llsms2108
2024

Current Issues in Finance

5.00 credits	30.0 h	Q1

Teacher(s)	Thewissen James ;
Language :	English
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Main themes	For many years, most companies have been dealing with the challenge of having to grow their business on an international basis through export sales (international trade) or direct foreign investments (subsidiaries, JVs, etc). In the last decade, this strategy has become even more important as the world economy has become a true global market place for consumer and industrial goods as well as financial products and services. In the course Current Issues in Finance, we mix theory, examples and practical case studies to truly understand what to do when confronted with difficult financial decisions at the corporate level. The course is split in two parts: 1. Behavioral finance By the end of the part on behavioral finance, students should be able to assess the impact of psychology on individual choice behavior when making financial decisions, and the subsequent implications for investment finance and corporate finance. Behavioral Finance has successfully addressed several observed anomalies, that is, empirical facts that cannot be explained using traditional Finance theories. The lectures give an introduction to Behavioral Finance starting with a brief overview of the classical paradigms for decision making under risk (expect utility theory) and the implications for portfolio selection and asset pricing. 1. Stock market efficiency and anomalies In this component, we address important questions related to market efficiency. We first discuss the definition of market efficiency. We then investigate in detail various market anomalies (January/December effects, Friday effect, post earnings announcement drift etc.) and discuss some psychological biases and limits of real economic agents (investors, managers, analysts,…) that might generate those anomalies.
Learning outcomes	**At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :** **Having regard to the LO of the programme X, this activity contributes to the development and acquisition of the following LO:** 1 • The course provides the student with practical tools that can be used to fulfill the tasks of a manager. These tasks include (i) financing (funding, financial investments), (ii), risk management (especially hedging, that is, risk reduction), and (iii) help in decision making by offering valuation of commercial or investment proposals. At the end of the course, the student should be able to: • understand the current challenges in international markets and their implications for managers, investors and other stakeholders. • understand the challenges dealt with in a context of M&As or the implications of tax aggressiveness in major corporations. • understand the main stock market inefficiencies and the related strategies adopted by managers to circumvent them (e.g., the post-earnings announcement drift). • Develop a critical opinion on current financial issues.
Evaluation methods	• Oral: Yes (TBD) • Written: Yes (TBD) • Unavailability or comments: Written or oral examination according to the number of students. To be discussed as the end of the semester approaches. The (oral or written) exam will be worth 50% of the grade. Students will also work on a Mini-Thesis. The report should be five page long and will be written in groups. Sessions will be organized during the course to discuss the report. The Mini-Thesis counts for 50% of the grade. This grade also contains the presentation evaluation. If the student fails the exam in January, s/he has to retake the part that was failed and has the option to retake the other succeeded part. If this option is taken, the student needs to inform the Professor at least one month before the exam date. In the August session, the weight of the Mini-Thesis in the total grade is equal to 20%. The remaining 80% are allocated to the written exam.

Teaching methods	The method of this course combines theory and real business life experience: 1. The presentation of theoretical background with references to the existing literature. 2. Presentation of real-life examples through a case study leading to a class discussion. 3. Case study on which students will work on their own. 4. The course also benefits from the intervention of external professionals. The course is taught on the campus.
Content	Session 1: Introduction to behavioral finance Session 2: Dividend policy Session 3: CEO compensation and agency issues Session 4: Mergers and Acquisitions & Behavioral Finance Session 5: Financial analysts, the transmission of information & the stock market Session 6: Tax aggressiveness – Uncovering the under-sheltering puzzle – Corporate practices, trends and the missing pieces Session 7: Earnings management as a pervasive strategic tool Session 8: Stock market efficiency – Introduction, definitions and some anomalies Session 9: Textual analysis – The power of words in finance
Inline resources	Students must acknowledge the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the text for the parts where they have used it. They must clearly cite the paragraphs/parts where AI has been used. A failure to acknowledge the use of AI is considered fraud if detected by the similarity detection tools used by the instructor. The group members are all jointly responsible for the work that they hand in on Moodle and are informed that any piece of work is part of the formal examination of the course.
Bibliography	*Slides* *Research papers* *Videos* *Bekaert and Hodrick, International Financial Management, 2018, Cambridge University Press* • Selected chapters • Available in the library *Sercu, P., International Finance: Theory into Practice, 2009, Princeton University Press* • Selected chapters • Available in the library
Faculty or entity in charge	CLSM

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)				
Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Master [120] in Management	GESM2M	5		🔍
Master [60] in Management	GESM2M1	5		🔍
Master [120] in Management	GEST2M	5		🔍