



PERSONAL FINANCE ECONOMICS SYLLABUS

Course Name: Personal Finance Economics
Instructor: Susan Doty
Office Location: CAS #141
Class Format: 7-week Online Asynchronous

Course Number: ECON 3303 (4350-060)
Contact: sdoty@uttyler.edu
Office Hours: T/Th 9:15-10:45
Zoom Meetings: By Appointment

Course Description:

Personal Finance Economics is a course for students of all majors who want to deepen their understanding of the economic foundations of personal finance as it affects the individual and family, firms and industries, and societies around the globe. The course covers economic decision-making, investing in yourself and earning income, spending and saving, credit and debt, insuring and protecting, financial markets and investing, and giving back with service, charity, and philanthropy. Taught in a 7-week online format, the course makes extensive use of online simulations, gamification, and interactive faculty/student and student/student virtual asynchronous communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The overarching objective for this course is that students will make deliberate informed financial decisions and will be able to communicate the rationale for doing so. Each of the seven modules has its own set of learning objectives, which are clearly communicated, reinforced, and assessed each week.

Course Organization:

The weekly modules that must be completed on time and in sequence. Modules open on Monday mornings and close on Sunday evenings. Each weekly module follows the same format with an overview and four topics. Each topic has a reading, a video, and an activity. Each week, students complete topic reviews and an end-of-module (EOM) assessment, due on the respective Sunday evenings. The EOM assessment options are activity videos, written memos, and tests. Students choose their one type of EOM each week. Two of each type must be completed over the course.

Course Materials:

All readings, videos, and activities will be provided in Canvas *at no additional financial cost to you*. Learning materials have been selected from a wide range of academic, practitioner, government, and business economics publication sources. In addition, UT Tyler offers a *NY Times* subscription and the full version of Microsoft Office for students.

Course Tools:

PC with Windows operating system, reliable internet, and the full *MS Office suite* installed. Additionally, you must have audio, video, and screen capture recording capabilities.

Grading Policy:

Final grades are based on the sum of the six highest scoring modules with the requirement that students complete two activity videos, two written memos, and two tests over the course of the semester. "A" grades require 585+ earned points. "B" grades require 520-584 earned points. "C" grades require 455-519 earned points. "D" grades require 390-454 earned points. Be aware that although technically a passing grade, a "D" may not be accepted by many programs. Less than 390 earned points and/or fewer than two activity videos, two written memos, or two tests will result in a failing grade of "F" and no course credit will be awarded. The **make-up policy** for all students and all situations is the built-in option to drop the lowest scoring module.

Personal Finance Economics Course Schedule

| Module Dates | Topic Content | Assignments & Grading |
|---|--|---|
| Weekly module pages open at 8:00am on their respective Mondays | 4 Topics/Module Each with Reading, Video, Activity | Weekly assignments due at 11:59pm on their respective Sundays* |
| Week One 1/12/2026 – 1/18/2026 Economic Way of Thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Way of Thinking • Personal Finance Education • Personal Finance Ecosystem • Course Resources | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video - 40 |
| Week Two 1/19/2026 – 1/25/2026 Investing in Yourself & Earning Income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in Yourself • Marginal Decision-Making • Behavioral Economics • Earning Income | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Week Three 1/26/2026 – 2/1/2026 Spending & Saving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending • Saving • Budgeting • Financial Management | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Week Four 2/2/2026 – 2/8/2026 Credit & Debt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit Basics • Credit Scores • Interest Rates • Debt | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Week Five 2/9/2026 – 2/15/2026 Insuring & Protecting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of Insurance • Types of Insurance • Protecting Yourself Online • Cybersecurity | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Week Six 2/16/2026 – 2/22/2026 Financial Markets & Investing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Markets • Types of Investments • Tax Implications • Evaluating Risk & Return | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Week Seven 2/23/2026 – 2/28/2026 Giving Back | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism • Microcredit • Philanthropic Entrepreneurism • Giving Back | 100 points Discussion Board -10 Topic Reviews - 50 Video or Memo or Test - 40 |
| Grades from Best Six Modules 2 Videos / 2 Memos / 2 Tests – Requirement for End-of-Module Assessments 585+ points – A 520-584 points – B 455-519 – C 390-454 – D <390 – F | | |

| <i>Personal Finance Economics Course Materials</i> <i>Provided in Canvas to students at no additional financial cost</i> | | |
|---|--|---|
| Module Readings | Module Videos | Module Activities |
| M1R1. Course guides M1R2. The cost of financial illiteracy M1R3. The importance of financial literacy MR4. An economist studied personal finance tips | M1V1. Be successful in this course M1V2. An economist explains why New Years resolutions fail M1V3. Freakonomics summary M1V4. Personal finance ecosystem | M1A1. Introductory video M1A2. Economic thinking in households, firms, & government M1A3. Aging booth M1A4. NEFE life values self-assessment |
| M2R1. Getting to the core M2R2. Marginal analysis M2R3. Behavioral economics and your money habits M2R4. Salary & benefits | M2V1. There's no such thing as soft skills M2V2. Why we want instant gratification M2V3. Decision matrix analysis M2V4. Finding work you love | M2A1. Invest in yourself now M2A2. Create a marshmallow test M2A3. Confirmation bias & bounded rationality M2A4. Occupational Outlook Handbook |
| M3R1. Consumer spending & saving M3R2. Primer on interest rates M3R3. Budgeting 101 M3R4. Financial Infidelity | M3V1. Don't buy stuff you can't afford M3V2. Saving for tomorrow, tomorrow M3V3. One life changing course M3V4. Spent | M3A1. How much house can I afford? M3A2. Soar to savings M3A3. Financial well-being questionnaire M3A4. Playspent challenge |
| M4R1. Economic impact of credit M4R2. Understanding FICO® scores M4R3. What are interest rates? M4R4. Employers check credit | M4V1. Loans: mistakes & best practices M4V2. What is a FICO® score? M4V3. APR explained M4V4. Disrupting the payday industry | M4A1. Case study and debt calculator M4A2. Searching the CFPB website M4A3. Get your credit score M4A4. Shady Sam |
| M5R1. Insurance 101 M5R2. How insurance works M5R3. Health, disability, life M5R4. Personal finance isn't simple | M5V1. Tools to manage risk M5V2. Property & casualty M5V3. Financial plan fundamentals M5V4. A vision for cybersecurity resilience | M5A1. Bummer! M5A2. Insurance simulation M5A3. How much life insurance? M5A4. Common scams & crimes |
| M6R1. What is a financial Institution? M6R2. Save and invest M6R3. Investing pre- and post-tax M6R4. Risk & return trade-off | M6V1. Understanding capital markets M6V2. Investing for beginners M6V3. Investing in both bull and bear markets M6V4. Financial education: risk & return | M6A1. Financial football M6A2. Financial market jeopardy M6A3. InvestQuest M6A4. Asset allocation activity |
| M7R1. Philanthropy, volunteerism & charity M7R2. Importance of giving back M7R3. It's getting harder to distinguish philanthropy and business M7R4. Financial well-being and what it means to help | M7V1. The power of giving back M7V2. Pennies a day M7V3. The audacious project M7V4. Philanthropy | M7A1. Volunteerism activity M7A2. What kind of philanthropist? M7A3. Meet the grantees M7A4. Who do you want to help? |

Personal Finance Economics Learning Objectives by Module

After successfully completing this module, students will be able to:

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|---|--|
| The Economic Way of Thinking & Financial Wellness | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulate the course organization and what it takes to be successful in it. 2. Identify the resources made available to you to be successful in the course. 3. Describe the benefit of personal finance education and the costs of financial illiteracy. 4. Justify the importance of financial literacy in the context of your own personal, family, community, and professional life. 5. Demonstrate the <i>Economic Way of Thinking</i> by applying it to personal, business, and societal decisions. |
| Investing in Yourself & Earning Income | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect the investment in education and skills to earning income. 2. Evaluate education as a return on investment. 3. Distinguish the role of both "hard" skills and "soft" skills in a professional environment. 4. Determine, using marginal analysis, why decisions are not all or none, and why we do not care about sunk costs. 5. Evaluate the role of incentives in rational decision-making and provide examples of irrational behavior. |
| Spending & Saving | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the differences between pre- and post-tax income. 2. Prioritize the several types of spending with an after-tax income. 3. Discuss the benefits of paying yourself first. 4. Compare several types of budgeting practices under the umbrella of commitment contracts. 5. Distinguish between emergency savings, saving for a goal, and saving for retirement |
| Credit & Debt | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the costs and benefits of credit. 2. Analyze the effects of a credit rating on the availability and price of credit. 3. Compare different types of credit and weigh the costs and benefits of each. 4. Articulate why employers care about your credit. 5. Explain the many ways to build or repair credit. |
| Protecting & Insuring | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect the concepts of risk and return to insuring and protecting. 2. Compare different types of property and casualty insurance and weigh the costs and benefits of each. 3. Compare distinct types of life, health, and disability insurance and weigh the costs and benefits of each. 4. Explain the pros and cons of employer cafeteria plans. 5. Discuss protection, beyond insurance, in the context of cybersecurity, scams and schemes, identity theft, and reputation. |
| Financial Markets & Investing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revisit the role of compound interest to compare saving and investing. 2. Manipulate the variables of principal, rate, and time to demonstrate the effects of compound interest on investment. 3. Evaluate the costs and benefits of investing in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. 4. Analyze risk and reward in the context of your personal tolerance levels and goals. 5. Identify the roles of financial institutions and markets domestically and globally. |
| Giving Back: Volunteerism, Charity, & Philanthropy | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distinguish between service, charity, and philanthropy. 2. Articulate how service, charity, and philanthropy are each examples of giving back. 3. Explain the personal, business, and community benefits of giving back. 4. Compute the monetary value of volunteerism. 5. Provide multiple examples of philanthropic entrepreneurship. |



Required University Supplement to Course Syllabus Hyperlinks in Canvas

Student Resources:

- UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource (SAR) Office (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- UT Tyler Writing Center
- The Mathematics Learning Center
- UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center
- UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction
- Upswing (24/7 online tutoring) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas
- Robert Muntz Library and Library Liaison 08/2024
- Canvas 101 (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- The Career Success Center
- UT Tyler Testing Center
- Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- UT Tyler Counseling Center (available to all students)
- MySSP App (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- Student Assistance and Advocacy Center
- Military and Veterans Success Center (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry
- UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships
- UT Tyler Student Business Services (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- UT Tyler Registrar's Office
- Office of International Programs
- Title IX Reporting
- Patriots Engage (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information

- Withdrawing from Class Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the Withdrawal Portal. Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions on using the Withdrawal portal..



University Policies and Information (continued)

- Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. CAUTION #3: All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the Military and Veterans Success Center.

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average. The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.



University Policies and Information (continued)

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the Registrar's Form Library.

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following: • Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times. • Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course. • Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.



University Policies and Information (continued)

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and Discipline policy in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy 5.2.3. The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for University Events or Activities as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison.

NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form.

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>