

Session 1: Introduction


Foundations of Finance

Spring 2026

Outline

- Practical Information about the class:
- Overview of class:
 - Outline of topics covered
 - The axioms underlying finance
 - The main insights of finance
- Some words about fintech

General information

- Class Times:
 - Monday (17:00 - 18:20 p.m.)
 - Wednesday (17:00 - 18:20 p.m.)
- Office Hours:
 - Monday (16:00 - 17:00 p.m.) & Wednesday (16:00 - 17:00 p.m.)
 - Or by appointment
- Prof. Luis Garvía,
 - 28 sessions to get to know each other
 - lg139@nyu.edu (questions)
 - +34 671 035 094 (appointments )
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/garvia/>

General information

WhatsApp Group:

NYU Finance Spring 2026

Grupo de WhatsApp



<https://chat.whatsapp.com/LOV41gje0NmIWY5D8rMuBv>

Resources

- Recommended Readings:
 - Bodie, Kane and Marcus (BKM), “Essentials of Investments,”
 - Ross, Westerfield, and Jordan (RWJ), “Essentials of Corporate Finance,”
- The Web Page on NYU BrightSpace will contain:
 - the slides
 - the problem sets and **their solutions**
 - the handouts,
- Calculators:
 - You need a calculator for problems and exams (e.g. \ln , \exp).
 - Having a financial calculator is an advantage, but not an absolute requirement.
 - Start familiarizing yourself with the calculator ASAP.
 - Exams will be solvable with standard calculator...

Problems

- Solving lots of problems is *crucial*!
- 6 problem sets
 - Hand in individual assignments
 - You may collaborate, but you need to state it at the top
 - Checked, not graded
- Suggested problems from BKM on class

We will deal with so many **languages**: English / Spanish, Maths, Accounting, Excel, Programming... and Finance itself. **Practice is the only way.**



Co-curricular activities

Students are required to submit the **15th April** a report, including a photographic report.

- The report must be uploaded as a post in the BrightSpace Forum (1 hour per response/post).
- Additionally, each student is required to comment on one or two reports from other students (1 hour per response/post).

1) The student must have participated in at least one of the following activities from the "Mapping Madrid" series:

- Money Heist, with Professor Luis Garvía - Friday (2 hours)
- Food Cultures and the City's Markets, with Professor Ellen Gordon - (2 hours)
- One Person's Trash is Another Person's Treasure: Exploring El Rastro (Flea Market), with Professor Luis Garvía - Sunday (2 hours)

2) Visit to the Madrid Stock Exchange - **TBD** (4 hours)

From 11:00 to 15:00.

Palacio de la Bolsa. Plaza de la Lealtad, nº 1. 28014-Madrid.

Grades

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| • Participation | 5% |
| • Co-curricular activities | 10% |
| • Problem sets | 10% |
| • Midterm | 30% |
| • Final | 45% |

Participation

- During Class:
 - Interactive!
 - Slides and white board – take notes!
- Before class: readings (see Syllabus, see last slide).
- After class: Review your notes, handouts, and readings

Midterm & final

- Cumulative
- Format:
 - Closed book
 - 1 sheet of notes plus formula sheet
 - Multiple choice questions and short problems from problem sets, lectures and text

Prerequisites

- Some knowledge of the basics of finance, although the course is self-contained.
- Because of the nature of modern practical finance, the course is heavily quantitative:
 - Calculus and algebra in class and in problems.
 - Statistics: mean, variance, correlation and regression analysis (read **Statistics Review**).
- Knowledge of how to use a calculator and excel
- Stay up to date: FT, WSJ, Economist

The Course Outline

1. Market Structure: Financial Instruments and Markets
2. Performance Measures: Time Value of Money
3. Valuing Financial Assets:

- Portfolio Selection

Learn to add

- The Capital Asset Pricing Model

Return and risk

- Market Efficiency, Frictions, and Anomalies

- Equity Valuation

Can we predict the future?

- Arbitrage

- Fixed Income Securities

Stocks

- Derivative Securities

Bonds

Options

Futures

SWAPs

Derivatives

Finance is Based on Simple Axioms

1. Investors prefer more to less
 - Example: \$100 is better than \$10.
2. Investors are risk averse
 - Example:
 - A) \$1 million for sure
 - B) 50/50 gamble \$0/\$2 million
3. Money paid in the future is worth less than the same amount today
 - Example: \$100 today is better than \$100 next year
4. Financial markets are competitive; no arbitrage
 - Example: There should not be a stock that people agree is under-priced

Price vs. Value

- Are price and value the same thing?
 - Price: Is objective (there is only one)
 - Value: Is subjective (each one has its own)
- Equilibrium models, efficient markets and no arbitrage hypothesis.
- Rational investors vs. irrational investors
- It is reasonable apply valuation models based on equilibrium when talking about technology?



How much would you pay for Whatsapp?

WhatsApp Free For All Users After App Removes 99 Cent Subscription Fee

Facebook \$22 Billion WhatsApp Deal Buys \$10 Million in Sales

[Bloomberg 2014](#)

Nobel-Prize-Winning Insights



Harry
Markowitz



William
Sharpe



Myron
Scholes



Robert
Merton



Eugene
Fama



Lars
Hansen



Robert
Shiller

- Harry Markowitz (1990): Optimal portfolio selection.
- William Sharpe (1990): Capital Asset Pricing Model. In equilibrium, riskier assets have higher returns
- Robert “Bob” Merton, Myron Scholes (1997): No arbitrage and pricing of derivatives
- Gene Fama (2013): efficient markets
- Robert Shiller (2013): irrational markets
- Lars Hansen (2013): statistical methods
- Jean Tirole (2014): market power and regulation
- Richard Thaler (2017): nudge theory
- Nordhaus and Romer (2018): Climate change and Tech
- Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer (2019): poverty



Jean
Tirole



Richard
Thaler

Some words about Fintech

- 1452 – Printing press
- 1661 – First bank note (200 years later)
- 1776 – Adam Smith (100 years later)
 - Ricardo (1817), Malthus (1798), Ramsey (1928), Young (1934), Schumpeter (1934), Keynes (1936), Hayek (1941), Domar (1946)...
- 1990 – Internet
- 2008 – Bitcoin or 2020 Digital Yuan (30 years)

Conclusions

- Things happen quickly: do not relax and enjoy
- Simple ideas become complex by aggregation.
The more you work at the beginning the easier it will be at the end.
- Next class we will continue working on simple ideas.

Next Session Assignments

- Read the syllabus
- Skim BKM Chap 1-3