Investments
FIN 323, Fall 2026
William Mann, Goizueta Business School, Emory University

Course overview:
This course will cover the fundamentals of measuring investment performance and building optimal portfolios within the traditional asset classes of equities, fixed income, and Treasuries. We will cover portfolio optimization, the CAPM, and the evidence on several well-known anomaly strategies in equities and fixed income that have historically outperformed the CAPM required rate of return.

The main goal of the course is to prepare students to work in the areas of portfolio management, equity research, and investment banking. Even for those who will not continue to work in these areas, the course will teach you to be an informed investor and consumer of news about financial markets.

The course is divided into three sections:
1. Traditional asset classes and fund structures: We will describe the markets for fixed income and public equities, and the basic economics driving their prices. We will highlight how to assess investment performance, and the advantages and disadvantages of various fund structures.
2. Diversification, mean-variance analysis, and the CAPM: We will highlight the benefits of diversification, the classic mean-variance approach to portfolio construction based on this insight, and how mean-variance analysis leads us to the CAPM as a model for required returns.
3. Repackaging risk: We will introduce short sales and derivative as ways of repackaging investment payoffs and achieving leverage. We will focus especially on dollar-neutral strategies, and use these to understand multifactor risk models that extend the CAPM to reflect evidence on active returns.

Office hours: 1pm to 3pm on Mondays in my office (Goizueta 512). If you need to meet outside this time, I will try to find a time but cannot make any promises in advance. See Canvas for my Zoom link.
Textbook: *Investments* by Bodie, Kane, and Marcus, 13th edition (McGraw Hill).

Grading: Goizueta has a grade distribution that I follow as closely as possible. Grades are based on:
- Five homeworks, each worth 8% of the course grade. Download and submit via Canvas.
  - Each is due by 8:00 AM, Atlanta time, on the dates listed on the next page.
  - You may work individually, or in groups of up to four members.
- Two midterm exams and a final exam, each worth 20% of your grade.
  - The midterms will be in-class on **Thursday, October 1** and **Thursday, November 5.**
  - The final exam will be during finals period, date and time to be assigned by the registrar.
  - The exams are **not cumulative**. Each one only covers the most recent section of the course.

Technology: I will use Microsoft Excel and Python (Jupyter). All code will be posted to Canvas, and can be run on your own computer, but this is not required. You should complete homeworks in Excel.

Accommodations: Students who are registered with the Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) should submit their accommodation requests to me within the first week of classes. Additionally, students who have accommodations that include assessments and exams must register accommodation requests with the BBA Program Office. The form to do so can be found here.
Honor code: Any apparent violations of the GBS Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council.
Teaching assistant: TBA

This version: January 8, 2026. Subject to revision before the semester starts.

Schedule of topics for each week of the semester: Each week has a corresponding tab on Canvas. Before the week starts, check that tab for any required work ahead of time. **There will typically be video lectures for you to watch before class**, so please set aside enough time to watch them!

Module 1: Traditional asset classes, portfolios, and funds

Date	*Plan*
Thursday, August 27, 2026	Introduction and course overview.
Tues, Sep 1 / Thurs, Sep 3	Asset classes.
Tues, Sep 8 / Thurs, Sep 10	Investment returns, portfolios, and indexes.
Tues, Sep 15 / Thurs, Sep 17	Fund structures. **Thursday: Homework #1 due by 8 AM** (8% of course grade).
Tues, Sep 22 / Thurs, Sep 24	Tuesday: TBD Thursday: Evidence on investment performance.
Tues, Sep 29 / Thurs, Oct 1	Tuesday: Review for midterm. **Thursday: Midterm exam #1 in class,** on all topics so far (20%).

Module 2: Diversification, mean-variance analysis, and the CAPM

Date	*Plan*
Tues, Oct 6 / Thurs, Oct 8	Diversification and portfolio optimization.
Tues, Oct 13 / Thurs, Oct 15	Tuesday: Diversification and portfolio optimization. **Thursday: Homework #2 due by 8 AM** (8%).
Tues, Oct 20 / Thurs, Oct 22	The capital asset pricing model (CAPM) and investment styles.
Tues, Oct 27 / Thurs, Oct 29	The CAPM and investment styles. **Thursday: Homework #3 due by 8 AM** (8%).
Tues, Nov 3 / Thurs, Nov 5	Tuesday: Review for midterm. **Thursday: Midterm #2 in class**, on topics since the first exam (20%)

Module 3: Derivatives, short sales, market-neutral strategies, and factor models

Date	*Plan*
Tues, Nov 10 / Thurs, Nov 12	Short sales, derivatives, and dollar-neutral strategies.
Tues, Nov 17 / Thurs, Nov 19	Factor models. **Thursday: Homework #4 due by 8 AM (8%).**
Tues, Nov 24 / Thurs, Nov 26	Overview of derivatives. *Thursday: No class*
Tues, Dec 1 / Thurs Dec 3	The profitability and quality factors.
Tuesday, December 8	**Homework #5 due by 8 AM** (8%). Review for final exam.
Date TBD	**Final exam**, on topics covered since the second exam (20%).

This version: January 8, 2026. Subject to revision before the semester starts.