

Fin 302 Summer 2015 (5/20/2015 – 8/18/2015 10:30am) Prof. Phillips  
(rev 5/17/2015b)

## Sections 10405

### **Please read the FAQ for this course available as a class resource.**

This course is an entirely online and self-paced general education course. The professor for this course is Prof. Mike Phillips (profmike@profmike.com).

All assignments must be initially submitted before 10:30am, PDT, August 10, 2015. No assignment may be originally submitted after this time. All assignments must be submitted using the [www.BoringFinance.com](http://www.BoringFinance.com) website.

All revisions (of any assignments that were submitted before the original deadline and returned for revision) must be resubmitted by 10:30am, PDT, August 18, 2015. No assignment may be revised or resubmitted after this time. All resubmitted assignments must be resubmitted using the [www.BoringFinance.com](http://www.BoringFinance.com) website.

*Please note that you are encouraged to write your memos/essays in a word processor and then cut&paste them into the [www.BoringFinance.com](http://www.BoringFinance.com) form to submit them. That way, if there's a computer glitch, you won't lose your essay. Please submit them as you complete them rather than waiting until the end of the semester.*

### **Course Title / Course Number**

Personal Finance—FIN 302

Prof. Phillips: [profmike@profmike.com](mailto:profmike@profmike.com)

Office Hour: On Campus Office Hours by appointment only; email, and telephone (818)527-4979 on Mondays from 10:30 to 11:30am after June 10. Prof. Phillips will have limited availability until June 10.

## Key Dates

**Start: 5/20/2015** You may begin turning in assignments.

**Bonus: 7/15/2015 10:30am** Assignments turned in before this date/time may receive a 10% bonus. (So, start early!)

**Drop Day (without “W”): 6/5/2015** This is the last day to withdraw without a “W”. If you haven’t begun assignments by this day, you are strongly encouraged to withdraw. Otherwise, it is highly likely that you will receive a failing grade.

**Initial Submission Deadline: 8/10/2015 10:30am** Initial submissions of any assignment must be turned in before this date/time in order to be graded. This still allows a period of time for revisions and resubmission, if necessary, but the initial submissions must be done by this date/time.

**Assignment Due Date: 8/18/2015 10:30am** All revisions to assignments (revisions of those returned for editing or improvement) must be submitted before this date/time.

## Course Description

Prerequisite: Completion of the Lower Division writing requirement.

Examination of the concepts necessary for the rational allocation of personal resources. Emphasis is on the significant financial decisions facing each household during its life cycle. The role of financial institutions and governmental economic policy is evaluated in the context of their potential impact on personal financial planning.

## Course Objectives

This course will cover topics, vocabulary, and basic calculations needed to make wise financial decisions. Students will also have the opportunity to work on exercises that will help them better understand their own financial preferences and to develop specific skills to help them with their personal financial decision making.

### iv. List of General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) FIN 302 Addresses

- Life Long Learning
- Information Competence (IC)
- Writing Intensive (WI)

v. **Topics Covered in FIN 302**

- The financial planning process
- Financial planning tools: Personal financial statements and the time value of money
- Goal setting, career planning, and budgeting
- Income tax planning
- Cash management and financial institutions
- Purchasing strategies and credit cards
- Consumer loans and credit management
- Automobile and housing decisions
- Property and liability insurance planning
- Analyzing jobs and employee benefits: Health, disability, and retirement plans
- Fundamental concepts in investing
- Investing in stocks
- Investing in bonds and preferred stocks
- Mutual funds, investment real estate, and other investment alternatives
- Saving for distant goals: Retirement and education funding
- Life insurance and long-term care planning
- Estate planning

vi. **Texts and Other Instructional Materials Needed**

1. **Access to a Computer and Internet**

Access to a computer and Internet is a requirement. You may use a Windows, Apple, or Linux based machine so long as it has an adequate Internet browser.

2. **Websites**

Since this is an online class, the class is conducted at these websites:

a. [www.profmike.com](http://www.profmike.com) or [www.boringfinance.com](http://www.boringfinance.com)

There is no fee for registering with [www.boringfinance.com](http://www.boringfinance.com) or equivalently [www.ProfMike.com](http://www.ProfMike.com). You just register for a free account and then “add” this class to your boringfinance.com profile. The boringfinance.com site is where the syllabus will be

posted, where lectures can be heard, and where you will turn in (“Submit”) your written assignments.

**b. Subscription to the WileyPLUS online learning environment**

<http://edugen.wileyplus.com/edugen/class/cls377407/> is the URL to the online textbook materials at WileyPLUS.

A registration code may come bundled with new copies of the textbook and can also be directly purchased online at the [WileyPLUS](#) or [www.wileybookstore.com/csun](http://www.wileybookstore.com/csun) if you purchased your textbook elsewhere without the WileyPLUS online access. At the WileyBookStore website, the cost is about \$76 for the WileyPLUS and text package.

**There is a fee** to get an access code to register for the WileyPLUS Personal Finance site the first time but you probably already have the access code from the textbook. If your book did not come with a WileyPLUS access code, or if you didn’t buy the book and would like to purchase either an inexpensive edition plus the access code, or if you didn’t buy the book and would like to just purchase an access code to WileyPLUS (which also includes electronic access to the text so you really don’t need to buy the paper version unless you want to keep it), the campus bookstore might be able to help or you can purchase these materials at [www.wileybookstore.com/csun/](http://www.wileybookstore.com/csun/) and then look for this class.

If you are **repeating the class** (or satisfying an Incomplete) and previously purchased WileyPLUS, there is no need to buy another access key; just use the “edugen.wileyplus.com/edugen/class/...” URL above and re-register your copy of WileyPLUS if necessary.

**3. Textbook**

*Personal Finance: Skills for Life* (1e) (with WileyPLUS) by Vickie Bajtelsmit (John Wiley). (See [www.wileybookstore.com/csun](http://www.wileybookstore.com/csun) for online purchasing. Look for the “FIN 302” link.) Note that an electronic copy of the textbook is included in WileyPLUS.

*Print Version of Wall Street Journal Student subscriptions for the semester are available at <http://student.wsj.com/>. Your school is CSU Northridge, your class is Personal Finance, and your professor is Michael Phillips.*

**4. Online Lectures**

The online lectures are geared towards the textbook, *Personal Finance: Skills for Life* (1e) by Vickie Bajtelsmit. The lectures are available at [www.boringfinance.com](http://www.boringfinance.com) or [www.prof mike.com](http://www.prof mike.com) in the classroom “lectures” heading of the FIN 302 area. There are also online lectures geared towards a previous book, but which still may be useful, under the “other/supplemental resources” heading.

# Course Requirements

Your grade is based on **total points earned (not the percentage of possible class points)** and you may **pick and choose** which assignments you choose to submit. Please choose assignments that are of interest to you. Please turn them in early so that you have an opportunity to revise them if that is needed. Yes, there are over 150 points possible, and you just need 90+ points for an A.

Please **pay careful attention to the key dates**, listed at the top of the syllabus and on the website.

There are six types of assignments, described below, and many possible specific assignments within those groups. You could choose to none, some, or all of a particular type of assignment. You do not need to do every type of assignment to pass the class.

For example, one of the assignment types with 17 possible assignments is the Wall Street Journal (“WSJ”) Print Edition Memos. You do not need to do any of the WSJ Print Edition memos. Similarly, you do not need to do ALL of the WSJ Print Edition for those you do submit to potentially count. But, some students will want to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal print newspaper (subscription information is below; it usually gets delivered to subscribers’ homes) and do all 17 assignments. This class is designed to have a wide range of assignments to match a diverse set of student interests and learning styles; almost nobody does them all. What’s important is that you learn about personal financial planning principles and how to apply them in your own life!

## 1. **Personal Financial Planner (Worksheet) Memos (@ 4pts each = 68 points possible)**

There are up to 17 Personal Financial Planner Memos based on the collection of Personal Financial Planner (PFP) Worksheets accompanying each chapter of the textbook (e.g., Chapter 7 has four PFP Worksheets—PFP 25, 26, 27, and 28--and all four need to be discussed in a single essay submitted for Chapter 7). **The PFP Worksheets should not be submitted, but students need to write about each one** describing what they did and what they thought about and learned from each one of the PFP Worksheets, and turn in what they wrote. Please note that some editions of the textbook include SOME of the PFP worksheets but generally not ALL of them. It will be necessary to acquire the full set, either through WileyPLUS or by separately purchasing the Student Financial Planner workbook that includes the PFP worksheets. These are available at [www.WileyBookstore.com/CSUN](http://www.WileyBookstore.com/CSUN).

Organize your essays by first identifying a specific PFP worksheet that is being discussed with title and number in a heading, followed by the paragraphs relating to that worksheet, followed by a similar heading for the next PFP worksheet, and so on.

For each chapter, do the exercises in the associated worksheets. You need to write about ALL of them for the chapter in a single essay. You should use the Personal Financial Planning (PFP) Worksheets that are online as part of WileyPLUS. For each chapter, write a minimum of a 250 word memo describing what you did, what you learned, and how you think it will apply to your life (either now or in the future). Be sure to clearly identify what part of your essay is talking about which PFP worksheet. If one of the chapter's PFP worksheets is not discussed, you haven't completed that assignment. (250 Word min.)

## 2. **Resource Comparison Essays (@ 6 points each = 30 points possible)**

There are five *Resource Comparison Essays* to be completed after a required initial draft of essay 1 is approved. These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. In each essay, students will compare and contrast the type of information they get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Please note that after the initial draft of essay 1 is approved, the whole essay needs to be resubmitted as essay 1 (so that we can keep separate track of the draft status and the final essay points).

### Resource Comparison Essay #1 Initial Draft (required, but no points)

- For Essay #1, students will be required to turn in an initial draft and are required to submit a revised draft based on the comments by faculty. This exercise will provide guidance on how to write the remaining essays. These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. (“Type” refers to different kinds of sources. For example, books and weblogs are two different types. Be sure to read the specific requirements for each essay, as shown below.) In each essay, you will compare and contrast the type of information you get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Be sure to discuss situations when each type might be preferred to the other. Essay #1: Pick a chapter from the text. Find information about that chapter’s topic from a traditional newspaper and compare it to the variety of information which you would get from Google News. Evaluate as described above. (Min 500 words)

### Resource Comparison Essay #1 (6 points)

- **This is just resubmitting the draft above after it has been approved.** It is necessary to submit it to places—as a draft and again as a finished essay—in order for you to get credit for it.

**After the draft of essay #1 has been approved, you may then submit resource comparison essays 2 – 5. Before then, you may not submit those essays. (Note that you must turn in essay #1 after the draft is approved to get points for it.)**

Resource Comparison Essay #2 (6 points)

- These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. (Type refers to different kinds of source. For example, books and weblogs are two different types. Be sure to read the specific requirements for each essay, as shown below.) In each essay, you will compare and contrast the type of information you get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Be sure to discuss situations when each type might be preferred to the other. Pick a chapter from the text. Find a popularly written book that discusses the chapter's topic. Compare information from the book to the information you find using specialized websites. (Min 500 words.)

Resource Comparison Essay #3 (6 points)

- These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. (Type refers to different kinds of source. For example, books and weblogs are two different types. Be sure to read the specific requirements for each essay, as shown below.) In each essay, you will compare and contrast the type of information you get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Be sure to discuss situations when each type might be preferred to the other. Pick a chapter from the text. Compare information from a consumer oriented magazine on the topic to that which you would get from specialized websites you would find when searching for the topic online. (Min 500 words.)

Resource Comparison Essay #4 (6 points)

- These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. (Type refers to different kinds of source. For example, books and weblogs are two different types. Be sure to read the specific requirements for each essay, as shown below.) In each essay, you will compare and contrast the type of information you get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Be sure to discuss situations when each type might be preferred to the other. Pick a chapter from the text. Research the chapter's topic using a research database (like those available from the campus library). Compare that information to that which you find in weblogs discussing the chapter's topic. (Min 500 words.)

Resource Comparison Essay #5 (6 points)

- These essays focus on different types of information available in traditional and electronic form. (Type refers to different kinds of source. For example, books and weblogs are two different types. Be sure to read the specific requirements for each essay, as shown below.) In each essay, you will compare and contrast the type of information you get and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each type of information. Be sure to discuss situations when each type might be preferred to the other. Pick a chapter from the text. Compare information about the chapter's topic that you obtain from a radio or television show to the information that you obtain using any resource available in the CSUN or local public library besides radio or television show broadcasts, recordings, or transcripts. (Min 500 words.)

**3. Wall Street Journal Print Edition Memos (@ 2pts each = 34 points possible)**

There are up to 17 *Wall Street Journal Print Edition Memos* and these are based on articles and columns in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) regarding personal finance issues. For each chapter of the textbook, students may find at least one article in the print version WSJ that relates to some of the topics in that chapter. In each memo, you should discuss how the selected article illustrates the material from the chapter and how the topic may impact their (current or future) financial lives. **You must include the full citation to the WSJ newspaper article you are discussing as the first thing in your essay.** Note that essays based on <http://guides.wsj.com/>... resources belong in #4 below, not here, and will fail if submitted here. If you do these WSJ Print Edition memos, you can't use online resources; you must actually get access to the print edition of the newspaper.

Read a recent print edition of the Wall Street Journal. Find a newspaper article printed during the current semester that relates to the chapter. Discuss the article and how it relates to the chapter. Discuss possible applications to your own financial life. Be sure to put the WSJ citation info at the top of your essay. (500 words min.)

**4. Wall Street Journal Personal Finance Guide Memos (@ 2pts each = 34 points possible)**

There are up to 17 *Wall Street Journal Personal Finance Memos* and these are based on articles and columns in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) regarding personal finance issues. For each chapter of the textbook, students may find at least one article in the WSJ that relates to some of the topics in that chapter. In their memos, students should discuss how the article illustrates the material from the chapter and how the topic may impact their (current or future) financial lives. **You must include the full citation to the WSJ Personal Finance Guide you are discussing as the first thing in your essay.** Please note that if you write something based on an article from the WSJ print edition it belongs in #3, not here; if you write something based on Wall Street Journal Online, it doesn't belong anywhere. No assignments are currently geared to use the online edition of the paper.

Select a WSJ Online Personal Finance Guide (<http://guides.wsj.com/personal-finance/>) that you haven't previously written about. Discuss the article and how it relates to the material in the class. Discuss possible applications to your own financial life. Be sure to put the WSJ Personal Finance Guide URL at the top of your essay. (500 words min.)

**5. Personal Finance Book Report (up to 10 points depending on grade, can't be resubmitted)**

Students are to find a popular book discussing personal financial planning or a related topic. They are then to write a review of that book. Find a popular book discussing personal financial planning or a related topic. (Personal Financial Planning textbooks, like Bajtelsmit, don't count as "popular".) Write a review of that book, with a minimum of 2500 words. Who is it for? How effective do you think it is for that audience? How does the material compare to what else you've studied in this class? Would you recommend this book? Why/why not? This assignment is worth up to 10 points depending on your score for the assignment [points = 10 points possible x (0% to 100%)]. **After this assignment is submitted, it cannot be revised or resubmitted.** (2500 word min)

**6. Analyze a Charity paper (6 points possible)**

Find a charity of interest to you. Research it using the charity's own online resources, [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), <http://rct.doj.ca.gov/MyLicenseVerification/Search.aspx?facility=Y>, and other online research resources. What do you find? Is it worthwhile? Is it one you would choose to support? Does it look financially reasonable? Does it appear to be honestly and effectively run? Why/not? Describe your research in a minimum 1000 word essay. This assignment is worth 6 points. **After this assignment is submitted, it cannot be revised or resubmitted.** (1000 word minimum)

**Methods of Evaluations**

Your course grade is based on your total class points (NOT the percentage earned of possible points) as follows:

90+ = A

80+ - 90 = B

70+ - 80 = C

65+ - 70 = C-

<65 = F

**There are NO D GRADES assigned in this class.** It is unfortunate, but if at the last moment you have a few assignments not submitted on time or that don't pass, if you receive a 64.99 you will fail the course. Therefore, please do more, a lot more, and try for an A while you're at it.

The Personal Finance Book Report is assigned a numerical score between 0% and 100%. All other assignments are pass/fail. Except for the "Personal Finance Book Report" and the "Analyze a Charity" Paper, a failed assignment **can be resubmitted up to the resubmission deadline until it is passed.**

### **Bonus Points**

Please note that assignments that are turned in prior to the Bonus Point Deadline (see the website for specific details) may earn a 10% bonus if they are turned in prior to the Deadline. (If the assignment isn't passed, or no points are earned, then no bonus points are added.)

### **Assignment Submission Deadline**

Please note that in order to be counted towards your grade, **all assignments must be initially turned in** by the Assignment Submission Deadline which is about a week before the end of the semester, allowing time for revision of assignments. **This includes assignments which cannot be resubmitted once turned in.**

### **CSUN Core Values and Ethical Conduct Pledge**

The [CSUN Core Values and Ethical Conduct Pledge](#) is a requirement for this course. You will be asked to agree to this statement when you register on the BoringFinance.com website and submit essays. If you don't indicate that you agree to adhere to the statement, then you won't be allowed access to the BoringFinance.com classroom site. (Note that this is where you will turn in your written assignments.)

Bottom line: Don't cheat, don't do unethical things, just do your own work and turn it in.

Please read the Academic (Dis)Honesty Policy below.

### **Academic (Dis)Honesty Policy**

The CSUN policy on academic dishonesty will be enforced. ***Anybody found violating the academic dishonesty policy with respect to any aspect of this class will fail not just the assignment but also the entire course and will be reported to University authorities.***

Any plagiarism or turning in writing that is not your own is not permitted any time. You must do your own work on the assignments. Submitting the same essay to satisfy more than one requirement is cheating and will be punished accordingly. Similarly, re-using paragraphs (even within the same essay) is cheating and will be punished accordingly. Turning in of work previously submitted for this or any other class is not allowed and will be punished accordingly. Any turning in of gibberish as if it was an essay is cheating and will be punished accordingly. Copying a newspaper article or material from a website and turning that in as part of your essay, except for brief properly attributed quotations, is plagiarism and will be punished. If you think you are “getting away with something”, it is probably cheating. Don’t do it. It’s not worth it.

### **Incomplete Policy**

**Please note that according to University policy, students must have passing work before an incomplete can be assigned. That means that you must already have earned 65 class points (to earn a C-, the lowest passing grade in this class) before an incomplete can be assigned. Incompletes will NOT be authorized in the final week of classes or later in the semester. IF YOU DO NOT REQUEST AN INCOMPLETE AND HAVE ALREADY BEEN ASSIGNED ENOUGH POINTS FOR A PASSING GRADE PRIOR TO THE INITIAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE (generally 8 days before the final revision deadline), THE INCOMPLETE WILL NOT BE APPROVED.**