PERSONAL FINANCE SYLLABUS

Name of Course: Personal Finance

Number of Course: FIN 369, Section 001

Semester: Fall 2019

Financial Planning: This course is one of the six courses (3 hours each) required to obtain a minor in Financial Planning for those not majoring in Finance; and is a required course for a Financial Planning Emphasis for those students majoring in Finance. It is also one of the six courses that must be taken in order to take the CFP exam. Topics covered during this course are shown below. When a number appears to the side of a topic it corresponds to the Principal Topics that are identified by the CFP Board to serve as a curricular framework that the CFP Board accepts for continuing education. In addition, attached to this syllabus is the list of Student-Centered Learning Objectives based on CFP Board Principal Topics.

Instructor: Dr. Banker Phares

E-Mail of Instructor: pharesb@sfasu.edu

Phone Number of Instructor: 936.234.9196 or 936.468.1783

Office: Room 169, SFA College of Business Building

Office Hours: 9 – 12 Monday thru Thursday. Instructor is available after each class to discuss topics and answer questions.

Class Meeting time and Place: The first class is Monday, August 27, 2019. Class meeting time is 12:30 – 1:45 p.m. Room 369 of the SFA McKee Business Building.

Prerequisites for Course: None.

Required Text and Materials: Personal Finance, To be assigned.

Program Learning Outcomes:

Program learning outcomes define the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of an academic program. These learning outcomes are regularly assessed to determine student learning and to evaluate overall program effectiveness. You may
access the program learning outcomes for your major and particular courses at [http://www.sfasu.edu/cob/ug-plo.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/cob/ug-plo.asp).

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

In general, SLOs in a course that support the PLOs are specific and include the exact knowledge, skill or behavior taught in the course that supports the more global PLOs.

For additional information on meaningful and measurable learning outcomes see the assessment resource page: [http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp).

Bankruptcies and debt collections have dramatically increased in recent years. In large part, this is due to inadequate financial planning by individuals and businesses. To prepare the student to deal with a constantly changing economy by having the student: 1) Learn the importance, and have a basic understanding of, planning techniques; 2) Develop and identify analytical skills, by lecture and class discussion to facilitate effective financial decision-making, including informed decisions regarding budgets, investment, insurance, retirement, and estate planning. Upon course completion, the student should have the ability to have a working knowledge of the materials covered in the course, thereby providing the student with the ability to make – and, if necessary access, sources – for making appropriate financial decisions, both personal and business.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author
into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Withheld Grade Policy

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Course Requirements:

1) **Exams for Course**: Three, each of equal value. The Final will be one of the three tests and will have a value equal to a test. There will be no quizzes or homework (unless needed to make up for an unexcused absence). There will be an advance reading assignment each week. A legitimate excuse must be presented in order to make-up a missed exam. If a student has a D or lower average for the first two tests, the student will be required to take a comprehensive final.

2) **Grading Policy**: For the most part, the tests will primarily require short specific answers; i.e. objective. Tests will be announced two weeks in advance.

3) **Required Attendance for Course**: Three absences from each class meeting is allowed without excuse. Other absences require acceptable excuse. If absent without acceptable excuse, additional course work may be assigned.

Topics covered during this course include:
FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS

Facing Financial Challenges

The Personal Financial Planning Process
Step 1: Evaluate Your Financial Health
Step 2: Define Your Financial Goals
Step 3: Develop a Plan of Action
Step 4: Implement Your Plan
Step 5: Review Your Progress, Reevaluate, and Revise Your Plan

Establishing Your Financial Goals
The Life Cycle of Financial Planning

Thinking About Your Career
Choosing a Major and a Career
Getting a Job
Being Successful in Your Career

What Determines Your Income?
Keeping a Perspective – Money Isn’t Everything

Ten Principles of Personal Finance
Principle 1: The Best Protection is Knowledge
Principle 2: Nothing Happens Without a Plan
Principle 3: The Time Value of Money
Principle 4: Taxes Affect Personal Finance Decisions
Principle 5: Stuff Happens, or the Importance of Liquidity
Principle 6: Waste Not, Want Not – Smart Spending Matters
Principle 7: Protect Yourself against Major Catastrophes
Principle 8: Risk and Return Go Hand in Hand
Principle 9: Mind Games and Your Money
Principle 10: Just Do It!

MEASURING YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

Using a Balance Sheet to Measure Your Wealth
Assets: What You Own
Liabilities: What You Owe
Net Worth: A Measure of Your Wealth
Sample Balance Sheet for Larry and Louise Tate
Using an Income Statement to Trace Your Money

Income: Where Your Money Comes From
Expenditures: Where Your Money Goes
Preparing an Income Statement: Louise and Larry Tate

Using Ratios: Financial Thermometers
Question 1: Do I Have Enough Liquidity to Meet Emergencies?
Question 2: Can I Meet My Debt Obligations?
Question 3: Am I Saving as Much as I Think I Am?

Record Keeping

Putting It All Together: Budgeting
Developing a Cash Budget
Implementing the Cash Budget

Hiring a Professional
What Planners Do
Choosing a Professional Planner

UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATING THE TIME VALUE OF MONEY

Compound Interest and Future Values
How Compound Interest Works
The Future-Value Interest Factor
The Rule of 72
Compound Interest with Non annual Periods

Using an Online or Handheld Financial Calculator
Compounding and the Power of Time
The Power of Time

The Importance of the Interest Rate

Present Value—What's It Worth in Today's Dollars

Annuities
Compound Annuities
Present Value of an Annuity

Amortized Loans
TAX PLANNING AND STRATEGIES The Federal Income Tax Structure

Marginal Versus Average Rates  
Effective Marginal Tax Rate  
Capital Gains and Dividend Income  
Filing Status  
Cost of Living Increases in Tax Brackets, Exemptions, and Deductions  
Paying Your Income Taxes

Other Taxes  
Other Income-Based Taxes  
Non-Income-Based Taxes  
Calculating Your Taxes  
Step 1: Determining Gross or Total Income  
Step 2: Calculating Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)  
Step 3: Subtracting Deductions  
Step 4: Claiming Your Exemptions  
Step 5: Calculating Your Taxable Income, and from That, Calculating Your Base Income Tax  
Step 6: Subtract Your Credits and Determine Your Taxes Due

Other Filing Considerations  
Choosing a Tax Form  
Electronic Filing  
Filing Late and Amended Returns  
Being Audited  
Help in Preparing Taxes

Model Taxpayers: The Taylors File Their 2004 Return  
Determining Gross or Total Income (line 22)  
Subtracting Adjustments to Gross or Total Income and Calculating Adjusted Gross Income (line 37)  
Subtracting Deductions (line 39)  
Claiming Exemptions (line 42)  
Calculating Total Tax (line 63)

Tax Strategies to Lower Your Taxes  
Maximize Deductions  
Look to Capital Gains and Dividend Income  
Shift Income to Family Members in Lower Tax Brackets  
Receive Tax-Exempt Income  
Defer Taxes to the Future

CASH/LIQUID ASSET MANAGEMENT (WEDNESDAY) B.10  

Managing Liquid Assets
Automating Savings: Pay Yourself First

Financial Institutions
"Banks" or Deposit-Type Financial Institutions
Non-deposit-Type Financial Institutions
Online Banking
What to Look for in a Financial Institution

Cash Management Alternatives
Checking Accounts
Savings Accounts
Money Market Deposit Account
Certificates of Deposit
Money Market Mutual Funds
Asset Management Accounts
U.S. Treasury Bills, or T-Bills
U.S. Savings Bonds

Comparing Cash Management Alternatives
Comparable Interest Rates
Tax Considerations
Safety

Establishing and Using a Checking Account
Choosing a Financial Institution
The Cost Factor
Convenience Factor
Consideration Factor
Balancing Your Checking Account
Other Types of Checks

Electronic Funds Transfers
Automated Teller Machines
Debit Cards
Smart Cards
Stored Value Cards—Another Way to Carry Cash
Fixing Mistakes—Theirs, Not Yours

USING CREDIT CARDS

A First Look at Credit Cards and Open Credit
Interest Rates
Calculating the Balance Owed
Buying Money: The Cash Advance
Grace Period
Annual Fee
Additional Fees

The Pros and Cons of Credit Cards
The Advantages of Credit Cards
The Drawbacks of Credit Cards

Choosing a Source of Open Credit
Bank Credit Cards
Bank Card Variations
Travel and Entertainment Cards
Single-Purpose Cards
Traditional Charge Account
The Choice: What's Best for You

Getting a Credit Card
Credit Evaluation: The Five Cs of Credit
The Key To Getting Credit: Your Credit Score
Determining Creditworthiness
Your Credit Score
How Your Credit Score Is Computed
What’s in Your Credit Report
The Factors that Determine Your Credit Score
Monitoring Your Credit Score
Consumer Credit Rights
The Credit Bureau and Your Rights
If Your Credit Card Application Is Rejected
Resolving Billing Errors
Identity Theft
How Do You Know If You're a Victim of Identity Theft?

Controlling and Managing Your Credit Cards and Open Credit
Reducing Your Balance
Protecting Against Fraud
Trouble Signs in Credit Card Spending
If You Can’t Pay Your Credit Card Bills

USING CONSUMER LOANS

Consumer Loans—Your Choices
First Decision: Single-Payment Versus Installment Loans
Second Decision: Secured Versus Unsecured Loans
Third Decision: Variable-Rate Versus Fixed-Rate Loans
Fourth Decision: The Loan’s Maturity—Shorter Versus Longer Term Loans

**Understanding the Terms of the Loan: The Loan Contract**
- Insurance Agreement Clause
- Acceleration Clause
- Deficiency Payments Clause
- Recourse Clause

**Special Types of Consumer Loans**
- Home Equity Loans
- Student Loans
- Automobile Loans

**Cost and Early Payment of Consumer Loans**
- Cost of Single-Payment Loans
- Payday Loans—A Dangerous Kind of Single-Payment Loans
- Cost of Installment Loans
- Early Payment of an Add-On Loan

**Getting the Best Rate on Your Consumer Loans**
- Inexpensive Sources
- More Expensive Sources
- Most Expensive Sources
- Keys to Getting the Best Rate
- Should You Borrow or Pay Cash?

**Controlling Your Use of Debt**
- Debt Limit Ratio
- Debt Resolution Rule
- Controlling Consumer Debt

**What To Do If You Can't Pay Your Bills**
- Chapter 13: The Wage Earner's Plan
- Chapter 7: Straight Bankruptcy

**HOME AND AUTOMOBILE DECISION**

**Smart Buying**
- Step 1: Differentiate Want from Need
- Step 2: Do Your Homework
- Step 3: Make Your Purchase
- Step 4: Maintain Your Purchase
Smart Buying in Action: Buying a Vehicle
Step 1: Differentiate Want from Need
Step 2: Do Your Homework
Step 3: Make Your Purchase
Step 4: Maintain Your Purchase

Smart Buying in Action: Housing
Your Housing Options
Step 1: Differentiate Want from Need
Step 2: Do Your Homework
Renting Versus Buying
Determining What You Can Afford
Financing the Purchase—The Mortgage
Conventional and Government-Backed Mortgages
Fixed-Rate Mortgages
Adjustable-Rate Mortgages
Adjustable-Rate Versus Fixed-Rate Mortgages
Specialty Mortgage Options
A Word of Warning: Beware of Subprime Mortgages and Predatory Lending

Mortgage Decisions: Length or Term of the Loan
Coming Up with the Down Payment
Prequalifying
Step 3: Make Your Purchase
Step 4: Maintain Your Purchase

LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE

The Importance of Insurance
Why are Health and Life Insurance So Important?
Why is it so Costly?
What Do These High Costs Mean for You?
What About Those Who Have No Health Insurance?

Determining Your Life Insurance Needs
Do You Need Life Insurance?
How Much Life Insurance Do You Need?

Major Types of Life Insurance
Term Insurance and Its Features
Cash-Value Insurance and Its Features
Term Versus Cash-Value Life Insurance
Fine-Tuning Your Policy: Contract Clauses and Riders
Contract Clauses
Riders
Settlement or Payout Options
Buying Life Insurance
Selecting an Agent  D.31
Comparing Costs
Making a Purchase: The Net or an Advisor

Health Insurance
Basic Health Insurance
Dental and Eye Insurance
Dread Disease and Accident Insurance

Basic Health Care Choices
Private Health Care Plans
Government-Sponsored Health Care Plans

Controlling Health Care Costs
Flexible Spending Accounts
Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)
COBRA and Changing Jobs
Choosing No Coverage—or "Opting Out"

Finding the Perfect Plan
Important Provisions in Health Insurance Policies

Disability Insurance  D.25
Sources of Disability Insurance
How Much Disability Coverage Should You Have?
Disability Features That Make Sense

Long-Term Care Insurance  D.26

PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE  D.32

Protecting Your Home
Packaged Policies: HO's
Supplemental Coverage

Your Insurance Needs
Coinsurance and the "80-Percent Rule"
The Bottom Line
Keeping Your Costs Down—Insurance Credit Scoring
Keeping Your Costs Down—Discounts and Savings

Making Your Coverage Work

Automobile Insurance
Personal Automobile Policy
No-Fault Insurance
Buying Automobile Insurance
Filing a Claim

INVESTMENT BASICS

Before You Invest
Investing Versus Speculating
Setting Investment Goals
Financial Reality Check
Starting Your Investment Program
Fitting Taxes into Investing
Investment Choices
The Returns from Investing

Market Interest Rates
Nominal and Real Rates of Return
Historical Interest Rates
How Interest Rates Affect Returns on Other Investments

A Look at Risk-Return Trade-Offs
Historical Levels of Risk and Return
Sources of Risk in the Risk-Return Trade-Off
Diversification
Understanding Your Tolerance for Risk

The Time Dimension of Investing and Asset Allocation
Meeting Your Investment Goals and the Time Dimension of Risk
Asset Allocation

What You Should Know About Efficient Markets
Beating the Market
Thinking Back to Principle 9: Mind Games and Your Money

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The Ingredients of Success

The Financial Life Cycle

Women and Personal Finance

Financial Life Events
Life Event 1: Getting Started
Life Event 2: Marriage
Life Event 3: Buying a Home
Life Event 4: Having a Child
Life Event 5: Inheritances, Bonuses, or Unexpected Money
Life Event 6: A Major Illness
Life Event 7: Caring for An Elderly Parent
Life Event 8: Retiring
Life Event 9: Death of a Spouse
Life Event 10: Divorce

The Keys to Success: A Dozen Decisions
Number 1: Become Knowledgeable
Number 2: Don’t Procrastinate
Number 3: Live Below Your Means
Number 4: Realize You Aren’t Indestructible
Number 5: Protect Your Stuff (and Look Out for Lawyers)
Number 6: Embrace the "B" Word (Budget)
Number 7: Reinvent and Upgrade Your Skills
Number 8: Hide Your Plastic
Number 9: Stocks Are Risky, but Not as Risky as Not Investing in Them
Number 10: Exploit Tax-Favored Retirement Plans to the Fullest
Number 11: Plan for the Number of Children You Want
Number 12: Stay Married

Tying Things Together: Debt and the Real World

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