UCONN
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

OPIM 5115
Online Synchronous
Spring 2026

# Supply Chain Finance

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| **Instructor:** | Fasheng Xu | **Time:** | Wednesday, 6:00 - 9:00PM |
| **Email:** | fasheng.xu@uconn.edu | **Location:** | HuskyCT ▷ Webex ▷ Meetings |
| **Office Hour:** | Book your meeting on HuskyCT | | |

## Course Description

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the intersection between supply chain management and financial strategies, with a focus on how financial tools and risk management techniques can optimize supply chain performance. The course emphasizes making informed decisions using relevant analytics tools at the interface of operations, finance, and risk management. Through this course, students will learn how to optimize financial flows within supply chains, manage working capital, leverage financial instruments, and develop risk management strategies to enhance supply chain efficiency and resilience.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the theories and practices of supply chain finance (SCF) and risk management, this course will offer a mixed pool of theory concepts, application tools, simulation games, and case studies. Among the topics explored are working capital management, inventory-based lending, trade credit, factoring and reverse factoring, integrated risk management (operational and financial hedging), global sourcing and supply chain disruptions, fintech innovation, and sustainable supply chain finance.

## Course Objectives

1. Appreciate the language of finance, including key terms, concepts, tools, and applications.
2. Understand the standard market definitions for the techniques of SCF.
3. Understand the evolution of trade finance and the shift to encompass supply chain finance.
4. Recognize the major categories of supply chain risks and disruptions and their causes.
5. Understand how operational and financial risks in global supply chains interact and what combination of operational and financial tools can be used to effectively manage those risks.
6. Develop a comprehensive view of emerging best practices in SCF and risk management.

## Course Materials

HuskyCT serves as your central hub for all course materials and activities. You'll find your lecture content and materials, supplementary learning resources including course-related videos, detailed instructions for

case assignments, and assignment submission portals. Check the site frequently to stay up-to-date with course materials and deadlines.

1. All lecture materials (including PowerPoints, news articles, industry reports, supplemental materials) will be posted on HuskyCT (👉 Lecture Notes Page).
2. A list of HBS cases in coursepack at Harvard Business Publishing website (link on HuskyCT):
   - David Berman
   - Credem: Banking on Cheese
   - Grupo Pao de Acucar
   - Supply Chain Finance at Procter & Gamble
   - The Fall of Greensill and the Future of Supply Chain Finance
   - Supply Risk Management at Unilever: Managing Spend at Risk
3. Optional textbooks: The textbooks listed below are optional and not recommended for purchase, as the lecture notes will provide all the necessary learning materials.
   - Templar, S., Hofmann, E. and Findlay, C., 2020. Financing the End-to-End Supply Chain: A Reference Guide to Supply Chain Finance (Second Edition). Kogan Page Publishers.
   - Trent, R.J., 2016. Supply Chain Financial Management: Best Practices, Tools, and Applications for Improved Performance. J. Ross Publishing, Incorporated.
4. Online simulation game: The Cool Connection (TCC)

## Instruction Methods

This course will employ a team-based approach to instruction, where the instructor and students collaborate to enhance efficiency and learning satisfaction. Class time will be allocated to mini-lectures on key concepts and issues, along with the analysis and discussion of case studies. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and thoroughly analyze the cases prior to class. Active participation in class discussions is essential. The cases, drawn directly from real-world contexts, are detailed and often complex. While we encourage collaboration in study groups to aid understanding, students must present their own analysis and perspectives during class discussions.

Attendance and active engagement are critical. Absences will impact your participation grade. If you are unable to attend a class or are unprepared for any reason, you must notify the instructor before the session begins. Group work is a significant component of this course. Student groups will be randomly assigned, and each group will participate in group activities as outlined in the Course Grading section.

## Course Grading

1. Class Contribution ..... 10%
2. Homework Assignment ..... 10%
3. Final Exam ..... 20%
4. Personal Journal of Learning ..... 10%
5. Case Assignment and Presentation (Group) ..... 30%
6. TCC Simulation (Group) ..... 20%

## Course Policy

1. **AI Policy** (Important!)
   As a course focused on Fintech innovation and emerging technologies, we embrace the use of Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, and similar systems) as a productivity multiplier, provided they are used ethically and critically. AI tools are becoming integral to business decision-making; this course prepares you to use them effectively while developing the judgment needed to evaluate, verify, and improve upon AI outputs. You are responsible for the accuracy and integrity of all submitted work.

   Permitted Uses: AI tools may be used for:

   - Research support: identifying concepts or potential industry examples (you must verify facts and sources independently; do not cite AI as a source; do not include fabricated citations)
   - Writing enhancement: grammar and clarity edits of your own draft content (AI may suggest edits, but may not write substantive analytical sections)
   - Analytical verification: checking calculations, debugging Excel models, verifying formulas (you must be able to explain the logic and reproduce the work)
   - Brainstorming: exploring initial frameworks, generating discussion questions, or outlining possible approaches
   - Presentation support: creating visuals, summaries, or demos so long as the underlying analysis, recommendations, and conclusions remain your team's own and are fully disclosed

   Prohibited Uses: AI tools may **NOT** be used to:

   - Replace your team's core analysis, reasoning, recommendations, or conclusions
   - Write personal journal reflections or graded discussion responses
   - Complete homework questions or assist during exams
   - Fabricate sources, data, quotes, or citations (all claims must be verifiable)

   Required Citation/Disclosure (All Work): AI use must be disclosed for any use beyond minor spelling/-grammar suggestions using this format: "AI Assistance Note: I consulted [Tool Name] to [specific purpose]. I verified the output. The core analysis and conclusions are my own." For group work, specify how AI was used and each member's individual contribution.

   Academic Integrity: Submitting AI-generated content as your own work, or failing to disclose required AI assistance, constitutes plagiarism under UConn's Student Code and will be addressed according to UConn's academic integrity policies. When in doubt, ask yourself: "Could I explain this analysis in detail without notes?" If not, you've relied too heavily on AI. Contact the instructor before submitting if you're uncertain about appropriate AI use.

2. **Class Contribution (10%)**
   Contribution is assessed on consistent, meaningful engagement, not just how often you speak. You can earn full participation credit through multiple channels, including:

   - Asking questions that clarify concepts, assumptions, or methods
   - Answering questions (instructor or peer) with reasoning, not just conclusions
   - Building on others' ideas (e.g., "I agree/disagree because. . . ")
   - Connecting to real-world examples (industry news, work experience, cases)

- Chat contributions (thoughtful questions/answers; not just "yes/no")
- Breakout-room engagement and reporting back key takeaways to the class

How to earn a strong participation grade: aim for 2 meaningful contributions per class (spoken or chat), or 1 contribution plus a high-quality question/response during activities.

Attendance and engagement: Absences will critically impact your Class Contribution grade. For regular class engagement, we will use Kahoot! for interactive review quizzes.

3. **Homework Assignment (10%)**
   There will be two individual homework assignments throughout the semester designed to build essential skills and prepare you for the final exam. All assignments must be submitted online via HuskyCT before the specified deadline (refer to the Homework page on HuskyCT for details). Late submissions will not be accepted. You are allowed two submission attempts for each homework assignment, with your final score determined by the last graded attempt. Solutions will be made available immediately after the due date to support your review and understanding.

4. **Final Exam (20%)**
   The course includes one final exam, conducted in-class and online, lasting 2 hours and accounting for 20% of your final grade. The exam will be open-book and open-note; however, all work must be your own. You are expected to plan accordingly to take the exam on the scheduled date. Rescheduling will only be permitted under exceptional and emergent circumstances, subject to approval by the MBA office. The exam will feature a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions, similar in style to those in the homework assignments.

5. **Personal Journal of Learning (10%)**
   Learning is inherently a personal journey. In this "Personal Journal," you will document key takeaways from the course and reflect on how the main concepts can be applied to real-world contexts. Select three significant concepts you have learned during the course, and dedicate 1-2 pages to each. For each concept: (1) Provide a description in your own words, summarizing the concept as discussed in class. (2) Illustrate its application by offering examples from supply chain processes within your industry or another industry you are familiar with. The completed journal, a 5-6 page report, is due one week after the conclusion of course sessions.

   Your journal entries will be evaluated using the following criteria:

   - Depth of concept understanding (40%): Accurate use of course concepts; clear explanation of key ideas; demonstrates mastery beyond surface-level summary.
   - Quality and relevance of real-world applications (40%): Connects concepts to specific, credible real-world examples (industry news, firm practices, cases, or personal/professional experience); explains why the example matters and how it illustrates the concept.
   - Critical reflection and personal insights (20%): Thoughtful evaluation of assumptions, trade-offs, limitations, and implications; includes your own perspective (what you learned, what changed your mind, what you would do differently, open questions).

6. **Group Presentations on Assigned Cases (30%)**
   Groups will be responsible for preparing brief presentations (up to 15 minutes) addressing specific

questions related to assigned cases. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on the HuskyCT site closer to the respective session dates. Groups should collaborate on their assigned tasks and prepare their presentations for in-class delivery. It is expected that all students will have read the case materials before the session in which the case is discussed. Please ensure that one group member uploads the presentation slides to the Case Assignment page on HuskyCT prior to the class session.

Bonus Points for Effective AI Use in Presentations:

You may earn bonus points for creative, well-documented, and critical uses of AI that enhance the quality of your group presentation (e.g., stronger structure, clearer communication, better scenario analysis, thoughtful tool comparison, or a transparent approach to identifying/mitigating AI hallucinations). Bonus points are awarded at the instructor's discretion and cannot offset academic integrity violations.

Required AI Disclosure Page in Presentations:

Each group presentation submission must include a one-page appendix titled "AI Use Disclosure" describing how AI tools were used. Include:

- Tools used (name/version if known) and which team member(s) used them
- Specific purpose(s) (e.g., verify calculations, generate alternative slide outlines)
- Representative prompts (or a brief prompt summary) and what outputs were incorporated
- Verification steps taken (fact-checking, recalculation, source validation, sensitivity checks)
- What was **not** produced by AI (i.e., what analysis the team developed independently)

7. **Simulation Game: The Cool Connection (20%)**

The Cool Connection (TCC) is a web-based business simulation game that engages participants in strategic decision-making for managing a manufacturing company specializing in personal care products. In teams of four, participants assume functional roles in sales, purchasing, supply chain management, and finance, addressing realistic challenges and dilemmas. The simulation focuses on designing and managing a complex supply chain while balancing operational and financial decisions. The 20% simulation grade comprises two components: team simulation Write-up (15%); (2) GenAI reflection (5%).

GenAI Use in the Simulation (Encouraged):

In keeping with the course's AI Policy (Section 1), students are actively encouraged to use Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot) as decision-support aids during the TCC simulation. The objective is to build practical experience with AI-augmented decision-making—a skill increasingly expected in operations and finance roles.

*Why GenAI in TCC?* The simulation presents the same types of complex, data-rich decisions that professionals face daily: demand forecasting, safety stock optimization, payment term analysis, working capital management, and cross-functional trade-offs. AI tools can help you analyze game data faster, explore "what-if" scenarios before committing, and build deeper intuition about supply chain finance concepts.

*Critical thinking requirements:* AI is a tool, not a replacement for your judgment. You must: (1) Cross-check AI outputs with your own calculations and the TCC Handbook; (2) Recognize that AI does not have knowledge of TCC's specific game rules, constraints, or scoring mechanics unless

you provide that context in your prompts; (3) Make and own your team's final decisions—AI should inform, not dictate; (4) Document what AI suggested versus what you actually decided (this feeds the Reflection below).

*Self-check:* The goal is AI-augmented decision-making, not AI-replaced thinking. If you cannot explain a decision without referencing what AI told you, you have relied too heavily on AI.

Team Simulation Write-up (15%):
After completing the simulation, your team will submit a comprehensive write-up (8–10 pages) detailing the decisions made, the reasoning behind them, and the key lessons learned. This reflection will also connect these lessons to broader challenges in managing complex supply chains and working capital, along with responses to a set of provided questions.

GenAI Reflection (5%):
As part of the team simulation write-up, your group will include a dedicated section (2–3 pages) documenting how the team used GenAI tools during TCC rounds. Include at least two specific examples, each containing:

- The prompt you used: the actual text you entered, including any game data you provided.
- The AI output you received: a summary or excerpt of the AI's response.
- How you evaluated the output: what you verified, questioned, or modified, and why.
- The decision you made: whether you followed, adapted, or rejected the AI's suggestion.

*Grading Rubric:*

| **Criterion** | **Weight** | **What We're Looking For** |
|---|---|---|
| Prompt Quality | 25% | Specific, context-rich prompts tailored to your TCC role and round; demonstrates thoughtful prompt engineering rather than generic questions. |
| Critical Evaluation | 30% | Evidence of verifying, questioning, or improving AI suggestions; identifies where AI was wrong or incomplete; shows independent judgment. |
| Decision Impact | 25% | Clear link between AI-aided analysis and actual game decisions; explains how AI insights influenced (or did not influence) the team's strategy. |
| Reflection Depth | 20% | Thoughtful discussion of what worked, what didn't, and lessons learned; considers how AI-augmented decision-making applies beyond TCC. |

*Important notes:* The reflection is graded on the quality of your critical thinking, not on whether AI improved your performance. A well-documented failure is more valuable than an undocumented success. All standard AI disclosure requirements from the Course AI Policy (Section 1) apply. The GenAI Reflection itself serves as your disclosure for simulation-related AI use. No specific AI tool is required. You may use ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or any other publicly available GenAI tool—or try multiple tools and compare.

8. **Peer Evaluations**

At the end of the semester, you will be required to complete a team peer evaluation. This evaluation provides an opportunity for each team member to individually assess the contributions of

their peers in preparing case analyses and the group presentations. The feedback you provide will highlight any exceptionally strong or weak contributions within your team. Consistently positive or negative evaluations of a specific team member will be considered when determining the overall group assignment grade.

9. **Property Rights of Course Content**
   All materials created for this course—including slides, notes, videos, assignments, exams, and other resources—are intended solely for the use of students enrolled in this course. Any unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of these materials without the prior written consent of the instructor is strictly prohibited.

10. **Tentative Grading Scale**

| **Grade Range** | **Letter Grade** |
|---|---|
| 92.5–100 | A |
| 90–92.5 | A- |
| 87.5–90 | B+ |
| 82.5–87.5 | B |
| 80–82.5 | B- |
| 77.5–80 | C+ |
| 72.5–77.5 | C |
| 70–72.5 | C- |
| 67.5–70 | D+ |
| 62.5–67.5 | D |
| 60–62.5 | D- |
| <60 | F |

## Lecture Schedule Overview

| Lecture | Date | Lecture Topic | Assignment Due |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 01/21 | Introduction to Supply Chain Finance<br>Course Overview | |
| 2 | 01/28 | Supply Chain and Financial Performance<br>Working Capital Management | |
| 3 | 02/04 | Accounting for Inventory and Inventory Valuation<br>Case Study: David Berman | Case Presentation |
| 4 | 02/11 | Inventory-Based Lending<br>Case Study: Credem | Case Presentation |
| 5 | 02/18 | Trade Credit: Theory and Practices<br>Case Study: Grupo Pao de Acucar (GPA) | Case Presentation |
| 6 | 02/25 | The Cool Connection (TCC) Simulation<br>Game Introduction and Kickoff | TCC Handbook |
| 7 | 03/04 | Supply Chain Finance Solutions<br>Standard Definitions and Business Cases | Homework 1 |
| 8 | 03/11 | Payables Finance (Reverse Factoring)<br>Case Study: Procter & Gamble (P&G) | Case Presentation |
| | 03/18 | Spring Break<br>No Class | |
| 9 | 03/25 | Hidden Risks and New Accounting Rules<br>Case Study: Greensill | Case Presentation |
| 10 | 04/01 | TCC Grand Finale<br>Final Competition and Strategy Debrief | |
| 11 | 04/08 | Risk Management and Financial Hedging<br>Case Study: Unilever | Case Presentation |
| 12 | 04/15 | Blockchain Technology and Deep-Tier SCF<br>Sustainable SCF and Carbon Offsets Market | Simulation Write-up |
| 13 | 04/22 | The AI Supply Chain: Operations, Financing, & Risks<br>Final Remarks | Homework 2 |
| 14 | 04/29 | Final Exam<br>End of Class | Online Exam |