RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

School of Business - Camden

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

53:390:506 Online

Spring 2026

Tuesday to Monday Format

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Office Hours:	By Appointment via Zoom

Key Spring 2026 Dates:

- Classes begin: **Tuesday, January 20, 2026**
- Last day to withdraw with "W": **Monday, April 6, 2026**
- Spring Recess (no classes): **Saturday, March 14 - Sunday, March 22, 2026**
- Classes end: **Monday, May 4, 2026**
- Reading Days: Tuesday-Wednesday, May 5-6, 2026
- Final exam period: **Thursday, May 7 - Wednesday, May 13, 2026**

1 Course Description

Finance is decision-making under constraints. This course builds a comprehensive toolkit that students can apply both in their professional careers and personal lives. Through the lens of running a growing coffee shop business, we explore time value of money, financial statement analysis, security valuation, capital budgeting, risk and return, and capital structure decisions. Students will develop parallel skills in corporate finance and personal financial management, using Excel to model real-world scenarios. The course emphasizes practical application, clear reasoning, and the intersection of business and personal financial success. No prior finance experience is assumed.

2 Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Explain** how the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement connect, then **evaluate** performance with core ratios.
2. **Compute** present and future values for single sums, annuities, perpetuities, and uneven cash flows, and **apply** these to personal choices such as retirement saving and mortgages.
3. **Value** basic bonds and stocks using discounted cash flow, and **interpret** how yields, time to maturity, dividends, and required returns affect prices.
4. **Build** capital budgeting cash flow timelines and **decide** among projects using NPV, IRR, Payback, and Profitability Index under budget constraints.
5. **Measure** expected return and risk for single assets and two-asset portfolios, and **compare** choices using the risk-return tradeoff.
6. **Estimate** WACC given target leverage and **assess** the effect of capital structure and payout policy on firm value.

3 School of Business Program Learning Goals

This course advances School of Business Camden goals in:

- **Communication effectiveness and impact**
- **Technology fluency**
- **Ethical consideration**

Students practice concise business writing, spreadsheet modeling, clear visualization, and responsible citation of sources and tools.

4 Course Materials

4.1 Required Textbook

Ross, Westerfield, Jaffe, and Jordan, *Corporate Finance: Core Principles and Applications*, 7th ed. McGraw-Hill.
Note: 6th edition is also acceptable. Chapter order differs slightly.

4.2 Required Tools

- **Microsoft Excel:** Essential for all projects and assignments
- **Financial Calculator:** Optional but helpful

4.3 Recommended Resources

- **The Wall Street Journal:** Free to Rutgers students
- **The Economist:** Global economic perspective
- **Financial Times:** International business coverage
- **Bloomberg:** Market data and analysis

5 Assessment Structure

Grade Distribution

Weekly Quizzes (14 total)	65%
Knowledge Checks (14 total)	5%
Bi-Weekly Discussion Projects (7 total)	15%
Final Exam	15%
Total	**100%**

5.1 Knowledge Checks (5%)

Low-stakes practice assignments that mirror main quizzes. Each KC has the same structure and number of questions as main quizzes. You can attempt each KC twice, with your best score recorded. These build confidence and identify areas to strengthen before graded quizzes.

5.2 Weekly Quizzes (65%)

Comprehensive assessments covering module content. Focus on problem-solving and application. Open-book but time-limited. **No AI assistance permitted on quizzes.**

5.3 Discussion Projects (15%): The Coffee Entrepreneur's Journey

Build your coffee shop empire while mastering personal finance. Each project develops both business acumen and life skills through Excel modeling and analysis.

Project Requirements:

- Post 1-2 professional visualizations (charts/tables)
- Include 130-160 word analysis with two specific numbers from results
- Maintain single Excel workbook (`FM26_LastName_FirstName.xlsx`)
- Reply to 2 peers (40-80 words each, reference one number)
- AI encouraged for Excel formulas, prohibited for written analysis

5.4 Final Exam (15%)

Comprehensive assessment covering all modules. Mix of conceptual questions and problem-solving. Open-book format.

6 Weekly Rhythm and Deadlines

Module Schedule (Tuesday to Monday):

- **Tuesday:** Module opens, review materials
- **Friday 11:59 PM:** Knowledge Check due
- **Friday 11:59 PM:** Initial discussion post due (bi-weekly)
- **Monday 11:59 PM:** Main Quiz due
- **Monday 11:59 PM:** Peer replies due (bi-weekly)

All times Eastern. Late submissions lose one letter grade per day.

7 The Coffee Entrepreneur's Journey - Project Details

Module 1: Introduction & Business Setup
Project: "Meet the Entrepreneur"
Introduce yourself and your coffee shop concept. Create basic P&L projection for Year 1. Learn how business and personal finances interconnect.
Deliverables: Introduction + projected income statement

Module 3: Personal Financial Foundation
Project: "The Owner's Retirement Plan"
Your shop is profitable! Calculate monthly savings potential. Model retirement growth comparing tax-deferred vs. taxable accounts.
Deliverables: Retirement growth chart + analysis of tax benefits
Life Skill: Retirement planning and compound interest

Module 5: Financing Decisions
Project: "Buy the Building or Keep Renting?"
Your landlord offers to sell. Compare commercial mortgage (with APR analysis) vs. continuing to rent and investing elsewhere. Full amortization schedule.
Deliverables: Rent vs. buy NPV comparison + mortgage amortization
Life Skill: Understanding mortgages and real estate decisions

Module 7: Business Expansion
Project: "The Second Location Decision"
Opportunity for second shop. Build complete capital budgeting model with initial investment, working capital, and projected cash flows.
Deliverables: Cash flow timeline + NPV/IRR analysis
Business Skill: Major capital investment evaluation

Module 9: Equipment & Efficiency
Project: "Smart Capital Allocation"
$50,000 windfall - choose among: new espresso machines (efficiency), delivery van (revenue), or solar panels (cost savings). Use Profitability Index.
Deliverables: Project comparison chart + capital rationing decision
Business Skill: Resource allocation under constraints

Module 11: Diversification Strategy
Project: "Balancing Business and Personal Investments"
Allocate $100,000 profits between shop reinvestment, stock index, and bonds. Calculate risk-return for different portfolios.
Deliverables: Efficient frontier chart + optimal allocation
Life Skill: Personal portfolio management

Module 14: The Grand Finale
Project: "Capital Structure and Payout Decisions"
Your coffee chain is worth $2M. This capstone project integrates M13 (capital structure) and M14 (dividends and payouts). Optimize your financing mix with WACC analysis, then design a payout policy that balances reinvestment for growth with extracting personal wealth.
Deliverables: WACC optimization chart + dividend policy proposal
Business Skill: Strategic financial decision-making for mature businesses

8 Excel Workbook Guidelines

Building Your Financial Toolkit:

- Maintain ONE workbook throughout the course
- Create new sheet for each project module (M1, M3, M5, M7, M9, M11, M14)
- File naming: `FM26_LastName_FirstName.xlsx`
- Place large key numbers near charts for easy verification
- Label all charts with "LastName - Module X"
- Use consistent formatting across sheets

9 Grading Scale

90-100%	A
84.5-89.4%	B+
79.5-84.4%	B
74.5-79.4%	C+
69.5-74.4%	C
60.0-69.4%	D
Below 60%	F

10 Course Schedule

Module	Topic	Assessments
M1	Proficiency with Financial Statements	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Meet the Entrepreneur
M2	Financial Statements (continued)	KC, Quiz
M3	Proficiency with Time Value of Money	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Retirement Plan
M4	TVM Applications	KC, Quiz
M5	Key Stock and Bond Concepts	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Buy vs. Rent
M6	Securities Valuation	KC, Quiz
M7	Applying Capital Budgeting Techniques	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Second Location
M8	Capital Budgeting (continued)	KC, Quiz
M9	Advanced Capital Budgeting	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Smart Allocation
M10	Concepts of Risk and Return	KC, Quiz
M11	Portfolio Theory	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Diversification
M12	Risk and Return Applications	KC, Quiz
M13	Capital Structure	KC, Quiz
M14	Dividends and Payout Policy	KC, Quiz, Discussion: Grand Finale
M15	Final Exam	Comprehensive Final

11 Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

This course uses a **three-zone framework** to make AI expectations explicit. Rather than treating AI as contraband, we define exactly when and how it fits into your learning.

ZONE 1: AI-BLOCKED

Protect core reasoning skills—no AI assistance permitted.

- **Knowledge Checks** — demonstrate foundational understanding
- **Weekly Quizzes** — apply concepts under time constraints
- **Final Exam** — comprehensive assessment of mastery
- **Written analysis** in discussions (your 130-160 words)
- **Peer responses** — your authentic engagement with classmates

What we grade: Reasoning clarity and correct method, not polish.

ZONE 2: AI-ASSISTED

Use AI as a learning tool, but show your process.

- **Excel work** — AI can help with formulas, functions, debugging
- **Concept clarification** — ask AI to explain financial concepts
- **Brainstorming** — generate ideas for project approaches
- **Grammar and spelling** — polish your writing mechanics

What we collect: Your Excel workbook showing iterations and decisions.
Required: Briefly note AI assistance in your project posts.

ZONE 3: AI-REQUIRED

Build modern capability—AI use is expected, judgment is graded.

- **Decision Memos** — consult two AIs (one argues Pro, one argues Against)
- **Your task:** Reconcile the arguments using course concepts
- **Justify your decision** — which position wins and why?

What we grade: Decision quality, verification, and domain reasoning.
This addresses employability: You learn to direct AI, not just use it.

Your Responsibilities:

- **Accuracy:** You are responsible for all content, including AI-generated material
- **Disclosure:** Note AI assistance where used (Zone 2 and 3 work)
- **Integrity:** Unacknowledged AI use in Zone 1 is an academic integrity violation

Bottom line: We stop treating AI as contraband and start treating it as a powerful tool.

12 Communication and Canvas

Email: Use only your Rutgers email address. Include "FM" in subject line.
Canvas: Access at canvas.rutgers.edu
Response Time: 24-48 hours on weekdays
Technical Support: 833-648-4357 or help@camden.rutgers.edu
Announcements: Check Canvas regularly for updates

13 Make-up and Late Work Policy

- **University-Approved Absences:** Email immediately with documentation. Make-up work arranged on case-by-case basis.
- **Late Work:** Loses one full letter grade per day without approved documentation. After 3 days, work receives zero.
- **Technical Issues:** Document with screenshots. Contact support immediately. Not an automatic excuse for late submission.
- **Incompletes:** Rare and only by prior consultation. Must be completed by registrar deadline or converts to F. See: registrar.camden.rutgers.edu

14 Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity policy can be found at studentconduct.rutgers.edu
Students must:

- Properly acknowledge and cite all sources
- Submit only their own work
- Report suspected violations
- Obtain data ethically and report accurately
- Not share quiz/exam content with others

Finance-Specific Integrity: Financial analysis requires absolute accuracy and honesty. Misrepresenting data or calculations mirrors real-world fraud. Take pride in honest work.

15 Disability Services

The University provides accommodations through the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you have or suspect a disability, contact: success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services

Services include extended time for assessments, note-taking assistance, and assignment flexibility. Services are free and confidential. Share accommodation letters early in the semester.

16 Code of Student Conduct

Rutgers University-Camden maintains standards for a respectful learning environment. Review the complete code at: deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct

Professionalism: Maintain constructive, respectful tone in all interactions. Finance professionals work in teams—practice collegiality now.

17 Tips for Success

Weekly Success Routine:

1. **Tuesday-Wednesday:** Read chapter, watch lectures, take notes
2. **Thursday:** Work practice problems, attempt Knowledge Check
3. **Friday:** Complete Knowledge Check, post discussion (if due)
4. **Weekend:** Review material, work on Excel project
5. **Monday:** Complete quiz, submit peer replies

Excel Excellence:

- Build incrementally—don't try to complete projects in one sitting
- Test formulas with simple numbers first
- Save versions as you progress
- Use cell references, not hard-coded numbers

18 Professional Development

This course prepares you for:

- Corporate finance roles
- Investment banking analyst positions
- Financial planning and analysis (FP&A)
- Entrepreneurship and small business management
- Personal financial success
- MBA-level finance courses

Consider pursuing: CFA Level I, FP&A Certification, or CFP designation.

Welcome to Financial Management!
Your coffee empire awaits...

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now." — Chinese Proverb