**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Personal Finance

FNAN 300





Spring 2020 Syllabus

Personal Finance

FNAN 300

Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Derek Horstmeyer

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Course Website: Blackboard

Office Hours: TTh 3:00 – 4:00 and by appointment

**Classroom Meeting Times**

Section 001 – Thursdays 4:30-7:10, Innovation Hall 208

Section 002 – Tuesday/Thursdays 1:30 – 2:45, Lecture Hall 3

**Course Objectives**

The emphasis of this class is on understanding the importance of developing financial goals and how financial decisions affect those goals throughout your lifetime. In addition, you will develop your own financial goals along with a financial plan that will enable you to meet those goals. This course is open to all admitted students to the university.

We will cover personal and family financial planning with an emphasis on financial recordkeeping, planning your spending, tax planning, consumer credit, making buying decisions, purchasing insurance, selecting investments, and retirement and estate planning. But throughout all of these topics, we will give special attention to how to acquire information and make better decisions. My goal is to teach you (and make you practice!) techniques that will be helpful even if the specific information doesn’t pertain to your situation (e.g., you encounter an uncommon financial situation, you spend time living in another country, the much ballyhooed “grand bargain” tax reform happens and the prevailing rules change).

**Learning Goals/Objectives:**

* To understand the importance of developing personal financial goals.
* To understand the basic concepts of the time value of money and how it relates to one’s personal financial goals.
* To understand the implications of taxes on one’s personal financial goals.
* To understand the various financial services available to support one’s financial goals.
* To understand the costs, benefits, and risks of consumer credit alternatives.
* To describe various types of insurance that can be used to reduce the risk of financial loss.
* To develop risk management strategies to protect oneself against possible adverse events (market downturn, unemployment, etc.).
* To understand the costs and benefits of home ownership.
* To develop a personal financial plan. - To understand basic investment principles of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

**Course Materials:**

Required textbook*: Focus on Personal Finance, 5th Edition,* Kapoor, Dlabay, Hughes, McGraw-Hill Irwin, New York, NY, 2016. (Loose-leaf edition). ISBN: 9781259531057

In addition, an online version of the text can be found below, though it is important to note that Connect is **not** needed for the class.

<https://connect.mheducation.com/class/d-horstmeyer-spring-2020>

**Homework/Quizzes**

All homework assigned will follow from the above textbook. All homework will just be checked off for effort and will be utilized to make sure students are keeping up with the class. In addition, there will be eight total quizzes given throughout the class. The three lowest quiz scores will be dropped – this entails that five out of the eight quizzes will count for the final grade.

**Grades**

Your final grade will be based on:

Class Participation/Attendance 20%

Quizzes (keep 5 out of 8) 30%

Homework 20%

Final Project 30%

Grade distribution is based on a standard 10-point scale: 92-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 82-88 = B; 80-82 = B-, etc. All grades are calculated straight from the raw points allotted from each assignment.

Note: There will be extra credit projects available and detailed in class. All extra credit work will be solitary work and capped at 4% of the final grade.

**Appeal of Grading**

If you wish your answer to a question to be regarded, first submit a copy of your answer to the question and a written explanation of why you believe that the grading is incorrect. You must turn in this material within one week after the graded work is returned. In general, the entire exam will be checked for grading errors, and correcting these could either raise or lower the overall score.

**University Office of Disability Services**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct causes failing the course and triggers quite unpleasant university-mandated procedures which result in further sanctions. Faculty Rule 2.11.5 (Faculty Responsibility under the Honor Code) requires alleged misconduct to be reported to the department and the Honor Committee. So follow the GMU honor code at all times and don’t even think about cheating!

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| **School of Business Recommendations for Honor Code Violations**  ***Approved May 2016*** | | |
| **UG-Non Freshman Students (including transfer students)** | | | |
| **Type of Violation** | **First Offense** | **Second Offense** | |
| Plagiarism   1. Failure to cite/attribute sources 2. Representing someone else’s work as the student’s own (e.g., copying and pasting) | An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion | An F in the class; referral to the Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion | |
| Cheating   1. On a minor assignment (e.g., homework, quizzes) 2. Cheating on a major assignment or exam, submitting course work from another course as original work | An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion  An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension | An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion | |
| Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data) | An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension | An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion | |
| Egregious Violation (e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work across multiple courses; lying to an employer about academic performance, false identification or posing as another, in person or online) | An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension | An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and expulsion | |