Course Overview

This one week immersion seminar will provide a broad based understanding of the financial services industry and consider fundamental questions about its’ future. This is an industry in the midst of dynamic change at all levels. The present is being heavily influenced by public policy and regulatory changes. The future is being readied for significant disruption, especially in the context of new technology applications and demographic shifts. Moreover, average returns of the large financial firms have fallen from over 20% in the early 2000s to 7% in 2013/4. Yet, the role of financial intermediation remains at the heart of any economy, and is critical to the economic prosperity of any nation. This course will look to define both the opportunities and the perils which lay ahead in the Financial Services Industry by interactive dialogue, analysis and exposure to faculty and practitioners, both on campus and at institutions.

Any student who is interested in understanding or at least getting a peak into the future of this critical global sector and a major economic driver of New York City will benefit from taking the course. Whether you are in the financial services industry or just anticipate being impacted by it in your work or personally, this course should be interesting.

Some of the Key Questions we will consider:

1. What are the key segments of the industry and how do the firms make money (yesterday, today, and in the future)? We will consider aspects of commercial and investment banking, asset management (including long only, hedge and private equity funds), private wealth management and personal finance.

2. Understanding the operating cycle of the business for several key segments including how this creates opportunities and risks.

3. Who are the customers, what do they need and how is this changing? This has some variation for different segments.

4. What is the (appropriate?) role of public policy and regulation in reshaping this industry?

5. What is the role for risk taking in the industry and how is it managed (or even can it be managed)?

6. How is Technology changing everything in the industry (e.g. FinTech)

7. What are the opportunities and risks for you, the businesses and NYC?
Work Load for Students:

As the course is being developed and being offered for the first time this is not yet finalized. However, at least half the grade will be based on team analyses in breakouts during the week and participation in the sessions. There will also be a final paper that will summarize your team views on one aspect that you can choose (subject to approval) that covers a core area we will consider.

Faculty Leader

Professor Trevor Harris, who in addition to having been a Professor at Columbia Business School starting in 1983, spent time at Salomon Brothers and more than a decade at Morgan Stanley as a Managing Director In Equity Research and then Vice Chairman of Client Services and Director of Special Projects, before returning to Columbia. He continues to work with various financial institutions as they transition to a new world. He has worked on many sides of the business both here and globally and so brings a broad perspective that blends both conceptual and practical aspects of the field.

Other Presenters and Organizers

Professor Charles Calomiris a leading banking scholar is providing advice on the course and may participate in some sessions.

Khalid Azim, currently Director of Strategic Curricular Networks and Partnerships at Columbia Business School, and formerly a Managing Director at Morgan Stanley and UBS in various positions is working both on the content and helping to develop the external speakers.

External speakers

We have access to a large network of speakers who will be finalized once we assess the size and mix of the class.