# Quantitative Finance

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

This course deals with important quantitative tools for the study of capital markets and for the analysis of investors’ optimal choices. We will start with the crucial principles of absence of arbitrage and of market completeness in the presence of risk. We will then examine the technical and economic/financial nature of the solutions to optimization problems that are related with investors’ decision making. Theory will be constantly illustrated with classroom applications.

At the end of the course, the student will be familiar with models of risky financial markets that she/he will be able to harness for asset pricing purposes as well as for asset allocation decisions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Risky financial markets*

At the end of this part of the course students will be able to:

– construct investment strategies and spot first- and second-type arbitrage opportunities;

– associate the no-arbitrage assumption with the existence of a risk-neutral probability measure;

– relate the concept of market completeness to the one of payoff profiles’ replication;

– find no-arbitrage prices for claims that provide given payoff profiles.

*Optimal decision making in finance*

At the end of this part of the course students will be able to:

– properly set up optimization problems related to the unconstrained/constrained objectives of rational agents;

– work out either paper-and-pencil or numerical solutions of such problems;

– appreciate the underpinnings of the solution techniques employed;

– grasp the economic/financial interpretation of the solutions obtained.

***READING LIST***

Lecture notes made available on *Blackboard*.

K. Sydsaeter-P.J. Hammond, *Mathematics for economic analysis,* Prentice-Hall, 1995.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is based on frontal teaching with classroom applications of the theory covered.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The valuation mark is based on a final written exam, which is made of open and/or multiple-choice questions, aimed at assessing the understanding of the theory and the applications of the topics studied. The score awarded for each question is specified in the text of the exam. The total score obtained in the written exam, rounded to the closest integer (i.e. ceiled if the decimal part is at least 0.5, floored otherwise), will be the final mark of the course. The “cum laude” mention will be awarded if the rounded score is at least 31 and the student shows complete mastery of the subject. A mock exam, representing the format of the final written exam, is published on Blackboard.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should be acquainted with:

– fundamentals of linear algebra;

– basic notions of financial mathematics under certainty (e.g. Compounded interest and annuities);

– random variables and the features of their probability distributions (mean, variance and standard deviation), as well as the features of joint and conditional distributions (covariance and correlation, conditional expectation and variance); Gaussian distributions;

*Office hours*

The instructors’ office hours are published on the corresponding personal web pages.