

# JMC 41 | Financial Fundamentals for Communication Professionals

**Meeting Days:** Wednesdays | **Time:** 5 p.m. – 6.15 p.m.

**Instructor:** Eric Kwame Adae, Ph.D. | **Office:** MER 110

**Our Time (Office Hours):** Mondays 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. (CST);  
Wednesdays 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. (CST); By appointment

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This one-credit course provides students with an introduction to basic business principles and terminology for non-business majors, with an emphasis on communication professionals. Topics include fundamentals of business organizations; reading and interpreting business financial statements; investment basics; understanding economic indicators; writing a business plan; and basic applied math.

As future professionals in mass communication and journalism, let us deal with one another professionally and kindly. Values that we can exemplify include:

- **Diplomatic behavior:** We are communication professionals. Let's share interpersonal communications with cordial and diplomatic behavior.
- **Open and clear communications:** Communication professionals must understand and communicate with consumers, businesses, and clients of all sorts. Therefore, in this class I expect each student to be able to ask me questions or request clarifications as often as they are necessary.
- **Excellence in effort:** Clients pay for our communication work. Clients are not going to pay for personnel to rewrite work presented with typographical errors or designs done in wrong colors; they expect the work to be done right. Therefore, in this class I expect work to be turned in only after it was proofread and corrected for grammar, spelling, and all appropriate writing conventions.
- **Honest and ethical behavior:** Our industry expects ethical behaviors and has self-governing methods for dealing with anything less. Therefore, in this class students will abide by the SJMC Honor Code:  
<http://www.drake.edu/media/collegesschools/sjmc/documents/SJMC-Honor-Code.pdf>

"Beyond journalism, having a working fluency with numbers will help you better understand most aspects of your world, and will certainly put you ahead of peers who – for whatever reason – shrink from the quantitative side of life."

Source: American Press Institute; Poynter Institute for Media Studies

## Learning Objectives

The basic competencies mastered in this course include:

- Demonstrate mastery of basic business terminology by accurately completing the exercises
- Interpret and explain basic business documents, including financial statements
- Demonstrate an understanding of investment basics by explaining how the stock and bond markets work and their impact on the business world
- Summarize what the general economic indicators are and what they mean to individuals, states, and nations
- Apply basic math to real-world problems, including calculating percentages, averages, and ratios

## SJMC CORE VALUES

Our students will:

1. **Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice.**
2. **Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.**
3. **Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.**
4. **Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.**
5. **Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.**
6. **Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.**
7. **Think critically, creatively and independently.**
8. **Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.**
9. **Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.**
10. **Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.**
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.
12. **Take ownership of their own academic experience.**
13. **Be engaged with the community: the university, the local community, professional groups.**
14. **Cope and thrive in the workplace.**

NB: Values in **bold** are pivotal in this course.

“Forget what they told you. You want the truth, follow the money.”  
Roxanne Bland

## **Policies:**

**Attendance:** To be successful in this class, and in your career, showing up is important. The same logic holds for this course. Attendance in this course is also based on the timely submission of various tasks.

You are required to regularly review the course material (see course schedule at the end of this syllabus).

## **Main Tasks**

The following are the main tasks. Check Blackboard Learn Ultra for details.

- **Knowledge Checks:** These quizzes check your understanding of the content in the mini-lectures. Knowledge Checks for the week are due by midnight **(CST)** every Wednesday.
- **Individual class exercises:** 22 in total and averaging four (4) exercises per week (except for Week 6 when you have two questions to answer). The class exercises for the week are due by midnight **(CST)** every Thursday.
- **Wall Street Journal (WSJ) tasks:** Three (3) of them are due by noon **(CST)** on Sundays of Weeks 2, 4, and 6.
- **Corporate Profile task:** Due by noon **(CST)** on the last Sunday of class.

**Accommodations:** If you have a disability and require academic accommodations, please let me know or contact Student Disability Services, 107 Old Main, 515-271-1835.

**Student Services:** The Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion's primary role is to act as a resource for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking and will advocate on behalf of the student victim's requests if services are voluntarily initiated.

The coordinator can explain how to initiate a complaint within the university and through criminal/civil processes, assist with referrals to a confidential crisis advocate and/or counselor and appropriate medical or legal professionals. The coordinator must report "known" student campus assaults to the Dean of Students and/or Title IX Coordinator, but the complainant still has rights to participate or withdraw from the university process. Other services include providing crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed.

To contact the coordinator, Lynne Cornelius call [515-271-4141](tel:515-271-4141) or email [prevention@drake.edu](mailto:prevention@drake.edu). The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7

confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text [515-512-2972](tel:515-512-2972). For more information about these services visit [www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/](http://www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/)

**Academic Integrity and Honesty:** Drake University and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication have strict guidelines regarding academic honesty. All students are expected to be familiar with these policies and abide by them. Students are expected to be honest in their academic work and to display integrity in the demonstration of their achieved competencies.

Cheating is defined as the willful decision on the part of a student to be dishonest in the representation of the work of others as his/her own. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting another's ideas, phrases or discourse as one's own. Both cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable behaviors.

If a student is found guilty of receiving or giving help in an examination or other course work, or is guilty of plagiarism in the submission of a project or paper, he/she will receive a grade of F in the course. Other penalties may be imposed as mandated by SJMC departmental policies and as directed by circumstances. Refer to the student handbook section on Academic Dishonesty for additional details on how a student may be penalized for academic dishonesty.

Please read and be familiar with the SJMC policies, located at:  
<http://www.drake.edu/sjmc/about/currentstudents/academichonesty/>

**Deadlines:** Assignments are due on time. Late work will receive no credit unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor – and then only in exceptional circumstances.

**Inclusion:** I strive for an inclusive classroom that values everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity and orientation, faith practice, economic class, political views, or anything else we use to divide ourselves. I'd appreciate your help in creating an environment:

- In which everyone feels safe, supported, included, and encouraged to be themselves;
- Where each person is recognized as a diverse individual connected to a community;
- Where we can discuss divisive issues with the goal of true understanding of the views of others.

**Professionalism:** This is a world where deadlines, standards, results, and conduct matter. To prepare students for this transition, students are expected to adhere to the highest levels of professionalism while enrolled in this course.

**Instructions for Students who Test Positive:** If you test positive for Covid-19 or have been exposed and need to isolate yourself, please send an email to [dos@drake.edu](mailto:dos@drake.edu) from your Drake email account and include your full name and student ID along with information about your situation. College and schools' deans' offices will then contact your professors, who will work with you to provide fully virtual learning opportunities during your quarantine and/or recovery.

**Instructions for Students about Self-Monitoring and Experiencing symptoms.** Please carefully monitor your own health and wellbeing throughout the semester, including frequently taking your own temperature. If you experience [Covid-19 symptoms](#) or a fever, even if you do not test positive, *please do not attend an in-person class meeting*. Make sure you alert the Dean of Students' office at [dos@drake.edu](mailto:dos@drake.edu).

**Your Responsibilities:**

- Keep track of happenings in this class.
- Know how to navigate the course Blackboard site.
- Print a copy of the syllabus/course calendar and study same closely.
- Acquire a 3-ring binder to hold course readings and other materials.
- Complete assigned readings in a timely manner, keeping up with the course schedule – especially by reading given chapters and other readings/handouts before class.
- Ask questions about course content.
- Check your email and the course Blackboard site regularly. Print PowerPoint lecture in notes/handout mode for note taking prior to class meetings (3 frames per page with lines to the right for taking notes).
- Make an office appointment to discuss questions regarding your grades and any other issue(s) whenever necessary.
- Use Microsoft Word (not "Pages" or any other platform, double spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt. type for all assignments).

**My Responsibilities:**

- Fairly evaluate students' work.
- Hold regular office hours for the purpose of meeting students' needs one on one.
- Check email weekdays in order to respond to students' needs as soon as possible.
- Ensure students' privacy by discussing grades only in my office – not via email, telephone, in the classroom, or in the hallway.
- Provide students with timely, honest feedback.
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"Basically, financial reporting is this sinking hole at the centre of journalism. You start by swimming around it until finally, reluctantly, you can't fight the pull anymore and you get sucked down the drain into the biz pages."

Tom Rachman

### Course Requirements:

You may earn up to 100% this semester, as follows\*:

- Knowledge Checks 20%
- Class Exercises 30%
- Wall Street Journal (WSJ) Tasks 30%
- Corporate Profile 20%
- TOTAL 100%**

### Final grades:

Final grades for the course will follow this scale:

A = 90.0% and higher

B = 80.0% - 89.9%

C = 70.0% - 79.9%

D = 65.0% - 69.9%

F = below 65.0%

Details for assignments and campaign projects will be provided at appropriate intervals. It is your responsibility to ask for more information, if and when you deem it necessary.

### Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Themes/Modules	Tasks Due
1	Introduction to Financial Fundamentals <i>Course Overview: Introduction, basic concepts, in-class exercise</i>	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> January 25, 2023 (ii) Classwork Exercises 1-4 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> January 26, 2023
2	Basics of Financial Reporting	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> February 1, 2023 (ii) Classwork Exercises 5-8 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> February 2, 2023 (iii) WSJ Task 1 due by noon (CST) <b>Sunday</b> February 5, 2023

<b>Week</b>	<b>Themes/Modules</b>	<b>Tasks Due</b>
3	Census and Population Studies	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> February 8, 2023 (ii) Classwork Exercises 9-12 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> February 9, 2023
4	Key Economic Indicators	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> February 15, 2023 (ii) Classwork Exercises 13-16 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> February 16, 2023 (iii) WSJ Task 2 due by noon (CST) <b>Sunday</b> February 19, 2023
<b>Week</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Tasks Due</b>
5	The Stock Market	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> February 22, 2023 (ii) Classwork Exercises 17-20 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> February 23, 2023
6	Personal Finance  Corporate Profile Submission	(i) Knowledge Checks due by midnight (CST) <b>Wednesday</b> March 2 (ii) Classwork Exercises 21-22 due by midnight (CST) <b>Thursday</b> March 2, 2023 (iii) WSJ Task 3 due by noon (CST) <b>Sunday</b> March 5, 2023 (iv) Corporate Profile task due by noon (CST) <b>Sunday</b> March 5, 2023

**I am grateful to Professor Dorothy PISARSKI for refining this course and shaping this syllabus.**

“College students spend 16 years gaining skills that will help them command higher salary, yet little or no time spent helping them save, invest and grow their money.” Vince Shorb

**“We’ll fix that!” Drake SJMC**