

(BELOW IS THE LINK TO THE SYLLABUS SCHEDULE. READ IT CAREFULLY.)

**West Los Angeles College Syllabus
Finance 8 - Personal Finance and Investments
Spring 2014, Section Number 8063, 3 Units (CSU)**

Instructor: Professor Sheldon Burgh

Class Dates: 2/10/2014 – 6/6/2014

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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:

Textbook:

Our required textbook is ***Personal Finance***, by Rachel Siegel and Carol Yacht, I have adopted this book for three reasons: it does the job adequately, it is inexpensive and it is the financially responsible thing to do. With the cost of textbooks spiraling out of control, if I did not hunt down a low-cost text for you, I would not be setting a good example based on the principles we will be discussing in this course. You can purchase the text at: <https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1578701>.

Here are your purchase options:

Study Pass - \$24. You have lifetime access to the entire textbook in their **online** reader. You also have access to all of the textbook's study aids (formerly sold separately), which range from audiobook files to flashcards that help reinforce key terms and concepts. If you choose this option and later decide you prefer the Digital All Access Pass, you can simply pay the difference.

The Digital All Access Pass – \$39. Gives you complete digital access. You can access the online book reader and all of the book's study aids; download the e-textbook files for your digital devices such Kindle Fire, iPad, or NOOK HD; download PDF files and print a chapter at a time.

Softcover textbook in black and white – \$59 or softcover textbook in color – \$139.

Wall Street Journal:

Since you are saving so much money on the textbook (the previously adopted text was at least \$155!) you are **required** to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal. As a student, you get a significantly reduced rate of 75% off the retail subscription price. Just \$15 for 15 weeks. It includes the printed version 6 days a week, the WSJ online, and access through smartphones and tablets. To subscribe, please do the following instructions **exactly**. By doing so, the Wall Street Journal can provide me with a list of students who have subscribed, which allows me to give you credit. **The WSJ is a class requirement.**

To subscribe, please log in to the following website: www.wsj.com/studentoffer

1. Fill in the required information
2. In order to for me to verify your purchase **be sure to fill in** the "SCHOOL INFORMATION" section
 - You only need the first 3 digits of WLAC's zip code which is 902
 - Once done, you should see my name in the drop down menu under "Please Select Referring Professor". If for some reason you do not see my name, choose "sburghedu".

If you are already receiving the WSJ, either through you own subscription or through work, please email me at sburghedu@sbcglobal.net with verifying documentation.

Aside from any coursework I may assign using the WSJ, I primarily require it so you can begin to internalize an important personal financial concept, financial consciousness. The WSJ helps to do that. Furthermore, it is a more comprehensive and interesting paper than most people think. (For those of you who have never read the Wall Street Journal, I suggest that you check out the following two websites:

<http://live.wsj.com/video/wsj-101-an-essential-guide-to-the-wsj/4B59555A-4749-4A12-ABD6-2B0F3BFBE96E.html#!4B59555A-4749-4A12-ABD6-2B0F3BFBE96E>

and

<http://live.wsj.com/video/introduction-to-wsjcom-for-students/64583CE9-805B-4143-A9AC-B85F02D713BA.html#!64583CE9-805B-4143-A9AC-B85F02D713BA>.

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 semester, comparing them against how everyone else did, and comparing everyone against a minimum standard I believe necessary for a "C". It is relatively easy to pass this class if you simply turn in **ALL** your assignments, **STUDY** the textbook and Etudes modules, **STUDY** & take all the exams, and participate in class discussions (if any are assigned). I have no problem giving lots of deserving A's and B's; **however**, I also have no problem giving F's to anyone who clearly has not put in the effort.

Grading:

Grade Category

Point Value

Exams	200
Financial Plan	125
Assignment & Discussions	<u>120</u>
TOTAL POINTS	445

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.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with a verified disability who may need authorized accommodation(s) for this class are encouraged to notify me and the Office of Special Services as soon as possible, but at least two weeks before any exam or quiz. All information will remain confidential.

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 ****