Instructor Information

- Professor Andrea Armeni
- Email: andrea.armeni@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM or by appointment

Course Information

- Meeting Times: Mondays, 4:55 – 6:35 PM
- Location: Kimmel (60 Washington Square South), Room 803

Course Prerequisites

- CORE-GP.1021

Note that while Accounting is not a prerequisite, students should strongly consider completing the Financial Accounting Online Course: Introductory Section, which has been made available in your Case Pack and is estimated to take approximately 10 hours to complete. For those who pursue it, it is recommended that you complete the course before Lesson 4.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the impact investing landscape and its evolution, players, and tools, focusing on the opportunities and challenges for investors. Through a combination of readings, case studies, class discussion, and projects, students will gain deep insight into the perspective of the impact investor and consider how it relates to the other stakeholders in impact investing. We will examine the process by which an investor develops an impact thesis, sources and evaluates opportunities, all the way to structuring a deal and monitoring financial and social returns.

By the end of the course, you will have developed a thorough understanding of the players and tools in impact investing, as well as a critical appreciation of its potential and limitations.
Course Format

This course is designed for your self-study of the theoretical material as introduced in the online textbook. Some classes have an assigned activity based on spreadsheet material that accompanies the text, which will help to reinforce your learning from the text. Class time will be used for a combination of lecture on the assigned topic and class discussion or hands-on activities.

Most weeks we will also cover a business case, which is a helpful way of wrestling with real-world examples. It is essential that you come to class having read the case in advance. You may be called on in class to discuss the assigned cases. These cases will not always correlate directly with the textbook material assigned for the week. For most weeks, there will be a Discussion Question; you are required to post a one-paragraph response before the corresponding class session. This will give you an opportunity to think critically about the case you have read and to be prepared for the live class.

Course Learning Objectives

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<tr>
<th>Course Learning Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Assignment Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the evolution, landscape and future potential of impact investing.</td>
<td>Discussion Forum</td>
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<td>Develop financial and analytical competency to apply investment to drive social impact.</td>
<td>Root Capital Memo, Microfinance Valuation Memo and Template, Midterm</td>
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<td>Obtain basic skills to understand the process to innovate impact investment financial</td>
<td>Online Text Activities, Final Project</td>
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<td>structures and create and operate impact investment funds.</td>
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<td>Refine negotiation skills to represent stakeholder positions in placing or securing impact</td>
<td>In-Class Simulation</td>
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<td>capital.</td>
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<td>Learn to utilize impact investing strategies to drive measurable social impact in public</td>
<td>Midterm, Final Project</td>
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<td>sector, nonprofit, and for-profit contexts.</td>
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Required Readings

- Supplemental Required Harvard Business Publishing *Case Pack*
- Other readings as indicated in NYU Brightspace under each class section

Highly Recommended Supplemental Reading:

- Impact Alpha (daily online publication, free through NYU)
- Impact: Reshaping Capitalism to Drive Real Change, Sir Ronald Cohen
- Adventure Finance: How to Create a Funding Journey, Aunnie Patton Power
- Social Finance, edited by Alex Nicholls, Rob Paton, and Jed Emerson

Other Optional Readings:

- The Impact Investor, Lessons in Leadership and Strategy for Collaborative Capitalism, Jossey-Bass, Cathy Clark, Jed Emerson, Ben Thornley
- The Power of Impact Investing, Putting Markets to Work for Profit and Global Good, Judith Rodin and Margot Brandenburg
- Impact Investing: Transforming How We Make Money While Making a Difference, Jossey-Bass, Antony Bugg-Levine, Jed Emerson
- Money Well Spent: A Strategic Plan for Smart Philanthropy, Paul Brest and Hal Harvey
- Measuring and Improving Social Impacts, Marc Epstein and Kristi Yuthas

Other Recommended Resources:

- GIIN Sizing the Impact Investing Market 2022
- IFC Growing Impact: New Insights into the Practice of Impact Investing

Final Project:

The Final Project will be discussed in detail before the midpoint of the semester. This is in lieu of a final exam. You will be asked to show your understanding of the material and provide your own analysis – that is to say, not simply regurgitate what you have learned, but use that knowledge to analyze a specific situation in impact investing. The deliverable will take the form of an extended memorandum on a topic of your choice that addresses the instructor’s prompt.

The Final Project will be due on the last day of the NYU Wagner exam period.
Overview of the Semester
Deliverables due by 1:00 PM on the day of class unless another date is noted.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>The Impact Investing Landscape and its Origins</td>
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<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Frameworks for Impact Case: Root Capital</td>
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<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Investment Analysis and Valuation Case: Bridges Ventures</td>
<td>Root Capital Memo (due 2/5)</td>
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<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Asset Owner Approaches to Impact Investment Mission Investing – A Framework for Family Foundations</td>
<td>Bridges Ventures Memo (due 2/12)</td>
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February 19, 2024 – NO CLASS – Presidents’ Day

| Lesson 5 | 2/26 | Impact Measurement Part I: Reasons and Methodologies | |
| Lesson 7 | 3/11 | Mid-Semester Review | |

March 18, 2024 – NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

| Lesson 9 | 4/1 | Impact Transformation: Driving Additionality in Mature Companies Practitioner Guest Lecturer: Chid Liberty | |
| Lesson 10 | 4/8 | Alternative Deal and Fund Structures in Impact Investing | |
| Lesson 11 | 4/15 | Investment Transactions, Term Sheets, and Structuring – In-Class Exercise Case: Acumen Fund and Embrace | |
| Lesson 12 | 4/22 | Innovative Approaches to Impact Investing: Power Shifting, Systemic Investing, and Investment Lenses | |
| Lesson 13 | 4/29 | Policy and the Future of Impact Investing Practitioner Guest Lecturer: Fran Seegull | |
| Lesson 14 | 5/6 | Critiques of Impact Investing as a Driver of Social Change | Final Project (due 5/10) |
Detailed Course Overview

WEEK 1: THE IMPACT INVESTING LANDSCAPE AND ITS ORIGINS
January 22, 2024

This Lesson introduces the concept of impact investing, focusing on the challenges of its definition, and lays out the current landscape. We will review the historical context for impact investing and how it informs themes that will recur throughout the course.

We will run through an overview of how the course will develop and what you can expect.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 1 Live Session

Required Activities: Complete Before Week 1 Live Session
Sign up for ImpactAlpha – free for NYU students.
  • Visit the Landing page
  • Click on the “Join Now” button
  • Create an account with your school email address

Optional: Complete Before or After Week 2 Live Session (no submission)
Financial Accounting Online Course: Introductory Section
This Lesson introduces the concept of an investor framework for impact. The Root Capital case will be used to discuss the importance of developing a framework to guide impact investment decision-making.

Through the analysis of the case, we will start to review some of the key players along the chain of an investment, with a focus on asset owners and asset managers.

**Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 2 Live Session**

Read in Online Textbook: Chapter 1, Introduction to Impact Investing; Chapter 2, Sourcing and Screening

Read in Case Pack: Root Capital Case

**Discussion Question Due Before Week 2 Live Session**

The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.

**Assignments to Submit on Brightspace: Complete After Week 2 Live Session but Before Week 3 Live Session**

Based on the Root Capital case, write a memorandum (not to exceed one page double spaced) suggesting which and how many of the seven loans detailed in Exhibit 1 you suggest Root Capital undertake. Your memorandum should include a framework for comparing the deals.

**Optional: Complete Before or After Week 2 Live Session (no submission)**

Financial Accounting Online Course: Introductory Section
WEEK 3: INVESTMENT ANALYSIS AND VALUATION
February 5, 2023

This Lesson covers the idiosyncrasies of valuation of early-stage companies and the complexity that creates for impact investors. The Bridges Ventures case will introduce the idea of a portfolio of funds and the process for selecting impact investment opportunities on different parameters of impact and financial returns.

A representative of SIIA will visit the class to introduce their activities.

**Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 3 Live Session**
Read in Online Textbook: Chapter 3 - Investment Analysis and Valuation
Read in Case Pack: Bridges Ventures

**Discussion Question Due Before Week 3 Live Session**
The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.

**Assignments to Submit on Brightspace: Complete After Week 3 Live Session but Before Week 4 Live Session**
The Assignment will be posted at the end of the Week 3 session.

**Optional: Complete Before or After Week 3 Live Session (no submission)**
Financial Accounting Online Course: Introductory Section
WEEK 4: ASSET OWNER APPROACHES TO IMPACT INVESTING
February 12, 2024

This Lesson will discuss how asset owners approach the impact investing decision, with an emphasis on the role of philanthropic entities and nonprofits. We will review possible frameworks that foundations use to evaluate whether and how to pursue impact investments, either via their programmatic resources or their endowments.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 4 Live Session
Read in Online Textbook: Chapter 4 - Due Diligence and Investment Structuring
Read in NYU Brightspace:
  - From Blueprint to Scale: The Case for Philanthropy in Impact Investing

Discussion Question Due Before Week 4 Live Session

The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.
WEEK 5: IMPACT MEASUREMENT PART I: REASONS AND METHODOLOGIES
February 26, 2024

This Lesson will review the relevance of impact measurement and management and will introduce various impact measurement techniques.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 5 Live Session

- Watch the IRIS Plus Video Recording (available in Brightspace)
- Textbook Chapter 6 - Post Investment Monitoring, Management and Value Building
- Calculating the Value of Impact Investing (available in your Case Pack)
- Unpacking the Impact in Impact Investing (available in Brightspace)
WEEK 6: IMPACT MEASUREMENT PART II: APPLICATION TO SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS AND INVESTOR COMPENSATION
March 4, 2024

This Lesson builds on the initial review of impact measurement to explore how impact measurement is used in two specific instances: Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) and incentivizing impact fund managers.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 6 Live Session

- Social Finance, Inc. case study (available in your Case Pack)
- Incentives for driving impact in deal and fund structures (available in Brightspace)
- Impact Linked Compensation: Considerations, Design Options and Frameworks [excerpts]
  (available in Brightspace)

Assignments to Submit in Brightspace: Complete After Week 6 Live Session but Before Week 7 Live Session

Memo on tying carried interest compensation to the achievement of impact goals.

Midterm Exam Note:
The take-home midterm exam will be posted in Brightspace, with instructions and timelines, after Session 6.
WEEK 7: MID-SEMESTER REVIEW
March 11, 2024

This Lesson will take stock of what we have covered so far and how it builds toward a holistic understanding of the players and practices of impact investing. Armed with our familiarity with concrete examples, we will paint a picture of the ecosystem of impact investing actors and tools that will be refined in the second half of the course.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 7 Live Session
- Online Textbook Chapter 8 - Investment Alternatives, Challenges and Outlook
- Make sure to be fully caught up on the readings so far

Required Activities: Complete Before Week 7 Live Session
See announcement re memo on tying carried interest compensation to the achievement of impact goals, from Week 6.

Midterm Exam Reminder:
The take-home midterm exam, to be posted in Brightspace, will be discussed during the class session.

Discussion Question Due Before Week 7 Live Session
The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.
WEEK 8: BLENDED FINANCE AND CATALYTIC CAPITAL

March 25, 2024

Given the scarcity of impact capital, how can it be combined with other capital sources to mobilize additional funds and maximize the impact achieved? We will look at blended finance and its role in crowding in non-concessionary capital and at “catalytic capital” as a way of conceptualizing impact-first investments.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 8 Live Session

- Blended Finance Taskforce, “Better Finance, Better World: Consultation Paper of the Blended Finance Taskforce.” (Executive Summary and Chapter 1)

Required Activities: Complete Before Week 8 Live Session

N/A

Discussion Questions: Due Before Week 8 Live Session

The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.
WEEK 9: IMPACT TRANSFORMATION: DRIVING ADDITIONALITY IN MATURE COMPANIES
April 1, 2024

While a lot of early stage impact investing aims to get a good idea financed and off the ground, plenty of impact can be had by transforming existing and mature companies toward more impactful results. This can range from supply chain improvements to decarbonization to quality jobs and even shared ownership models.

We will have a guest practitioner lecture from Chid Liberty, a prominent social entrepreneur and impact investor who spearheaded the concept of the Impact Transformation Fund (ITF), an investment vehicle founded by an independent sponsor to lead a traditional leveraged buyout combined with an Impact Transformation of the company being acquired.

We will discuss the final project in class.

**Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 9 Live Session**

Read in NYU Brightspace:

- Selected materials on Ownership Works [forthcoming]
- Private Equity and LBO approaches to impact [forthcoming]
WEEK 10: ALTERNATIVE DEAL AND FUND STRUCTURES IN IMPACT INVESTING
April 8, 2024

For a lot of the enterprises that are a good fit for impact investors, traditional debt and early-stage equity investments are not a good fit. This Lesson will explore the universe of alternatives, from revenue-based loans to mandatory equity redemption models.

Much as traditional deal structures are not always a fit for impact investing, the traditional closed-end fund also has limitations. This Lesson will explore the nature of those limitations, especially around Venture Capital funds, their timelines and the need to push for exits. We will focus on examples of open-ended funds and holding company structures.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 10 Live Session

Read in NYU Brightspace:

- Aner Ben-Ami, “Don't Go Chasing Unicorns”
- Aner Ben-Ami, “Square Peg, Round Hole”
- Innovations in Financing Structures in Impact Enterprises
  - Browse the entire document
  - Familiarize yourself with the following short case studies, which will be covered in class:
    - Village Capital: Revenue-Based Loan;
    - La Base: Flexible Debt Financing for Worker-Recovered Companies;
    - Adobe Capital: Revenue-Based Mezzanine Debt;
    - Eleos Foundation: Demand Dividend
    - Aqua-Spark: Open-Ended Fund
WEEK 11: INVESTMENT TRANSACTIONS, TERM SHEETS, AND STRUCTURING – IN CLASS EXERCISE

April 15, 2024

This Lesson will cover the process of investment selection and structuring. We will focus on the way a philanthropic funder would make a PRI selection through an in-class exercise. You will play the role of either the investor or the investee; materials will be provided in class.

Building on the case of Acumen / Embrace, we will do a live simulation of a term sheet negotiation as a way of understanding the core terms and the stances of the two parties.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 11 Live Session

- Acumen Fund and Embrace: From the Leading Edge of Social Venture Investing (in your Case Pack)
- Optionally, you may also want to peruse Negotiating an Equity Capital Infusion from Outside Investors
- Watch the Embrace video (available in Brightspace)
- Online Textbook Chapter 5 - The Term Sheet and Definitive Documentation
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, “Policies and Guidelines for Program-Related Investments.”
- Ford Foundation, “FAQ on PRLs.” [forthcoming]
- You may want to take a look at other PRI program guidance from Mission Investors Exchange (this is a repository of over 60 resources).

Discussion Question Due Before Week 11 Live Session

The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.

Required Activities: Complete Before Week 11 Live Session

Using Chapter 7: PE_Fund_Model_20150303.xlsm, as a prospective impact investor, what other information would you like to see on the Output Tab Dashboard?
WEEK 12: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO IMPACT INVESTING: POWER SHIFTING, SYSTEMIC INVESTING, AND INVESTMENT LENSES

April 22, 2024

This Lesson covers the emergence of alternative approaches to impact investing, such as community-centered investment funds, and explores the emerging practice of alternative governance and ownership at the enterprise level to drive structural impact.

We will also review approaches that focus on a lens, such as gender, and those that emphasize the need for a systems-level or systemic change approach.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 12 Live Session


Suggested Reading:


Discussion Question Due Before Week 12 Live Session

The discussion topic will be posted at the end of the preceding class. It is due at 1:00 PM on the day of class.
WEEK 13: POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF IMPACT INVESTMENT
April 29, 2024

This Lesson will focus on policy as a lever and a practitioner’s reflections on the state of the impact investing Sector.

We will be joined via Zoom by Fran Seegull. Fran is President of the U.S. Impact Investing Alliance, which works to increase awareness of impact investing in the U.S., foster deployment of impact capital across asset classes globally, and partner with stakeholders, including government, to build the impact investing ecosystem. She also serves as Executive Director of the Tipping Point Fund on Impact Investing—a donor collaborative focused on growing the field. Previously, Fran was the Chief Investment Officer and Managing Director at ImpactAssets where she headed investment management for The Giving Fund—now a $2B impact investing donor-advised fund.

Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 13 Live Session

Familiarize yourself with the US Impact Investing Alliance, and with Fran's work, by reading the following, all available in Brightspace:

- **Private Capital, Public Good** - The Alliance's 2020 public policy docket organized around community investing and stakeholder capitalism priorities [full document (12 pages)]
- **Impact at Work** - The Alliance report on the durability of corporate impact investing commitments [full report (~15 pages)]
- **Climate. Capital. Communities. Cross-Sector Leaders Call for Transformative and Equitable Climate Action** - Climate Week round-up opinion [two pages]
- **ImpactAlpha Policy Corner: Get ready: ESG critics are coming for ‘S’ issues** - Article on how the anti-ESG movement is evolving to more squarely focus on social issues [three pages]

Required Activity Before Week 13 Live Session

Prepare and submit at least two questions for our speaker on topics related to the field at large, policy interventions, predictions for the future, and the like. **Submit your questions under Assignments in Brightspace by Friday, April 26, at 5:00 PM.**
WEEK 14: HOT DEBATES AND CURRENT CRITIQUES OF IMPACT INVESTING
May 6, 2024

This Lesson will guide you through some of the current debates permeating the impact investing industry, with a focus on those especially relevant to a public service perspective.

**Required Reading/Watching: Complete Before Week 13 Live Session**

- Frameworks for Dialogue and Research about Social Impact Investing [in your Case Pack]

**Optional Activities: Complete Before or After Week 14 Live Session**

Efficient Impact Frontier Simulation
Assignments and Evaluation

- Active Class Participation - 20% (this includes Activities and Discussion Posts)
- Homework - 20%
- Mid-Term - 30%
- Final Project - 30%

Grading

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- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student: unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate, but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in "good standing."
- (C/-/+ Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.
Late Submission Policy for Assignments

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally hectic schedules. Late submissions without approved extensions will be penalized up to 20% per 24-hour period. No extensions will be granted for the assignments relating to the Term Sheet negotiation exercise.

NYU Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the NYU Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, readings, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Technology Support

Students have 24/7 support to NYU’s IT services. Explore the NYU servicelink knowledgebase for troubleshooting and student guides for all NYU-supported tools (like NYU Brightspace, Zoom, etc). Contact askIT@nyu.edu or 1-212-998-3333 (24/7) for technology assistance, or Zoom’s 24/7 technical support.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Student Accessibility website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email (212-998-4980 or mosescsa@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.
NYU’s Wellness Exchange

NYU’s Wellness Exchange has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

Student Resources

Wagner offers many quantitative and writing resources as well as skills workshops. The library offers a variety of data services to students.

Other Class Policies

I will generally answer emails within 36 hours of receipt, but not on weekends.

Note and abide by Wagner’s incomplete policy and course withdrawal policy.