Instructor: Liuqing Mai, Ph.D.
E-mail: mailiu@umsl.edu
Phone: 314-516-5567
Office: 1114, Tower
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 P.M. --- 2:30 P.M., or by appointment

Class Meetings: Tuesday, 11:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M., Room 315, Thomas Jefferson Library
Thursday, 11:00A.M.- 12:15 P.M. Online Learning

Course Materials:
Required Text:
ISBN 10: 0-205-98725-7
A used textbook without an access code is acceptable.

Required Hardware:
A flash drive to ease file portability; access to a Windows-based computer with Microsoft Excel 2010 and a reliable internet connection; a college ruled notebook for lecture notes. (A notebook will be handy for the large amount supplementary materials and lecture notes.) You are expected to back up your work regularly.

Please note: there are some fairly significant differences between the Mac version of Excel and the Windows version. I don't have a Mac and therefore will not be much help on the differences. If you are at all uncomfortable with computer usage, I would advise against trying to use a Mac for this course.

Recommended Text:
Skills for Success with Microsoft Excel 2010 Comprehensive, second edition

Home Page:
I will be providing all course related items (syllabus, lecture notes, handouts, announcements, grades etc.) on MyGateWay.

You need to log in to http://MyGateWay.umsl.edu to access FIN3503 course materials.
Prerequisites:
INFSYS 1800, FINANCE 3500, one 300-level finance course, and a 2.0 campus GPA.

You must have completed all prerequisites when you take this course. I expect you to remember a good deal of what you covered in those courses.

Course Description:
Spreadsheet proficiency is one of the most sought-after skills by the financial community. This course mainly focuses on practical financial applications using spreadsheet software. It is designed as a project-oriented course with an emphasis on: breakeven analysis, project analysis, financial statements analysis, capital budgeting, valuation, financial planning, and more.

The course assumes the student will obtain a basic working knowledge of Excel 2010 on their own. Those individuals without prior working knowledge of spreadsheets can expect to spend additional time setting up early example spreadsheets to learn routine commands.

Course Objectives:
This course is intended for students who want to become finance professionals, knowledgeable individual investors, or both. The purpose of this course is to learn how to build spreadsheets to solve complex financial problems. Upon completion of this course, students should master various excel skills and have the ability to model a financial problem in a spreadsheet and the ability to use the model to assist financial decision-making.

Course Pedagogy:
Class content is delivered in a computer. Almost all of the content involves working directly on your computer in Excel while the instructor demonstrates the operations and procedures. It is important that you work along with the instructor to complete the examples and procedures so you know how they are done. Therefore, only minimum class time will be devoted to “lecturing” in the traditional sense. Most of the class time will be spent on working exercises and creating spreadsheet models, with the instructor available to answer questions as needed. All of the projects and exams require you to apply similar operations in Excel.

I also expect you to do your own work in this class. Asking your fellow students for explanations of points on which you are confused is fine, but looking at someone else’s solution is not a substitute for the learning occurs when you work through examples and exercises yourself. Expect to spend a lot of time on this course.

Course Requirements:
Classroom: Students are expected to attend every class, though occasionally other obligations (e.g., business trips) may take precedence. If you expect to miss more than four class meetings, you should consider taking this course another semester. This course is mainly hands-on, and we will spend most of our time working exercises based on the textbook. However, the contents of the textbook shall in no way limit the content of the course. Instead, we will expand on the content and include many useful skills left out by the book. For this reason it is very important that you attend every class. Your ability to manage your time well and your desire to put in the effort needed to learn spreadsheet modeling are the primary drivers of your success in the course.
Out-of-Class Assignments: Homework exercises are assigned for each class. These are not collected and graded, nor do they count explicitly toward a student’s grade. However, it is impossible to master the material in this course without doing the homework conscientiously. Answers to homework exercises will be provided in class and online. Most of students are able to spend some class time on the homework after they finish working on their warm-up exercises. If you need additional assistance with the homework, please feel free visit during office hours.

In addition to homework exercise, there will be projects from each topic. The projects will require the use of Excel and, sometimes, the Internet. These are individual projects. Both getting help from other students or helping others are considered to be cheating. Please note there is no payoff copying others on the projects. Use the buddy system but make your own mistakes!

There are 8-10 projects in total. Only 4 projects will be randomly selected for grading. Please do not ask which project will be graded. Graded projects may vary individually. Instead of guessing which project will be graded, you can maximize your project points by doing your best in every single project. All projects must be submitted through mygateway. Projects submitted by email will not be graded.

Exams:
There are two exams. Each of the exams will consist of several problems which must be worked in Excel. The exam II will be cumulative. If there is even a hint of cheating, I will take the appropriate measures against those involved.

It is your responsibility to attend all exams at the scheduled time. No make-up exams will be given without legitimate excuses and proof. If the legitimate excuses are foreseeable, they must be submitted in writing (email is OK) two weeks prior to the scheduled exam. If they are unanticipated such as medical emergencies, you should be able to produce documentation. Any student submitting work not his/her own, any student allowing other students to copy his/her work or any student cheating on an exam will automatically receive a failing grade for the course.

Grades:
Grades will be based on two exams, class participation, and projects. Note: projects turned in after the due date will receive, at most, 50% of the full credit. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Exam I: 25%
Exam II: 25%
Projects: 40%
Class Participation: 10%
Total 100%
Evaluation Standards:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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I do not use +/- grading. I have no preconceived target grade distribution or average for the class. Everyone can get an A or everyone can get an F. I hope that A's prevail. Please note that your grade has to be earned and justified by your performance. An impending graduation does not automatically warrant a passing grade.

Cell phone usage:  
*Please turn off your cell phone when in the classroom.* All cell phones must be turned off and stored during exams as you will NOT be allowed to use the calculator on your cell phone during exams. Please see me prior to class if there is an impending emergency that waiting until the end of class will materially alter.

Standards of Conduct:

Students are responsible for being attentive to and observant of campus policies about academic honesty as stated in the University’s Student Conduct Code (p. 60): [http://www.umsl.edu/~studentplanner/index.html](http://www.umsl.edu/~studentplanner/index.html)

Any student who commits any act of academic dishonesty will automatically receive a grade of "F" in this course and a full description of the offense will be filed with the University and with the Dean of the College of Business Administration. **There are no exceptions to this policy.**

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and dismissal from the University. View this campus policy here: [http://www.umsl.edu/services/academic/policy/academic-dishonesty.html](http://www.umsl.edu/services/academic/policy/academic-dishonesty.html)

**Note:** *All work that is submitted for a grade in this course is to be your work and only your work. There is no group work in this course.*

Americans with Disabilities Act:  
Any student whose disabilities fall within ADA must inform the instructor at the beginning of the term of any special needs or equipment necessary to accomplish the requirements for this course.
Notes:
Due to privacy issues, I do not e-mail grades and I do not give out grades over the telephone. You can view all your grades on mygateway and see me in person if you need to discuss about your grades.

Do not assume that I won't give you a bad or failing grade, even if you are a graduating senior and have a job waiting for you. Don't make that bet. You will lose. The final grade in the course, once assigned, will not be changed except in the event of a recording error.

This is not a course in using Excel. It is a course in corporate finance that happens to use Excel as a tool with which to model financial decision environments. You cannot pass the course without mastering the finance topics that we will discuss.

This may not be a course you should be in if
- You are not self-motivated.
- You expect to put in 3 or 4 hours a week and that's all and be able to pass.
- You expect to be able to skip most of the work and cram for an exam the night before the exam. You are math-challenged or computer-challenged.
- You don't have a computer of your own.

You are strongly encouraged to give me feedback on how well you understand the material so that together we can create an effective learning environment. Please feel free to send me email or talk to me—I would be delighted to hear from you.