pages should stand on their own. You will do a group submission on Canvas. The 6 pages of the report and appendices should be printable on regular letter size paper. You may also include an excel file showing your work if you choose to do so.

I will review but not pre-grade your work if you submit it to me by email a week ahead of time. If you submit the ratios calculated by your group by February 8th, I will verify your ratios to make sure your reports are based on correctly calculated ratios. Please note that you may lose some points for inaccuracies but that will be a lot fewer points lost than a report based on inaccurate ratios.

* Typed, doubled-spaced, with one inch margin all around. Standard type size (e.g., 12 point Times)

**Participation and Peer Evaluation**

In my view, simply being in the classroom does not add much to our collective experience. Participation includes asking questions (e.g., clarifying questions, what if? questions, I don’t get it? questions), adding to the discussion (e.g., bringing in your past work experience to bear), and generally enhancing the learning experience of the group as a whole.

You are encouraged to work in groups. I suggest you study the chapter independently, then follow up with a group discussion. Remember that, "*none of us is as smart as all of us.*" Just a reminder, if you have not attempted the independent work first, it is unlikely you will gain as much from the group discussion as others who have. *Strive to understand, not memorize.*

Since you will work on the research assignment and several in-class projects in assigned groups, part of your evaluation will include a "peer evaluation" assessing your contribution to the group work.
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| January 17-18      | Introduction to Accounting, Recording and analyzing transactions during the financial period and at the end of the Financial Period. | Chapters 1 through 4 in textbook         | a. Problem set to be distributed in class  
b. Initial Group Formation  
c. Select Companies to Analyze  
d. Download Annual Reports. You will be given 2 hours of class time to accomplish this. |
| January 31 – February 1 | Revenue Recognition, Reporting Receivables, Inventory, long term assets and Financial Statement Analysis and Interpretation. | Chapter 5 through Chapter 7. Discussion of Chapter 12. | a. submit problem set distributed in weekend 1  
b. You will be given time to work on calculating ratios for your companies. |
Instructor’s Background

Dr. Ramgopal Venkataraman, PhD, FCA, Grad CWA is the Chair of the Department of Accounting at the University of Texas at Arlington, College of Business. He received his Ph.D. in Accounting from Penn State and joined the accounting faculty at UT-Arlington in 2013. He previously served on the faculties of University of Minnesota and SMU. During the past few years, Professor Venkataraman has primarily taught financial and managerial accounting in various graduate programs in addition to teaching a doctoral seminar on accounting research. Professor Venkataraman’s teaching philosophy is based on a foundation of helping students better themselves by providing them with knowledge and skills that can readily be applied in modern business settings. He places particular emphasis on integrating knowledge across the various business disciplines such as management, marketing, operations, finance etc. and accounting.

Professor Venkataraman’s research has largely focused on capital markets, auditing and financial analysts. He has published articles in journals such as The Accounting Review, Contemporary Accounting Research, Review of Accounting Studies, and Journal of Accounting and Public Policy among others. He has also published research in medicine.

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) http://www.uta.edu/disability/ or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For
information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Michelle Willbanks, Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-4585 or titleix@uta.edu

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at https://www.uta.edu/conduct/. Faculty are encouraged to discuss plagiarism and share the following library tutorials http://libguides.uta.edu/copyright/plagiarism and http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week,
an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which will be pointed out to you on the first day of class. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Active Shooter:** The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by UTA Police regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. https://police.uta.edu/activeshooter