

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
SOULES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Fall 2026
Course Syllabus

COURSE NUMBER: FINA 5396.001

COURSE TITLE: Master's Thesis in Finance - II

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Vivek Pandey, Professor of Finance

OFFICE & E-MAIL: Location: COB 350.01; Phone: (903) 566-7224; Email: vpandey@uttyler.edu

PREFERRED MODE OF CONTACT: Email

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays: 10 am – 12 noon; 2 – 4 pm
Tuesdays: 2 – 4 pm
Other times by appointment

CLASS MEETING & LOCATION: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION: FINA 5395 and 5396 (3 credit hours each) are faculty directed courses that graduate students enroll in while writing their master's thesis in finance.

FINA 5395 – Master's Thesis in Finance I – Selection of topic and development of research plan

FINA 5396 – Master's Thesis in Finance II – Completion and defense of the thesis

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

FINA 5395 – Consent of graduate advisor and thesis advisor

FINA 5396 – FINA 5395 and consent of thesis advisor

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- a. Synthesize the state of scholarship in a contemporary field of interest in finance.
- b. Identify a gap in existing scholarship or a need in an emerging area of interest to form a research question.
- c. Formulate a plan for investigation of the research question.
- d. Retrieve relevant data and use statistical analysis to provide empirical evidence supporting or refuting the research hypotheses.
- e. Create a research report with insightful analysis and deliver an oral defense of research results.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL THINKING: Student will demonstrate critical thinking regarding issues in finance.

SYNTHESIS OF KNOWLEDGE: Student will survey contemporary scholarship and write a synthesis of the current state of knowledge in the selected topic.

FORMULATE: Student will formulate a research hypothesis after identifying a gap in scholarship.

INVESTIGATE: Student will investigate the research question after gather relevant information (data) and conducting appropriate quantitative analysis.

CRITICAL WRITING: Students will write research papers that demonstrate a thoughtful and critical approach to a research project.

ORAL PROFIECIENCY: Students will present their original scholarship as part of the requirements for art history courses.

ENROLLMENT: Prior to enrolling in the course(s) the student will select a faculty advisor (chair) for their thesis. The chair must be a tenured associate or full professor of finance employed at UTT, and the subject of the thesis must be in an area suited to the expertise of the chair. With the advice of the chair, the student will contact two additional UTT faculty members to form a thesis committee. In addition to the chair, it is preferred that one of the other faculty members also be finance professor. Including the thesis advisor, the committee must consist of at least three members with expertise pertinent to the topic. It is required that all faculty on the committee have proper "Graduate Faculty Membership" according to the UTT Graduate School and be at the minimum a "Provisional Graduate Research Faculty." The chair of the committee must have "Graduate Research Faculty" designation. No adjunct faculty may serve on a thesis committee in an official capacity. A visiting professor may be included as either a fourth non-voting advisory member or, if he or she has a relevant specialty in the thesis topic and meets the required criteria for selection according the UTT Graduate School regulation, may be included as a voting member or co-chair after approval by three qualified department faculty members, the department chair, the dean of the Soules College of Business and the dean of the Graduate School.

In order to **enroll in FINA 5395**, the student must first:

- a. Obtain written consent from the thesis chair and committee members. The committee chair will submit a committee membership form to the dean of UTT Graduate School for approval.
- b. Obtain the course permission code from the department. The student is not allowed to enroll without the permission of the thesis advisor (chair).

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES:

Please follow the general procedures for thesis and dissertations at UT Tyler outlined in the web page linked below:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/academics/colleges-schools/graduate/thesis-dissertation/thesis-students/>

Procedures specific to Master's thesis appear at the web page linked here:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/academics/colleges-schools/graduate/grad-faculty/files/thesis-process-student.pdf>

While writing their thesis, students must use the formatting guidelines provided at:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/academics/colleges-schools/graduate/guidelines-for-preparation-of-thesis-or-dissertation.pdf>

TIMELINE & STEPS:

1. During the first two weeks of the semester, the student will create and submit to the chair a calendar delineating proposed dates for submission of the various parts of the thesis to the chair during the semester, including: a working bibliography, an introduction, chapters detailing the objective of the research and proposed methodology, and a suggested defense date. The chair must approve the proposed calendar.
2. In general, students should strive to seek and incorporate feedback from committee members on a frequent basis during their thesis research. The suggested frequency is once every two weeks.
3. Once the chair determines that the thesis is reasonably complete, the student must submit a draft

- of the thesis to all committee members at least 6 weeks before a proposed oral defense date.
4. Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback within 2 weeks of receiving the draft.
 5. Revised draft, incorporating edits based on committee members' feedback should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense date.
 6. The oral defense of the thesis will take place after a final draft of the thesis has been submitted to all committee members, they have had time to respond and the student has made requested changes.
 7. The student is required to pass an oral defense of the thesis, which requires a scholarly presentation of the thesis and successful fielding of questions from the committee.
 8. There could be final changes to the thesis required by the committee at the oral defense before they will give final approval and sign the signatory page.
 9. The oral defense date must be at least one week before the deadline for submission of the thesis to the UTT Graduate School in order to allow time for any final changes, and in order to obtain all required signatures. See the Graduate School Calendar for submission deadlines:
<https://www.utttyler.edu/academics/colleges-schools/graduate/calendar/>
 10. Students should be aware that the committee expects the thesis research and oral defense to be of high quality. There is no guarantee that a thesis reviewed by the committee before the defense will be accepted, nor that the student will pass the oral defense.
 11. If the thesis is not approved, or the oral defense is not passed, the committee members will provide a written statement to the student and department chair explaining the reasons for disapproval and alternatives for the student to complete the thesis and defense.
 12. If the committee does not approve the thesis and the student decides to appeal the evaluation, the student shall follow procedures for appealing a grade in a course; however, the committee chair will be part of the appeal process instead of a course instructor.

GRADING SCALE:

The committee chair, in consultation with members of the thesis committee, determines the final grade based upon the quantity and quality of work completed, and whether the student turns in a calendar and drafts on time according to the proposed schedule. Possible grades for the course are: CR (credit), IP (in progress) or NC (no credit). Once six hours of thesis have been completed CR, previous IP grades will be changed to CR; however, only six credit hours of thesis will be applied to the MS degree. An NC is essentially a failing grade and cannot be changed.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, **AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required.**

Most assignments in this course will permit using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT or Copilot. When AI use is permissible, it will be in the assignment description, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. When using AI tools for assignments, add an appendix showing (a) the entire exchange (e.g., prompts used), highlighting the most relevant sections; (b) a description of precisely which AI tools were used, (c) an explanation of how the AI tools were used (e.g. to generate ideas, elements of text, etc.); and (d) an account of why AI tools were used (e.g. to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to experiment for fun, etc.). Students shall not use AI tools during in-class examinations or assignments unless explicitly permitted and instructed to do so.

OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

University policies and student resources are available on the University website at the following locations. Please thoroughly review and follow the policies listed below. You can also take advantage of a multitude of resources available to you as a UT Tyler student.

- [University Policy](#)
- [Student Resources](#)