

**FIN 201, Personal Finance, Spring 2023
Online**

Instructor: Derek Tharp, Ph.D., CFP®, CLU®

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Office Hours: By appointment.

Zoom link: <https://maine.zoom.us/j/4156661379>

Required Material:

We will be using WileyPLUS for homework assignments. WileyPLUS access, which includes an electronic version of the textbook, is required for this course. Instructions for accessing WileyPLUS are provided within Brightspace. If you are happy with an electronic version of the textbook, you do not need to purchase a copy of the textbook. If you wish to purchase a copy of the textbook, further information is provided below:

[Introduction to Personal Finance: Beginning Your Financial Journey](#). ISBN: 9781119479796

Course Description:

The primary emphasis of this course is to teach students how to become more knowledgeable and independent over money matters. Topics such as obtaining financial aid, managing student loans, career and education planning, budgeting, credit cards, stock market investing, real estate, and insurance will be covered. Upon completing the course, students will be on their way to making better money decisions. This course is open to all USM students. When taken by business or accounting majors, this course will give general elective credit.

This is an asynchronous online course. This course will follow the weekly schedule indicated below. The course is quite rigorous and requires a self-motivated, disciplined student to keep up with the material. As we work through the course, lectures and/or practice problem videos will be posted each week. Assignments and exams are all available from the start of the course and you are welcome to work ahead if you would like. Some weeks may have multiple lectures. A list of the URLs for the chapter lectures will be posted on Brightspace.

Course Objective:

The principal objective of this course is to provide an introduction to various personal finance domains, including:

- Career and education planning
- Personal taxation
- Consumer credit
- Saving and investments
- Insurance
- Retirement and estate planning

Assessment:

Exams (40%): Exams will mostly cover material covered since the prior exam. However, you will continually make use of concepts covered in earlier chapters as this course progresses, and therefore you may continue to see certain concepts reemerging throughout this course. We'll have three exams. Your lowest exam score will be dropped. Exams are open book and open resource. However, you may not consult any classmates or other individuals (e.g., tutor, posting questions in online forums, etc.) when completing your exams.

Assignments (40%): An assignment will be posted for each chapter in our textbook. Any students who join the class late will be required to make up past quizzes/assignments. In the event that a student joins late and quiz/assignment solutions have already been provided to students, an alternative quiz/assignment may be required. Your two lowest assignment scores will be dropped. Assignments are completed online via WileyPLUS accessed within Brightspace. All assignments are due at 11:59 PM EST on Sunday of the week they are assigned. You can work ahead on assignments if you would like.

Discussion (10%): We will have a weekly discussion post. Initial replies to discussion prompts are due 11:59 PM ET on Thursdays. Replies to two of your classmates are due at 11:59 PM ET on Sundays.

Final Project (10%): A final project will be worth 10% of your grade. The final project instructions will be posted in Brightspace. All final projects should be submitted via Brightspace.

Number scores for the course roughly translate into letter grades as follows:

A	100-94	C+	79-77
A-	93-90	C	76-74
B+	89-87	C-	73-70
B	86-84	D+	69-67
B-	83-80	D	66-60
		F	59 or less

Any curve, if appropriate, will be applied at the end of the semester based on overall course grades.

Course Evaluations:

At the end of each semester every student has the opportunity to provide constructive feedback on the course. It is important to me that you take the time to let me know your thoughts about the course. I use your feedback to make improvements in the course materials, assignments, and outcomes.

Objective:

This course is structured to be consistent with the mission statement of School of Business: We prepare and inspire current and future leaders, and stimulate economic growth by providing quality learning opportunities, valuable research and professional service, all in partnership with the business community,

Class Schedule and Assignments:

Tentative Course Outline

Note: This tentative schedule is subject to change and MAY change at some point during the semester. Please pay careful attention to announcements in Brightspace.

Week	Date	Assignment	Due
1	1/16 - 1/22	Chapter 1: Interior Finance	11:59 PM ET on 1/22
2	1/23 - 1/29	Chapter 2: TVM and Budgeting	11:59 PM ET on 1/29
3	1/30 - 2/5	Chapter 3: Earnings and Income	11:59 PM ET on 2/5
4	2/6 - 2/12	Chapter 4: Taxes	11:59 PM ET on 2/12
5	2/13 - 2/19	Exam 1	11:59 PM ET on 2/19
6	2/20 - 2/26	Chapter 5: Checking and Credit	11:59 PM ET on 2/26
7	2/27 - 3/5	Chapter 6: Loans and Housing	11:59 PM ET on 3/5
8	3/6 - 3/12	Chapter 7: Savings	11:59 PM ET on 3/12
9	3/13 - 3/19	Spring Break!	- -
10	3/20 - 3/26	Exam 2	11:59 PM ET on 3/26
11	3/27 - 4/2	Chapter 8: Investments	11:59 PM ET on 4/2
12	4/3 - 4/9	Chapter 9: Risk Management	11:59 PM ET on 4/9
13	4/10 - 4/16	Chapter 10: Retirement and Estate	11:59 PM ET on 4/16
14	4/17 - 4/23	Exam 3	11:59 PM ET on 4/23
15	4/24 - 4/30	Final Project	11:59 PM ET on 4/30

Note: First discussion replies are due on Thursdays at 11:59 PM ET with follow up replies due on Sunday at 11:59 PM ET.

Skills

This course is designed to develop many skills that are both demanded by employers and practical for application in your own financial life.

Computer Skills

Throughout the course there will be demonstrations of the use of various computer programs (e.g., Excel, online tools) to solve personal finance problems.

Analytical Skills

This course requires a working knowledge of algebra. Lectures, class discussion, and homework are designed to strengthen and apply analytical skills.

Written Communication Skills

The final project for this course will include a written component. This project is designed to enhance your writing skills, but also to develop your ability to think critically in the context of personal finance.

Critical Thinking Skills

The spectrum of personal finance strategies and considerations extremely broad and the skills needed to analyze these topics are even broader. This course seeks to develop your critical thinking skills in the area of personal finance. You are challenged to apply the topics discussed in class lectures to real world situations.

Ethical Context of Professional Practice

The material contained in this course is presented within a context that ethical behavior in the field of personal finance. Unethical business practices are a common source of business failures and substantial losses for consumers, employees, and other stakeholders. We will not shy away from discussing these situations as they arise.

COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / PLAGIARISM

Everyone associated with the University of Southern Maine is expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity central to the academic function of the University. Any breach of academic integrity represents a serious offense. Each student has a responsibility to know the standards of conduct and expectations of academic integrity that apply to academic tasks. Violations of academic integrity include any actions that attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means. Cheating on an examination, stealing the words or ideas of another (i.e., plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, falsifying the results of one's research, improperly using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records are examples of violations of this policy which are contrary to the academic purposes for which the University exists. Acts that violate academic integrity disrupt the educational process and are not acceptable.

Evidence of a violation of the academic integrity policy will normally result in disciplinary action. A copy of the complete policy may be obtained from the office of Community Standards and Mediation, online at usm.maine.edu/communitystandards/academic-integrity or by calling and requesting a copy at (207) 780-5242.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The university is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and services. If you think you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, you must register with the Disability Services Center. Timely notification is essential. The Disability Services Center can be reached by calling 207-780-4706 or by email dscusm@maine.edu. If you have already received a faculty accommodation letter from the Disability Services Center, please provide me with that information as soon as possible. Please make a private appointment so that we can review your accommodations.

TUTORING AND WRITING ASSISTANCE

Tutoring at USM is for *all* students, not just those who are struggling. Tutoring provides active feedback and practice, and is available for writing, math, and many more subjects. Walk-in tutoring is available at the Glickman Library in Portland, the Gorham Library, and the LAC Writing Center. For best service, we recommend making an appointment at <https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/schedule-tutoring-appointment>. Questions about tutoring should be directed to Naamah Jarnot at 207-780-4554. Interested in becoming a more effective, efficient learner? Check out <https://usm.maine.edu/agile!>

COUNSELING

Counseling is available at USM. The best way to schedule an appointment is to email usm.health@maine.edu. More information is available at <https://usm.maine.edu/uahcs>.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University of Southern Maine is an EEO/AA employer, and does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender expression, national origin,

citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information or veteran's status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Sarah E. Harebo, Director of Equal Opportunity, 101 North Stevens Hall, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469-5754, 207.581.1226, TTY 711 (Maine Relay System).

STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE FOR USM STUDENTS

Absence for Religious Holy Days: The University of Southern Maine respects the religious beliefs of all members of the community, affirms their rights to observe significant religious holy days, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for such observances. If a student's religious observance is in conflict with the academic experience, they should inform their instructor(s) of the class or other school functions that will be affected. It is the student's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements mutually agreed upon with the instructor(s).

TITLE IX STATEMENT

The University of Southern Maine is committed to making our campuses safer places for students. Because of this commitment, and our federal obligations, faculty and other employees are considered mandated reporters when it comes to experiences of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking). Disclosures of interpersonal violence must be passed along to the University's Deputy Title IX Coordinator who can help provide support and academic remedies for students who have been impacted. More information can be found online at <http://usm.maine.edu/campus-safety-project> or by contacting Sarah E. Holmes at sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu or 207-780-5767.

If students want to speak with someone confidentially, the following resources are available on and off campus: University Counseling Services (207-780-4050); 24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-871-7741); 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline (1-866-834-4357).