**The University of Texas at Arlington - Department of Accounting**

COURSE TITLE: Research in Accounting Issues INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Martin Taylor

COURSE#: ACCT 5321.001 OFFICE: 431 (Main Campus)

COURSE TIMES: W 7:00-9:50 p.m. PHONE: (817) 272-3030

COURSE ROOM: Main Campus COBA 245E E-MAIL: [mtaylor@uta.edu](mailto:mtaylor@uta.edu)

Website: <http://wweb.uta.edu/faculty/mtaylor> OFFICE HOURS: W 6-7 p.m. and by appointment

**Class Materials:**

There is no textbook, but other readings may be assigned. Student must have access to a computer outside of class in order to conduct accounting research. If students do not own a computer, computers are available for use in COBA room 336, the business library (COBA, first floor), and in the central library. Groups may also be required to research cases *in class* - at least one member of each group should bring a laptop to class.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to improve a student's ability to research complex areas in accounting and to sharpen understanding and application of accounting concepts and principles. Case studies and problems are considered and analyzed.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1.      Effectively research accounting issues using US GAAP and IFRS

2.      Identify and comprehend relevant accounting information from complex fact situations.

3. Discuss hot topics within accounting

Objectives 1 and 2 will be assessed through successful completion of class presentations and the final exam. Objective 3 will be assessed through successful completion of a mid term exam and an evaluation of class participation.

**Class Policies:**

The class policies on attendance, grades, and withdrawals will follow the rules and regulations set forth in the current UTA graduate catalog.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss anyone from the class who is violating the right of the other students to receive the full benefit of the class instruction. Attendance and participation in class discussions of the material are important aspects of the course. **You must participate in classroom discussions to receive credit for class participation. A sign-in sheet will be passed around during each class period. This is the only record of attendance, and failure to sign-in will result in being marked absent for the class period. More than three unexcused absences will result in zero credit for class participation.**

**Current Events:**

Read the Business section of your local newspaper and the Wall Street Journal for items that have an accounting dimension. The WSJ is available free online through the UTA library. Other sites with current accounting information include: [www.IASPlus.com](http://www.IASPlus.com) and [www.IFRS.com](http://www.IFRS.com). Be prepared to discuss current items in class. The contribution you make to this discussion will count toward your class participation grade.

**In-Class Discussions:**

On most class days there will be a period of “in-class discussion” based upon either a case or current topic of interest. Each group will work on the In-Class Discussion case or topic in class and formulate a solution. The topics and cases for in-class discussion are listed on the Assignment Schedule in this syllabus, and there is a link on the website to the cases for in-class discussion. <http://wweb.uta.edu/faculty/mtaylor> Groups have the opportunity to prepare a tentative solution before class.

**Grading Policy:** Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Exams 40%

# Case and Topic Presentations 40%

Class participation 20%

100%

**Exams:**

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. Both exams will be take-home. Exams must be completed absolutely independently. No discussion among classmates is permitted. I do not give make-up examinations. If you must miss an examination because of an approved absence such as personal illness or injury, illness or injury of a dependant, or unavoidable prior commitments in connection with full-time employment, you need to let me know **PRIOR TO** the exam. Exams may **NOT** be missed for any recreational or otherwise non-essential absences. In all cases of absence from an exam, I will require written documentation of the circumstances. Failure to provide this documentation on a timely basis, or an unauthorized absence from an exam, will result in a grade of zero on that exam.

**Group presentations:**

Students will work in groups. Cases and topics will be randomly assigned. Groups will prepare and present (1) information on the research process; (2) information on specified research cases; and (3) special topics. Groups will be required to bring hardcopy PowerPoint and other handouts for distribution to the class on the day of their presentation. Presentations should be no longer than 45 minutes and will be graded based on the rubric included within this syllabus after the assignment schedule. When presenting cases, the introduction should be brief and students should get to the case itself quickly. Most of the cases will be from the [Trueblood Case Studies](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/About/university-relations/Deloitte-Foundation/0ac1264f0b0fb110VgnVCM100000ba42f00aRCRD.htm). Case solutions should be prepared under both US GAAP and IFRS. Prepare case solutions with the most up-to-date information, regardless of the date given within the case.

**When presenting cases and topics, real-world examples are strongly encouraged. Also, it is important that the presentations be fluid and not disjointed. It is very apparent when group members divide up presentation material and do not fully collaborate on the project as a whole.**

**NOTE: When making a group presentation, it is Department of Accounting policy that students be dressed in formal business attire.**

**Class participation:**

1. Class Discussion: All Groups are required to develop a case solution and to contribute to a meaningful discussion on relevant topics (ask questions, voice opinions, etc.).
2. Weekly Deliverables: Groups not presenting a case or topic on a class date are required to prepare and submit one page summaries of the cases and topics being presented that day. For cases, a suggested solution should be provided. For topics, a brief overview should be prepared. Bring hardcopies of the summaries to class to turn in at the end of the class period. Make sure your group number and names of all members are on the summaries. These should be collaborative among group members. This is an important component of your overall grade and participation will be monitored throughout the semester.

**WEBSITE:** <http://wweb.uta.edu/faculty/mtaylor/>

**Please visit my website on a regular basis** to see if new items have been posted that you will require for your next class, and to access information on various topics. Additional items may be added during the semester.

**EACH TIME YOU COME TO THIS WEBSITE, YOU MAY NEED TO REFRESH YOUR BROWSER TO VIEW UPDATED MATERIALS.**

**Suggested topics relating to the Research Process**

1. Professional Responsibilities
   1. SAS No. 50, plus updates and amendments
   2. Ethical issues in “opinion formulation”
   3. CPA exam emphasis on research
   4. Principles vs. rules approaches
   5. Conceptual Frameworks – FASB and IASB (including convergence)
2. Research Methods
   1. AICPA Resources
   2. Public Accounting Firm Resources (e.g., DART, Deloitte Accounting Research Tool) – include information on publications and other items such as newsletters
   3. FASB Codification
   4. Steps in and documentation of the accounting research process
3. Research Tools
   1. Automated
      1. EDGAR
      2. XBRL
      3. The Web
      4. RIA Checkpoint (Available in the library) – Discuss how to access U.S. GAAP (Codification), IFRS, and Auditing Standards. DO NOT discuss tax.
   2. UTA Library
      1. Books
      2. Journals
      3. Professional Pronouncements
      4. Search Engines

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| **Day** | **Date** | **Group** | **Assignment Schedule** |
| W | Jan 20 | Orientation | Read: Best Practices for Resolving Complex Accounting Issues (link found on website) |
| W | Jan 27 | 1  2  3 | Topic: The Research Process – professional responsibilities  Topic: The Research process – research methods  Topic: The Research process – research tools |
| W | Feb 3 | 4    5 | Topic: The SEC (including discussion of comparable organizations in other parts of the world such as China, Canada, Australia, & Japan. Do NOT discuss Europe as this will be covered separately)  Topic: The European Accounting Regulators  In Class Discussion: Will the US adopt IFRS? Fully discuss the pros and cons of adoption. |
| W | Feb 10 | 6  7 | Case 15-3 - Operating Segments - Big Islands Amusement Park Case 10-4 - Asset Retirement Obligations - Lack of Information  In Class Discussion: Case 15-6 Exit or Disposal Cost Obligations - Targeted for Termination |
| W | Feb 17 | 1  2 | Case 11-2a Fair Value Hierarchy AND Case 11-2b - Fair Value Disclosures  Case 12-9 Fair Value - Rough Waters Ahead  In Class Discussion: Case 12-01 Consolidations - An Unlikely Alliance |
| W | Feb 24 | 3  4 | Topic: Management Commentary (IFRS Practice Statement) and other Narrative Reporting (EU Business Review, MD&A, and UK Strategic Report)  Topic: Sustainability Reporting and Integrated Reporting  In Class Discussion: Assurance of Sustainability and Integrated Reports |
| W | March 2 |  | **MID TERM EXAM** |
| W | March 9 |  | **Guest Speaker (tba)** |
| W | Mar 16 |  | **SPRING BREAK** |
| W | Mar 23 | 5  6 | Case 11-5 Income Statement Presentation - Venus Cellular  Case 13-8 Accounting for a Loss Contingency for a Verdict Overturned on Appeal  In Class Discussion: Case 11-1 Cash Flows and IFRS - Polluter Corp. |
| W | Mar 30 | 7  1 | Topic: FASB/IASB Exposure Draft on Leases  Case 15-4 - Leases - All-In In Class Discussion: Lease accounting – NeedsSpace (See link on website) |
| W | Apr 6 | 2  3 | Case 14-3 Revenue Recognition - Coconut Telegraph  Case 14-5 - Qualitative goodwill impairment assessment - Quality Waste Removal  In Class Discussion: Case 13-1 Revenue Recognition – Refer A Friend |
| W | Apr 13 |  | **Guest Speaker (tba)** |
| W | Apr 20 | 4  5 | Case 12-2 Subsequent Events -ToRecognize or Not to Recognize, That Is the Question  Case 12-3 Provisions and Contingencies |
| W | Apr 27 | 6  7 | Case 11-7 Business Combinations - Food for Thought  Case 11-9 Goodwill Impairment Testing  In Class Discussion: Case 15-7 Share-Based Compensation - Ventura Company |
| W | May 4 |  | **EXAM REVIEW**  **DUE:** Peer Evaluation Form |
| W | May 11 |  | **FINAL EXAM** |

**Term Research Presentation Evaluation Form – Group (100 points)**

* 1. **Introduction (10)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
     + **(0-5) Little or no introduction of self or topic, failed to establish purpose and agenda for presentation.**
     + **(6-7) Introduction provided and established the presentations purpose and agenda.**
     + **(8-10) Fulfilled item 2 above and opened presentation in a particularly effective manner that captured the interest of the audience and generated questions.**
  2. **Body of the presentation (40)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **(0-28) Content either lacked substance or was inappropriate, too many irrelevant facts or too few relevant facts, and did not provide insight into the issue(s).** 
  + **Presentation sequence seemed random and confusing and did not fully integrate proposed concept/theory into content.**
  + **Audience was unable to understand sequence or ideas/concepts.**
* **(28-32) Content appropriate, topic researched, most key areas covered.** 
  + **Coverage seemed adequate to understand the ideas/topic chosen.**
  + **Topical areas seemed adequately researched and were integrated into presentation**
  + **Audience seemed able to follow ideas/concepts after questions/discussion. Transitions were made between topics**
* **(32-40) Fulfilled 2 above.** 
  + **Fulfilled 2 above in a thorough and effective manner and integrated concept/theory from other disciplines as well.**
  + **Topic seemed to be thoroughly researched, original data gathered and all key areas covered in a strong and convincing manner.**
  + **Ideas were sound and most were conveyed in an effective and balanced manner to the audience.**
  + **Logical sequence with strong internal summaries to link sections and relationships.**
  1. **Conclusions/recommendations (20)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
     + **(0-14 pts) Recommendations/conclusions seemed unrelated to stated relevant facts and concepts/theories.**
     + **(14-16) Most of the recommendations/conclusions seemed accurate and were related to stated relevant facts and concepts/theories. No specific actionable recommendations made..**
     + **(16-20) Viable, specific, actionable recommendations provided that were creative and innovative.**
  2. **Teamwork during Presentation and Audience Questions/Discussion 10)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **(0-6 pts) Minimal evidence of teamwork during presentation or audience discussion/questions.** 
  + **Answers did not respond to question (long, incomplete or rambling) or defensive/unprofessional.**
  + **Answers showed a poor understanding of topics/issues.**
* **(7-8 pts) Adequate handling by team of presentation and of questions/discussion afterwards.**
* **(8-10 pts) Fulfilled 2 above and, in addition, all questions were addressed professionally and confidently with concise responses showing a good understanding of topic/issues.**

**Individual presentation skills and speaking ability (20) – Group**

**Group Member:**

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**Absences Based on Religious Beliefs:**

A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given the opportunity to complete the work missed within 15 days following the due date of the assignment, test, or other project missed. To be eligible for such a make-up, the student must notify me in writing of classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. Notification must be made within the first 15 (fifteen) class days through either a written correspondence, personal delivered, acknowledged and dated by me or written correspondence sent certified mail, return receipt requested to me. Failure to follow the rules provided above within the time frames listed will result in the absence being considered unexcused.

**Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to pursue their scholastic careers with honesty and integrity. It is the philosophy of this Department, this instructor and the University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

“Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” Regents *Rules and Regulations*, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22.

Institutional procedures regarding charges of academic dishonesty are outlined in Part II, Chapter 2, of the **Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Arlington**. Copies of the Handbook are available at more than 75 locations on campus, including the Student Congress office, the Library, and the Accounting Department Office.

Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Attendance and Drop Policy:**

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Class attendance and lateness policies will be discussed during the first week of class. Those policies include by reference all provisions for grade adjustment or drop policies included in the applicable Graduate or Undergraduate Catalog in effect at the start of the semester. No student will be dropped from the class rolls for absences.

Graduate students need to consult with their Graduate Advisor to drop or add a course. A student dropping a course after the Census Date but on or before the midsemester date will receive a grade of *W* only if at the time of dropping the student is passing the course (has a grade of A, B, or C); otherwise an *F* will be recorded.

College Policy: Students who have not paid by the census date and are dropped for non-payment cannot receive a grade for the course in any circumstances. Therefore, a student dropped for non-payment who continues to attend the course will not receive a grade for the course. Emergency loans are available to help students pay tuition and fees. Students can apply for emergency loans by going to the Emergency Tuition Loan Distribution Center at E.H. Hereford University Center (near the southwest entrance).

**College of Business Bomb Policy:**

Section 22.07 of the Texas Criminal Law states that a Class A misdemeanor is punishable by (1) a fine not to exceed $4,000, (2) a jail term of not more than one year, or (3) both such a fine and confinement. If anyone is tempted to call in a bomb threat, be aware that UTA will soon have technology to trace phone calls.

Every effort will be made to avoid cancellation of presentation/tests caused by bomb threats to the Business Building. Unannounced alternate sites will be available for these classes. If a student who has a class with a scheduled test or presentation arrives and the building has been closed due to a bomb threat, the student should immediately check for the alternate class site notice which will be posted on/near the main doors on the south side of the Business building. If the bomb threat is received while class is in session, your instructor will ask you to leave the building and reconvene at another location.

Students who provide information leading to the successful prosecution of anyone making a bomb threat will receive one semester’s free parking in the Maverick Garage across from the Business Building. UTA’s Crimestoppers will provide a reward to anyone providing information leading to an arrest. To make an anonymous report, call 817-272-5245.

**Student Support Services**:

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Student Feedback Survey:**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. Information on the location of the nearest exit will be provided the first day of class. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.