

PLAN 363 Personal Finance, Wealth Building, and Public Policy

Spring Semester 2024

Instructor: Meetra Najrabi

Office Hours: By appointment only

mnajrabi@unc.edu

Section 1: MW – 3:35 – 4:50 pm

Section 2: MW – 8:00 – 9:15 am

Section 3: MW – 5:05 – 6:20 pm

This syllabus is a living document. The schedule at the end of this document is subject to modification and amendment. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class and updated here accordingly.

Teaching Assistants

This course has six teaching assistants (TAs). At least one TA will be present each class to assist the instructor. To not burden any particular TA with emails, *please email the TA according to your section and last name*. In email include course and section number or the Professor and TAs will not respond.

Teaching Assistant	Email Address	Section	Student Last Name	Office Hours
Matthew Barcellos	mbar@unc.edu	1	A – G	By appointment
Izzy Norman	izzyn@live.unc.edu	1	H - Ng	Wednesday, 1 – 2 pm, New East Reading Room
Ian Skahill	iskahill@unc.edu	1	Ni - Z	Mondays, 11 – 12pm, New East Reading Room
Manuel Valbuena Pena	mavalbue@unc.edu	2	A - Z	Tuesday, 1:30 – 2:30 pm, New East Room 404 Teams link
Lydia Adjetey	adjetey@unc.edu	3	A - L	Tuesday, 11 – 12 pm, New East Reading Room
Rhea Brown	rlbrown@unc.edu	3	M - Z	Tuesday, 3 – 4 pm, virtual (zoom)

For any email sent to the instructor or the TA's, MUST include PLAN 363 and your section in email subject line.

Description

Plan 363 offers a value-based approach to personal finance. In the context of the course, value-based education brings to life via teaching and learning the ideals that the students and their community consider important. The objective is not only for students to recognize their values but also to reflect them in their behavior and attitudes. In this way, students are expected to consider their moral and ethical values to guide their actions, including financial behaviors and decisions.

Course Objectives

PLAN 363 has four primary goals:

- 1) Help students develop a firm understanding of basic financial principles in the context of managing their own finances wisely.

Students will develop an understanding of various aspects of personal finance. They will explore the way personal principles, values, and risk tolerance relate to many aspects of personal finance. They will engage in hands-on exercises related to their own finances and financial planning. Specific topics will include a math/financial primer, budgeting, taxation, measuring financial health, managing credit, identifying good and bad consumer and mortgage loans, understanding debt, choosing insurance products (all types), beginning investing, and others.

- 2) Help students gain sufficient familiarity with financial markets, banking, and investment concepts to make sense of market and financial news and related political and public policy discussions.

Students will consider these matters, and their implications, with respect to their own financial wellbeing.

- 3) Help students consider and explore community-based and public policy efforts to help lower-income individuals and families build wealth through better financial decision-making and access to appropriate financial services and asset-building opportunities, including support for entrepreneurial endeavors.

- 4) Students will explore a variety of prospective interventions aimed at helping households, particularly low and moderate-income households, build wealth and strengthen themselves as financial actors. Students will consider how programs should be designed to achieve their stated goals.

Many students learn best when applying new knowledge to relevant aspects of their daily lives. The term project will include application of knowledge and strategies learned during the course in development of individual family financial plans.

PLAN 363 is to be presented as an introductory seminar. “Drawing on diverse disciplines and subject areas, the seminar shares a focus on how students pose problems, discover “truth,” resolve controversies, and evaluate knowledge.” The seminar is a form of academic instruction, sometimes involving small groups for recurring meetings, in which all students are requested to participate actively. The seminar will provide a place to consider assigned readings, raise questions and issues, and engage in discussion. There are no course prerequisites, other than an energetic interest in public policy, and a willingness to participate.

Our purpose is to help you to excel in the current learning environment. The instructor and TAs value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. We strive to make the course an inclusive space for all students. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to improve. We appreciate suggestions.

My goal is to help you to excel in this learning environment. I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I strive to make the course an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve. I appreciate suggestions.

#IDEAs in Action General Education Curriculum

This course fulfills the Quantitative Reasoning focus of the General Education Curriculum

Students learn to comprehend and apply mathematical concepts in authentic contexts, developing tools for reasoning with data, logic, and quantitative methods.

1. What is the role of mathematics in organizing and interpreting measurements of the world?
2. How can mathematical models and quantitative analysis be used to summarize or synthesize data into knowledge and predictions?
3. What methodology can we apply to validate or reject mathematical models or to express our degree of confidence in them?

Learning Outcomes 1. Summarize, interpret, and present quantitative data in mathematical forms, such as graphs, diagrams, tables, or mathematical text. 2. Develop or compute representations of data using mathematical forms or equations as models and use statistical methods to assess their validity. 3. Make and evaluate important assumptions in the estimation, modeling, and analysis of data, and recognize the limitations of the results. 4. Apply mathematical

concepts, data, procedures, and solutions to make judgments and draw conclusions. 5. Synthesize and present quantitative data to others to explain findings or to provide quantitative evidence in support of a position.

More narrowly, students learn to use quantitative reasoning, mathematical concepts and reasoning, to make decisions about personal finance, wealth building, and related public policy issues.

In addition, as a General Education course, Plan 363 incorporates two recurring capacity requirements. 1. Students are required to prepare a Personal Finance Plan (10+ pages) as their term project. 2. Students are required to collaborate in small groups to deliver a 5 minutes presentation to the class. 3. Students are required to collaborate in pairs or small groups to complete in-class exercises during the semester. These exercises give students the opportunity to learn from each other as well as to apply experientially the concepts covered during class lectures.

Communication

For any communication related to assignments, please contact your designated Teaching Assistant. If you wish to meet with me, the best time is after class. Please avoid waiting until the last minute to reach out to them regarding assignments. I will make every effort to respond to your emails within 24 hours of receiving them. *When emailing me or the TAs, please include 'PLAN 363,' your section, and the reason for your email in the subject line. Emails that do not include 'PLAN 363' and your section will not receive a response.*

Evaluation

Evaluation of all work will be based class attendance and participation are required. Active and engaging class participation is intended to provide opportunity to engage in critical thinking and peer to engagement in the complex and value-laden realm(s) of Personal Finance, Wealth Building, and Public Policy. Students will be graded based on the scale below. The course rounds between grade intervals at the .50 mark.

Grading:

- 1) Attendance and Quizzes (35%)
 - a) Attendance/Daily Quizzes: 15%
 - b) Main Quizzes: 20%
- 2) Personal Financial Plan (35%)
 - a) Assignment #1: 5%
 - b) Assignment #2: 20%
 - c) Assignment #3: 10%
- 3) Group Presentation (5%)
- 4) Final Examination (25%)

Maximum Total: 100%

Missing Class

On the first day of class, each student starts with a 100% for participation. Students are allowed One UNEXCUSED absence without any questions from the instructor/TAs. If a student has two UNExcused absences, the participation grade will be affected.

Unexcused Absences: Students are allowed **ONE UNEXCUSED absence** without any questions from the instructor/TAs. There is no need to email the instructor or TAs. At the end of the semester, the earliest missed class will be credited.

Excused Absences: Students are permitted to miss class only for **excused absences**. For details about what qualifies as an excused absence, please refer to the UNC-Chapel Hill attendance policy. If you have a university approved absence email TA to notify.

Honor Code

As stated in UNC's honor Code: "It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the honor code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity."

All assignments must be completed through your own individual effort unless otherwise instructed. In order to uphold the Honor Code in your written assignments, you must properly cite all data, ideas, and information that are not your own. Academic misconduct is not tolerated.

For additional information on the honor code, please visit UNC Honor Code. For information about citations and how to avoid plagiarizing, please visit UNC Writing Center's website Plagiarism.

ChatGPT and similar technologies

Generative AI is extremely useful; however, it has the following limitations:

How output is arrived at is not clear as the internal processes used to produce a particular output within the generative AI cannot be determined.

The output is based on existing data (often scraped from online sources) and may reflect biases that should be acknowledged; it may also be inaccurate or entirely fabricated, even if it appears reliable or factual.

AI evokes a range of intellectual property concerns; sourcing and ownership of information is unclear, and the status of AI output raises numerous questions—e.g., is output equivalent to a published resource? What citational responsibilities are in place for various AI interactions? The following sections provide the philosophy and specific guidelines for using these tools and features (increasingly, generative AI capabilities will be integrated with everyday applications). Unless I provide other guidelines for an assignment or exam, you should follow these guidelines. Usage Philosophy Use of generative AI in your coursework is based on the following principles:

1. AI should help you think. Not think for you. Use these tools to give you ideas, perform research (in compliance with point 2 below), and analyze problems. Do not use them to do your work for you, e.g., do not enter an assignment question into ChatGPT and copy & paste the response as your answer.
2. Engage with AI Responsibly and Ethically: Engage with AI technologies responsibly, critically evaluating AI-generated outputs and considering potential biases, limitations, and ethical implications in your analysis and discussions. Utilize AI technologies ethically, respecting privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights. Ensure that the data used for AI applications is obtained and shared responsibly and in compliance with relevant regulations.
3. You are 100% responsible for your final product. You are the user. If the AI makes a mistake, and you use it, it's your mistake. If you don't know whether a statement about any item in the output is true, then your responsibility is to research it. If you cannot verify it as factual, you should delete it. You hold full responsibility for AI-generated content as if you had produced the materials yourself. This means ideas must be attributed, facts are true, and sources must be verified.
4. The use of AI must be open and documented. The use of any AI in the creation of your work must be declared in your submission and explained. Details on how to source your AI usage are explained below.
5. These guidelines are in effect unless I give you specific guidelines for an assignment or exam. It is your responsibility to ensure you are following the correct guidelines.
6. Data that are confidential or personal should not be entered into generative AI tools. Putting confidential or personal data (e.g., your One Card details) into these tools exposes you and others to the loss of important information. Therefore, do not do so. The following sections provide the philosophy and specific guidelines for using these tools and features (increasingly, generative AI capabilities will be integrated with everyday

applications). Unless I provide other guidelines for an assignment or exam, you should follow these guidelines. ChatGPT and similar technologies: Guideline Specifics

Not following these guidelines may be a reportable violation to the UNC Honor Court.

Sourcing Use of AI

Accuracy: Generative AI may invent both facts and sources for those facts. Verification is your responsibility, whether the source of the error is you or the AI makes no difference. You need to check the facts, the quotes, the arguments, and the logic, and document what you did to validate your material.

Attribution: All ideas that are not originally your own have a source and that source must be attributed. Please be aware that generative AI tends to invent sources. You have a two-fold obligation with respect to attribution:

- 1) If a source is identified, find and attribute the original source of the idea, identify the location of the text within the source, and provide a working link to the location (if the source is available online). If you are not able to locate the source, delete that content.
- 2) Document the process by explaining how you used generative AI in a work statement that will accompany your submission of major projects in the class. As you submit a project, develop, and include an appropriate version of the below statements:
 - “I attest that this project did not use AI at any stage in its development or in the creation of any of its components.”
 - “I attest that this project made use of AI in the following ways:” You must then use the following form to document your usage. *

Usage	Tool Used	How Edited	Conversation Link
Topic selection	e.g., ChatGPT-4		[Conversation Link]
Brainstorming and idea generation			[Conversation Link]
Research			[Conversation Link]
Source valuation			[Conversation Link]
Outlining/planning			[Conversation Link]
Drafting			[Conversation Link]
Media creation			[Conversation Link]
Peer review			[Conversation Link]
Revising			[Conversation Link]
Polishing			[Conversation Link]
Other			[Conversation Link]

*Note: Such attribution is not a valid source for facts; it’s for the output itself. ChatGPT was used in the development of these guidelines – more specifically, it was employed to generate suggestions for student use policies and to rephrase and consolidate certain sections of the text. Also, Sentient Syllabus was a resource for a number of the ideas within this document.

Optional Reading Material

1. Textbook Alternative #1 Fundamentals of Family Finance: Basic Principles You Can Use. 2nd Edition. 2018. Jeffrey Hill; Bryan Sudweeks; Bryce L. Jorgensen; Xiaohui Li; and Laura Ricaldi.

<https://personalfinance.byu.edu/https://brightspotcdn.byu.edu/ae/d3/dc560e59402aaed80297dcf506d9/fundamentals-of-family-finance-basic-principles-2e-guts.pdf>

2. Textbook Alternative #2 Personal Finance: Another Perspective. Complete College Course Manual. The Whys, Whats, and Hows. 12th Edition. 2019-2020 Bryan L. Sudweeks/ Marriot School of Management. Brigham Young University.

<https://brightspotcdn.byu.edu/b3/4a/bc163707418d9485ea662a106558/complete-college-manual.pdf>

There may also be ad hoc news articles and/or podcast episodes assigned.

We are grateful to, and appreciative of, Brigham Young University (BYU) and the Marriott School of Management for having published a series of excellent texts and course materials regarding personal finance, including alternative textbooks #1 and #2.

Brigham Young University is a private research university owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Alternative textbook #2 and particularly its introductory sections, contain numerous references to Mormon teaching and principals, Christian faith, God's will and guidance, and other religious allusions.

Within the context of this course, we neither accept or endorse, nor dismiss or repudiate, Mormonism, Christianity, religion in general, or any particular religion or system of faith whatsoever. The excellent course material and resources made available to us (free of charge) by BYU are coherent and stand on their merits exclusive of, and notwithstanding, any theological underpinning or attribution.

Students who may feel more comfortable not being exposed to theological material should use the suggested alternative textbook #1.

Grading Scale

Grade	Range
A	94% to 100%
A-	90% to 93.99%
B+	87% to 89.99%
B	84% to 86.99%
B-	80% to 83.99%
C+	77% to 79.99%
C	74% to 76.99%
C-	70% to 73.99%
D+	67% to 69.99%
D	60% to 66.99%
F	0% to 59.99%

Disability

The University's Accessibility Resources and Service Office (ARS) coordinates all reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

Students should visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time; however, the process can take time. ARS requests that students contact them as early in the semester as possible.

Title IX resources

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity & Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Laptops and cell phones

Please turn off your cellphones before entering the classroom or zoom session. If you must have your phone on during class because of an extraordinary circumstance (you are expecting a baby, etc...), please let us know beforehand. During the class session (in person or virtual), please turn off all other programs in your computer such as emails and instant messaging because they can be distracting.

Schedule of Sessions and Topics

The schedule below is subject to modification and amendment. Some classes maybe asynchronous or remote.

	Subject	Alternative Textbook #1	Alternative Textbook #2	Date	Notes
Week 1	Introduction and Email Etiquettes			1/8	
Week 2	Career Planning and Personal Finance and Salary Negotiation	Introduction	Through Chapter 2	1/13	In-class exercise: Salary Negotiation Simulation
	Time Value of Money	Chapter 1	Chapters 9-10	1/15	Excel Tutorial
Week 3	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day			1/20	NO CLASS
	Time Value of Money II	Chapter 1	Chapters 9-10	1/22	In-class exercise: TVM Problems
Week 4	Budgeting & Net Worth Money	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	1/27 1/29	Start budgeting...
Week 5	Global dimensions of personal finance			2/3	
	Cash Management & Debt	Chapters 3 & 4	Chapters 5 & 8	2/5	Financial Plan #1 Due
Week 6	Well-Being Day			2/10	NO CLASS
	Quiz #1			2/12	Quiz #1
Week 7	Taxes	Chapter 5	Chapter 4	2/17	
	Taxes II	Chapter 5	Chapter 4	2/19	In-class exercise: Prepare Taxes
Week 8	Insurance			2/24	
	Credit	Chapter 4	Chapters 6-7	2/26	
Week 9	Credit Cards & Presentation Skills			3/3	
	Investments: Fundamentals	Chapter 9	Chapters 17-19	3/5	In-class exercise: Risk Tolerance Self-Assessment

Week 10	Spring Break			3/10	NO CLASS
	Spring Break			3/12	NO CLASS
Week 11	Investment: Bonds & Stocks	Chapter 9	Chapters 20-23	3/17	
	Quiz #2			3/19	Quiz #2
Week 12	Real Estate	Chapter 8	Chapter 15	3/24	Financial Plan #2 due
	Financial Advisory Services	Chapter 9	Chapter 19	3/26	
Week 13	Automobile	Chapter 7	Chapter 16	3/31	
	Utility bills			4/2	
Week 14	Financial Scam and Schemes			4/7	
	Retirement	Chapter 10		4/9	
Week 15	Quiz #3			4/14	Quiz #3
	Group Presentation			4/16	
Week 16	Group Presentation			4/21	
	Group Presentation			4/23	
Week 17	Personal Relationships & Money	Chapters 13, 14	Chapter 30-32	4/28	Financial Plan #3 due
FINAL EXAM – Thursday, May 1st - Time TBD					

Financial Advisory Services

Chapter 9

Chapter 19