

FBE 591 Spring 2020: Real Estate Finance and Investments

Class Meeting: Monday, 6:30-9:30pm PST

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30pm-6:00pm PST

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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30pm-1:30pm

Zoom Information

The Zoom link is provided under “USC Zoom Pro Meeting” on Blackboard. Logging on to Blackboard will take you directly into the classroom without waiting in a “waiting room”.

Here is USC’s page for students on how to use their USC Zoom account:

<https://keepteaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/classroom/zoom/>.

If you have any questions about Zoom, please contact the Marshall Help Desk at

helpdesk@marshall.usc.edu.

Classroom Policies

1. Class attendance and participation is important in learning the material covered in the course. Unless accommodated as described in (b) below, attendance and active participation is expected at the synchronous Zoom class sessions.
 - a. Students are expected to have cameras on during the synchronous Zoom sessions, and preferably use headsets or earphones to ensure the best audio quality. *Please advise me if you have circumstances under which you will not be able to meet these expectations.*
 - b. For students who are located in a time zone where the synchronous class sessions or exams fall outside the window of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time, please contact me. You will not be penalized for not attending the live Zoom class sessions. The Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on Blackboard, and you will be responsible for watching the recorded sessions. Exams and other assessments will be scheduled for students to be able to complete them between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. in your local time zone.
2. During synchronous Zoom sessions, the following netiquette is expected:
 - a. Please do:
 - i. Log into class promptly.
 - ii. Mute your microphone, unless you are asking or answering a question.

- iii. Arrange to attend class where there is a reliable internet connection and try to eliminate distractions. If possible, please do not connect via phone, ipad, or other small screen devices, and rather use a laptop or desktop computer.
 - iv. Dress respectfully. Video conference business meetings are currently the norm, and we can use the classroom to practice professional telepresence.
 - v. You can use virtual backgrounds, but please, keep it professional.
 - vi. Display both your first and last name class meetings.
 - vii. Respectfully minimize distractions by muting and or turning off video if necessary and when appropriate.
 - viii. Engage in appropriate tone and language with instructors and classmates.
- b. Please try not to:
- i. Engage in a simultaneous activity not related to the class.
 - ii. Interact with persons who are not part of the class during the class session.
 - iii. Leave frequently or not be on camera for extended periods of time.
 - iv. Have other persons or pets in view of the camera.

3. All Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on Blackboard.

Course Description

Real estate is a critical part of the economy and aggregate wealth. The primary goal of this course is to develop an understanding of the principle issues involved in real estate investment and finance. Our treatment of real estate will be rigorously based on the modern finance theory. In the first half of the course, we will cover real estate investment analysis, valuation and financing at the “micro” (individual property) level. In the second half, we will cover mortgages, and briefly discuss real estate capital markets. This course is designed to provide the student with essential tools to understand how real estate value is determined, created, and influenced. We will cover a critical set of analytic concepts and techniques essential for students planning careers in almost any aspect of real estate. It is also a valuable course for finance majors who may become involved with real estate at the corporate level or alternatively as investors, investment advisors, or providers of capital.

Learning Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Interpret current event articles and case studies through the lens of the formal finance, real estate, economics concepts learned in the course
- Perform a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of income-producing properties, which includes:
 - Using industry-standard terminology and techniques for valuing income producing real estate
 - Making cash flow projections and preparing proforma statements using spreadsheets
 - Evaluating risk of investments and developing expected return measures
- Explain the roles of debt and equity in the structure of real estate transactions
- Understand the mechanics, pros and cons of different types of mortgages. Calculate the

APR, payments of mortgages, understand how debt financing affects the risk of the investment

- Navigate the loan underwriting process
- Develop a basic cash flow model using ARGUS Enterprise.

Required Materials

There is no required textbook for the class. If you would like to have a reference textbook, the main recommendation is Geltner, Miller, Clayton and Eichholtz, *Commercial Real Estate Analysis & Investments*, South-Western Educational Publishing; 3rd edition (February, 2013). It is available from all major online booksellers and at the USC bookstore. You can use any edition of the textbook.

There will be supplemental readings and cases, which will be made available on Blackboard. The Harvard Business School cases (required) can be purchased online from Harvard Business Online. The website will allow you to purchase a digital copy of each case for \$4.25 using your credit card. The login link for the course will be provided in class.

Case/project submissions will be made through ForClass. Each student should sign up for ForClass using the link provided on Blackboard. Please make sure that the name you use on ForClass matches your name on Blackboard and you upload a photo. It costs \$10 per student to register for the site. For each case/project there will be several questions posted on this site. Make sure to complete your submission by the due date and time announced on Blackboard.

Prerequisites and Recommended Preparation

BUAD 215 or BUAD 306. Individuals should have a good understanding of basic financial concepts and techniques such as cash flow discounting, risk and return. A profound background in real estate is neither expected nor necessary, but a solid background in finance is necessary. A basic knowledge of Microsoft Excel is also highly recommended. The use of a financial calculator which can compute annuities/present values and IRRs, such as HP 10B II or 17B II+ is allowed, but is neither necessary nor encouraged.

Course Notes and Communication

Most of the communication outside of class time will take place on Blackboard. I will post all class related information, including the syllabus, lecture notes, Zoom recordings, most of the readings and cases on Blackboard. Please check the Blackboard site regularly for class materials and announcements. If you have any class related questions or comments outside of the class time, you can either use the **Blackboard Discussion Board** to communicate with me and your classmates, or reach out to me or the TAs via email.

Grading Policies

This is an “applied” course. In order to gain hands-on practice, you will be working on several projects, case studies, and assignments, which will account for the majority of your grade in this class. Your grade will be determined by assignments, four project/cases, a midterm exam, a final exam, a final project, and class participation. The grade breakdown will be as follows:

Assignments/cases/projects	20%
Homework	20%
Final project	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%

Midterm and Final exam: There will be one midterm exam and one final exam. Exams will cover all materials examined in class or the class notes. The two tests will jointly account for 40% of your grade. The midterm will test material covered in the first half of the course, while the final will focus on the second half of the course. However, remember that the latter material builds heavily on the earlier material. Exams will be **open book/notes**.

Homework: There will be homework \ and exercises which are aimed towards giving you the opportunity to use the techniques we learn in class and prepare you for the exams. This homework is marked with “H” in the course outline below, and will be posted on Blackboard. Total homework grade (which accounts for 20% of your grade in this course) will be based on the best two out of three individual homework grades. Therefore, one assignment may be missed without a grading penalty. I encourage you to discuss the assignments with your classmates; but each student is responsible for preparing and uploading his/her solution independently.

Assignments/cases/projects: Answers to four case/project questions (marked with “C” in the outline below) are to be submitted through ForClass. Each student is required to make a separate submission, but you are encouraged to work on the cases in groups.

Final project: The group project will serve as the culmination of the class. The goal of this project is to search for a potential real estate investment, and to present your group's investment proposal to the rest of the class during the last week of the semester. You are expected to attend all of the presentations and provide constructive feedback to your classmates. The potential investment will be the acquisition of an existing development. The source of your development can be the local broker community, the Internet (CoStar, Loopnet, ...), the Wall Street Journal, or your own contacts. The project analysis and presentation will account for 20% of your grade in the course.

Class participation: I encourage you to ask your questions to gain clarity, enrich discussion or bring a different perspective. I expect everybody to prepare for and attend the classes, participate in case/project discussions and offer answers to my questions.

Re-grading: All requests for re-grades must be submitted in writing within a week of receiving the graded assignment or exam. You must submit the entire assignment or exam along with your detailed description of what you think was scored incorrectly. Re-grading may potentially lead to a lower grade.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Technology Requirements

The following equipment and system requirements are recommended to successfully participate in this online course:

- Computer with webcam
- Earphones or headset
- Reliable (preferably high speed) Internet connection
- Current operating system for Windows or Mac
- Current browser
 - o Google Chrome
 - o Firefox
 - o Internet Explorer (not recommended)
 - o Safari (Mac)

For technical support please see:

- **USC Systems** (Blackboard, USC Login, MyUSC)
For assistance with your USC login or other USC systems, please call +1 (213) 740-5555 or email Consult@usc.edu. They are open Mon – Fri 9:30 am – 5:00 pm and weekends from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm (all Pacific time).
- **Zoom Video Web Conferencing System** (Live Zoom Sessions)
For assistance using Zoom, go to Zoom Support Page. You may also call +1 (888) 799-9666 ext. 2. They are available 24/7.
- **Marshall Systems** (MyMarshall, Marshall Outlook email)
For assistance with Marshall systems you can call +1 (213) 740-3000 Mon-Fri 8am-6pm (Pacific), email HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu or use our self-help service portal as shown below. The portal allows you to get immediate assistance by searching for the information you need. You can also use it to chat with a technician or input a request. To access the service portal, follow these steps:
 - o On a computer or mobile device, go to MyMarshall Home Page and click the “Help” link on the upper right.
 - o Log in using your Marshall username and password.
 - o (If you don’t know your Marshall login please follow the onscreen instructions pertaining to login issues. You will need to know how to login to your Marshall account for accessing Argus Enterprise in week 8.)

If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, Office 365 package is available to you free of charge and allows you to install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on up to 5 PCs or Macs and Office apps on other mobile devices including tablets. Office 365 also includes unlimited cloud storage on OneDrive. To download Office 365 log into your student (University) email through a web browser, choose Settings (top right corner), and select software. If you have further questions or need help with the software, please contact the USC ITS service portal.

Notice on Academic Integrity

The use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student, and similar behavior that defeats the intent of an examination or other class work is unacceptable to the University. It is often difficult to distinguish between a culpable act and inadvertent behavior resulting from the nervous tensions accompanying examinations. Where a clear violation has occurred, however, the instructor may disqualify the student's work as unacceptable and assign a failing mark on the paper.

Academic dishonesty includes: (Faculty Handbook, 1994: 21-22):

- Examination behavior - any use of external assistance during an examination shall be considered academically dishonest unless expressly permitted by the teacher.
- Plagiarism - the appropriation and subsequent passing off of another's ideas or words as one's own. If the words or ideas of another are used, acknowledgment of the original source must be made through recognized referencing practices.
- Other types of academic dishonesty - submitting a paper written by or obtained from another, using a paper or essay in more than one class without the teacher's express permission, obtaining a copy of an examination in advance without the knowledge and consent of the teacher, changing academic records outside of normal procedures and/or petitions, using another person to complete homework assignments or take-home exams without the knowledge or consent of the teacher.

USC Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255 suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX - (213) 821-8298 equity.usc.edu, or titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298 usc-advocate.symplcity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710 uscsa.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, or emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 dps.usc.edu, ability@usc.edu.

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs. 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 (dsp.usc.edu) 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 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.

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 as early in the semester as possible. Students requesting test-related accommodations will need to share and discuss their DSP recommended accommodation letter with me at least three weeks before the date the accommodations will be needed. 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.

Note

This syllabus is an invitation to you as a student to engage in an exciting and interactive study of real estate finance and investments. My instruction will focus on real-world engagement with real estate investments; it will provide you with information, offer practice with skills, and enhance your preliminary understanding of real estate concepts. It is my intention to provide a collaborative and supportive learning environment where students learn from one another both in and out of the classroom. To that end, modifications to this syllabus might be warranted as determined by the instructor as I assess the learning needs of this particular class of students.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

(You should expect some deviations from the outline. Significant changes will be announced on Blackboard and in class.)

Week #1 (1/18)

No class on 1/18 (Martin Luther King Day).

Week #2 (1/25)

Course overview

Space and asset markets (GM[†] Ch 1)

Real estate investments - background (GM Ch 7)

Emerging trends in real estate 2020

Recent WSJ articles on real estate markets

Bonus Assignment: HW 0 (week 1 article punchlines) is due on 1/27. (H) Submission via ForClass.

Week #3 (2/1)

Real estate investments - risk and return (GM Ch 8,9,10)

Week #4 (2/8)

Real estate valuation - Cash flow proformas (GM Ch 11, 12)

Warm-up project: House valuation, ForClass submission is due on 2/12. (C)

Week #5 (2/15)

No class on 2/15 (President Day).

Week #6 (2/22)

Real estate valuation, cont'd. (GM Ch 12)

HW 1 (valuation) is due on 2/26. (H)

Week #7 (3/1)

Case Study: Pinckney Street, ForClass submission is due on 3/7. (C)

Leverage and valuation (GM Ch 13)

Midterm review

Week #8 (3/8)

Midterm exam on 3/8

HW 2 (Rentleg proforma) is due on TBA. (H)

[†] Geltner, Miller, Clayton & Eichholtz.

Week #9 (3/15)

Mortgages (GM Ch 17,19)

Week #10 (3/22)

Underwriting

Leverage and valuation

Week #11 (3/29)

Leverage and valuation, cont'd.

Argus tutorial

HW 2 (Rentleg proforma) is due on 3/28. (H)

Week #12 (4/5)

Case discussion

Taxes and valuation (GM Ch 14)

TCJA 2017 and real estate

Case Study: Angus Cartwright IV, ForClass submission is due on 4/5. (C)

Week #13 (4/12)

Taxes and valuation. cont'd

Perspectives on the COVID-19 crisis, outlook of CRE markets.

HW 3 (mortgages) is due on 4/19. (H)

Weeks #14 and #15 (4/19, 4/26)

Guest speakers

Final project presentations

Project reports (slides and documents) are due on the day of the presentation, before class.

Final exam review: 4/26

Final Exam Schedule

Pending: Exam period is May 5 – May 12