

FINC460 - Fall 2008 Final Exam

NAME: _____ SECTION: _____

1. Please do not open this exam until directed to do so.
2. This exam is 3 hours long.
3. Please write your name and section number on the front of this exam, and on any examination books you use.
4. Please show all work required to obtain each answer. Answers without justification will receive no credit.
5. State clearly any assumptions you are making.
6. This is a closed book exam. No books or notes are permitted. Calculators are permitted. Laptops are permitted but you are only allowed to use Excel and only a blank worksheet. You are not allowed to use other spreadsheets with pre-entered formulas.
7. Brevity is strongly encouraged on all questions.
8. The exam is worth 115 points.
9. Relax, and good luck!

Hints:

1. *Think through problems before you start working. Draw pictures.*
2. *If you get stuck on part of a problem, go on to the next part. You may need to use answers from earlier parts of the question to calculate answers to the later parts. If you weren't able to solve the earlier part, assume something.*
3. *Remember, setting up the problem correctly will get you most of the points.*

Short questions (25 points)

Assess the validity of the following statements (True, False or Uncertain) and explain your answers.

1. (5 points) The mean-variance frontier created by N securities will always lie inside the mean-variance frontier created by $N+1$ securities.
2. (5 points) It is not possible for the APT and the CAPM to both hold at the same time.

3. (5 points) Since larger firms have lower betas than small firms, the size anomaly is not an anomaly but is in fact consistent with the CAPM.

4. (5 points) Suppose that firms that increase their leverage, by issuing debt and buying back equity, have higher stock returns over the next 12 months. This is evidence of an inefficient market, since if increasing leverage is good news for the firm it should be immediately reflected in the stock price.

5. (5 points) An asset whose returns are uncertain can never have a negative risk premium, since investors will always prefer holding cash over it.

Question 1 (50 points)

You are managing a fixed income portfolio for your clients. You believe that the following factor model holds for bond *returns*:

$$\begin{aligned}r_t^1 &= 1.1\% + 1 \tilde{f}_{L,t} - 1 \tilde{f}_{S,t} \\r_t^5 &= 2.0\% + 5 \tilde{f}_{L,t} \\r_t^{10} &= 4.0\% + 10 \tilde{f}_{L,t} + 10 \tilde{f}_{S,t},\end{aligned}$$

where r_t^n represents the return on a zero-coupon bond with maturity n , and $\tilde{f}_{i,t}$ represents factor i 's surprise realizations. The two term structure factors, (f_L) and (f_S) are uncorrelated, i.e. $cov(f_L, f_S) = 0$, and $var(f_L) = 0.01$ and $var(f_S) = 0.005$.

1. (5 points) How would you characterize the two factors, (f_L) and (f_S) , based on how bond returns load on these factors?
2. (10 points) Construct two portfolios that exactly mimic the two term structure factors, f_L and f_S . What are the weights on these portfolios?
3. (10 points) Find the risk free rate and the factor risk premia λ_S and λ_L implied by the absence of arbitrage opportunities.
4. (15 points) Find the portfolio of the three zero coupon bonds that has the maximum Sharpe Ratio.
5. (10 points) Assume now that you believe that the Federal Reserve is likely to raise short term interest rates by 100bps but because this move signals a tougher inflation regime, long term rates will actually fall by 100 bps. Thus you believe that the yield curve is likely to flatten with

the level being unaffected. That is, you believe that over the next year \tilde{f}_L , like everyone else, but that $\tilde{f}_S = 1\%$.

- Construct a portfolio that takes advantage of this view but has no level factor risk.
- What is the Sharpe Ratio of this portfolio according to the market?
- What is the Sharpe Ratio on this portfolio according to you?

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Question 2 (40 points)

You are a partner in Roll and Rock Asset Management. Your firm uses the APT as a tool for managing money.

Your team of analysts has determined that there are three factors in the economy: industrial production (IP), inflation (IN), and consumer confidence (CF). Furthermore, your analysts have determined that, over the next year, the risk-premia and standard-deviations of the three factors will be as follows:

| Factor | Risk Premium |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Industrial Production (IP) | 0.06 |
| Inflation (IN) | -0.05 |
| Consumer Confidence (CF) | 0.00 |

In addition, they have determined that the loadings of the S&P 500 index on the three factors are as follows:

$$b_{IP} = 1.7 \quad b_{IN} = 0.0 \quad b_{CF} = 0.5$$

(Assume that the S&P 500 is a well-diversified portfolio.) They have also forecast the covariance matrix for the three factors for the coming year to be:

| | f_{IP} | f_{IN} | f_{CF} |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| f_{IP} | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| f_{IN} | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| f_{CF} | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.04 |

Furthermore, assume that you can borrow or lend at the LIBOR rate of 5%/year.

1. (10 points) Comment on the sign of the risk premia for the three factors. Are they consistent with your intuition?

2. (10 points) What do your analysts expect the return and the standard deviation of the S&P 500 to be over the next year?
3. (10 points) Is the S&P 500 a mean-variance efficient portfolio?
4. (10 points) Assume you were to test the CAPM using the S&P 500 as a proxy for the “market.” Would you be likely to find that the CAPM held? Explain.
 - If your answer to the above is no, please comment on whether, based on your results, the CAPM is truly incorrect.
5. (BONUS 10 points) Assuming the CAPM holds, what are the loadings of the market portfolio on the three factors? (*HINT*: Think carefully about whether you should have an investment of zero in any of these three)

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