

SEMINAR IN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING RESEARCH – SPRING 2008
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
TAMKANG UNIVERSITY

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COURSE AIM

The major objective of this course is to expose master-level accounting students to ongoing and emerging financial accounting issues and to acquaint them with various research methodologies used in empirical financial accounting research. Specifically, the course is designed to review and analyze empirical aspects of financial accounting, including, but not limited to, accounting choices and earnings management, analysis of Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts, accounting measurement and valuation, financial disclosure, review of market studies, and usefulness of financial information.

RECOMMENDED COURSE MATERIALS

Accounting Theory: Conceptual Issues in a Political and Economic Environment (6th edition)

by Harry Wolk, James Dodd, & Michael Tearney, South-Western, 2004.

Positive Accounting Theory (PAT) by Ross L. Watts and Jerold L. Zimmerman, Prentice Hall, 1986.

Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts (SFAC) by Financial Accounting Standards Board.

FORMAT OF CLASSES

Important accounting topics, as described above, will be selected for recitation, demonstration, and discussion in the seminar, and a number of papers will be listed for reading on each topic. Students are expected to read the assigned papers **before** coming to class, and they are encouraged to do their own research of the literature to identify additional research papers on each topic.

Students are required to write a research paper and make an oral presentation based on a narrow subsection of one of the session topics. The paper will be a review of the work done

(minimum of three articles) on the subject with your evaluation of the need for further research. The articles selected should not be dated prior to January 2003. Please comment on the research design and methodology of each of the relevant study to the extent possible as well. Specifically, the written and oral reports shall discuss the research focus of the selected articles, research methodologies used to achieve the objectives, interpretation of the results, strengths and weaknesses of the work, and recommendations for future research. Presentations will be followed by open class discussions and questions.

A preliminary thesis proposal will be required by the end of the semester. Students will be given the opportunity to select an accounting topic, preferably financial accounting, for their term papers at the beginning of the semester based on their interests. The first chapter of the paper should state the purpose of the study and the research questions. The second chapter should provide an integrated discussion of the core literature. A clear definition of the variables and their expected and observed relationships should be presented as well. The third chapter should briefly describe the methodology to be followed. Only the basic types of analysis and techniques should be identified. The three major techniques are: experiments, surveys, and field research. If you are doing a survey, provide some sample questions. If doing a statistical study, describe the software package and appropriate techniques. Papers are to use primary as well as secondary data and to follow behavioral and social science design. The proposal is purported to reflect each student's independent mastery of the chosen subject and ability to apply it with an appropriate research design.

All papers submitted are expected to be typed and in a graduate-level form. Please use APA style for each paper and obtain approval from the instructor for each topic before commencing work.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Your grade at the end of the course will depend on your ability to demonstrate your understanding of the ongoing financial accounting issues and research techniques used in empirical financial accounting research. The course grade will be determined as follows:

Class Participation	20%
Research Paper and Presentation	40%
Preliminary Thesis Proposal and Presentation	40%
Total	100%

Class participation will be based on students' contribution to class discussions during the

lectures. Each time you make a positive contribution, you will be awarded one participation point. The student who has the highest number of participation points will be awarded full marks for class participation (20%). The other students will then be marked in relation to this student. Attendance to class does not constitute class participation. However, attendance is mandatory in this course.

The final grade for each student will be based on his/her cumulative score in each of the above areas of assessment. Students must satisfactorily complete all major tasks in order to pass the course.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

Week	Date	Topic
1	Feb. 22	Introduction to Course/Syllabus Overview Introduction of User-Oriented Accounting Research
2	Feb. 29	Introduction of User-Oriented Accounting Research
3	March 7	Agency Theory and Positive Accounting Theory
4	March 14	Agency Theory and Positive Accounting Theory
5	March 21	Accounting Choices and Earnings Management
6	March 28	Accounting Choices and Earnings Management
7	April 4	No Class
8	April 11	Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts (Conceptual Framework)
9	April 18	<i>Class Presentation and Research Paper Due</i>
10	April 25	Corporate Governance
11	May 2	Corporate Governance
12	May 9	Market Studies and Usefulness of Accounting Information
13	May 16	Market Studies and Usefulness of Accounting Information
14	May 23	Financial Disclosure
15	May 30	Financial Disclosure
16	June 6	Accounting Measurement and Valuation
17	June 13	Accounting Measurement and Valuation
18	June 20	<i>Class Presentation and Preliminary Thesis Proposal Due</i>

I wish you a productive semester and success in your studies.