

MA3521: INTRODUCTORY MATHEMATICAL FINANCE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Introductory Mathematical Finance

Subject Code

MA - Mathematics

Course Number

3521

Academic Unit

Mathematics (MA)

College/School

College of Science (SI)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

MA2506 Probability and Statistics; or
MA2510 Probability and Statistics

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course introduces students to the financial instruments used in modern financial practice, particularly forward contracts and options. The emphasis is on developing the concept of risk-neutrality and the financial and mathematical theory underlying the behaviour of these financial instruments and preparing students with knowledge to solve related problems. Students should have a basic understanding of probability concepts to be properly prepared for this course.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	explain the concept of a forward contract, a call option and a put option, and recognize the mathematical and logical relationships among them.		x		
2	apply the concept of no-arbitrage to the pricing of forward contracts.		x	x	
3	describe the various basic option strategies (basic instrument of portfolio for trading strategies) and their objectives.		x	x	x
4	explain the concept of risk-neutrality and risk-free rate of interest.		x	x	
5	construct a binomial tree for stock prices and apply it to evaluate the no-arbitrage price of an option and the assumptions needed for the price to be valid.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	Learning through teaching is primarily based on lectures.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	39 hours in total

2	Take-home assignments	Learning through take-home assignments helps students implement fundamental concepts and theory of financial instruments as well as model their applications in financial markets.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	after-class
3	Math Help Centre	Learning through project helps students apply principles of quantitative finance and financial economics to analyze financial instruments in contemporary financial markets. It also helps students to communicate and collaborate effectively in the team.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	after-class

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Quizzes/Test/Midterm	1, 2, 3	20	Questions are designed for the first part of the course to see how well the students have learned mathematical concepts of forward contracts and options, as well as techniques of derivatives pricing.	No
2	Hand-in assignments	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	These are skills-based assessment to help students implement basic concepts of quantitative finance, mathematical theory and pricing strategies of financial instruments.	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

30

Examination (%)

70

Examination Duration (Hours)

3

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

30

Additional Information for ATs

30% Coursework 70% Examination (Duration: 3 hours, at the end of the semester) For a student to pass the course, at least 30% of the maximum mark for the examination must be obtained.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

1. Quizzes/Test/Midterm

Criterion

ABILITY to APPLY the fundamental concepts and methodology of financial derivatives, option pricing and risk hedging

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Demonstrate an excellent understanding of Pricing model and can always apply this understanding to different financial derivatives.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Demonstrate an understanding of Pricing model and can usually apply this understanding to different financial derivatives.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Demonstrate a partial understanding of Pricing model and can sometimes apply this understanding to different financial derivatives.

Marginal (D)

Basic

Demonstrate little understanding of Pricing model and can rarely apply this understanding to different financial derivatives.

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Hand-in assignments

Criterion

CAPACITY for LEARNING to understand and apply the principles and different methods of mathematic finance

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Well organized with correct answers.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Organized and most answers are correct.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Organization needs to improve, some correct answers.

Marginal (D)

Basic

Very weak evidence of organization, a few correct answers.

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

4. Examination

Criterion

ABILITY to APPLY the fundamental concepts and methodology for the comprehensive problem solving of mathematic finance

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Well organized. with correct answers. Mathematical terms and symbols are often elaborated upon.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Organized and most answers are correct. Mathematical terms and symbols are used appropriately.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Organization needs to improve, some correct answers. Some mathematical terms and symbols are used correctly.

Marginal (D)

Basic

Very weak evidence of organization, a few correct answers.

Mathematical terms and symbols are weak, not even refers to mathematical terms are used.

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

- Forward contracts, options, payoff, and no-arbitrage profit;
- Option strategies and combinations;
- Interest rate and Risk-neutrality;
- Call and Put options, put-call parity on options;
- Binomial tree for stock option pricing model: Random Walk, Brownian Motion, Martingale;
- Binomial tree for pricing exotic options such as barrier option and Asian option.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	John C. Hull, Options, Futures, and other Derivatives, Prentice Hall.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Robert L. McDonald, Derivatives Markets. Addison-Wesley.