West Los Angeles College Syllabus
Finance 8 - Personal Finance and Investments
Fall 2013, Section Number 8045 3 Units (CSU)

Instructor:  Professor Sheldon Burgh
Class Dates:  8/26/2013 – 12/15/2013
Email:  sburghedu@sbcglobal.net

To Contact Me: The BEST and fastest method is to email me at sburghedu@sbcglobal.net rather than using "Private Messages" within the Etudes platform.

Required Material: (Be sure to read my welcome letter or welcome announcement for more detail.)

Textbook: Personal Finance by Rachel Siegel. You may access the textbook website using this link: https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1451011.


Course Description:
This can be a life-changing course, if taken conscientiously and seriously. It should be taken by anyone wishing to be financially secure. This course teaches smart decision-making, using the "time value of money" as a tool to understand the dynamics of everyday personal financial decisions. It develops techniques for financial planning, achieving goals, debt management, saving, spending, insurance and retirement, as well as a cursory exploration of investing in securities and real estate.

Goals and Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

1) Overall goals are threefold:
   a) To develop a financial consciousness
   b) To recognize the importance of financial planning
   c) make smarter financial decisions
   d) To develop the knowledge and confidence to act as one's own personal financial manager

2) SLO's:
   a) Self-awareness: students will be able to apply self-assessment and reflection strategies to their personal finances.
      i) Students will control their financial well-being by creating a comprehensive and effective lifelong personal financial plan.
ii) Students will evaluate their personal financial goals and define methods for achieving them.

iii) Students will avoid costly financial waste by analyzing and controlling their spending patterns and thus enhancing the quality of their lives.

b) Quantitative Reasoning: Students will be able to identify, analyze, and solve problems that are quantitative in nature.

i) Students will analyze financial decisions using the time value of money.

ii) Students will utilize internet and computer tools to help meet objectives and solve problems.

c) Critical Thinking: Students will be able to analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using information, facts and sound reasoning.

i) Students will apply a framework for making smart financial decisions.

ii) Students will identify various strategies for achieving financial success.

COURSE FORMAT

General comment. This course is critically important at all times, but particularly during this current economic downturn. A significant factor adding to the downturn is the lack of financial literacy by the average U.S. citizen. I no longer want you to be a member of this club. I want you to succeed in this course. One way to increase your chance of success is to jump into this material immediately and utilize good time management.

To help ensure your success, please monitor our class website regularly. If you are unfamiliar with the Etudes platform, you will need to familiarize yourself with how it works. Spend time exploring its various nooks and crannies. The following website has a PDF link to the "Etudes Student User Guide" which should prove to be extremely helpful: http://etudesproject.org/student-help.htm

CHAPTER READINGS:

You are expected to read each chapter and complete all tasks that I may assign. Various informational websites/materials may be used for supplemental reading and resources. To earn points for your assignments deadlines must be met. **Late assignments are not accepted.**

ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR DISCUSSIONS:

You will typically receive a weekly assignment or discussion topic. Any deviation from this will depend on my perception of the class workload. **I do not accept late assignments or discussion responses, so do not ask!**

Assignments: Assignments will typically be based on ancillary material including my modules and discussions. They may conclude with a short quiz, generally not more than ten questions, or an exercise.
Semester project: Your semester project will be to develop your own personal financial plan. This is a very important part of the course and thus you will not pass without turning it in.

Discussions: We may have some assigned discussions. If so, I encourage you to participate. Some discussions may include points for your thoughtful responses. Others may prompt me to include questions on the exam relating to my response to the discussion topic. So, if you choose not to participate, please monitor the discussions on a regular basis. Finally, if you participate in most of the discussions with thoughtful comments (not just yes or no responses) and you are within a few points of the next higher letter grade at final time, I will bump you up.

EXAMS:

There will be a total of four exams worth 50 points each. The exams are multiple-choice, based primarily on the textbook, but may include some questions from our discussions and assignments. Since the exams will be open for several days I do not allow any make-ups or late exams.

A word of advice: Because of the capricious nature of computers and the internet, do not begin your exam an hour or so before it closes! Give yourself extra time for glitches in your system or the internet. I will monitor my email and messages up to two hours before the close of each exam. After that it will be too late for me to intervene and you will not be allowed to retake the exam due to computer/internet errors.

FINAL GRADE:

I base my grades on what I call a biased (in your favor) curve. Thus, your final letter grade is determined by accumulating your total points for the term, comparing them against how everyone else did, and comparing everyone against a minimum standard I believe necessary for a "C". If you simply turn in all your assignments, take all the exams, read the textbook and Etudes modules, and participate in class discussions (if any are assigned), it is unlikely you will pull anything less than a "C". So, passing the class should be no problem if you do the class work; however, I have no problem giving an "F" to anyone who deserves it.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Category</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Plan</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment &amp; Discussions</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>435</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SCHOOL POLICIES:

Dropping the class:

It is the YOUR responsibility to drop a class. Drop dates are included in the syllabus schedule. If you stop participating in the class and you do not drop in time you will receive an "F". You can drop by phone, in person, or online. Deadlines are set by the college Admissions office. Please be mindful of the deadlines, which you can find online or in the schedule of classes.
Academic Standards:

The best way to receive the maximum benefit from this class is to read the text, submit your assignments on time and complete your exams by the deadlines.

** TO ACCESS THE SYLLABUS SCHEDULE CLICK THE LINK BELOW **

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**Syllabus ** **Finance 8 - Section 8045**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk #</th>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>TEXT: Personal Finance by Siegel and Yacht: Access online at <a href="https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1451011">https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1451011</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26-Aug</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 1: Personal Financial Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2-Sep</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Basic Ideas of Finance</td>
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<td>Sept 6: Last date to drop with a refund/no fee owed and without a &quot;W&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9-Sep</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Financial Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16-Sep</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Evaluating Choices: Time, Risk, and Value</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>23-Sep</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chapter 5: Financial Plans: Budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin tracking your expenses as of October 1st.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30-Sep</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Taxes and Tax Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7-Oct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 7: Financial Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14-Oct</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Chapter 8: Consumer Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21-Oct</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Buying a Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28-Oct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 10: Personal Risk Management Insurance</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4-Nov</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 11: Personal Risk Management: Retirement And Estate Planning</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11-Nov</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 12: Investing</td>
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<td>Nov 15: Last date to drop - you will receive a &quot;W&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>18-Nov</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chapter 13: Behavioral Finance and</td>
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</tbody>
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Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **  
14  25-Nov  
Chapter 14: The Practice of Investment

Tentative Discussion/Assignment:**  
15  2-Dec  
Chapter 15: Owning Stocks

Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **  
16  9-Dec  
Chapter 17: Investing In Mutual Funds, Commodities, Real Estate & Collectibles

Submit Completed Cash Flow Statement Including Oct-Nov Data: **DUE DEC. 9th**

Exam 4 - (Chptrs 13-15 & 17)  
50

**PLEASE NOTE: The syllabus is subject to change. Unless otherwise or announced please note the following:  
All Discussions/Assignments are due no later than 10 p.m. on Sunday of the week assigned.  
All Submissions and Exams are due by no later than 11 p.m. on Sunday of the week assigned.**

COLOR LEGEND & POINT VALUES:  
points
Required Chapter Readings  
110
Discussion/Assignment: Be sure to check announcements
Submission: Relates to some aspect of your financial plan  
125
Examinations  
200
Total Points:  
435