

CORPORATE FINANCE SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE SPRING 2025

Aswath Damodaran

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- Office: KMEC 9-69 or Cyberspace
- E-mail: adamodar@stern.nyu.edu
- Office Hours
 - Monday: 12 pm – 1.15 pm, EST
 - Wednesday: 12 pm – 1.15 pm, EST
 - All office hours are in-person, but will also be online, with breakout rooms for privacy
 - The “fair game” principle applies.
- The teaching assistants/fellows for this class are:
 1. Christopher Ball, cjb9265@stern.nyu.edu
 2. Zoey Cai, yc7158@stern.nyu.edu

PRE-SEASON PREP!

GETTING READY FOR THE CLASS

- **Accounting:** The raw material you need to value a company comes primarily from accounting statements. Understanding how to read a financial statement and where to find the information need is critical.
 - My primer: http://people.stern.nyu.edu/adamodar/New_Home_Page/AccPrimer/accstate.htm
 - My YouTube Accounting class: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUkh9m2BorqmKaLrNBjKtFDhpdfdi8f7C>
- **Statistics:** Statistics is designed to help us make sense of data that is large and contradictory. That is exactly the problem we face in valuation.
 - My primer: http://people.stern.nyu.edu/adamodar/New_Home_Page/StatFile/statistics.htm
 - My YouTube Statistics class: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUkh9m2BorqmXcRzWFbzcjMd7fYErVexF>
- **Finance:** There are tools that we draw on in corporate finance extensively.
 - Risk and return models: <http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/pdfiles/acf3E/ch3.pdf>
 - Present value: http://people.stern.nyu.edu/adamodar/New_Home_Page/PVPrimer/pvprimer.htm
 - My YouTube Foundations of Finance class: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUkh9m2BorqndWimijiJ-VCAXjJUrzJOU>

CLASS STRUCTURE



CLASSES NOTES

- Be here and please be on time: I would like you to be on time, but even if you are not able to make it on time, I would rather see you in the class than on zoom.
- Bring your lecture note packet with you: These are available in two parts. They can be bought at the book store or downloaded from my web site by going to:
 - http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/cflect.htm
- If you do miss a class, catch up: All classes will be web cast. The web casts will be online (usually) within a couple of hours of the class. The webcasts are available in four formats (stream, YouTube, downloadable video and downloadable audio) at:
 - https://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/webcast_cfspr25.htm

INFORMATION HUBS

- **The Website:** The central location for everything related to this class is on the home page for the class on my website:
 - http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/corpf.html
 - I will try to also keep the material on NYU Classes, but I don't like closed systems. Enough said!
- **YouTube Channel:** There is a YouTube playlist for this class, where all class sessions will be loaded.
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUkh9m2Borqn549nqiEOyFRlvqs4_P3d0
- **Email Chronicles:** As we go through the semester, there will be times that you feel lost or at least unsure. All of the emails sent in this class will be collected in an email chronicle, listing the emails by date, allowing you to keep up.
 - http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/cfemail.html

MORE WAYS THAT I CAN HARASS YOU!!

- The Google calendar: The Google calendar for the class is available at:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=MjE2NWZmYWWE0M2UyOTUwOTc3ZWViZThhNzA2NTBhMTM0N2Y2NGM1ZWE3MTc0MWVmMWMYzWm0NjY1ZGJlOGMwOEBncm91cC5jYWxlbmRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t>

- Blog: I post on finance and valuation on my blog. If you have time on your hands:

<http://aswathdamodaran.blogspot.com/>

- Twitter: I have a twitter feed (@AswathDamodaran). I don't tweet much, you will learn nothing about my personal life, and I don't engage in twitter feuds. In short, nothing exciting happens...

REQUIRED MATERIAL

I. Text: Lecture Notes; The lecture notes are available in pdf format on the web:

http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/cflect.htm

II. Supplementary Text:

http://people.stern.nyu.edu/adamodar/New_Home_Page/ACF4E/appldCF4E.htm

[Applied Corporate Finance: A User's Manual \(Fourth Edition\)](#) by Aswath Damodaran

III. Practice Problems/Exams:

Every quiz and final exam that I have ever given is online, with solutions.

http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/cfprob0.html

There are also problems in the supplementary book, and solutions.

http://www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/cfprset.htm

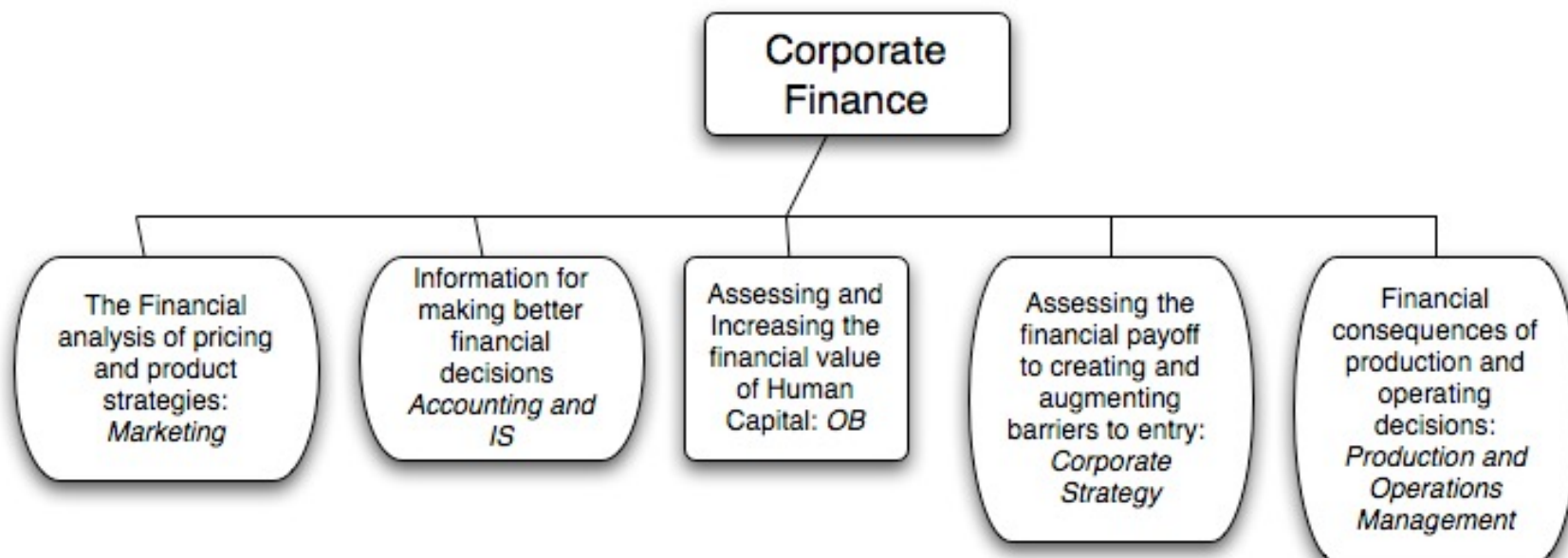
IV. Spreadsheets and data are accessible on my home page:

www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/data.html

www.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/spreadsh.htm

WHAT IS CORPORATE FINANCE?

- Every decision that a business makes has financial implications, and any decision which affects the finances of a business is a corporate finance decision.
- Defined broadly, everything that a business does fits under the rubric of corporate finance.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To give you the capacity to understand the theory and apply, in real world situations, the techniques that have been developed in corporate finance.
 - Motto for class: If it cannot be applied, who cares?.
- To give you the big picture of corporate finance so that you can understand how things fit together.
 - Motto for class: You can forget the details, but don' t miss the storyline.
- To show you that corporate finance is fun.
 - Question for class: Are we having fun yet?

THE TRADITIONAL ACCOUNTING BALANCE SHEET

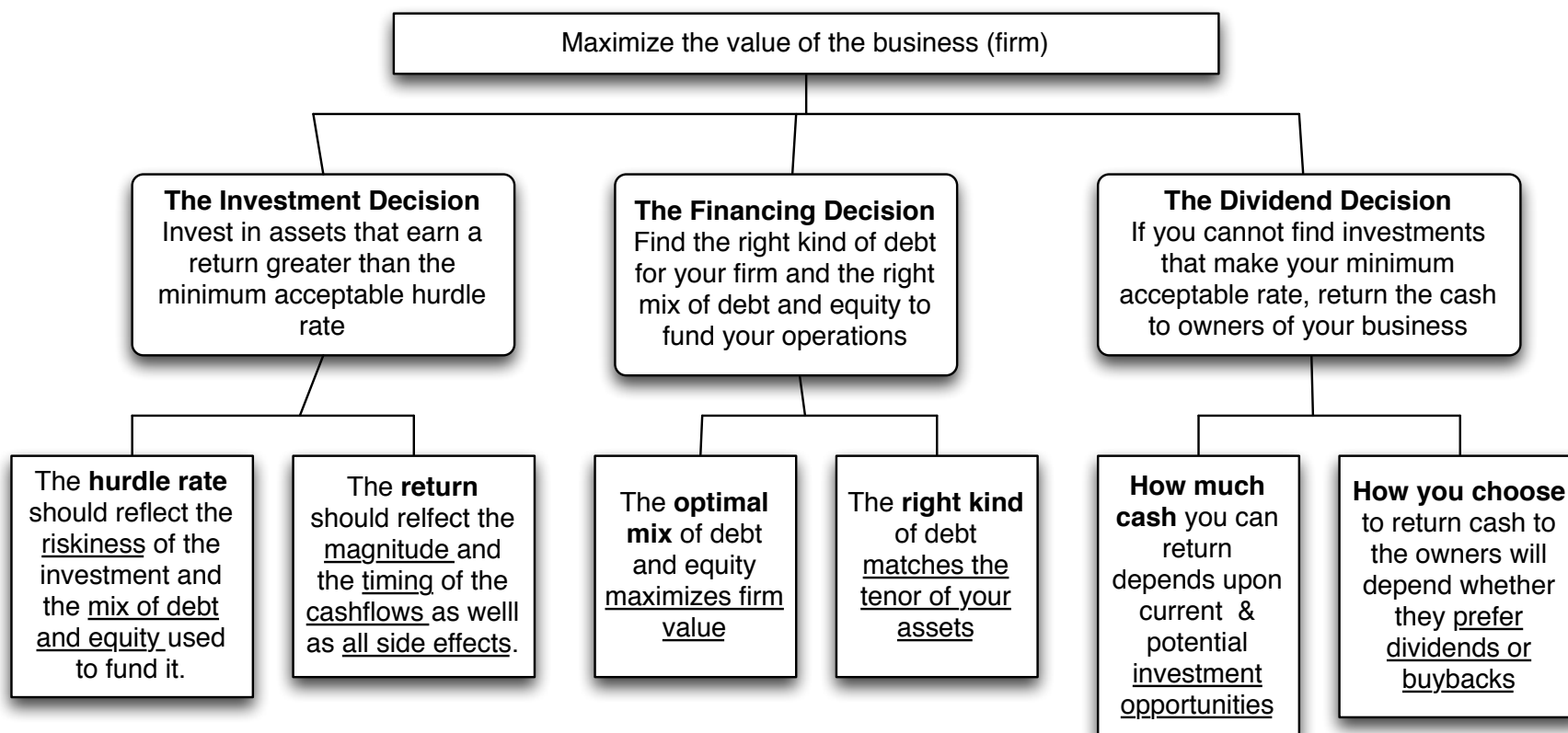
The Balance Sheet

Assets		Liabilities	
Long Lived Real Assets	Fixed Assets	Current Liabilities	Short-term liabilities of the firm
Short-lived Assets	Current Assets	Debt	Debt obligations of firm
Investments in securities & assets of other firms	Financial Investments	Other Liabilities	Other long-term obligations
Assets which are not physical, like patents & trademarks	Intangible Assets	Equity	Equity investment in firm

THE FINANCIAL VIEW OF THE FIRM

Assets		Liabilities	
Existing Investments Generate cashflows today Includes long lived (fixed) and short-lived (working capital) assets	Assets in Place	Debt	Fixed Claim on cash flows Little or No role in management <i>Fixed Maturity</i> <i>Tax Deductible</i>
Expected Value that will be created by future investments	Growth Assets	Equity	Residual Claim on cash flows Significant Role in management <i>Perpetual Lives</i>

FIRST PRINCIPLES & THE BIG PICTURE



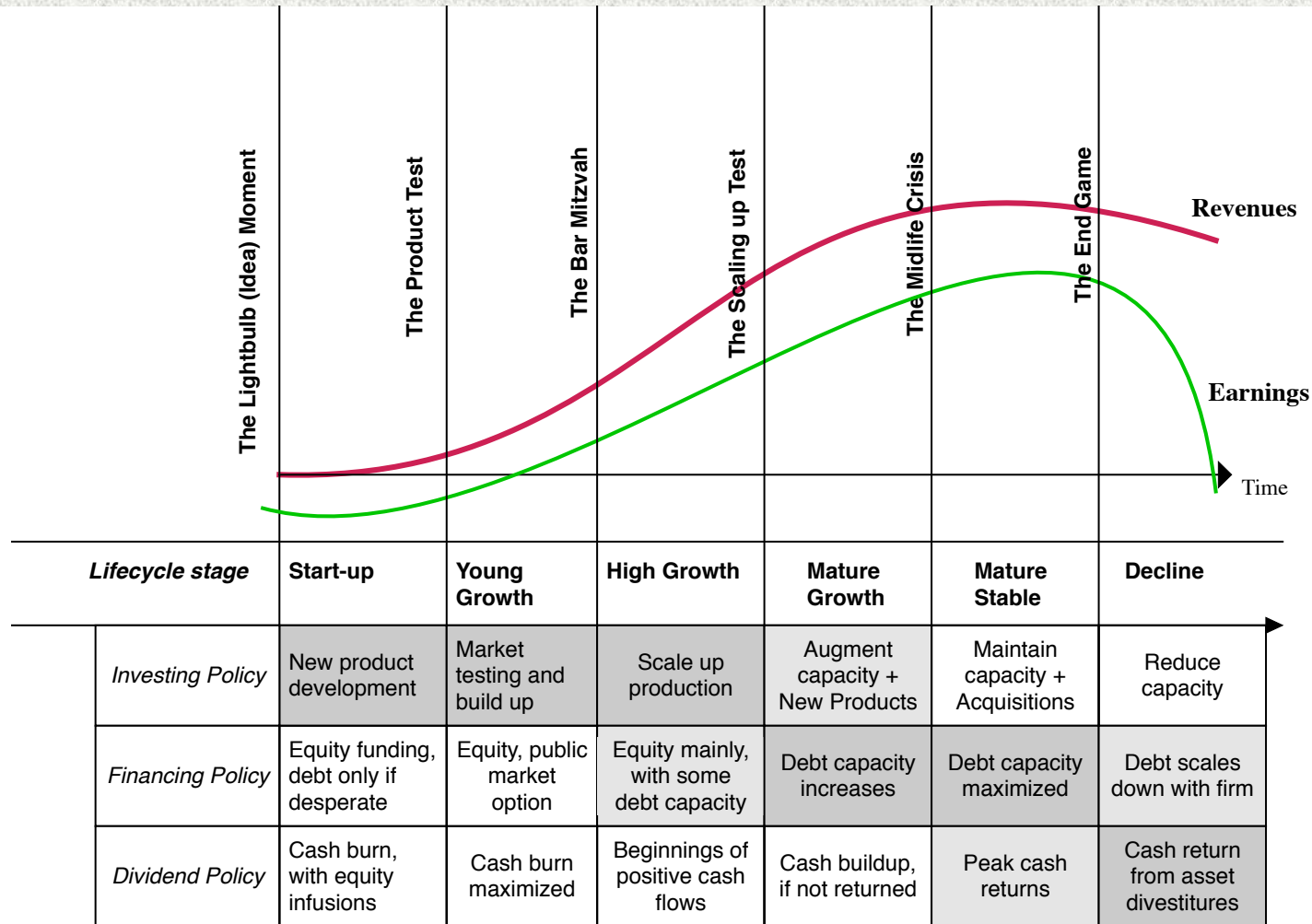
THEME 1: CORPORATE FINANCE IS “COMMON SENSE”

- There is nothing earth shattering about any of the first principles that govern corporate finance.
 - Arguing that taking investments that make 9% with funds that cost 10% to raise seems to be stating the obvious (the investment decision)
 - So is noting that it is better to find a funding mix which costs 10% instead of 11% (the financing decision)
 - And positing that if most of your investment opportunities generate returns less than your cost of funding, it is best to return the cash to the owners of the business and shrink the business.
- Shrewd business people, notwithstanding their lack of exposure to corporate finance theory, have always recognized these fundamentals and put them into practice.

THEME 2: CORPORATE FINANCE IS FOCUSED...

- It is the focus on maximizing the value of the business that gives corporate finance its focus. As a result of this singular objective, we can
 - Choose the “right” investment decision rule to use, given a menu of such rules.
 - Determine the “right” mix of debt and equity for a specific business
 - Examine the “right” amount of cash that should be returned to the owners of a business and the “right” amount to hold back as a cash balance.
- This certitude does come at a cost. To the extent that you accept the objective of maximizing firm value, everything in corporate finance makes complete sense. If you do not, nothing will.

THEME 3: THE FOCUS IN CORPORATE FINANCE CHANGES ACROSS THE LIFE CYCLE...



THEME 4: CORPORATE FINANCE IS UNIVERSAL...

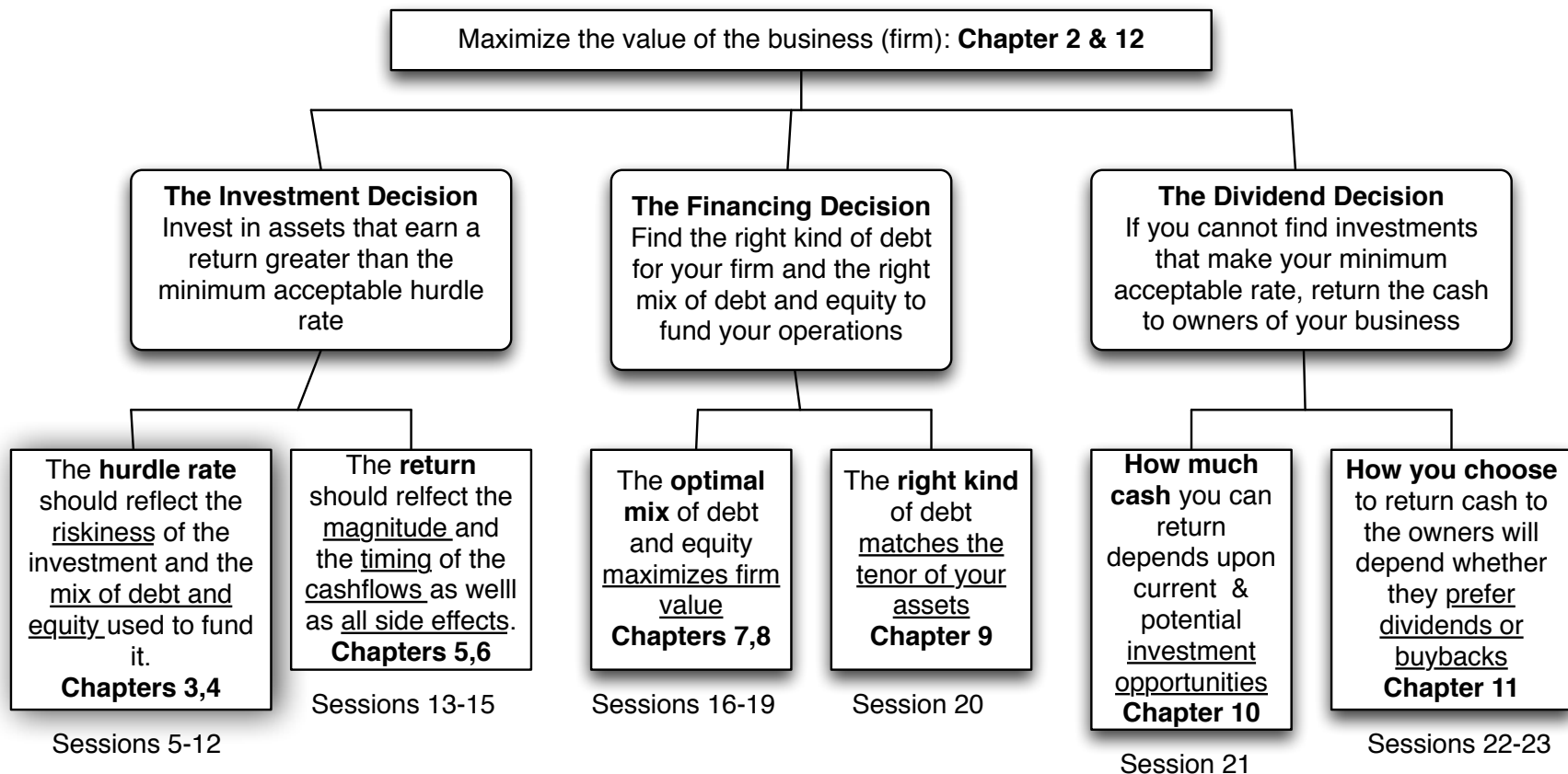
- **Every business**, small or large, public or private, US or emerging market, has to make investment, financing and dividend decisions.
- The objective in corporate finance for all of these businesses remains the same: **maximizing value**.
- While the constraints and challenges that firms face can vary dramatically across firms, **the first principles do not change**.
 - A publicly traded firm, with its greater access to capital markets and more diversified investor base, may have much lower costs of debt and equity than a private business, but they both should look for the financing mix that minimizes their costs of capital.
 - A firm in an emerging market may face greater uncertainty, when assessing new investments, than a firm in a developed market, but both firms should invest only if they believe they can generate higher returns on their investments than they face as their respective (and very different) hurdle rates.

THEME 5: IF YOU VIOLATE FIRST PRINCIPLES, YOU WILL PAY A PRICE, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE..

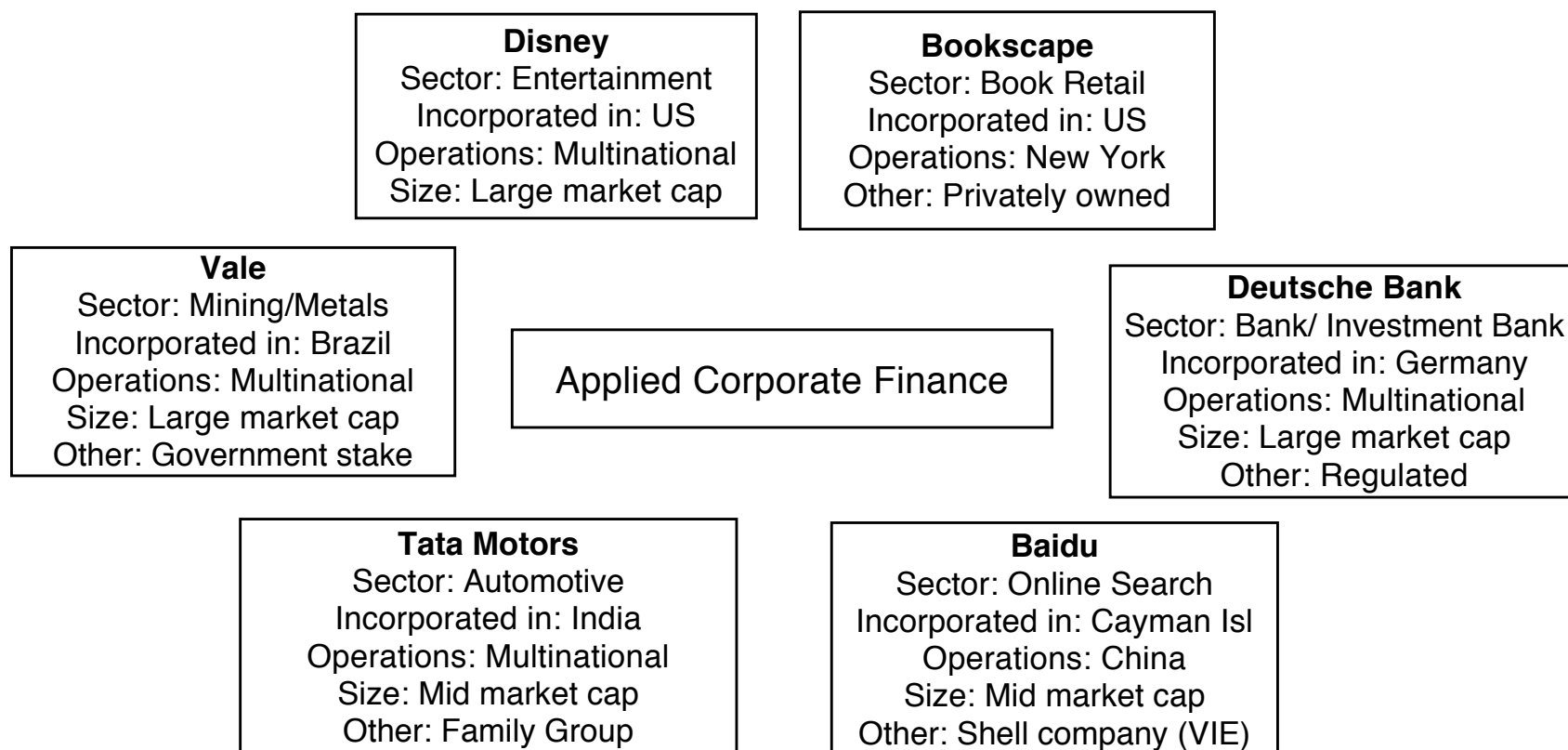
- The first principles are sacred and violating them comes with a cost. Models and theories are not and you should feel free to challenge them, if they are at odds with the facts.
- There are some investors/analysts/managers who convince themselves that the first principles don't apply to them because of their superior education, standing or past successes, and then proceed to put into place strategies or schemes that violate first principles.
 - Sooner or later, these strategies will blow up and create huge costs.
 - Almost every corporate disaster or bubble has its origins in a violation of first principles.

CLASS STRUCTURE & CHAPTER REFERENCES

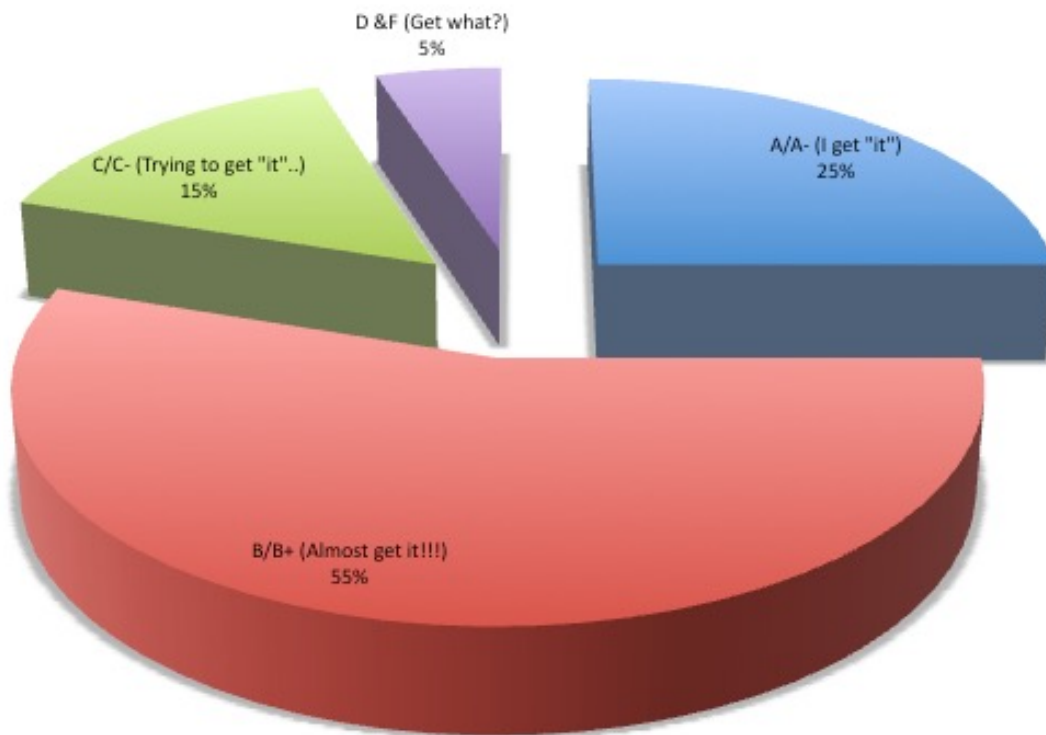
Session 2-4, 24-25



AND IT WILL BE APPLIED...



GRADING DISTRIBUTION



GRADING BASIS

- **Group Work:** Each group will be required to work on one case (you will get it in class in the fourth week) and one comprehensive project (See attached description).
 - ▣ Case: Due session 15 (March 26 before class) 10%
 - ▣ Group Project:
 - ▣ Numbers on your company (May 5, by 5 pm): 5%
 - ▣ Project report (May 5, by 5 pm): 25%

- **Individual Work:**
 - ▣ **Quizzes:** There will be three open-book and open-notes quizzes worth 10% each.
 - ▣ Quiz 1: Session 10 - Covers sessions 1-9 (March 3)
 - ▣ Quiz 2: Session 18 - Covers sessions 10-15 (April 7)
 - ▣ Quiz 3: Session 22- Covers session 16-22 (April 21)
 - ▣ **Final Exam:** This will also be an open-book and open-notes cumulative exam, worth 30%. It has not been scheduled yet.

EXAM GROUND RULES

1. Quizzes will be on the designated days in the first 30 minutes of the class.
2. Exams will be open book, open notes. You can bring in as much supporting material as you can carry.
3. Each quiz is worth 10%.
4. If you have to miss a quiz for good reason, you will have to let me know (by email) at least 15 minutes before the quiz that you will be missing the quiz.
5. If you miss a quiz for good reason, the 10% weight on that quiz will be reallocated across your remaining exams (quizzes and final). You cannot weight prior quizzes more.
6. If you take all three quizzes, the score on your worst quiz will be pushed up to the average score across all of your other exams (the other two quizzes and the final exam) (Note: It will not be thrown out). If you miss a quiz, you will not have this option, even if you miss the quiz for good reason.
7. You can never be worse off from taking all three quizzes. At worst, your total score will be unaffected, but at best, it will improve.
8. I grade all of your quizzes and I give partial credit. So, please show all work. If you have a beef with the grading (and I do make mistakes), please come to me
9. You cannot use your laptops on the quiz.
10. You can use your iPads for reviewing lecture notes but not as connected devices.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CLASS AND GROUP WORK

- **Rules of group work**
 - Pick your own groups. (If you have trouble getting picked, I will help)
 - All group work will be self policed, except in extreme circumstances.
 - There will be one grade per group, no matter how the workload is distributed among the group members
- **Rules for class**
 - I do not enforce attendance, but I would really like you to be here. Of course, if you have to miss a class, you can always use the webcast as a fallback.
 - Cell phones ... (Please, need I say more..)
 - All participation is welcome.