

Department of Economics
University of California San Diego



Economics 4:- Financial Accounting

5:00-6:20pm MW Center 101

Syllabus Spring 2008

Note: This Syllabus is an agreement between you and I that establishes the content, representations, schedule, requirements, and performance measurement aspects of this course.

Materials:

1. **Financial Accounting READER**; Willoughby 2008 (UCSD Bookstore). Available end of 1st week.
2. Any Financial Accounting book, tutorial, or guide: For example: [Accounting for Dummies](#), by John Tracy, CPA or [Accounting for Non-Accountants](#); or [Core Concepts of Accounting](#), etc.
3. [The Number](#) Alex Berenson.

Course Objective:

An introduction to the principles of financial accounting (assuming no prior knowledge of accounting) to help students understand how accrual accounting information is produced insofar as that will facilitate more thoughtful reading of the primary financial statements.

Course Webpage.

The course webpage is an ongoing guide to the course including a calendar, *your scores*, helpful documents to *print & bring-to-class*. Check the [Calendar](#) for *due dates* and *office hours*. You can find the Econ4 webpage from the Department's list of course web pages or from my [Homepage](#).

Graduate Fellows and Teaching Assistants:

Graduate Fellows and Teaching Assistants have been assigned to this course and each will be responsible for specific tasks which will be listed on the course webpage.

Grading:

Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the course based on weighted total scores. Because this is a lower division course, there are some guidelines for the distribution of grades: Grades will be curved at the following reference points:

- The class average establishes the lowest B-; thus, scores below the class average will start at C+, and
- At least 50 percent of all possible points will be need for a C-, which is the minimum requirement for a P on *Pass/No Pass*;
- Less than 50 percent of the “top-three scores” will be the threshold for an F.
- The top 20% (approximately), of the scores will receive at least an A- , with a reasonable delta between the highest A- and lowest A. The same will be true for the separation between highest B+ and lowest A-.

Context, Requirements, & Guidelines:

I have divided this course into five parts:

- (1) The basics of accounting & financial reporting;
 - (2) Booking transactions using the accrual method –*profits versus cash flow*;
 - (3) Accounting choices – The Ugly Puppy;
 - (4) Analysis – comparing companies - e.g. Target *versus* Wal-Mart *versus* Nordstrom;
 - (5) Time Value of Money. There will be:
- **Five quizzes** will be given at scheduled intervals during the quarter. One quiz for each part of the course: There will be **no make-ups** for a missed quiz unless you let me know *in-advance* and the absence is caused by a school-related event that is *out-of-your control*.
 - A reference Kit will be allowed for both exams, and quizzes #3, #4, and #5 only. You build your own “Kit” consisting of a 1 inch 3-ring binder with any materials, and all materials “punched & bound” into the binder. If you ask for guidance regarding the “Kit”, I will offer some suggestions and you may look at mine; but your Kit is *your* Kit.
 - The Midterm exam will cover material from parts (1) and (2), thus it will be similar to quizzes #1 and #2. The Final exam will cover material from all five parts of the course, thus it will be similar to all five of the quizzes. In fact, the Final exam will consist of five parts – each similar to its corresponding quiz.
 - There will be specific time limits for all exams and quizzes and, regardless of your arrival time, the proceedings will end “on the clock”. For quizzes, I will allow 20 minutes; for the Midterm exam, I will allow 2 x 20 = 40 minutes; and, for the Final exam, I will allow 5 x 20 = 100 minutes.
 - The University’s *Academic Integrity Policy* will be applied strictly.

- I may **Podcast** selective lectures and this will be announced in advance.
- In-process scores will be published frequently. It is your responsibility to insure that your scores are accurate. No changes will be made to scores after the last day of classes. Final scores will be weighted across all assignments according to the Table below.

Item	Weight		Description
Five Quizzes	7.0 percent each	35%	On selected days (see calendar).
Performance Boost	5.0 percent	5%	Added to the better of your scores on the two exams.
Midterm Exam	20.0 percent	20%	April 30 th
Final exam	35.0 percent	32%	
Problem Sets	4.0 percent each	8%	Due April 9 th and

Topic Outline – subject to change

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics and Assignments</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Week 1 - 3/31</i>	<u>Course Intro/Admin</u> Acctg, Business, & Finance	Download <u>Reader</u> “Intro” PowerPoint uploads
<i>Week 2 – 4/7</i>	Looking at Financial Statements Accrual Earnings vs. Cash Flow	Download PS #1 “SBUX”
<i>Week 3- 4/14</i>	QUIZ #1 ... and ... Capital Markets & Reporting Booking <i>accrual</i> transactions.	<u>The Number</u> PowerPoint uploads
<i>Week 4 – 4/21</i>	Accrual & Cash Flow QUIZ #2 & review	PowerPoint uploads
<i>Week 5 – 4/28</i>	Midterm #1 Accounting Choices	Monday April 28th PowerPoint uploads
<i>Week 6 – 5/5</i>	Accounting Choices Accounting Choices	PowerPoint Uploads
<i>Week 7 – 5/12</i>	QUIZ #3 Compounding & Discounting	Ben Kay
<i>Week 8 – 5/19</i>	Compounding & Discounting	Tutorials online
<i>Week 9 – 5/26</i>	Holiday – Memorial Day Review and QUIZ #4	Enjoy ! Bring Scantron
<i>Week 10 – 6/2</i>	Financial Statement Analysis and Problem Set #2 due QUIZ #5 and Review	PowerPoint uploads