University of Washington Foster School of Business
FIN 579 E/F: Intro to Real Estate Finance and Investment
Winter 2018
Professor Tracey Seslen

Course Contact Information

Professor: Tracey Seslen
Office: PCAR 564
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-2 (walk-in, starting 1/10), and by appointment.
Email: seslen@uw.edu
Phone: 310-874-8777 (cell) No calls before 9am or after 9pm, please.

Classroom: DEM 112
Class Time: TTh 3:30-5:20
Class Website: http://canvas.uw.edu

Grader: Rory Ernst (Ph.D Student in Finance) rjernst@uw.edu (206) 661-2546

Description

The goal of this course is to equip students with a toolbox of fundamental concepts and analytical techniques for the purpose of making prudent real estate investment decisions. The course will be built upon the modern corporate finance curriculum; however, a key objective of the course is to impart understanding of the factors that distinguish real estate from conventional securities investments and the implications of those differences. By the end of the quarter, students will learn various real estate valuation techniques and the circumstances under which they are best used; how to tailor a property’s lease structure to best fit the property and specific tenant type; how to choose the best loan for a property; how to set up an equity partnership, and how to identify and better control risk in a property investment. Learning will take place via lectures, problem sets, case discussions, in-class exercises, class visits from industry experts, and a group project in which students carry out a detailed financial analysis of an actual for-sale property in the Puget Sound area.
Prerequisites

MBA Core Finance or equivalent. Individuals should have a solid understanding of cash flow discounting and present value mathematics. In this course, the students will develop an understanding of such techniques as applied to real estate issues. For those of you needing a PV math or discounting refresher, please work through the “PV Math Pre-Test” document posted in the “Miscellaneous” section of the class Canvas page. Step-by-step solutions are available in video format under the Panopto link.

Recommended Course Materials

- Brueggeman and Fisher: Real Estate Finance and Investments, Fifteenth Edition. (ISBN #978-0-07-337735-3). Please use caution if thinking of acquiring a different edition. You will be solely responsible for any problems that may arise from using an edition other than the above. Understand that due to the great scope of the book and limited time allotted to the class, we will not be covering every topic in the assigned chapters. The main purpose of the book will be as a source for homework problems, and as a means of filling in any gaps from the lectures, slides, or personal notes. Reading of the book chapters should not be used as a first approach in studying for exams. This book will be on reserve in the Foster Business Library if you choose not to purchase it.


- Excel or calculator with financial functions.

Grading Policy

Each student’s grade is made up of the following categories:

- Problem Sets (3) and Speaker turn-ins (2) 15%
- Huntington Flats Case (4 parts) 4%
- Pinckney Street and Wildcat Equity Partners Cases 25%
- Exam 25%
- Final Project
  - Timely submission of proposal 2%
  - Final Report 25%
- Peer Evaluation
  (2% for submission + 2% for assessment) 4%

Total 100%
Disputes regarding grades must be brought to my attention within one week of the item being returned (I encourage you to pick up your papers promptly, as the clock starts when I bring your papers back to class). Disputes of a “subjective” nature must be submitted in writing along with the original exam paper or case document. Incorrectly added scores or other obvious grading mistakes may be handled face-to-face. Course grades will follow the Foster School’s standard policy for 500-level elective median targets.

**Problem Sets**

Problem sets will be graded on a full-credit/no-credit basis. To receive full credit for a problem set, you should have made a reasonable attempt to solve every problem assigned. Each student must turn in their own paper, although students may work together to solve the problems. Students may turn in problem sets up to 48 hours late for 50% credit. Beyond 48 hours, no credit will be awarded. Solutions to problem sets will be posted on Canvas approximately 48 hours past the due date and links to Tegrity/Panopto video explanations may be posted for particularly challenging problems. Computational questions on the exam will be similar to the types of problems found in the problem sets, with extra consideration for time constraints. *So please note: you will be better off turning in a complete problem set late for partial credit than turning in an incomplete one on time, both from a grading as well as a knowledge acquisition perspective.*

**Guest Speakers**

To add an additional element of real world color to the class, two guest lecturers will be visiting the class. While attendance will not be explicitly graded, you will be required to turn in a *very brief* writing assignment at the end of the period designed to indicate active listening. Generally speaking, everyone who attends a lecture will receive full credit, which counts for three percent of your total course grade (6% total for the two lectures).

**Huntington Flats In-Class Case**

Throughout the quarter, you will have the opportunity to solidify your understanding of basic valuation and pro-forma-building within a real-world context through a case called “Huntington Flats”. All parts of the case will be done in-class, and you will be free to consult with me or with your fellow students to complete the exercises. There is an expectation that all students will attend class on those days, and remain in class, working productively, until class is over OR you have successfully (correctly) completed the exercise. Students will submit their work to Canvas (either an Excel file or a jpeg of handwritten work) when it is complete or class is over. If you expect to be absent on a “Huntington Flats” day, you may do the work at home and receive full credit, but you MUST notify me in advance, and the work MUST be submitted within 24 hours of the class in which it was assigned.
Other Cases

In addition to the Huntington Flats case, students will be assigned two “traditional” Harvard-style cases. The Pinckney Street and Wildcat Equity Partners cases must be done in teams of 4 or 5, depending on course enrollment. Each team should turn in one hard copy and one electronic copy of the case deliverables at the time they are due. Case assignment questions and deliverable guidelines will be posted on Canvas approximately one week before the assignment is due.

No late cases will be accepted.

The cases will be graded out of 100 points. Grades will be based on accuracy of calculations, depth of analysis, insightfulness, conciseness, and conforming to a “professional” level of report formatting – pages should be numbered, graphs and tables properly labeled, and the text free of typographical and grammatical errors. If an early mistake in a calculation propagates others down the line, teams will only be penalized for the first mistake in the sequence.

Exam

There will be one (1) in-class exam. You will be permitted one 8.5”x11” cheat-sheet (both sides), and usage of Excel or a financial calculator. You will be given 1 hour 45 minutes to complete the exam. Old exams and practice questions will be distributed in advance to familiarize students with formats and question style/complexity. I strongly recommend that your review include working through the practice exam/practice questions. We will have a formal exam review in class the class period before the exam.

Final Project

The culminating learning experience of this class will be a project requiring you to seek out an actual real estate investment opportunity in the Puget Sound area, evaluate that opportunity, and present your findings in a 12-15-page report (excluding graphics). Students should plan to work in their Pinckney/Wildcat case teams on this assignment. Further details on acceptable property types, sizes, deliverables, etc. will be discussed later in the quarter.

Peer Evaluation

Given the emphasis on group work in this class, you will be asked to assess your own and your group members’ contributions to the Pinckney Street and Wildcat cases, and to the final project. It is not expected that all group members in all situations will contribute exactly equally, but there is an expectation that over the course of the quarter, everyone roughly “pulls their weight”. Situations in which there is a consistent pattern of “slacking off” on the part of one or more group members may result in loss of points. Students will receive 2 points for submitting the evaluation and 2 points for a positive assessment of their contributions throughout the quarter.
Participation/Classroom Etiquette

Lectures will take place once a week. You should arrive on time and not leave until class has been dismissed. You should also return promptly at the designated time from any breaks. While participation in class will not be explicitly graded, it may be used to decide cases in which a student’s final grade falls on a borderline. Good classroom participation constitutes making a meaningful contribution to the intellectual environment of the classroom. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior may have a negative impact on your grade. All electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) should be turned off and put away unless you are actively using the device to take notes, perform calculations, or participating in an in-class Excel exercise.

Academic Integrity

By being a student in this class, you acknowledge that you are a member of a learning community in the Foster School of Business that is committed to the highest academic standards. As a member of this community, you agree to uphold the fundamental tenets of the MBA Honor Code and actively encourage others to do so. Where a violation has occurred, the student will receive a zero on the assignment/exam and may be subject to further disciplinary action.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Valuation conventions and techniques; Intro to Huntington Flats <em>(Exercise due at end of class)</em></td>
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<td>Valuation conventions and techniques (cont'd); Intro to pro-forma analysis</td>
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<td>Introduction to fixed-rate mortgages</td>
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<td>Financing alternatives (debt vs. equity); Excel pro-formas with debt</td>
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<td>Catch up; Exam review</td>
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<td>Exam</td>
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<td><em>Guest Lecture #2: David Marino and Owen Rice, Principal of Hughes Marino</em></td>
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<td>Wildcat Equity Partners Case Discussion</td>
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<td>3/6</td>
<td>Huntington Flats Part 4 <em>(Exercise due at end of class)</em>; Course wrap-up, evaluations</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>In-class workday for final projects</td>
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3/10 *(Saturday) Final Project Report due
Peer Review due on Canvas at 11:59pm

Please bring your laptop to class on 1/18, 2/1, 2/8, and 3/6