

Federal Income Tax Course Syllabus On-Demand/Self-Study

2024

Course Description

The H&R Block *Federal Income Tax Course* is a comprehensive course that provides a foundation for understanding personal income tax returns. The emphasis is on preparing Form 1040 and related forms and schedules.

The course structure includes four components:

- Federal and state tax theory and law.
- Conducting thorough taxpayer interviews.
- Offering tax advice to taxpayers.
- Tax preparer ethical and due diligence obligations.

Course Hours

The *Federal Income Tax Course* is a total of 39 hours of qualifying education hours. Much like college credit, one hour of credit may be completed in one hour for some learners and many more hours for another learner. The time put into each credit hour is based on each individual's learning style, methods, and experience. Some topics may come easily to one individual and harder to another. There is no right or wrong amount of time to spend on the course; it is completely based on your own needs.

Course Objectives

Participants will be provided instructions using the Next Steps in Block Academy, a Participant's Guide, and online resource materials. Using these tools, participants will be able to accurately conduct a client interview, offer advice, and complete a tax return by hand.

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Conduct a thorough taxpayer interview.
- Determine correct filing status, calculate correct number of dependents, and determine eligibility for common tax credits.
- Complete a Form 1040 without the use of computer software ("by hand").

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2024

Course Supplies, Required Documents, and Resources

- H&R Block's *Income Tax Course* includes the following:
 - eBook (Participant's Guide) with text, interactive exercises, review questions, and case studies. Links to all PDF documents needed to complete the homework are provided within the eBook.
 - Online access to Practice Questions after each chapter to help cement lessons learned.
 - Online access to one State Tax Fundamental module.
 - Optional Participant's Guide for purchase. This provides a printed copy of the Participant's Guide. However, any interactive material in the Participant's Guide cannot be printed.
 - Optional Forms Book for purchase. This provides a printed copy of all forms, schedules, and worksheets needed to complete the homework. (Again, links are provided to all fillable PDF documents needed, so this purchase is not required.)
- This course syllabus.
- Course schedule with a breakdown of each chapter/module and a checklist to help keep track of what needs to be done before and after each chapter/module.
- IRS Publication 17 (only available electronically via the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-prior/p17--2023.pdf>.)

The internet will be used to attend class, access the eBook, complete chapter Practice Questions, State Tax Fundamentals module, tax research, and three individual content tests.

Course Structure

The H&R Block *Income Tax Course* includes reading content, completing exercises and case studies, answering practice questions, and three tests, which focus on content covered immediately before each test. See the course schedule for more details.

All the self-study learning must be completed to successfully complete the course.

The course is taught using prior-year tax laws since those laws are finalized. Specifically, you will be learning 2023 tax law since 2024 tax law has not been finalized.

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2024

Course Topics

The course covers the following topics:

Form 1040 and related forms and schedules	Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA)
American Opportunity Tax Credit	Interest and Form 1099-INT
Child and Dependent Care Credit	Itemized Deductions
Child Tax Credit/Additional Child Tax Credit	Itemizing vs. Standard Deduction
Credit for Other Dependents	Lifetime Learning Credit
Credit for the Elderly or Disabled	Pensions and Annuities
Credits vs. Deductions	Penalties
Dependency	Premium Tax Credit
Determining Support	Refunds and Tax Due
Due Diligence	Saver's Credit
Earned Income Credit (EIC)	Social Security Benefits
Educator Expenses	Student Loan Interest
Filing Requirements	Taxable vs. Nontaxable Income
Filing Status	Withholding
Form W-2	

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2024

Ethics and State Tax Fundamentals I

These two chapters/modules will be available to complete as self-studies after the *Test 1* has been completed. They are not set to a specific schedule. This is to give you the opportunity to complete them at your own pace. They have to be completed before the last test, *Test 3*, can be taken. Ethics and State Tax Fundamentals I content questions will be included on *Test 3*.

Tests – Verifying Your Understanding

- There are three tests that must be taken, and passed, to complete the course:
 1. *Test 1*
 2. *Test 2*
 3. *Test 3*
- Each test is open book and is comprised of multiple-choice questions and scenarios. For Tests 1 and 2, you have unlimited attempts to achieve a passing score of 70% before moving on to the next chapter. It is necessary to pass each test in order to verify that you are ready to move to the next chapter or module in the course. For Test 3, you have three attempts to pass with a score of 70%.

Employment Opportunity

While completion of this course is not a guarantee of employment, those interested in employment opportunities with H&R Block become eligible for an interview by completing all required tasks and passing the course with a score of at least 70% on each of the three tests.

Course Expectations

The H&R Block *Income Tax Course* does include homework (reading and exercises). It is highly encouraged that you complete the homework assignments. All necessary homework materials are available in your Participant's Guide (eBook in Inkling). Tax preparation software is not a required element to complete the homework assignments and is discouraged from being used until after completing the coursework "by hand."

Learning how to prepare taxes by hand is one of the best gifts you can give yourself if you plan to prepare tax returns in the future. Having a foundational understanding of how to read and understand the forms, schedules, and worksheets allows you to not only prepare complex tax returns, but also find and/or avoid tax return errors. This understanding also prepares you to discuss, dissect, and explain a tax return to those you may be serving in the future.

The good news is most tax returns are not completed by hand. Computer software is predominately used by all tax return preparation entities. However, software is only as good as the entries made into it. This is where knowing, understanding, and being able to read the tax forms will help you to be a superior tax preparer.

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Chapter	Topics
Introduction	Introduction Chapter Introduction, Expectations, History and Theory of Taxes.
Chapter 1	Wages, Income, and Taxes Gross Income, Wages, Interest Income, Tax Computation.
Chapter 2	Filing Requirements Filing Requirements, Standard Deductions, Filing Status, Single, MFJ, MFS.
Chapter 3	Qualifying Dependents and Support Qualifying Child, Qualifying Relative, Determining Support, Child Tax Credit, Other Dependent Credit.
Chapter 4	Dependent-Related Filing Statuses Qualifying Child Tiebreaker Rules, Head of Household, Costs of Maintaining a Home, Divorced or Separated Parents, Qualifying Surviving Spouse.
Test 1 Review	Reviews Chapters 1 through 4.
<i>Test 1</i>	Tests on content from Chapters 1 through 4.
Chapter 5	Additional Income and Adjustments to Income Other Income, Scholarships, Disability, Alimony, Unemployment, Gambling, Educator Expenses, Student Loan Interest, Other Adjustments.
Chapter 6	Credits Child and Dependent Care Credit, Recovery Rebate Credit, Credit for the Elderly and Disabled, State and Federal Marketplaces, Premium Tax Credit, Adoption Credit, Additional Credits.
Chapter 7	EIC and ACTC (Earned Income Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit) Refundable and Nonrefundable Credits, Earned Income Credit, Additional Child Tax Credit, Due Diligence.
Test 2 Review	Reviews Chapters 5 through 7.
<i>Test 2</i>	Tests on content from Chapters 5 through 7.

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2024

Chapter	Topics
Chapter 8	Education Provisions Education Benefits, Form 1098-T, American Opportunity Tax Credit, Due Diligence, Lifetime Learning Credit, Other Education Provisions.
Chapter 9	Retirement Employer-Sponsored Plans, IRAs, Retirement Account Distributions, IRA Distributions, Early Distributions from Qualified Plans, Self-Employed Retirement Plans, Social Security and Railroad Retirement, Retirement Savings Contributions Credit.
Chapter 10	Itemized Deductions Medical and Dental Expenses, Mortgage Interest, Charitable Contributions, Casualty and Theft Losses, Alternative Minimum Tax, Recovery of Prior-Year's Itemized Deduction.
Ethics	Ethics Due Diligence, Conflict of Interests, Confidentiality, Compliance, Tax Preparer Responsibilities.
State Tax Fundamentals I	State Tax Fundamentals I Domicile, residency, state filing requirements, the state taxable income calculation, federal-state conformity, common state tax benefits.
Test 3 Review	Reviews Chapters 8 through 10, plus Ethics.
Test 3	Tests on content from Chapters 8 through 10, Ethics, State Tax Fundamentals I.