



Economics and Political Science Department

CARR 2010/ECON 2012: Personal Financial Fitness [Do1]
Spring 2025

Course Information

Credits Hours:	4
Course Meeting Days & Times:	W 1:30-3:10 pm
Course Meeting Location:	CdC 370
Course Delivery Format:	Hybrid
Catalog Description:	This course will teach you practical, hands-on skills that will be used throughout your lifetime. You will leave this class with the ability to establish goals, create and organize a personal file, develop a personal budget, understand the mechanics of successful financial management, including banking and investing basics, credit use and risk management, and apply economic analysis to personal financial decision making. Co-convenes with CARR 2010.
Requisites:	N/A
Prerequisite(s):	N/A
Prerequisite(s) with concurrency:	N/A
Corequisite(s):	N/A

Faculty Information

Instructor:	Libby Kula
Pronouns:	she/her
Email:	erkula@stkate.edu
Office Location:	CdC 492

Availability/Office Hours:

Office hours: Tues/Wed 11:30am-12:30pm in CdC 492 or on [Google Meet](#)
Available by email to answer questions or set up a Zoom call if you need; will rarely respond on weekends.

Faculty Response Time:

48 hours or less during the school week.

Textbook(s) and Other Required Materials

Textbook: Rachel S. Siegel (2020). *Personal Finance v4.0 FlatWorld* ISBN: 978-1-4533-3481-2;

Textbook link:

<https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course/2611798>

Available in-library use print book!

Davidoff, H. (2012). *The Everything Personal Finance in your 20's & 30's Book*. (3rd ed.) Avon, MA: Adams Media ISBN: 978-1440542565

[Free online access!](#)

Technology Requirements and Tools

St. Kate's [minimum computer requirements for students](#).

- Learning management system: Canvas

Technology help is available through the Help Desk (located in the Tech Hub in the Library) at 651-690-6402 or by submitting a [help ticket](#).

Course Goals

This course will teach you practical, hands-on skills that will be used throughout your lifetime. You will leave this class with the ability to establish goals, create and organize a personal file, develop a personal budget, understand the mechanics of successful financial management, including banking and investing basics, credit use and risk management, and apply economic analysis to personal financial decision making

A liberal education at St. Kate's enables students to hone transferable skills, develop and refine competencies in analysis and communication, and empowers graduates to lead and influence. An education at St. Kate's emphasizes three institutional learning goals:

(1) Intellectual Inquiry, (2) Creative & Critical Thinking, and (3) Social Responsibility. The work in this course will further your learning in goal # (2).

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify social and economic influences on personal financial goals and decisions
- Learn the importance of goal setting as related to personal and financial management.
- Create a personal file as a means of understanding record keeping and financial organization.
- Understand decision-making as related to spending choices, credit, budgeting for daily living, making car and home purchases, and debt management.
- Learn the types of financial institutions and the products they carry: checking and savings accounts, time deposits, basic investments, etc.
- Develop an understanding of the comprehensive nature of financing a college education: loans, interest rates, grants, parent loans, and loan payment plans after graduation.
- Gain the basic essentials of risk management through insurance policies and investment strategies.
- Learn the current topics (e.g., Bitcoin) in personal financial and economic markets.
- Have the opportunity to ask for guidance on other financial topics of concern to them, such as taxation basics, insurance, and salary negotiation.

Instructional Strategy

It is essential that you attend face-to-face classes. There will be significant amounts of materials that will be discussed in class that is not in your book. Anticipated absences should be discussed with the instructor prior to the class involved. Due to the nature of skill development, there will be periodic assignments pertaining to topics covered in class. These assignments will be of a practical nature to help clarify information and you are expected to complete them.

Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and to keep up on current financial and economic news, as they are a key part of the course. Processing your thoughts in order to participate in the discussion is an important part of your learning. Teaching strategies and tactics used to facilitate learning, such as readings, lectures, and case studies.

Method of Assessment

Attendance (5%): You are required to attend the in-person class on Wednesdays. See the Attendance section below for additional info.

Homework (20%): You will be assigned homework for each topic. You will complete these assignments in Canvas. You have two tries on each assignment. You will have one week to do each homework. It is usually available on Monday and is due on Sunday. The lowest homework score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Class Activities (30%): Wednesdays, we will have a face-to-face class from 1:30-3:10 pm. The class will consist of mini-lectures, guest-speaker lectures, group work time, and class debates/discussions. You will be graded on active participation and turning in evidence of your activity (e.g., a lecture summary). It is due on the following Monday. The lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Weekly Reflections (10%): We will use Canvas discussion boards to have an ongoing conversation applying and reflecting on what you are learning. You should post a weekly reflection to the Canvas discussion board. You can also share other examples and ideas you have encountered. This is a good way to process what you are learning and to make connections to the world around you. Reflections should be ~100 words.

Personal File And Financial Plan (20%): The major outside focus of the course is the student's creation of a personal file (including a financial document) and the completion of her own personal financial plan. It will encompass a detailed analysis of the process of financial planning on the most practical level.

Case Study (15%): You will be provided with a case study analyzing financial decision-making, evaluating by your knowledge of personal financial fitness. This is a collaborative effort, and your team is expected to present the findings in class.

Grading

Grades will be assigned based on the following weights

Attendance	5%
Homework	20% (drop the lowest)
Class Activities	30% (drop the lowest)
Weekly Reflections	10%
Personal File & Financial Plan	20%
Case Study	15%

The following scale will be used to determine your course grade:

Percentage	Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+

83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	F

Grading Policies

Late Assignments

If you are having challenges that may prevent you from doing work you are proud of on time, please reach out as soon as you can. I am willing to grant extensions if life events arise. Please communicate in advance as much as possible, or as soon as you can. I understand that may not be right away if a crisis arises.

Late work without communication or a crisis will be accepted for partial credit **(-10% off per day late, up to -50%)**. Everything must be turned in by 5pm on Sunday, May 18th to earn any credit.

Attendance

Attendance is required for Wednesday's sessions in order to complete the in-class activities. If you must miss class, you may email me a 200-word summary of what you have learned from the missed class lecture slides and submit your makeup in-class activities within 1 week to receive full credit. Please contact me as soon as possible if there is a serious issue.

Extra Credit

I will let you know about a few events you can attend to replace a homework assignment or in-class activity.

AI Policy

This course will allow Selective Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI). **On each assignment, I will instruct you as to if and how you are allowed to use AI tools.** I believe AI can be a useful tool; however, you should never use it as a substitute for learning or creating. I want to know your understanding of the material to help you grow as a student!

I encourage you to read through the [Library's guide on responsible use of AI for students](#). It outlines important considerations, including the following:

- How AI output should never be taken at face value given AI's tendency to "hallucinate." You must always verify the information for yourself.
- How AI reflects and can perpetuate biases and inequities.
- How much energy and water resources AI requires, which can negatively impact the environment.

I highly recommend following the guide's advice for navigating these challenges.

Learning Resources

Learning Management System (LMS)

The course site in Canvas houses course announcements and resources such as course documents, websites, and course content.

Student Success Support Resources

Student Success is a web-based software platform that offers students access to various support services that help them engage, connect, and succeed at St. Kate's. Visit the [Student Success platform](#) to view and schedule an appointment for support services such as Academic Advising, Accessibility and Accommodations, Tutoring, and more.

The Economics & Political Science Department hires student tutors who will be able to help you with this course. I will announce their schedules via Canvas when I have access to them.

Maintaining an Inclusive and Accessible Class

Your success in this class is important to me. I am committed to inclusive, universal learning that values the differences that students bring to the class. This means that our

classroom, virtual spaces, practices, and interactions must be as civil and inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others thoughtfully are crucial to learning together.

This course is intended for all students, including those with mental or physical disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that tends to negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact me. It is never too late to request accommodations -- our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing. I also encourage you to contact [Accessibility Resources](#). By making a plan through this office, you can ensure accommodation without disclosing your condition to course instructors.

I also want you to know that I respect your observance of religious holidays and will work with you on a plan to make up any missed course work, according to the [Religious Holiday Accommodation Policy](#).

If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet your needs and the course requirements, working in conjunction with other campus offices to create a more accessible and inclusive learning environment, as appropriate.

University Policies

University policies are available through the Registrar's [Academic Catalog and University Policies webpage](#). The University's [Inclusive Excellence](#) and [Inclusive Excellence Resources for Students](#) provide full statements and resources.

St. Catherine University is committed to equal access for all and recognizes that disability is an aspect of diversity. The University's goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to the learning environment and/or the accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact [Student Accessibility & Accommodations](#) as soon as possible.

If you are registered with Student Accessibility & Accommodations and have been granted an accommodation, please contact me at erkula@stkate.edu to review how the accommodation will be applied in this course.

Student Accessibility & Accommodations Main Office

(651) 690-6563 | Accessibility@skate.edu

Course Schedule

Topic	Weekly Pattern	Read/Listen/Watch	Guest Speakers/Assignment due at 11:59pm
Week 1: Welcome & Course Introductio n	W 1/29	- Syllabus - Introduce yourself - Financial plan explanation - Course goals and expectations	
	S 2/2		**Start tracking all income and expenses, even vending machines! Canvas Discussion Reflection #1
Week 2: Goal Setting & Economic Conditions	M 2/3	- Your Life, Your Money - What has been driving inflation? Economists' thinking may have changed - The Financial Diet: Welcome To The College Student's Guide To Money - What are tariffs, which countries is Trump targeting and will prices rise?	
	W 2/5	- Everything PF Ch 1	Class Activity #1
	S 2/9	- Text Ch.1 - Setting SMART goals	Homework #1; Canvas Discussion Reflection #2

Week 3: Basic Finance		- Financial Statements: All the Basics in 8 Mins	
	M 2/10	- How it Happened - The 2008 Financial Crisis	Class Activity #2
	W 2/12	- Text Ch. 2 & 3	
	S 2/16		Homework #2; Canvas Discussion Reflection #3
Week 4: Budgeting		- How to Make Your First Budget (At Any Income)	
		- Budgeting in Uncertain Times ;	
		- The Student's Guide to Budgeting in College	
		- Over 100 Budgeting Articles (read one that most interests you)	
	M 2/17	- Everything PF Ch 2	Class Activity #3
	W 2/19	Text Ch. 5	Financial plan (part 1) due
	S 2/23		Homework #3; Canvas Discussion Reflection #4;
Week 5: Saving		- Everything You Need to Know About Savings	
		- Smooth Spending & The 401(k)	
		- How to Stretch Your Money	
	M 2/24	- Everything PF Ch 3 & 4	Class Activity #4
	W 2/26	Text Ch 4 & 7.1-7.3	
	S 3/2		Homework # 4 due; Canvas Discussion

			Reflection #5
Week 6: Taxes		- Personal taxes overview - Taxes & Donald Duck	
	M 3/3	- Everything PF Ch 16	Class Activity #5
	W 3/5	Text Ch 6	Guest Speaker: <i>Taxation Basics Info Session with St. Kates' Money Management Program</i> <i>-President's Dining Room, dessert provided</i>
	S 3/9		Homework #5 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #6
Week 7: Spring break	No Class Meeting (Mar.10-16)		
Week 8: Credit		- Understanding Your Credit Score - Build Your Credit	
	M 3/17	- Everything PF Ch 5-7	Class Activity #6
	W 3/19	Text Ch 7.4 & 7.5	Financial Plan (Part 2)
	S 3/23		Homework #6 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #7;
Week 9: Investing Basics		- Becoming a "Vulcan" Investor - Will Interest Rates Ever Go Up? - Investing, Saving, and Spending	
	M 3/24	- Everything PF Ch 17	Class Activity #7

	W 3/26	Text Ch 12	Guest Speaker: <i>Jerry Czech, Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.</i>
	S 3/30		Homework #7 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #8
Week 10: Car Purchase and Insurance	M 3/31	- Key Concepts to Understand Health Insurance - Car Insurance - Everything PF Ch 13 & 19	Class Activity #8
	W 4/2	Text Ch 10	Guest Speaker: <i>Joannette Cintron with Old National Bank financial literacy program</i>
	S 4/6		Homework #8 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #9
	M 4/7	- To Buy or Not to Buy a House - Mortgage 101 - Buying a House: How to Prepare Your Finances First - Financial steps to buying a house - How to Buy a House: 15 Steps in the Homebuying Process - Everything PF Ch 11	Class Activity #9

	W 4/9	- Text Ch 9	Guest Speaker: Tiana Danforth with Bridge Realty
	S 4/13		Homework #9 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #10;
		- Everything you need to know about student loans	
		- Economists take on student loan forgiveness	
		- Financial Aid 101	
	M 4/14	- Everything PF 8	Class Activity #10
	W 4/16		Guest Speaker: Student Loan Repayment Info Session with St. Kates' Money Management Program President's Dining Room Dessert included!
Week 12: Student Loans	S 4/20		Homework #10 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #11
Week 13: Career Planning	M 4/21	- The Labor Market - The Best Career Path Isn't Always A Straight Line - The Career Advice You Probably Didn't Get	Class Activity #11

		- Everything PF Ch 9	
	W 4/23	Text Ch 18	Guest Speaker: <i>Denise Heiman, Sr. Benefits Specialist with St. Kate's - Employer Benefits</i> Financial plan (part 3) due
	S 4/27		Homework #11 due; Canvas Discussion Reflection #12
Week 14: Salary Negotiation		- The Ultimate Guide to Negotiating Your Salary - What Should A Salary Negotiation Sound Like? - Mind The Pay Gap; - How to Negotiate Your Starting Salary	
	M 4/28	- Everything PF Ch 19	Class Activity #12
	W 4/30	Salary Negotiation Basics	Guest Speaker: <i>Jocelyn Zambrano with Career Development, St. Kate's</i> Personal File due
	S 5/4		Canvas Discussion Reflection #13;
Week 15: Case Study Presentations	M 5/5	Prepare for case presentations	Class Activity #13
	W 5/7	Class presentations	
	M 5/12	Final financial plan due @11:59pm	

Note: S = Sunday, M = Monday, W = Wednesday