COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an advanced, modern finance course with the objective of studying indices and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and their application in investment management. The course is divided into two major segments. The first provides a comprehensive overview of the theories and practical experience that are the foundations for indexing. This includes a review of Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) and its influence on the evolution and role of indexing in investment management, a deep dive into best practices in index (portfolio) construction necessary to fully understanding ETFs, and a thorough overview of the latest in index products across all asset classes. The second segment provides a thorough examination of ETFs, including their anatomy, mechanics, application in investment strategy, and eco-system of industry participants.

The course is designed to be comprehensive covering the topics of Indexing and ETFs, while being contemporary and practical with the content, along with, providing access to resources and industry participants. Class time will include lectures using PowerPoint Presentations and periodic appearances of guest speakers from across the Financial Services industry. Students will gain useful knowledge about the important methodology considerations amongst providers, the many applications for indexes (covering all asset classes), the benefits of ETFs in investment management. They will also understand how to navigate the eco-system of industry participants and job opportunities to pursue and advance their careers.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Canvas and email will be used
- No textbook is required; however, recommended books include:
  - Rasmussen, M., *Quantitative Portfolio Optimisation, Asset Allocation and Risk*
LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course should be able to:

A. Understand the basics of portfolio construction/optimization
B. Understand the origins and role of indexing in investment management
C. Understand market-capitalization weighted and alternatively-weighted indices
D. Discuss the multiple dimensions of indexing
E. Understand Best Practices and Challenges in Index Construction
F. Understand implications in passive versus active management
G. Understand the evolution and progression of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)
H. Understand the mechanics of ETFs in Primary and Secondary Markets
I. Understand the objectives, construction, maintenance of ETF portfolios
J. Understand and discuss the benefits of ETF use
K. Analyze ETFs in the context of investment strategy
L. Understand data and information used by Index Providers, ETF Sponsors and their clients

PREREQUISITES

To best take advantage of this class students should have a good understanding of statistics, macroeconomics, and finance including a basic understanding of capital markets and portfolio analysis.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I do NOT tolerate cheating. Students are responsible for understanding the RU Academic Integrity Policy (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

I will strongly enforce this Policy and pursue all violations. On all examinations and assignments, students must sign the RU Honor Pledge, which states, “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination or assignment.” I will screen all written assignments through SafeAssign or Turnitin, plagiarism detection services that compare the work against a large database of past work. Don’t let cheating destroy your hard-earned opportunity to learn. See business.rutgers.edu/ai for more details.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

A. Lectures (notes will be made available the day after each class)
B. Periodic homework assignments involving both required and suggested reading (will be communicated in class and via Canvas)
C. Semester Team Project
D. Guest Speakers

CLASSROOM CONDUCT
Students are expected to behave with respect for instructor, classmates and guests. This includes hand-raising for questions and comments, silencing cell phones and laptops, and not engaging in side conversations during the lecture.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

A. There will be no intended grade distribution.

B. Two quizzes/exams, three homework assignments, and a final project will account for 95% of final grade
   1) Quizzes, will include multiple choice questions, will account for 50%
   2) Homework will account for 15%
   3) The semester project, that will account for 30% of the semester grade, will be explained at the end of Class #2 and must be approved by Class #6 date and submitted/presented by ().

C. Class participation will be judged by instructor and count for 5% of final grade
   1) Attendance will be recognized (if campus is open class will be held) 2) Discussion (questions and answers) will be noted

COURSE CONTENT

A. Course Foundation – Genesis of Indexing
   1) Summary of the Evolution of Optimal Portfolio Construction and Maximization Techniques
   2) Review of Investment Risk
   3) Overview of Beta/Alpha in Investment Management

B. Indexing
   1) Methodology of Index Construction
   2) Evolution Of Popular Indices
   3) Multiple Dimensions of Indexing

C. Details about Asset Class Indexes (focus on equity)

D. Overview of Alternatives to Market-cap Weighting

E. Smart Beta Strategy and Factor Indexes

F. Understand the implications of indices in passive and active management
   1) Overview of benchmarks versus tradable indices
   2) Overview of index funds and derivatives
3) Industry Trends

G. Overview on the evolution of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)

H. Details on the mechanics of ETFs in Primary and Secondary Markets
   1) ETFs as an investment vehicle
   2) The mechanics of ETFs and the Eco-system of participants
   3) Pricing ETFs
   4) Real costs involved

I. Understand and discuss the benefits of ETFs
   1) Review the compelling features
   2) Examples of benefits to different users/investors

J. Industry
   1) Review the scope, participants and products
   2) Introduce next generation structure

K. Analyze ETFs in the context of investment strategy
   1) Passive, Active, Blended
   2) Smart Beta

L. Access data and information about ETFs
   1) Overview of popular sources for ETF data, news and information
   2) Examples of industry participants

M. Industry Trends

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Financial Times


The Wall Street Journal

**SUPPORT SERVICES**


[Rutgers University-New Brunswick ODS phone (848)445-6800 or email dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu]
If you are pregnant, the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy.

If you seek religious accommodations, the Office of the Dean of Students is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed.

If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides help and support. More information can be found at http://vpva.rutgers.edu/.

If students who have experienced a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate, you should submit a request via https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu .
If you are a military veteran or are on active military duty, you can obtain support through the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services. [http://veterans.rutgers.edu/](http://veterans.rutgers.edu/)

If you are in need of mental health services, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center: [http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/](http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/)]

[Rutgers Counseling and Psychological Services–New Brunswick: [http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)]

If you are in need of physical health services, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers Health Services – Newark: [http://health.newark.rutgers.edu/](http://health.newark.rutgers.edu/)]

[Rutgers Health Services – New Brunswick: [http://health.rutgers.edu/](http://health.rutgers.edu/)]

If you are in need of legal services, please use our readily available services: [http://rusls.rutgers.edu/](http://rusls.rutgers.edu/)

Students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a second language (ESL) should contact the Program in American Language Studies for supports.

[Rutgers–Newark: PALS@newark.rutgers.edu]

[Rutgers–New Brunswick: esl pals@english.rutgers.edu]

If you are in need of additional academic assistance, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers University-Newark Learning Center: [http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc](http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc)]

[Rutgers University-Newark Writing Center: [http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter](http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter)]

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick Learning Center: [https://rlc.rutgers.edu/](https://rlc.rutgers.edu/)]

[Optional items that many faculty include:

- Students must sign, date, and return a statement declaring that they understand the RU Academic Integrity Policy.

- Students must sign, date, and return a statement declaring that they understand this syllabus.]