



ACCOUNTING 370
EXTERNAL FINANCIAL
REPORTING ISSUES
Syllabus – Fall 2017

14025D; M & W: 10:00 am –11:50 am; ACC 303

14026D; M & W: 12:00 pm –1:50 pm; ACC 303

Discussion; F: 10 am–11:50 am; HOH EDI

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Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on problems and issues related to the collection, reporting, and analysis of financial accounting information for decision making. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Report and analyze accounting information;
- Identify and create accounting information, including the rules used to prepare and report this information;
- Explain the usefulness and limitations of accounting information;
- Analyze accounting information from the perspective of its various users (e.g., equity investors, creditors, auditors, etc.);
- Write accounting reports, discuss accounting issues, work in a team on accounting projects and make oral presentation

PREREQUISITES:

One from: BUAD 281, BUAD 285b or BUAD 286b, or BUAD 305

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Readings:

- **Required Textbook:** *Intermediate Accounting 16th Edition*, (by Donald E. Kieso, Jerry J. Weydandt, and Terry D. Warfield; John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 2016).
- Accounting Standards Codification: You will need access to and develop facility with the FASB Accounting Standards Codification (“ASC”). The ASC represents the authoritative standards that, in large measure, constitute Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (“GAAP”). See attachment at end of syllabus- “Using the American Accounting Association...” for login instructions. Specific assignments to the ASC are provided on the day-to-day assignment sheet.

Supplemental Material:

- *Problem Solving Survival Guides volume 1 (Chs. 1-14) and volume 2 (Chs. 15-28)*. The survival guides contain additional problems you can do, and excellent descriptions of how to solve each problem. Although no formal assignments will be given from the guides, doing additional problems in the guides will help you better understand the course material.
- Class website: <http://edugen.wiley.com/edugen/class/cls66923/>. You will be prompted for a registration code the first time you access the website. Registration codes are packaged with new copies of textbooks purchased from the Trojan Bookstore. You may also purchase a code online from the Wiley website at www.wileyplus.com/buy. The website provides complete texts of the textbook, as well as additional problems and self-tests to help you better understand the topics.

COURSE POLICIES:

A. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY:

This will consist of class discussions, homework, quizzes, in-class exercises, presentations, two midterms, and a final examination. Students should attend class during the section for which they are officially enrolled.

B. GRADING:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Two midterm exams | 50% (25% each) |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| WSJ Assignment | 4% |
| Team Project | 12% |
| Professionalism, class participation, Homework, and in-class exercise | 5% |
| Quizzes (Take-home quizzes) | 4% |
| | 100% |

Final grades represent how you perform in the class relative to other students. Your grade will not be based on a mandated target, but on your performance. Historically, the average grade for this class is about a 3.3 (i.e., B+). Three items are considered when assigning final grades:

1. Your score for each of the items above weighted by the appropriate factor and summed.
2. Your overall percentage score for the course.
3. Your ranking among all students in the course(s) taught by your instructor during the current semester.

The grade of “W” is allowed only if a student withdraws after the official add period and before the end of the drop period during the semester. The grade of incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or unforeseen emergency occurring after the drop period of the semester that prevents the student from completing the semester. An “emergency” is defined as a serious documented illness, or an unforeseen situation that is beyond the student’s control, that prevents a student from completing the semester. Prior to the end of the drop period, the student still has the option of dropping the class so incompletes will not be considered. Arrangements for completing an IN

must be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final examination. All work required to replace the IN with a final grade must be completed within one calendar year from the date the IN was assigned. If the student does not complete the work within the year, the IN will automatically be converted to a grade of F.

General descriptions on how the components of your grade (team case and team project assignments, etc.) are given below:

Midterm Exam

There will be two midterm examinations given during the semester. These midterms will start at the beginning of class on the dates listed on the schedule. The midterms will emphasize material covered in lectures, homework assignments, and the text. The midterms may include multiple-choice questions, brief essay discussion questions, exercises and problems. In order to prepare for the midterm please make sure you understand the assigned readings and the concepts discussed in class. **There will be no make-up midterms.** If you have to miss a midterm for a valid reason, the score earned on the final examination will be attributed to the missed examination. **This policy is intended to accommodate sickness or other emergencies.**

Final Exam

The final exam will include all material covered in the course subsequent to the second midterm examination. It will be of similar nature to the midterm examinations. The final exam will be held **Wednesday, December 6, 2 pm to 4 pm.**

Wall Street Journal Assignment

This is a team assignment. Team sizes can be four to five members. If you do not have a preference for teammates, the instructor will assign you to a team. Please make teams by September 15. After teams have been formed on September 15, the teams cannot be changed. The team assignment will consist of a written component in addition to a 10-minute presentation. More information about this team assignment will be discussed as the semester progresses. Your team for the WSJ team assignment does not have to be the same as your team for the final team project.

The assignment consists of producing a summary and presentation of one article from the Wall Street Journal. The date of the article should fall within two weeks of your team's assignment date. The article must relate to the topics covered in this course and, fall into either of the following categories: 1) financial reporting issues; 2) accounting firms/profession; or 3) business ethics.

Once your team has agreed on an article for the assignment, please notify me of your selection. Articles will be awarded on first-come, first-served basis. Only one team will be approved for a particular article.

The written report cannot exceed one page, single-spaced 11-point type (1 inch margins). A copy of the original Wall Street Journal article should be attached to your summary. Please include a cover page for your assignment with the names of your team members in alphabetical order by last name. Please note that the presentation should be limited to 10 minutes in length and the written report is due on date of presentation.

Final Team Project

The final project will require students work in teams to integrate the material learned during the semester in ACCT 370 to analyze an accounting issue. The written portion of the final team project will count toward your ACCT 370 grade, and there will be an oral presentation in BUAD 302T – Communication for Accountants. You will be graded on content (accuracy, completeness, etc.), writing style (grammar, consider your audience, etc.), professional appearance of your project, and the appropriate use of cited resources. More information about the final project will be discussed as the semester progresses. The due date for the ACCT 370 written team assignment is: Friday, December 1 (tentative).

Details on team makeup and size will be given to you during the semester. Note that the results of the written team assignment may be presented orally in BUAD 302T – Communication for Accountants.

If you are a student taking ACCT 370 but not BUAD 302T because you already successfully completed BUAD 302T or its equivalent, (a) you must join a team and be fully involved in the development and execution of both the written and the oral portions of the team assignment; and (b) you must contact your instructor AND your BUAD 302T Professor on or before Thursday, January 19 and inform them that you are a student taking ACCT 370 but not BUAD 302T because you already successfully completed BUAD 302T or its equivalent.

Professionalism and Other Class Conduct

Professional conduct is expected from all students. Students are expected to adhere to, and will be bound by, the University and School policies governing academic integrity, classroom behavior, and etiquette. Active participation (e.g., posing questions and providing comments and observations) in class is strongly encouraged. Requests for exceptions to be made that are not consistent with the course policies set forth herein are considered unprofessional conduct.

In-class Exercises

At various points during the semester, unannounced exercises will be introduced to provide students with examples of kind of material they should expect to see on exams. These exercises can be completed by ad hoc groups, of four members or less, using any course materials present (i.e., open book / open notes). Points are earned by students completing the exercise based on the proper application of the techniques covered during class discussion. No make-ups or alternative assignments will be accepted.

Homework

It is extremely important to complete the reading assignment and homework before class. During the semester the homework assignments will be collected at random and graded. Homework assignments will be graded for effort not correctness. If you attempt each problem assigned, whether or not you get it right, you will receive full credit. No make-ups or alternative assignments will be accepted but you will be allowed to drop one homework grade.

Quizzes

The quizzes will be posted on Blackboard and will comprise of exercises, brief essay discussion questions and problems. Collaboration on the quizzes is encouraged as it might enhance the learning process. There will be total of six quizzes during the semester and you will be allowed to drop one quiz grade.

C. RETENTION OF GRADED WORK

All graded materials not returned to the student will be retained for one additional semester following the student's receipt of their grade. Returned paperwork, unclaimed by a student, will be discarded after four weeks.

D. STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodation can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

E. FINAL COMMENTS:

You will benefit the most from this course by coming to class prepared. In other words, keep up with your homework and reading from the text. These actions will pay off at exam time! I hope you find the course enjoyable and beneficial. Please feel free to email me with questions.

LSOA Learning Objectives

| Program Learning Objective | Description | Level of Coverage |
|--|---|-------------------|
| 1. Technical Knowledge | Students will demonstrate technical proficiency in the accounting discipline, including the use of technical accounting knowledge to help solve problems and make decisions. | High |
| 2. Research, Analysis and Critical Thinking | Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information for decision making in the local, regional and global business environment. | High |
| 3. Ethical Decision Making | Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethics, ethical behavior and ethical decision-making. | Low |
| 4. Communication | Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate ideas both orally and in writing in a clear, organized and persuasive manner. | High |
| 5. Leadership, Collaboration and Professionalism | Students will demonstrate leadership skills and the ability to work cooperatively and productively to accomplish established goals. | Moderate |

LEVENTHAL SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING GRADING AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Leventhal School of Accounting adheres strictly to the grading standards of the University and the School of Business Administration. Additionally, the Leventhal School of Accounting has supplemented those standards with certain others. For students' convenience, and to prevent misunderstanding, these additional standards are summarized below.

GRADING STANDARDS

The following grades are used: A - excellent; B - good; C - fair; D - minimum passing; F - failure. The grade of F is awarded for failing work at the end of the semester. The assignment of minuses and pluses when earned is required.

The grade of W (Withdraw) is assigned if the student officially withdraws after the third week but before the end of the twelfth week of the semester. No withdrawals will be permitted after the end of the twelfth week except by student petition to the University's Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures.

Students may elect to audit courses during the first three weeks of the semester. A course taken for audit (V) will be assessed at the current tuition rate. A course taken for audit (V) will not receive credit and will not appear on the USC transcript or grade report. Under no circumstances will the University allow a change in the registration status of a course from letter grade or credit to audit (V) or vice versa after the third week of a given semester.

Incomplete Grades Explanation

In incomplete (IN) grade may be assigned due to an "emergency" that occurs after the 6th week of classes for half semester courses or the 12th week for full-semester courses.. An "emergency" is defined as a serious documented illness, or an unforeseen situation that is beyond the student's control, that prevents a student from completing the semester. Prior to the 6th or 12th week, the student still has the option of dropping the class. Arrangements for completing an IN course should be initiated by the student, and negotiated with the instructor. Class work to complete the course should be completed within one calendar year from the date the IN was assigned. The IN mark will be converted to an F grade should the course not be completed.

Academic Integrity – Leventhal School of Accounting Honor Code

Students enrolled in any class offered by the Leventhal School of Accounting are expected to uphold and adhere to the standards of academic integrity established by the Leventhal School of Accounting Student Honor Code. Students are responsible for obtaining, reading, and understanding the Honor Code System handbook. Students who are found to have violated the Code will be subject to disciplinary action as described in the handbook. For more specific information, please refer to the Student Honor Code System handbook, available in class or from the receptionist in ACC 101.

G.P.A. PREREQUISITES FOR UNDERGRADUATE ACCOUNTING COURSES

The grade point average prerequisites for any undergraduate student enrolled in any accounting course is: a minimum 2.5 gpa for all completed accounting courses for students entering USC prior to Fall 2013; a minimum 2.7 gpa for all completed accounting courses for students entering USC in Fall 2013 or later. In computing grade point average prerequisites, BUAD 280, 281, 285ab, 286ab, 305 and 302T are considered accounting courses.

Grades in accounting courses taken at other institutions will not be included in the computation of the cumulative accounting grade point average.

When a student's cumulative accounting grade point average falls below 2.5 or 2.7, the student is placed on probation. If a student on probation does not regain a minimum accounting cumulative GPA of 2.5 or 2.7 after completing the next 12 semester hours in all courses (including accounting courses) attempted within the University, that student will not be permitted to continue as an accounting major in the Leventhal School of Accounting. Exceptions to this policy may be granted only in unusual circumstances by the Academic Standards Committee of the Leventhal School of Accounting. Decisions of the Academic Standards Committee are final.

To be removed from probationary status, a student may elect either to take another accounting course or courses for which prerequisites are met or to repeat an accounting course or courses in an attempt to earn a higher grade. Regardless of the course of action taken, all courses completed will be counted in computing the cumulative accounting grade point average.

The grade of "W" in an accounting course taken while a student is on probation will not extend probation. The probation period ends at the end of that semester during which the student completes a cumulative total of 12 semester hours of courses in any subject(s) at the university. Under no conditions will the student be permitted more than two successive semesters, including the summer semester, to complete the 12 semester hours of courses.

Students must attain a minimum 2.5 or 2.7 cumulative accounting grade point average to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting degree.

See the USC Catalogue for further restrictions on including grades in repeated classes in the overall grade point average computation.

OTHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS

1. The ability of students to write clearly and concisely is a necessary prerequisite to success in accounting work. Accordingly, students will be required to demonstrate writing capability in all accounting courses. This may be accomplished primarily through the inclusion of essay-type questions on course examinations.

2. Academic Integrity:

Ethics and values are very important in accounting, in the business world, and in education. We will consider ethical issues in accounting throughout this course. As an instructor, I will assume, barring evidence to the contrary, that you are an ethical student. To help you fulfill your ethical responsibilities as a student, the ethical standards for this course are listed below.

Graded team assignments: All work is to be performed exclusively by the members of the team and all team members must contribute their fair share to each assignment. If outside research is performed, sources are to be cited and information discovered via outside research is to be clearly referenced as such. The products of your research are not to be shared with any student who is not a member of the team nor should you use the product of any prior students in the class.

In-class examinations: All exams must be the exclusive work of the individual student. No student may share the exam contents with another student until exam grading has been fully completed.

If you know that another student is violating these standards: Allowing another student to obtain course points by deceit contributes to a general lowering of the ethical standards of the University and contributes to deception of potential employers and other academic institutions. Thus, you have an obligation to take some action when you know another student is violating the course's academic integrity standards. This is a difficult personal trial to face, but it is an important part of your ethical obligation as a student. If you know that another student is violating the standards, it is your responsibility to inform the student's instructor. See the latest edition of SCAMPUS for a discussion of academic integrity violations. In this course, academic integrity violations generally will be penalized with a grade of F for the course.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems:

Academic Conduct:

Students enrolled in any class offered by the Leventhal School of Accounting are expected to uphold and adhere to the standards of academic integrity established by the Leventhal School of Accounting Student Honor Code. Students are responsible for obtaining, reading, and understanding the Honor Code System handbook. Students who are found to have violated the Code will be subject to disciplinary action as described in the handbook. For more specific information, please refer to the Student Honor Code System handbook, available in class or from the receptionist in ACC 101.

Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

<https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

Students with Disabilities

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (www.usc.edu/disability). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: ability@usc.edu.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, the *USC Emergency Information* web site (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other information, including electronic means by which instructors will conduct class using a combination of USC's Blackboard learning management system (blackboard.usc.edu), teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Fall 2017 ACCT 370 Schedule of Assignments

TBD

USC Leventhal School of Accounting Important Dates Fall 2017

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Last Day to Register/Add without Late Fee | Friday, August 18 |
| First Day of Class, Regular Session and Session 431 | Monday, August 21 |
| Last Day to Add or Drop without a "W" (1st Half Session 431) | Tuesday, August 29 |
| Labor Day, University Holiday | Monday, September 4 |
| Last Day to Add or Drop without a "W" (Regular Session) | Friday, September 8 |
| Last Day to change enrollment from P/NP to a Letter grade (1st Half Session 431) | Tuesday, September 12 |
| Meet the Firms, California Science Center | Tuesday, September 19, 6pm-9pm |
| Last Day to Drop with "W" for ACCT courses (1st Half Sess. 431) | Monday, September 25 |
| Last Day to change enrollment from P/NP to Letter grade (Regular Session) | Friday, October 6 |
| Final Exams for ACCT courses (1st Half, Session 431) | Tuesday-Friday, October 10-13 |
| First Day of Class, 2nd Half, Session 442 | Monday, October 16 |
| Last Day to Add/Drop without "W" for ACCT courses (2nd Half Session 442) | Tuesday, October 24 |
| Last Day to change enrollment from P/NP to a Lettergrade (2nd Half Session 442) | Monday, November 6 |
| Last Day to Drop with a "W", Regular Session Courses | Friday, November 10 |
| Last Day to Drop with "W" for ACCT courses (2nd Half Session 442) | Monday, November 20 |
| Thanksgiving Break | Wednesday-Friday, November 22-24 |
| Last Class Meeting | Friday, December 1 |
| Final Examinations | December 6 – December 13 |
| Winter Recess | Thurs., December 14 - Sun., January 7 |