Course Objectives

Soc Gen Trader loses billions due to a “rogue trader”. Citibank, ML, UBS, lose billions in CDO’s, Bear Stearns “saved” by JP Morgan Chase to avoid a global crisis in credit derivatives, Amaranth hedge fund losses $7B in one week. These are not new stories but recurring crises going back many years. How did so many smart people lose so much money?? This course will explain what happened, examine a number of notorious cases, review what regulators are doing about it, (the new Basel III Accord), calculate Value at Risk and what you need to know to read and understand risk management reports, or architect and build or buy a risk management system.

In today’s world of rapid information flows, rising volatility, regulatory concerns and oversight, prudent management increasingly requires understanding and measuring risk. Merged or individual banks, securities dealers, insurance companies and industrial firms with significant financing operations, all require enterprise-wide risk management that may span many operations across currencies and locations in real time. Risk management establishes standards for aggregating disparate information, gathering market data, calculating risk measures and creating timely reporting tools for management market, credit, and operational risks. This course is directed toward students interested in understanding how large-scale complex risk can be quantified, needs to be managed and architected. We identify the business and technical issues, regulatory requirements and techniques to measure and report risk across a major organization.

Prerequisites – Course Audience

There are no required prerequisites for this course. However, to successfully understand the material, you should have a general understanding of US financial markets, trading and instruments, including stocks, bonds, futures and options. An ability to use basic MS Excel functionality is also required. Most Stern MBA students who currently work in the financial services industry or are majoring in finance have sufficient expertise. Alternatively, my spring Financial Information Systems course provides enough background.

This is not a programming or technical course but one aimed at those who will be using, building, buying or supporting risk management systems and need to understand the underlying business concepts of financial risk management. It is not a course in the risk management of computer systems. Its aim is not to train professional risk managers, (a program which Stern does offer), but has been successfully taken by trading and senior managers, compliance officers, auditors, regulators and anyone who needs a broad introduction to the topic.

If you do not have a finance background and still wish to take the course, please contact me as soon as possible for a reading list to help bring you up to speed.
Primary Texts (Required)


*May be available at the NYU bookstore, but can be purchased on Amazon at a significant discount with free shipping.*

Other Readings

Cases will be supplied on NYU Classes: Barings, Orange County, AIB, etc.

Current articles on risk management [http://www.bis.org/publ/bcbs_wp7.pdf](http://www.bis.org/publ/bcbs_wp7.pdf)

Basel II Accord documentation: [http://www.bis.org/publ/bcbs107.htm](http://www.bis.org/publ/bcbs107.htm)

Methodology

The class will be based on lectures, readings, case studies and guest speakers. Besides a mid-term and final exam, students will prepare assignments requiring the calculation of portfolio statistics and VaR and a Monte Carlo simulation using Microsoft Excel. There will be an assignment using the Barra risk management system available at Stern. All class notes and readings will be posted to the class NYU Classes website prior to each class. We will only use algebra and statistics in class. While more advanced math is used in the text, you can read it or skim over it as your background permits.

**GRADING**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Homework</td>
<td>10%</td>
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CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR (See Default Policies for Stern Courses, [http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/academic/affairs/policies.cfm?doc_id=7511](http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/academic/affairs/policies.cfm?doc_id=7511))

Rude and impolite behavior is disruptive. Therefore:

Stern rules state that you may not use cell phones, PDA’s, (even for receiving text messages) or other ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ANY KIND, including lap tops, during class meetings.

You must TURN OFF PDA's, pagers and cell phones BEFORE class. If your phone rings, you will be asked to leave. Further I reserve the right to reduce your final grade by reducing points normally awarded for class participation. If you are on-call for work or family, place your device on vibrate and leave the room before taking the call.

Arriving late interferes with other students' learning and is not acceptable. Subway delays and other problems are unavoidable on occasion, but it is each student's responsibility to plan carefully to arrive on time and well prepared. Repeated latecomers will be penalized. Classes are recorded and will be available the next day for students unable to attend a session. Repeated absences will affect class participation grades.

You may eat in class as long as it is not odiferous or noisy. There will be a break at about 7:30 when you can get “dinner”. Please clean up and throw away all trash.
As a mark of respect, I ask all men to remove their caps or hats while in class, unless worn for a religious reason.

This course has a “zero tolerance” policy on cheating and plagiarism. Any student who breaks academic rules in this course has violated the mutual trust on which teaching and learning are based and will not only receive a zero for that assignment, but will be excluded from taking any further quizzes or exams in this course, which is likely to result in a failing grade for the course. For serious infractions I will ask the University’s Disciplinary Panel to suspend the violator from all future courses. Remember that giving improper help is as clearly a violation as taking it. Please see the NYU Stern Code of Conduct.

If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation during this course, please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD, 998-4980) and provide me with a letter from them verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. If you will need to take an exam at the CSD, you must submit a completed Exam Accommodations Form to them at least one week prior to the scheduled exam time to be guaranteed accommodation.

Your e-mail address

Be sure your email address in NYU Classes is correct. I will use it to communicate timely information about the course. To update your e-mail address in NYU Classes, log into NYU Home at https://home.nyu.edu/. Click Preferences at the top of the screen and then edit your Directory Address, which will be reflected in NYU Classes within 24 hours.
Syllabus
(Schedule Subject to Change – Refer to NYU Classes)

Week 1 February 11
Introduction to the course
The course – syllabus, grading, readings, etc.
Review of Modern Portfolio Theory, (EMH) and behavioral finance
Review of key concepts in probability and statistics
Intro to risk management
Types of risk – market, credit, liquidity, operational, etc.
Examples of financial disasters
Barings case, Soc Gen and discussion of rogue trading
Reading: Jorion Ch 1 (except section 1.3), Ch 2 and Ch 4.2
Barings case posted on NYU Classes, please read prior to class.

Week 2 February 18
Value at Risk --VaR
Risk measures for various asset classes
Why VaR?
Historical VaR
Parametric VaR
Time scaling
Portfolio VaR
VaR Tools - Marginal, Component VaR, etc.
RAROC
Barings revisited
Review methodology for assignments 1 and 2
Allied Irish Bank – Allfirst Case discussed
Assignments: #1, calculating single instrument VaR, #2 portfolio VaR bring to next week's class
Reading: Jorion Ch 1.3, Chapter 4 (except sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.6)
Ch. 5.1 and 5.2 and Ch 7, Ch. 10 (Except sections 10.2.3, 10.2.5, 10.3.1, 10.A), Ch.14
Optional “Matrix Math” Appendix 7A or posted matrix math introduction
AIB case posted on NYU Classes, please read prior to class

Week 3 February 25
Monte Carlo Simulation, VaR Validation and Extremes
Review Assignments #1 and 2
Monte Carlo (MC) Simulations
Calculation MC VaR
Review Assignment #3 MC simulation
Measurement Errors
GARCH Volatility Models
Model Risk
Back Testing
Fat Tails
Extreme value Theory
Nassim Taleb and Black Swans

Reading: Jorion Ch 5.3, 5.4, Ch 6, Ch 10.4
Skim Ch.9, Ch 21.3, Ch 12. (Except section 12.4, 12.5, 12.6)
Assignment #3 Monte Carlo simulation of VaR posted and due next week.

Week 4 March 3
Guest speaker – Chief Risk Officer at major asset manager
Review MC Assignment
Liquidity Risk and Leverage
Liquidity Risk
Impact of Leverage
Hedge funds and their risk measures
Part I take home portion of the MT available on NYU Classes; due by email and printed copy in class date TBD
Reading: Jorion Ch 13 and for next week finish reading “When Genius Failed”

Week 5 March 10
Midterm – in class portion
LTCM Case
When Genius failed discussed

March 17 No Class – Spring Break

Week 6 March 24
Exam returned and reviewed in class
Orange County case posted on NYU Classes, please read prior to class

Week 7 March 31
Regulatory Environment
25 years of risk related regulations
Basel I and II
Basel III
Reading: Jorion Chapter 3, Ch 8 (except 8.2.4)
S&P articles “The Essentials of Basel II” and "Basel II Evolution Not Revolution" will be posted on NYU Classes
Scan BIS site: www.bis.org and overview of new Basel Accord
**Preliminary**

**Week 8 April 7**
*Guest Lecture - TBD*

*Multifactor models*
Discussion of multifactor analysis and Barra software
Barra system class *may* be held in computer lab

*Reading: Jorion Ch 8*
Barra specific readings will be posted on NYU Classes

**Week 9 April 14**

*Credit Risk*
Systems addressing Credit Risk
Credit Metrics, etc. Credit Rating Systems
CDO’s, CMO’s and other structured finance
SIVs and off balance sheet financing and lessons on credit risk management

*Reading: Jorion Ch 18*
*Scan: [http://www.riskmetrics.com/credit_risk.html](http://www.riskmetrics.com/credit_risk.html)*

**Week 10 April 21**

*Review of industry leading risk management system*
Metallgesellschaft case posted on NYU Classes, please read prior to class

**Week 11 April 28**

*Operational Risk and its Basel II requirements*
Managing Operational Risk
Calculating OpRisk VaR
Six Sigma and Balanced Scorecards for process improvement
Application of operational risk systems to Barings, AIB and what the outcome might have been.

*Reading: Jorion, Ch 19*

**Week 12 May 5**

*Guest Lecture TBD or final exam*
Review for final

*Final Exam may be held online via NYU Classes*