

# ECON542

## Taxation & Business Strategy

### Module 2, 2015-2016

#### Course Information

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Office Hour: Tuesday 5:30 - 7:30 pm or by appointment

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**Classes:**

Lectures: Tuesday & Friday 3:30-5:20 pm

Venue: PHBS Building, Room 319

## 1. Course Description

### 1.1 Context

Course overview:

Contrast to public finance course, the main agent in this course is business entity, instead of tax authority (government), so the major concern is profit maximization and tax strategy of business rather than social welfare maximization. In running business, taxes play an important role in various aspects. This course aims to present the students with an analytical framework to see how various business decisions such as investment, finance, labor relations, are affected by taxation. In addition, to be more realistic, this course takes holistic approaches by incorporating implicit tax rates, tax regulations, and non-tax factors into the analysis. The first part of the course is mainly to provide theoretical tools to analyze taxes and business strategy in general. On the other hand, the second part of the course discusses specific business decisions, such as capital structures, compensating and retirement plan for employees, applying the theoretical framework.

### 1.2 Textbooks and Reading Materials

Textbook

Myron S. Scholes, Mark A. Wolf, Merle M. Erickson, Edward L. Maydew, Terrence J. Shevlin  
“Taxes & Business Strategy” 4th edition, Prentice Hall.

Alan Auerbach, Michael Devereux, and Helen Simpson, “Taxing Corporate Income” *Dimension of Tax Design: the Mirrlees Review*, 2010, Oxford University Press.

Michael P. Devereux, Li Liu, and Simon Loretz, “The Elasticity of Corporate Taxable Income: New Evidence from UK Tax Records,” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 2014, 6(2): 19-53.

Recommended Readings

Sally Jones, Shelley Rhoades Catanach, “Advanced Strategies in Taxation” 4th edition, McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

## 2. Learning Outcomes

### 2.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

Learning Goals	Objectives	Assessment
1. Our graduates will be effective communicators.	1.1. Our students will produce quality business and research-oriented documents.	
	1.2. Students are able to professionally present their ideas and also logically explain and defend their argument.	
2. Our graduates will be skilled in team work and leadership.	2.1. Students will be able to lead and participate in group for projects, discussion, and presentation.	
	2.2. Students will be able to apply leadership theories and related skills.	
3. Our graduates will be trained in ethics.	3.1. In a case setting, students will use appropriate techniques to analyze business problems and identify the ethical aspects, provide a solution and defend it.	
	3.2. Our students will practice ethics in the duration of the program.	
4. Our graduates will have a global perspective.	4.1. Students will have an international exposure.	
5. Our graduates will be skilled in problem-solving and critical thinking.	5.1. Our students will have a good understanding of fundamental theories in their fields.	
	5.2. Our students will be prepared to face problems in various business settings and find solutions.	
	5.3. Our students will demonstrate competency in critical thinking.	

### 2.2 Course specific objectives

### 2.3 Assessment/Grading Details

Assessment task	Weighting	Due date
Class participation/attitude	10%	Every class
Problem sets	30%	TBA
Exam	35%	Dec 29
Presentation (Team Project)	25%	Last week of the class
Total	100%	

Two problem sets will be assigned (before and after the exam). The first problem set weighs 15% and the second problem set does 15%. Submission after the announced deadline is graded as zero. The first problem set will be assigned as homework. The second problem set can be either homework or replaced with in class quiz instead of solving in home.

Exam will be held at December 29th Tuesday in the class (10:30 am -12:20 p.m.). For the sake

of fair grading by testing with the exactly equal written exam (which weighs most among others), no exception for the examination date is allowed. If you have time conflict, then not-taking this course is strongly recommended.

#### Presentation (Team Project):

Instead of taking a written final exam, how well you understand overall class materials will be tested by a team project on an application of what is discussed in the class via 30 minutes' presentation in the last week of the 2nd module. At most, by 1st of December, each team should be formed and list of team members should be submitted.

As long as relevant to the class, each team is free to choose the content of the presentation. Some examples will be offered in the middle of class, for reference.

By the 29th of December, short proposal of the presentation (up to seven pages) is to be submitted. The presentation has to have clear research question, concrete research method, and accurate sources. The outcome should be original not copy other's work. As a penalty for plagiarism, both the grade for team project (25%) and the grade for class participation (10%) will be zero.

At the presentation in the last week of this module, each team should submit both the presentation slide (submission of the term paper is optional) and detailed document about each student's contribution (which part you did for presentation) for the sake of fair grading.

## **2.4 Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

It is important for a student's effort and credit to be recognized through class assessment. Credits earned for a student work due to efforts done by others are clearly unfair. Deliberate dishonesty is considered academic misconducts, which include plagiarism; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; or altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying of data, research procedures, or data analysis.

All assessments are subject to academic misconduct check. Misconduct check may include reproducing the assessment, providing a copy to another member of faculty, and/or communicate a copy of this assignment to the PHBS Discipline Committee. A suspected plagiarized document/assignment submitted to a plagiarism checking service may be kept in its database for future reference purpose.

Where violation is suspected, penalties will be implemented. The penalties for academic misconduct may include: deduction of honour points, a mark of zero on the assessment, a fail grade for the whole course, and reference of the matter to the Peking University Registrar.

For more information of plagiarism, please refer to *PHBS Student Handbook*.

## **3. Topics & Teaching Schedule**

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Lectures</b>
1.	Introduction of the Course	Logistics, Scope and aim of the course; Overview of the course, Various tax burdens in business, and Basic concepts.
2.	Tax Strategy and Tax planning	What is tax strategy and why does tax strategy for business matter? Types of tax planning, Restrictions on taxpayer

	[Chapter 1 & 2]	behavior, Tax law factors that affect firm's decisions
3.	Taxes and Returns on Alternative Investment Vehicles [Chapter 3]	How does different tax treatment of saving vehicles that yields equal before-tax rate of return affect after-tax rate of return?
4.	Taxes and Choice of Organizational Form of Firms [Chapter 4] Auerbach et al. 2010 Devereux et al. 2014	What are differences in tax treatment of organizations that produce goods and service and how does it affect the choice of organizational form of a firm?
5.	Implicit Tax, Tax Arbitrage, and Restrictions [Chapter 5]	What is implicit tax in a competitive market without any restrictions? What is tax arbitrage and how does it reduce tax liabilities?
6.	Nontax Costs of Tax planning [Chapter 6]	How do frictions in information and market competition affect tax planning?
7.	Marginal Tax Rates and Dynamic Tax Planning Considerations [Chapter 7]	How do we calculate marginal tax rate for tax planning over time?
8.	Corporations: Formation, Operation, Capital Structure, and Liquidation [Chapter 12]	Throughout the life cycle of the corporation from formation to liquidation, what are the roles of taxes?
9.	Compensation Planning [Chapter 8]	In designing contracts to hire employee, what are tax consequences of compensation alternatives on both employee and employers?
10.	Pension and retirement planning [Chapter 9]	Given special tax treatments on savings for pension account, what are the tax strategies of different pension plans?
11.	Estate and Gift Tax Planning [Chapter 18]	Facing several forms of taxation which arises when an accumulated wealth from a family business is transferred, what are optimal tax strategies?
12.	Multinational Tax Planning and Investment Decisions [Chapter 10]	How do taxes of multinational companies affect location and structure of investments?
13.	Introduction to Mergers, Acquisitions, and Divestitures [Chapter 13]	What are major tax and nontax issues associated with mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures?
14.	Case studies (Applications): presentations	