

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

**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

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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: (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>.

Wall Street Journal: To subscribe, please log in to the following website
<https://buy.wsj.com/shopandbuy/order/subscribe.jsp?trackCode=aaajb2on>.

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:

<u>Grade Category</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
Exams	200
Financial Plan	125
Assignment & Discussions	<u>110</u>
TOTAL POINTS	435

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 ****

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

Wk #	Week of	TEXT: Personal Finance by Siegel and Yacht: Access online at https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/1451011	Points
1	26-Aug		Chapter 1: Personal Financial Planning
		Assignment: Introductions. (See announcement)	10
2	2-Sep		Chapter 2: Basic Ideas of Finance
		Sept 6: Last date to drop with a refund/no fee owed and without a "W"	
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
3	9-Sep		Chapter 3: Financial Statements
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
		Submit Personal Balance Sheet.	25
4	16-Sep		Chapter 4: Evaluating Choices: Time, Risk, and Value
		Exam 1 - (Chptrs 1-4)	50
5	23-Sep		Chapter 5: Financial Plans: Budgets
		Begin tracking your expenses as of October 1st.	
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
		Submit Prioritized Goals.	25
6	30-Sep		Chapter 6: Taxes and Tax Planning
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
7	7-Oct		Chapter 7: Financial Management
		Submit Projected Cash Flow Statement.	30
8	14-Oct		Chapter 8: Consumer Strategies
		Exam 2 - (Chptrs 5-8)	50
9	21-Oct		Chapter 9: Buying a Home
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
10	28-Oct		Chapter 10: Personal Risk Management Insurance
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
11	4-Nov		Chapter 11: Personal Risk Management: Retirement And Estate Planning
		Tentative Discussion/Assignment: **	10
12	11-Nov		Chapter 12: Investing
		Nov 15: Last date to drop - you will receive a "W"	
		Exam 3 - (Chptrs 9-12)	50
13	18-Nov		Chapter 13: Behavioral Finance and

Tentative Discussion/Assignment: ** 14	25-Nov	10	Market Behavior
Tentative Discussion/Assignment: ** 15	2-Dec	10	Chapter 14: The Practice of Investment
Tentative Discussion/Assignment: ** 16	9-Dec	10	Chapter 15: Owning Stocks
Submit Completed Cash Flow Statement Including Oct-Nov Data: DUE DEC. 9th		45	Chapter 17: Investing In Mutual Funds, Commodities, Real Estate & Collectibles
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			
Discussion/Assignment: Be sure to check announcements		110	
Submission: Relates to some aspect of your financial plan		125	
Examinations		200	
Total Points:		435	