



FIN 2380 A: PERSONAL FINANCE

Fall 2013, TR 8:00 – 9:15am, Pound Hall 301

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Office Hours: T & R 9:30–10:30am or by appointments

I. TEXT: *Personal Financial Planning*. By Gitman and Joehnk, 13th Edition, 2013

II. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

The primary objective of this course is to provide a **non-technical, fundamental, and practical overview** of personal finance issues such as achieving personal financial goals through planning and budgeting, understanding the time value of money, taxes, managing liquidity and risk, asset/liability management, guidelines for making major purchases, protecting your wealth through appropriate insurance planning, building a financial portfolio, and planning for retirement. This course is intended to assist students in answering questions that arise in the everyday process of managing personal finances.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The course can be of equal use to those considering a career where they advise clients, or those interested in these topics for their own financial planning needs. After successfully completing the course, the student should be able to demonstrate the abilities to:

- Identify and quantify individual financial goals
- Describe the financial planning process
- Perform individual financial analysis
- Demonstrate how to manage money, make major purchases and use credit wisely
- Describe personal risk management tools such as home, life, auto, health insurance
- Discuss how to build a financial portfolio and plan effectively for retirement
- Develop students' critical thinking abilities, problem solving abilities, and application of course material to real life situations.
- Generate student leadership skills and ability to help fellow students by requiring students to work in a cooperative learning atmosphere.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COURSE:

The course consists of **lectures, problem solving, discussions, and group projects**. The outline in this syllabus indicates the reading assignment for each class. Students are

strongly encouraged to ask questions and participate in class discussions. You are also strongly encouraged to read the chapters and work homework assignments prior to class.

V. COMMUNICATION REMARKS:

- Announcements regarding course notes, homework, changes to the class schedule, or something important and urgent will be sent out via **VSU Email and BlazeView**. It is your responsibility to check them frequently to get updated.
- Students are strongly recommended to take advantage of my **office hours**! In addition to official office hours, I am also happy to schedule appointments at mutually convenient times. Please feel free to e-mail me or call me.
- You are always welcome to send or talk with me about the **teaching/learning feedback** during the semester.
- Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at VSU. Upon completing the course, please take the time to complete an online **Student Opinion of Instruction** anonymous survey (SOI) through Banner.

VI. GRADING:

The course grade will be based on six parts, including class participation, two exams, and three group projects. The full score for each part is 100 pts. Note that these six parts are subject to different weights as below,

Class Participation	10%
Project I	10%
Project II	10%
Project III	10%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

Grades will be awarded on a solid basis, and the following (guaranteed) scale applies. Grades may be moved upward or downward based on difficulty. Preliminary grade information can be provided after the midterm exam. Please check the following table for the detail scaling.

Grades	A	B	C	D	F
Scores	90	80	70	60	< 60

Class Participation:

To motivate students in this practical course, here are advices for class contributions:

- Please refer to the attendance policy below for more information about the basic requirement of students' class participation.
- Students are encouraged to read the assigned sections of the textbook before attending each class (See the class outline below) and review some of the end-of-chapter questions after the class.
- Some students will do voluntarily or be called to solve problems or share personal/professional experience. It is like special assignments by which you may get

a **bonus**. Any voluntary question or discussion during the class is welcome, and still may result in a **bonus**. Trust yourself!

- You must turn off your cell phone before class begins. If your cell phone is in view or used during class, you will be assessed 10 pts penalty reduction.

Projects:

Group assignments will consist of a variety of different projects that groups will be required to complete prior to the class meeting on the due date. You may have 2 or 3 students for the group capacity. Three projects will be announced quite before the due dates. If a group has any type of a problem with an individual group member, they are requested to talk to me immediately rather than let the problem fester.

Exams:

The specific format of the open-book & note exams will be announced in the class prior to the exams. Workshops will be offered just before each exam, but the attendance is not required. Please check the examination and the corresponding workshop schedules from our class outline below.

Any Exams should not be missed except when circumstances beyond your control. If an exam must be missed (e.g., sickness attested by a medical certificate, jury duty, college athletics competitor etc.), a make-up or prior exam will be scheduled at the instructor's discretion. Verification is required and permission to miss an examination must be secured prior to the scheduled exam time. An unexcused absence will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

Assignment of "W" and "WF" grades:

You are entitled to a grade of "W" if you are doing satisfactory work and withdraw from the course by the official VSU withdrawal date. If you withdraw after that date, you will receive a "WF" even though you were performing satisfactorily in the course at the time of your withdrawal, unless you receive a "hardship withdrawal" from the VSU Dean of Students Office. You will receive a "WF" at the time of withdrawal, regardless of your withdrawal date or whether you receive a "hardship withdrawal," if your classroom performance is unsatisfactory at the time of withdrawal.

VII. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that you will attend class regularly. Students who have missed more than 20% of the classes (6 classes) are ruled to be expelled from the course with a course grade F. Attendance will affect your class participation scores. You have my cell phone number if you need to call me in an emergency.

VIII. ACADEMIC HONESTY:

You will be held to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in connection with examinations and projects. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cases of academic dishonesty of any type will, at minimum, result in an F grade.

IX. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Any student with special needs due to language, physical, or other difficulty that might impede learning is invited to share this information with me. Students not registered with the Special Services Program should contact the Special Services Office (345-2498). To the extent feasible, arrangements will be made to accommodate special needs.

X. STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

The Student Success Center (SSC) is located in Langdale Residence Hall and is available to all students. They provide free professional academic advising, peer tutoring in core curriculum courses, and campus job information. They can be reached by (333-7570) and ssc@valdosta.edu.

XI. OTHER REMARKS:

I reserve my right to send the Student Conduct Incident Report and the Report of Academic Dishonesty when some related actions are observed. I also reserve the right to stop any disrupting or rude actions during the class and the right to put students to sit in my order in some circumstances.

You also should follow the university rules regarding food, drinks and tobacco usage while you are in the classroom. In case you have forgotten or were never told all three (except bottled water) are forbidden in the Pound Hall classrooms.

XII. CLASS OUTLINE:

Note that this course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. Deviation from this plan could be necessary, depending upon our progress. Additional reading, in the form of handouts, might be required.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Memo</u>
Aug 13	Introduction and Overview	Syllabus, Chapter 1	
Aug 15	Financial Planning Process	Chapter 1	
Aug 20	Goal Setting	Chapter 1, 2	
Aug 22	Financial Statements I	Chapter 2	
Aug 27	Financial Statements II	Chapter 2	
Aug 29	Financial Budgets	Chapter 2	
Sep 3	Cash Management	Chapter 4	
Sep 5	Taxes Management	Chapter 3	
Sep 10	Auto & Housing Decisions	Chapter 5	
Sep 12	Auto Insurance I	Chapter 5, Handouts	Project I Due
Sep 17	Auto Insurance II	Chapter 5, 10	
Sep 19	Renter/Homeowner's Insurance I	Chapter 5, 10	
Sep 24	Renter/Homeowner's Insurance II	Chapter 10, Handouts	
Sep 26	Life Insurance I	Chapter 8	

Oct 1	Life Insurance II	Chapter 8	
	Workshop I (9:30-11:00 am)		Pound Hall 230
Oct 3	Midterm Exam (8:00-10:00 am)		Withdrawal Date
Oct 8	Health Insurance I	Chapter 9	
Oct 10	Health Insurance II	Chapter 9	
Oct 15	Other Insurance	Handouts	
Oct 17	Managing Credit	Chapter 6	Project II Due
Oct 22	Managing Loan	Chapter 7	
Oct 24	Investment Planning	Chapter 11	
Oct 29	Investment Risk and Return	Chapter 11, Handouts	
Oct 31	Stocks and Bonds I	Chapter 12	
Nov 5	Stocks and Bonds II	Chapter 12	
Nov 7	Mutual Funds	Chapter 13	
Nov 12	Estate Planning I	Chapter 13, 15	
Nov 14	Estate Planning II	Chapter 15	
Nov 19	Retirement Plan I	Chapter 14	Project III Due
Nov 21	Retirement Plan II	Chapter 14	
	Workshop II (9:30-11:00 am)		Pound Hall 230
Nov 26&28	No classes		Happy Thanksgiving!
Dec 4	Final Exam (10:15 am -12:15 pm)		Done :)

Your Notes: