

2017

MACC 625-01 Current Topics in Accounting Practice

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Recommended Citation

Mastilak, Christian, "MACC 625-01 Current Topics in Accounting Practice" (2017). *Accountancy Syllabi Fall 2017*. 53.
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PROFESSOR	Christian Mastilak, PhD, CPA (Ohio, inactive) My last name is pronounced "MASS-tuh-lack." Feel free to call me "Dr. M."		
CLASS MEETINGS:	Tuesday, 6:00 – 8:30 PM, room G30 SMH		
OFFICE LOCATION	212 Smith Hall	MAIL LOCATION	ML#1211
OFFICE PHONE	513-745-3290	OFFICE FAX	513-745-4383
EMAIL ADDRESS	mastilakc@xavier.edu (note the "c" at the end of my username , but not my actual last name)		
OFFICE HOURS	by appointment – send me an email or call my office		
EMAIL HOURS	I try to check email daily during the week; however, I rarely do so on Saturdays and almost never on Sundays.		

Mission of the Williams College of Business: *We educate students of business, enabling them to improve organizations and society, consistent with the Jesuit tradition.*

Course objectives: MACC 625 contributes to this mission through the examination of current developments in accounting practice. Students will learn to identify current trends, changes, problems and other events or issues, to understand them in their theoretical and historical context, to understand the development of accounting standards and practices.

The above course objective primarily supports the following Master's of Accountancy Program Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

- 1 Prepare and analyze financial statements and financial reports across industries.
 - 2 Develop and analyze information for decision making support, planning, control and assurance.
 - 3 Understand how planning, research and analysis are conducted in taxation and other types of compliance.
 - 5 Use relevant professional technology.
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Required course materials

1. *Skills for Accounting Research 3e*, by Shelby Collins, published by Cambridge Business Publishers
2. Other readings as assigned.

Canvas: Course-related material and information will be distributed through Canvas. I will generally use "Announcements" on Canvas and email to communicate with the class.

If you need help in the course: Please try these things, roughly in this order:

1. *Have you done the recommended reading and practice exercises?* They are intended to help you. The practice exercises particularly will help you understand where you need help.

2. *Have you talked to me?* It is my job to help you learn – it is what I get paid to do, and I enjoy it. To help me be most effective and to use our time wisely, please have answers to the following questions when you ask me for help:
 - a. With what specific topic are you struggling?
 - b. Which practice exercises have you already attempted?
 - c. How far were you able to get on the practice problems?
 - d. Why were you unable to proceed further?
 - e. Which portion of the lecture or book was unclear?
3. *Have you talked to classmates?* Often other students in the class can help you understand the material, and may be either more conveniently available or better able to explain the solution to your struggles.

It is inefficient and often impossible for me to help students who have not attempted to work problems on their own. Saying, “I’m totally lost” doesn’t help me help you, and usually untrue (most students who say that are not totally lost; rather they need specific help in a few areas, most of which can be solved by working practice problems).

Professionalism: Please maintain a professional demeanor in class as you would at work. Please, prepare all written communications, such as emails or answers to assignments, professionally. I reserve the right to reduce grades on any outside-of-class assignment due to poor grammar, punctuation, spelling, or other presentation problems.

Class attendance and preparation: Actively participating in class and completing suggested homework problems on a timely basis are critical to your success. Homework problems for each chapter are noted on the tentative course schedule available on Canvas. Students should attempt all the homework problems assigned for each day prior to class. Completing the problems before class allows you to highlight the topics that need additional attention and to ask clarifying questions during class. You should bring the textbook to class each day.

I hope you will attend class every week. However, I understand that work, family and other parts of your life may cause you to miss class. I try to be reasonable to accommodate these things, while also trying to ensure all students must meet the same requirements for the course. If you anticipate missing more than three class periods during the semester, I recommend that you consider taking this course at another time. In the event that you find it unavoidable and must miss a class, you should make arrangements to obtain lecture notes and assignment solutions from another member of the class. I will answer specific questions, but I will not repeat entire lectures privately.

Grades: The course grade will be determined based on a student’s performance on the activities listed below. Final course letter grades will be based on the grading scale below. I reserve the right to assign + or – grades at my discretion. These adjustments will generally be made based on students’ contributions to the course, via class participation, thorough preparation, etc. Some grading will be very subjective. I will do my best to be equitable, but the nature of professional life is that assessments of your performance are likely to be subjective. So it is with academic life.

Grade Components		Grade Scale	
Cases (best 3 of 4)	30%	A (exceptional) =	90%-100%
Presentations	20%	B (good) =	80%-below 90%
Big idea paper	25%	C (minimal passing) =	75%-below 80%
Other assignments and participation	<u>25%</u>	F (failure) =	Below 75%
Total	<u>100%</u>		

Note that the university considers an “A” to represent “exceptional” work. Thus, earning an “A” in this course will require understanding the material deeply, and being able to apply it to situations beyond the basic examples provided in class or in the textbook. All students who demonstrate exceptional work (measured by earning at least 90% of the available points) will receive an “A”. However, students should not assume an “A” is the default grade. I intend to use the full grading scale provided by the University, as needed. A grade of Incomplete is not assigned except under extreme circumstances (at my discretion).

Late work: Any work turned in after the deadline without my prior permission will receive *at least* a one-letter-grade deduction.

Exams: Any course content is fair game for exams. If material is sufficiently covered in the readings, it may not be covered in class. This material may be on the exams. Generally, though, the material I believe is most important will receive time in class. Students should not expect to do well on exams if they have not read the textbook, worked homework problems on their own and participated in class.

All students are expected to sit for exams at the scheduled time. Students who are absent will receive a score of zero. **Consideration for a makeup exam will be given only to students who notify the professor in advance.** Documentation may be required for any exams rescheduled at the instructor’s discretion.

Department of Accountancy policy: No programmable calculators may be used for exams. Students will be provided with a basic four function calculator for taking exams if needed.

Quizzes, if assigned will be completed inside or outside of class. If done outside of class, they are due by the beginning of class on their due date. **These are to be done individually, unless otherwise noted.** They are intended to ensure practice working problems, and feedback, prior to exams. **Students may ask the instructor for help;** however, the instructor may give limited help to ensure the student benefits from doing the work.

Case summaries, if assigned: The case summaries are intended to demonstrate that all students have prepared and thought about a solution to cases. They are primarily for applying the material in class. **Typed case summaries must be turned via Canvas prior to class.** *Case summaries must be done individually.* All group summaries must clearly indicate the names of all students in the group, both on the summary itself and in a note accompanying the submission to Canvas.

Good faith effort assignments, if assigned: Good faith effort assignments are similar to cases, only smaller. Good faith effort assignments will receive full credit as long as they demonstrate the following characteristics: (1) on time, (2) all parts of the assignment are attempted with a good faith effort at correctness, (3) a note of explanation for any parts of the assignment that aren’t completed and (4) professional presentation. Note that no particular answers must be correct to receive full credit.

Practice problems: Practice problems listed on the Course Schedule may be the basis for class discussions and exam preparation, but will not be collected for grading. These problems are intended to help in learning to apply the material. They are not necessarily useful for assessing learning, nor are they necessarily sufficient for learning to apply the material in practice beyond your time in the course. Thus, homework problems and exam problems will differ.

Academic honesty: Academic life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. I will not tolerate violations of certain standards of ethical behavior. These violations include all forms of cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized assistance on any assignments and exams. **All assignments in this class are to be done individually, unless otherwise noted. Anyone who receives or gives unauthorized assistance on any assignment will be guilty of violating this policy.** If you are unsure

of how to apply this policy to a particular situation, you should discuss it with me before turning in any assignments or discussing an assignment with anyone else. **The penalty for violations of the academic honesty policy will generally include your receiving an "F" in the course. I will also very likely pursue your expulsion from the Master's of Accountancy Program or the University.** Further, in accord with the University's policy, **I will report all instances of academic honesty violations to the Dean of the Williams College of Business.**

Keep in mind that when I find instances of academic dishonesty, I am forced to respond. The responses are never pleasant, and may linger throughout the semester or beyond. It is a waste of my time to have to prosecute these incidents, and I am unlikely to be in a good mood when I do so. Given the penalty for cheating, and the fact that I take this seriously, you are generally better off not turning in an assignment than cheating on it. Not turning in an assignment results in a zero. Cheating is substantially worse than not turning in an assignment. **Your best course of action if you're having difficulty with an assignment – even if it's at the last minute – is to contact me and ask for help. I would much rather grant an extension, or help you with the requirements of an assignment, than have you turn in someone else's work as your own.** So, even if it's shortly before an assignment is due, or it's the middle of the night, send me an email and we can talk about it. Of course, you'd be better off contacting me sooner – but ***cheating is always the worst possible action to take.***

Learning disabilities: If you have a documented learning disability, please disclose this information to your professor during the first week of class. If you think you may have a disability, but are not sure, you should contact the Learning Assistance Center during the first week of classes to schedule testing. After obtaining documentation of a learning disability, please disclose this information to your professor as soon as you can.

Miscellaneous items: All dates and assignments in the Course Schedule are subject to change at the sole discretion of the professor. Verbal notification during any regularly scheduled class period will be considered sufficient notification to effect such change under this syllabus. Alternatively, an email sent to the class or an "announcement" posted to Canvas will be considered sufficient notification to effect a change.

Each student should become familiar with the appropriate dates and academic regulations as published by Xavier University in its Catalogs, Programs, and Semester Schedule of Classes.

Class schedule and specific topics: the accompanying class schedule, available on Canvas, is to be considered part of this syllabus.