The University of Texas at Tyler

College of Business & Technology

FINA 3315: Personal Finance

Spring 2020

Section 061 (Full Distance Learning/Online) Course Number 21103

Instructor: Dr. Chen (Ken) Wu

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:15 - 9AM and except holidays or posted otherwise on Canvas. Please email for appointments outside these posted hours.

**Communications with the Instructor**

I check email often on weekdays and will frequently be in my office. If you want to meet me for any reason outside of office hours shown above, please email for an appointment. For all email communications, you can expect a response within 24 hours except for those sent on holidays or between 5 pm on Friday and midnight on Sunday, when you can expect a response within 48 hours.

Email policy: As mandated by the University, I will only send emails to your Patriot email accounts. Emails from non-Patriot email accounts will ***NOT*** be answered

**Course Objective**

This is a survey course in personal finance and is designed to provide students with a foundation in personal finance and it assumes no prior knowledge of finance. Accordingly, the course will begin with a general overview of financial planning and budgeting and then go into depth on topics including cash management, retirement planning, investments in stocks and bonds, buying a house or renting an apartment, insurance, and income tax matters.

Upon completion of the course you should be able to:

• Perform personal budgeting and cash management.

• Understand process and cost of purchasing a house and renting an apartment.

• Explain purpose and types of insurance.

• Explain the basics of investments.

• Explain the basics of retirement planning.

• Explain the basics of tax planning.

**Course Structure**

The course begins with a general overview of personal financial planning and how to manage cash. Then, it introduces investments in stocks, bonds and mutual funds. Next, it examines the decision to purchase a house or rent an apartment and how to purchase the right kind and amount of insurance. Finally, it reveals some strategies to manage your income tax situation. To achieve these goals, students will be required to:

1. Watch ARC module introduction videos and read Powerpoint course slides and textbook chapters.

2. Visit course Canvas regularly.

3. Take every module quiz.

**Required Textbook and Internet Access**

• The required textbook is Get a Financial Life: Personal Finance in Your Twenties and Thirties by Beth Kobliner, 4th Edition (2017), Simon and Schuster, ISBN 978-1476782386.

***NOTE***: **Some of the figures in the textbook, especially figures involving income tax brackets and retirement contributions, (which are subject to frequent changes) are out of date. So when there is a conflict between the information presented in the textbook and the Powerpoint slides, remember that the slides contain more up-to-date information.**

• Students should have basic Internet, word-processing, spreadsheet, and email skills. Frequent checking of Canvas announcements and postings is strongly encouraged.

• Class materials are generally in the form of Word, Powerpoint, Excel and pdf files. Students can download Word, Excel or Powerpoint Viewer if they do not have Microsoft Word, Excel or Powerpoint installed on their computer. Adobe Acrobat Reader (which is free) is needed to read pdf files.

**Canvas Access**

All class materials, course grades, and class announcements will be posted on Canvas. Your Canvas account has already been created automatically by the Canvas administrator. The Canvas user name and password combination is the one you use for UT Tyler student email. For more detailed information, please visit UT Tyler’s homepage and click on the link for “Current Students” and follow the link to Canvas. Please contact the Canvas administrator if you have any problem accessing Canvas. Students are required to maintain their current e-mail address with Canvas as it uses this address to send course-related electronic communications.

***If you have issues with Canvas access that may hinder your completion of module quizzes, you must inform the instructor by email immediately. If the issue cannot be resolved by the instructor, he will ask you to contact UT Tyler’s IT Support staff immediately (even on weekends) for further assistance and get a ticket number. You must do so BEFORE noon (central daylight savings time) on Friday, May 1, 2020, the due date for all module quizzes. Claims of Canvas access problems reported to the instructor after the passing of this deadline or without a ticket number from UT Tyler’s IT Support staff when you have been asked to obtain one will be immediately dismissed. All Canvas-related issues are regarded as personal-level access issues except for cases of system-wide Canvas issues reported by the university and you must get them resolved without letting them interfere with your coursework.***

**Ten Module Quizzes**

A quiz will be given for each module that covers related topics. Each quiz will contain 20 multiple choice and/or true-or-false questions worth five points each and you will have 60 minutes (1 hour) to complete it. ***You are only required to complete any eight of the ten module quizzes***. ***The first nine modules will be based on the required Kobliner book while the tenth one will be purely based on Powerpoint slides created by the instructor***. You may take more than eight module quizzes if you wish and the points earned this way will be counted as extra credit. Note there will be no other quizzes, exams or assignments in this course. ***You will complete the material in each module at your own pace and may take each module quiz at any time between noon (central standard time) Monday, Jan 13, 2020 and noon (central daylight savings time) Friday, May 1, 2020***. ***You may do so from any place with a secure and stable internet connection. You may also take the quizzes in any order although it is recommended you follow the sequence of modules shown in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus***. ***Note as May 1, 2020 is the last day of finals for the Spring 2020 semester, no extension of the deadline to complete module quizzes can be given.*** ***You are strongly advised to complete all module quizzes you wish to take at least three days before the noon (central daylight savings time) May 1, 2020 deadline.*** Please make sure you study the module material thoroughly before you begin and can devote sufficient time to complete the quiz because you must finish each quiz in one sitting so you will not be able to save a quiz and resume it later. Note that only one question will be shown at a time and you cannot go back and change the answer of a previous question. You will be able to see the answers you provided at the end of the quiz.

You are allowed two attempts for each module quiz. However, keep in mind that if you take a quiz more than once, the score used to compute your course grade will be the ***higher*** of the two scores. As an example, if you received scores of 80 and 70, respectively on the two attempts for a module quiz, then the quiz score used to compute the course grade will be 80. Also remember that the questions on the two attempts will be different because each time you try to take a quiz, Canvas will randomly select the questions for your quiz from a pool of questions the instructor uploaded for that particular module. ***No one will be allowed to take any module quiz more than twice for any reason except for cases of Canvas system-wide outage as reported and documented by the University’s IT Support staff affecting both of the first two quiz attempts. Only then will a third attempt be allowed by the instructor, on a case-by-case basis, by clearing one of the first two attempts. All other requests to clear module quiz attempts will be rejected.***

All information covered in textbook chapter(s) assigned for the module is considered fair game for module quizzes. You are advised to begin each module by watching the brief ARC video introducing the topic (except Module 9 on military benefits and Module 10 on estate planning which have none) and then read the assigned chapter(s) in the required textbook for more in-depth understanding of the topic.

In addition, Powerpoint slides for each module will supplement your understanding of the material. ***Note that you are ONLY responsible for material from the textbook and no module quiz questions will be based on what is strictly found only in ARC videos and Powerpoint slides.*** The only exception to the rule above is that all module quiz questions for Module 10 (Estate Planning) will come from the Powerpoint slides as the textbook does not address this topic at all. Finally, certain topics addressed in the course, especially but not limited to US income tax code and military benefits which are the topics of Modules 8 and 9 respectively, only consider the information presented in the textbook when taking the module quizzes even if more updated information is available elsewhere. In other words, if there is a conflict between the information presented in the textbook (for Modules 1-9) and information found elsewhere including course slides, online or other resources, the correct answers to the module quiz questions will be determined using ***ONLY*** the information from the textbook. For Module 10, the correct answers are ***ONLY*** determined using the course Powerpoint slides in case of conflict with information found elsewhere.

**Every** **module quiz (except the last one) will consist of questions randomly selected from a pool of questions *EXCLUSIVELY* based on the reading of the textbook so it is crucial you read the chapter(s) assigned very carefully and study accordingly**. **Note that because students take module quizzes at different times, each student will face a different set of questions drawn randomly from the pool of quiz questions created for each module.**

When seeking email assistance from the instructor on a module quiz for any reason, you must clearly state (1) the course/section you are enrolled in, (2) the module quiz where you encountered difficulties and (3) a brief description of the difficulty. Any email missing any of the three items listed above will be ignored. You will be asked to provide the missing information by the instructor and no action will be taken until it is received.

**Course Information Quiz**

This is a mandatory 15-minute multiple-choice quiz designed to test your knowledge of the course requirements as explained in the syllabus. As an example, you may be asked how many unit quizzes are available and how many points they are worth as well as other course policies. It will be given via Canvas ***only*** between ***noon*** (central standard time) Monday, Jan 13, 2020 and ***noon*** (central standard time) Tuesday, Jan 21, 2020. You may earn up to 50 points on this quiz and anything above 25 is counted as extra credit.

Note that you are allowed to take the Course Information Quiz twice and the higher of the two scores (if you choose to take it more than once) will count. Third attempts will only be allowed if system-wide Canvas issues interrupted both quiz attempts.

**Grading**

Points Possible Assignment

25 Course Information Quiz (Earn up to 25 extra credit points)

800 Module Quizzes (Only eight are required)

825 Total

90.00% or above 🡪 A

80.00% to 89.99% 🡪 B

70.00% to 79.99% 🡪 C

60.00% to 69.99% 🡪 D

59.99% or below 🡪 F

Your course grade is computed using the following procedure (so you can use it to monitor your performance in the course at any time): (1) Add up all points earned from Course Information Quiz (see below) and all module quizzes taken, (2) The total number of points earned as computed in previous step will be divided by 825 to obtain a percentage, (3) The percentage obtained in previous step will be converted into a letter grade according to the grading scale shown above.

***Note: You can always estimate your grade following the procedure outlined above and ALL (EMAIL, TELEPHONE or IN-PERSON) request to confirm or verify grades will be REFUSED. The instructor is not allowed to disclose grades using email and once the 12 noon May 1, 2020 deadline to take all quizzes passes, your final course grade will be posted shortly thereafter in the Canvas grade center.***

***Canvas has a grade calculation feature that produces percentages which differ from what is shown above. In particular, extra credit assignments are factored in consideration of total number of points possible. The instructor has no control over how this feature does the grade calculations so you generally CANNOT rely on the grade shown in Canvas but must use the procedure described above to estimate your grade because they are unlikely to be the same except under some rare circumstances.***

**Extra Credit**

***WARNING***: Since you only eight of the ten module quizzes are required (so the last two are extra credit, attempts to change your grade at the end of the semester by asking the instructor to “round up” or by asking for further extra credit ***will be ignored***.

**UT Tyler Honor Code**

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

**Students Rights and Responsibilities**

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler including the areas listed below, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

* [Academic Dishonesty](http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php)
* [Academic Grievances](http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar/policies/academicgrievance.php)
* [Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Policies](http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/alcoholpolicies.php)
  + [Permission to Serve Alcoholic Beverages Form](http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/files/permission-to-serve-alcohol.pdf)
* [Athlete Conduct Policy](http://www.uttylerpatriots.com/athletics/compliance/)
* [Student Conduct](http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/)
* [Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents](http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/50000Series/50101.pdf)
* [Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/) – (Manual of Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs - Chapter 8)
* [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)](http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar/ferpa/index.php)
* [Hazing](http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf)
* [Nondiscrimination Policy and Complaint Procedure](http://uttyler.smartcatalogiq.com/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-1-Nondiscrimination-Policy-and-Complaint-Procedure)
* [Speech, Expression, and Assembly](http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/) – (Manual of Policies & Procedures for Student Affairs - Chapter 6)
* [Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act](http://www.uttyler.edu/police/forms/annual-security-report.pdf)

**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 you have 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 Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

**UT Tyler Resources for Students**

 UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu

 UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu

 The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.

 UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

**Syllabus Revisions**

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement via Canvas with adequate time for students to make the necessary coursework adjustments.

**Tentative Fin 3315 Course Calendar**

**Spring 2020**

Note: K refers to the required course textbook by Kobliner.

