ACCT 651: Identifying and Resolving Advanced Issues in Taxation  
Spring 2019 Class

FACULTY INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Contact Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Instructor:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. William Snyder, PhD, CPA</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">Faculty web page</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Enterprise Hall – Accounting Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office hours:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Call or email for an appointment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:rsnyder9@gmu.edu">rsnyder9@gmu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 703-993-9224</td>
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</table>

PREREQUISITES
Student is in the MSA program or permission from the Program Director.

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS

**Professional skills:** Our graduates will demonstrate professional skills necessary for success in the accounting profession.

- *Teaming & Leading* - Our graduates will demonstrate the team leadership and interpersonal skills needed to form, lead, and work effectively in diverse organizational teams.

- *Ethics and Professional Responsibility* - Our graduates will understand the importance of ethical conduct and the regulatory environment of accounting.

- *Professional Communications* – Our graduates will communicate effectively to professional audiences in both written and oral forms.

- *Analytical Decision Making* - Our graduates will demonstrate analytical decision-making skills.

- *Accounting Research* - Our graduates will effectively conduct and communicate accounting research
Technical skills and knowledge: Our graduates will demonstrate and apply technical knowledge of accounting and auditing.

Global perspective: Our graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the role of accounting in the global business environment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course focuses on identifying and resolving advanced issues facing various legal entities and transactions, including: Corporations, Partnerships, S Corporations, and International Transactions. The overall goals of the course are for students to gain:

a. A strategic understanding of federal income taxes applicable to these entities and transactions.

b. A working knowledge of the sources of tax law and the process of tax research and reporting.

Students will research tax issues for hypothetical clients and prepare reports documenting their analysis, research, and recommendations. The reports should demonstrate an understanding of the sources of tax law, and the relative weight given to those sources. There will be two research assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand and consider the unique tax aspects of various legal entities.
2. Gain an understanding of the tax implications of operating internationally.
3. Be aware of the tax rules regarding gratuitous transfers of property.
4. Perform tax research using electronic tax libraries, such as CCH, which is available on the campus network and other Internet based research sites.
5. Consider the ethical issues involved in tax planning including the Profession’s rules of conduct and the IRS Circular 230.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

1. Students will record, analyze interpret and communicate financial and non-financial information for users of such information in accordance with applicable professional authoritative literature.

2. Understand the environment and role of the accounting profession in the proper functioning of commerce and in society at large, and the ethical and regulatory responsibilities associated with that environment and role.

3. Students will possess the following technical competencies: (a) research skills to access, understand and apply relevant professional, authoritative tax literature; (b) decision modeling skills to identify issues, analyze alternatives, and implement solutions (i.e., communicate) related to financial and non-financial information, and (c) technology and data analysis skills to manage financial and non-financial information.
Note: goals in bold will be assessed.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Lecture slides and other materials are available on Blackboard. You will need access to a computer that has basic business software like Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Acrobat Reader. You will also need speakers or headphones to listen to course content as well as a headset microphone for live audio sessions using tools like Blackboard Collaborate. Please note that a fast-reliable internet connection will be necessary to download course content and upload deliverables.

The course will be conducted using online pre-recorded lectures, examples, problem solving, and the analysis of selected court cases. Power point slides prepared by the text book publisher will be available and the professor will review homework solutions and answer any questions you may have.

**Readings:** The textbook is:

Authors/Editors: William Hoffman, Jr., David M. Maloney, William A. Raabe, and James C. Young. **ISBN 13: 9781337703666.**

This is the ISBN for the electronic version of the textbook and includes access to CengageNOWv2, which is required. Alternatively, you may access both the textbook and CengageNOWv2 via “Cengage Unlimited” (https://www.cengage.com/unlimited/student-calculator).

**Implications of Tax Cuts & Jobs Act:** We will cover the new law in our course.

**COURSE POLICIES**

The course will be completed over 8 classes. Course instruction will be delivered Online using Black Board. Please refer to the most recent course schedule posted on Blackboard for detailed information.

**Attendance and participation:** You are required to complete the assigned tasks on or before the due date and time mentioned in the course schedule. Please inform your instructor immediately if you are unable to complete any of the tasks within the mentioned due dates.

**Course Requirements:**

a. You are expected to complete all homework assignments which we will review and discuss in class
   i. Homework is pass/fail with three attempts each – a score of 80% is passing.
   ii. Of the 7 graded homework assignments, I will drop your lowest 3 submissions.

b. Exams: There will be two tests.

c. Research Projects: You will complete two research projects.

d. Homework problems will be assigned during the first class.

e. Court opinions: We will read selected court opinions.

f. Participation in class is expected; ask questions, participate in discussions and be engaged.

g. Course Grading and relative weight:
   i. Homework: 5%
ii. Quizzes and final: 45%
iii. Research/writing projects: 50%
   1. Court summary
   2. Research paper
iv. Grades will be based on the number of weighted points earned at the end of the semester.

**Course Sequence:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Textbook Chapters</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Research Assignments</th>
<th>Homework Due Before the Next Class (pass/fail)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 8, 2019</td>
<td>1 &amp; 17</td>
<td>Tax Law &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>Assign court summary and research paper</td>
<td>January 14, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 15, 2019</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Corporations - Comparison of entities and accounting periods &amp; methods; new Section 199A Business deduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>January 21, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 22, 2019</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Corporations - Organization &amp; Capital</td>
<td>Court Summary Due</td>
<td>January 28, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>January 29, 2019</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Corporations - Earnings &amp; Profits, Distributions</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 4, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 5, 2019</td>
<td>6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Redemptions/Liquidations &amp; Reorganizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 11, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 12, 2019</td>
<td>10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>Partnerships - Formation, Distributions, &amp; Liquidations</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 18, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 19, 2019</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>S Corporations - Formation, Distributions, &amp; Liquidations</td>
<td>Research Paper Due</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>February 26, 2019</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>International Taxation of US companies - the basics</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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**Midterm Exam - 1/30 through 2/4 - Online**

**Final Exam - 2/26 - In Class**
Reading and Analysis:

Read the assigned materials and study the key concepts. Think about each reading from both a conceptual and a practical perspective. As you read the materials, ask yourself:

* What are the key concepts and principles?
* What are the key points being made? What is the rationale?
* Why does this matter for an organization?
* How can the concepts be applied to resolve accounting issues?
* How will this impact financial reporting decisions?

Writing Deliverables:

Double-space, use a standard 12-point font, and place 1-inch margins in all assignments. You should include a title page on all individual and group submissions. When you make references to assigned course materials, use the following format: Last name of author(s), date. If you use other outside readings, give full bibliographic information at the end of the paper. Because good writing skills are so important in the business world, each of your deliverables should be clearly written and completely free of spelling and grammatical errors.

To cite and reference professional or academic sources, please use APA style. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th Edition or at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. To cite the Internal Revenue Code and related sources, please see the examples in the first chapter.

Good writing is critical for your personal success as well as success in the program. Even if you have a great idea, if you cannot communicate that idea and persuade your manager (or teacher), that idea may be wasted. Use your MSA program to work on your writing as much as you possibly can.

Grading: The table below shows all assessment activities with corresponding due dates and grade weights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Description</th>
<th>Due Day/Week</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research/writing Projects:</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project 1</td>
<td>1/22/18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project 2</td>
<td>2/19/18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tests – as indicated above</td>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
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Note: The course faculty reserves the right to grant or deny exceptions and/or extensions on a case-by-case basis.
Individual Assignments: Individual assignments for this course are listed below.

- Research/Writing project – these projects are based on cases I developed.

Participation:
Ongoing and substantive participation in the group activities is important to your learning and to the success of your group. At the end of the term you will complete a peer assessment of your classmates' contributions to the group interactions. Your instructor will review your posts and interactions in the collaborative group space. Because participation is being evaluated, it is recommended that for document sharing and asynchronous group communications you use the Collaborative Group Space in Blackboard.

Group Projects vs. Individual Work:
1. Students may discuss assignments with fellow classmates. Feel free to bounce ideas off each other and brainstorm possible solutions.
2. Students must submit their own original work.
3. Plagiarism is considered cheating, and such actions will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." Plagiarizing the work of classmates, former accounting students, internet authors, websites, etc. constitutes cheating.
4. Brainstorming and collaboration becomes cheating when students execute individual assignments together. Another example of cheating can occur towards the end of an assignment. A student who changes an assignment to largely conform to the answers/style/format of another person is cheating.
5. Using answer keys, students' work from prior semesters, etc. constitutes cheating.

Quizzes and Tests:
1. Using any unauthorized information on quizzes and tests is obviously cheating (i.e., looking at another student's answers, using notes, storing information in a calculator or cell phone, communicating with other test takers, etc.).
2. Obtaining possible test questions through a test bank constitutes cheating.

COURSE WEBSITE
The course website is your online classroom. It is in the university’s course management system: Blackboard. Here you will perform many learning activities: see readings and assignments, view video lectures, interact with the instructor and your peers, work in groups, and much more.

If Blackboard is not functioning as expected, or you are unable to connect to Blackboard or content within Blackboard, email courses@gmu.edu for assistance.
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

These browsers work best with Blackboard Learn as it is implemented in your course website.

- Firefox 24 and later
- Chrome 30 and later
- Safari 6 and later
- Internet Explorer 9 and later

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

You are expected to have read the assigned readings before responding to any posted discussion questions and attempting the related assignments. The amount of effort you put into studying the assigned materials before attempting classwork would determine the quality of your responses to questions, as well as how much you learn about the course topics. We encourage you to not only read the assigned materials but to analyze them carefully. Think about each reading from both a conceptual and a practical perspective.

Communication: Students must use their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class and correspondence with the instructor. See Masonlive to obtain your personal GMU e-mail account. Mason policy requires faculty to communicate exclusively through the Mason email system. This means your instructor can respond to email from your Mason account only and cannot respond to emails you send from your personal or work email.

Email and questions posted to the discussion forums will be answered within 24 hours during the work-week (Monday through Friday) and 48 hours over the weekend and holidays. Students who anticipate missing a deliverable due date for religious reasons should inform the instructor in advance as soon as possible. You can find the University semester schedule and religious holidays at academic calendar and religious holiday calendar.

Honor System and Code: Mason is an Honor Code university. Please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the Mason Honor Code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

Attached to the syllabus is the uniform set of Recommendations for Honor Code Violations for graduate programs in the School of Business adopted by the faculty in May 2012.

School of Business Standards of Behavior: The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect,
free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:

- **Respect** for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- **Honesty** and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- **Accountability** for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. School of Business can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

Students with disabilities who require special accommodation should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/ or 703-993-2474) and should inform the instructor of their needs so it can be taken into consideration. Please take care of this during the first two weeks of the semester.

**DIVERSITY**

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. These goals apply to online learning at George Mason University equally as it does to classroom learning.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

**STUDENT PRIVACY**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. For further information on FERPA and student privacy, please see the dedicated page provided by the Office of the University Registrar (http://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/).
RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Course support: Preparedness is a major facilitator for a heightened learning experience in an online course. For help on Blackboard tools like Collaborate, Kaltura, Respondus Lockdown Browser and other resources, please refer to courses support or tutorials for additional information. If you encounter any difficulties accessing Blackboard or your course you can reach the Technical Help Desk at the following email: courses@gmu.edu.

For tips on how to be a successful online learner, please read the “Strategies for Online Learning Success” (online success strategies).

The Libraries at George Mason University strive to provide the best possible collections of research resources and scholarly materials in all formats for our users throughout the university community, supporting the University’s goals of learning, teaching, and research. The School of Business has a dedicated librarian liaison and more information is available at library resources. The University Libraries also provides resources specifically for distance students, including the ability to e-reserve materials. For more information on these services and the process to e-reserve texts, see http://library.gmu.edu/distance and http://infoguides.gmu.edu/distance_students.

The George Mason University Writing Center is committed to supporting writers in the Mason community and offers free writing support to Mason students. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just as you would sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means you set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the Online Writing Lab (OWL).

Student services: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Mason offers counseling and psychological services that can provide assistance if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or the like.

University policies: The University Catalog is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty and staff conduct in university affairs.

Information regarding weather related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the GMU website and via MasonAlert. Changes to schedule or deliverable due dates, if any, will be communicated via email and on Blackboard.

Copyright: Any audio or visual recording of lectures, reuse or remix of course materials, or further dissemination of course content is not permitted without prior written consent of the course instructor and George Mason University unless the recording is part of an approved accommodation plan.

Disclaimer: Any changes to assignments or course schedule will be announced on Blackboard and/or via e-mail. Inability to access the course webpage or failure to read e-mails cannot be an excuse for late submissions or non-completion of assignments.
# School of Business Recommendations for Honor Code Violations

*Adopted by the faculty in May 2012*

## Graduate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>First Offense</th>
<th>Second Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism—failure to cite/attribute sources</td>
<td>An F in the class; multiple visits to the Writing Center required; and Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance</td>
<td>An F in the class; multiple visits to the Writing Center required; Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance; dismissal from the program; and possible suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism—representing someone else’s work as the student’s own</td>
<td>An F in the class; multiple visits to the Writing Center required; and Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance</td>
<td>An F in the class; multiple visits to the Writing Center required; Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance (at times of hearing and reenrollment if relevant); dismissal from the program; and possible suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on an assignment, homework, class participation, or minor project</td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on a major project, test, or exam</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar Attendance; and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egregious Violation [e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work; lying to an employer about academic performance]</td>
<td>Dismissal from the program; at least one year suspension; and attendance at Academic Integrity Seminar at the time of hearing and just prior to reenrollment</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
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</table>