

Fall 2017 Finance 302 Online www.BoringFinance.com (syllabus, 7/06/2017 revision)

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Class runs from 8/28/2017 to 11:55am PST 12/07/2017, online only.

10/31/2017 at 11:55am is “Bonus Points” deadline.

(You may start early if you wish.)

Initial submissions of all assignments due by 11:55am PST, THURSDAY 11/30/2017!!!

This online class is only for the CSUN Sections taught by **Prof. G. Michael Phillips**

Section 01 #13427 and Section 2 #13553

If you have a different instructor or are enrolled in a different Class Number, then you are in a different version of Fin 302.

These sections DO NOT USE MOODLE OR CANVAS. Instead, use www.BoringFinance.com and www.WileyPLUS.com .

Office Hours & contact information:

Prof. Phillips JH4101 (on nice days, office hours held in Arbor Grille patio) Tuesday 2pm-3pm

Contact the professor via email or in person!

The office phone is seldom if ever checked for messages.

You may begin working on the class as soon as it is available. You may work whenever you wish, but you are encouraged to work hard earlier in the semester. To help motivate you, there is a 10% bonus for work turned in by an early deadline, discussed below.

Most students who do poorly in this class do so because of procrastination, not difficulty of material.

Key Dates:

Your assignments submitted by **11:55am on 10/31/2017** are eligible for a **10% bonus** (equivalent to a letter grade!) on points earned. Please get started on your readings and assignments as soon as you can to be able to receive the point bonus.

Assignments must be turned in initially before 11:55am 11/30/2017 if they are to count. Revisions of returned assignments may be turned in up to the “Class Expiration Date/Time” which is **11:55am PST 12/07/2017**. (Note that assignments are due a bit before noon, not midnight.) No assignments may be turned in after that date and time. In no case are any assignments able to be accepted using email, paper, text, or any other method besides the submission tool on the www.BoringFinance.com website.

With one exception, if you are delayed for any reason including there is a computer problem, or a natural disaster, or you are in the hospital, or the website isn't responding, or you forgot, or you thought the due-date was some other time, or any other reason, then **there is no recourse**. For that reason, we encourage you to be done with your initial submission of assignments **several days before the initial submission deadline**. (Indeed, the “bonus point deadline” makes a great target!) The sole exception is if you are active duty military and are unexpectedly deployed so you would not have access to Internet facilities, then contact me and we can work something out if needed.

Note: there is no guarantee or expectations that assignments turned in close to the end of the semester initial submission deadline will be graded in time for revisions to occur. Similarly, there is no expectation that students waiting until then to submit their assignments will be able to do so. To be safe, please submit your assignments throughout the semester and prior to the bonus point deadline.

Class Venue:

The class takes place at www.BoringFinance.com in the class for (Fin302 Fall 2017 Phillips). There are NO required class meetings, NO required times for all students to be online, and NO official lectures. There is NO Moodle or Canvas site. There is also no scheduled final examination. However, there is a large amount of written material and a lot of reading. Many of the assignments are reasonably unstructured so that you can tailor them to best fit your own needs and interests. Please take full advantage of this opportunity to learn about yourself and plan for your future. Please ensure that all your papers are SUBMITTED (NOT DRAFT) before the initial submission date if they are to count.

All class activities are done “asynchronously” at your own pace on your own schedule and at your own location (subject to the dates mentioned above). Additional material is provided at www.WileyPLUS.com (which requires a purchased access code that comes in a bundle with some new copies of the textbook) and www.CFPIonline.com which is another free resource.

Class Schedule:

You have about 17 chapters to read and thousands of words to write in thoughtful memos and essays. You may find it helpful to complete two chapters per week along with the corresponding online lectures, worksheets, and supplemental/resource materials.

Key Dates:

Now—get started

11:55am 10/31/2017 – have as much turned in before then as possible for 10% bonus points

11:55am 11/30/2017 – any assignment that will be graded must be turned in initially by this date

11:55am 12/07/2017 – last day of class; all revised assignments must be turned in before then.

Textbook Materials:

REQUIRED:

The online WileyPLUS electronic text “Personal Finance” by Vickie Bajtelsmit, which is available as a WileyPLUS course with an optional print companion volume, sold through the campus bookstore or from www.WileyPLUS.com . The class WileyPLUS URL is www.wileyplus.com/class/588662 . The online only version costs \$80 and the Online + print companion costs \$110. The online version is required but the print version of the text may be a helpful addition.

Other Supplemental Materials:

There are a wide range of supplemental materials provided on the WileyPLUS website and as “Resources” for each unit on the BoringFinance.com website. Please be sure to check these out. They can add tremendous value to your Fin302 experience. (Please note that some of the resources are **Lynda.com videos** which are free to students only when accessed through the campus portal or on campus. If you are asked to pay for access, then you didn’t go to them the right way. The Lynda videos are an excellent way to cover key material for this class.)

Some students might choose to spend \$95 to purchase a supplemental learning package including videos by radio personality Dave Ramsey. While not exactly matching the content and structure of this course, some students find these videos to be motivational. These optional supplemental materials are available at <http://www.daveramsey.com/store/prodD0205.html> .

There are also two alternative “open access” textbooks that are available for download from the resources associated with the Fin302 Topic 1 (“Getting Started”) on www.BoringFinance.com . These are not as current or thorough as the Bajtelsmit text, and they don’t cover all the same topics as the class text, but they are “free”. Note that students who use these as their sole text (and don’t also use the Bajtelsmit WileyPLUS materials) usually earn substantially lower grades.

Finally, some students may choose to purchase “Work Your Wealth: 9 Steps to Making Smarter Choices With Your Money” by Storjohann, available from Amazon (https://smile.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=work+your+wealth+smarter+choices). This supplement costs about \$9 for Kindle and includes additional applications that might help you with your financial planning essay.

Using www.BoringFinance.com

If you haven’t already done so, you will need to use your my.csun.edu email address and sign up for a free account on www.BoringFinance.com. **Please note that this class DOES NOT USE MOODLE OR CANVAS.** Once you have your BoringFinance.com account activated, then go to the “Classes” tab and find the “Manage your classes/Join another class” in the center of the page. At that link, you can “add” this section of Fin302. Please note that just because you join(add), or un-join(drop), the section to your account on BoringFinance.com doesn’t mean that you added or dropped as far as the University is concerned. These are unrelated processes.

Once you’ve joined the class, you can find a “Class Schedule” which shows the assignments and lectures in various orders. The Class Resources tab contains links pertaining to each unit that should be helpful. The Assignments link takes you to where each of the assignments is described in detail and where you may turn them in. (Please see “Assignments” below for more information. Your total points earned in the class will be displayed at various places on the website when you log in including right below the menu block with the links mentioned above. It will say “Estimated Class Points = XX” where XX is your points earned.

There is also a “Countdown clock” telling you how much time is left to turn in the initial versions of any assignments and how much time is left in the course.

On the upper right corner is a mail box. Any correspondence sent from the BoringFinance website, including comments on graded papers, will be sent to your email address that you registered with but also to the mail box available on the site. If you have class emails in the envelope but you didn’t get any to your email address, you might want to check your Junk Mail settings.

Grading

The class is based on class points earned. It is possible to earn more than 100 points in the class. Your grade is based on total points, not percent of possible points. When your webpage for the class indicates you have at least 90 points, then you have indeed earned an A. (If you earn 125 points, you still earn an A. If you earn 89.9 points, you earn a B. Sorry.)

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 64.999 or less you will fail the course. Therefore, please do more, a lot more, and try for an A while you're at it.

Class Structure: *The class has six broad units (following Bajtelsmit's book) with several chapters in each unit.*

- 1. Getting Started (Bajtelsmit chapters 1)*
- 2. The Basics (Bajtelsmit chapters 1 – 4)*
- 3. Securing Your Needs (Bajtelsmit chapters 5 -9)*
- 4. Building Wealth (Bajtelsmit chapters 10 – 13)*
- 5. Estate Planning & Miscellaneous (Bajtelsmit chapter 14, and other topics from supplemental materials including www.cfpionline.com)*

Assignments

There are four types of assignments: five “Information Comparison Essays”, five “Unit Personal Reflection Essays”, one “Financial Planning Book Report”, and one very large “Personal Financial Plan Essay”. You may earn points by doing a variety of these assignments. You are not required to do any particular assignment (**except Information Comparison Essay #1 which is a prerequisite for most of the other assignments**) so you may pick which ones you wish to

do based on your interests and your target grade. However, to get the most from the class, you might want to do all the assignments anyway.

Information Comparison Essays

5 essays x 6 points each = **30 points possible** (min 500 word essay), Pass/Fail grading

(Essays 2 – 5 have Information Comparison Essay #1 as a prerequisite.)

These 500-word "Information Comparison" essays are designed to have you think about how new Internet and computer database information resources compare to traditional information resources such as newspapers, books, magazines, and broadcast media.

In each of the essays, you will be given a specific comparison to make. You need to find a topic from the class and research it using the types of resources identified for the assignment. (For example, in the first assignment, you will use <http://news.google.com> and a traditional print newspaper like the Wall Street Journal or the Los Angeles Times.)

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. You should compare and contrast the information you find on the specific topic. You should also compare and contrast the sources themselves and indicate when each would be preferred. (For example, in the first assignment, you might research alternative sources for student loans. You could discuss what you found in the newspaper and also what you found in news.google.com. You would then discuss when you would use newspapers to research a topic and when you would use news.google.com to research a topic.) These essays should be well written with full citation according to the style (e.g., APA, MLA) used in your major discipline. Be sure to include references at the end of each paper.

Unit Personal Reflection Essays

5 essays x 6 points each = **30 points possible** (min 500 word essay), P/F grading

(These essays do NOT have prerequisites.)

For each of the units (major topics) in this course, you may write a reflection paper. Think about what you've done, what you've learned, and how it could apply to your life. What from the topic do you want to be sure to remember in the future? Are there any personal goals that you've identified? Are there any habits you need to change? Is there anything about your financial life you need to change?

These reflection essays are a chance for you to pull your thoughts together and make the valuable material in Personal Financial Planning your own.

Financial Planning Book Report

1 essay x up to 10 points = **10 points possible** (min 2500 word essay) Numerical grading

(Information Comparison Essay #1 is prerequisite.)

There are hundreds of books written about personal financial planning and related topics. Some of them are quite interesting, some are deadly dull. Some are valuable, some have no content to speak of. For this assignment, you are to find a book that appears to be of interest to you that is directly related to one of the chapters in the textbook. **YOU MAY NOT REPORT ON A TEXTBOOK.** Then, write an analytical review of the book. Who is the book written for? Did it do a good job addressing the needs of that audience? Did you learn anything? How did the material compare to what else you've learned in this class? Would you recommend this book to others? Why? (or Why not?)

This assignment is graded out of 100% and is worth up to 10 points in the class. Please note that **after the book report assignment is submitted, it cannot be revised or resubmitted.** Please do a good job the first time! (min 2500 words)

Personal Financial Plan Essay

1 essay x 40 points = **40 points possible** (min 3500 word essay) P/F grading

(Information Comparison Essay #1 is prerequisite.)

The goal of this assignment is to tie together everything in this course into a useful financial plan that you will be able to use to help you achieve your financial goals. **There is a lot of work to be done here besides just writing a paper, which is why this assignment is worth 40 points. You should be working on this all semester long.**

(Please note that this is a Pass/Fail paper. If you submit it in a timely fashion, there is a chance you might have an opportunity to revise it if the paper doesn't "pass" the first time. If you wait too close to the end of the semester, there usually is not be enough time for the professors to grade and return the paper in time for you to provide any revisions. You are strongly encouraged to get started soon. Do not wait until the last moment to begin or to turn this in.)

To do this paper, we suggest the following steps:

1. Read the textbook and supplemental materials for each unit.
2. Listen/watch the online "Lynda.com" lectures for each unit and any supplemental materials you might find and choose to watch on other websites (e.g., CFPIonline.com). Similarly, look at any online material on WileyPLUS associated with these chapters including lectures.
3. Do the worksheets (or at least as many as strike you as useful, and please read through the others) in the Personal Financial Planning guide which is available for each chapter in the

WileyPLUS.com online resource. The PFP Worksheets are included in WileyPLUS as “assignments”.

4. Think about the issues raised in the chapters and the worksheets.
5. For EACH of the four major units ("The Basics", "Securing Your Needs", "Building Wealth", and "Estate Planning"), perform the following analysis:
 - a. What is your current situation/condition?
 - b. What are your current "strengths" in the topics covered in the unit?
 - c. What are your current "weaknesses" in the topics covered in the unit?
 - d. What are your current "opportunities" (including potential for new choices, rearranging resources, new decisions, profit potential, and so forth) in the topics covered in the unit?
 - e. What are your current "threats" in the topics covered in the unit? (That is, what might go wrong, what are the downsides associated with your current situation? How might you correct those going forward?)
6. For EACH of the four major units, where would you like to be (as best as you can tell) 30 years from now? 20 years from now? 10 years from now? 5 years from now? Next year? What major expenditures would you like to save for? What cash flows will you need to support your desired lifestyle? Who are your dependents? What charities would you like to support? What other financial obligations do you expect to have? What other life-goals would you like? Given those targets, identify several goals and milestones to let you know if you are on track.
7. Using the analysis and reflection you did with the PFP Worksheets, your SWOT analysis of your current situation, your assessment of possible targets, milestones, and goals, and that you wrote about in your "Personal Reflection" essays, write a Personal Financial Plan essay summarizing this material. This essay should be a minimum of 3500 words and written in essay form with appropriate spelling and grammar. **The essay should follow the following general sequence:**
 - I. Introduction and statement of current goals ("Getting Started")
 - II. Income, Career, and Current Savings and Investments ("The Basics")
 - III. Savings & Cash Management, Credit and Loans, Various types of Insurance, Risk Management, Housing, Transportation, Career Expectations ("Securing Your Needs")
 - IV. Investing and growing resources for the future ("Building Wealth")
 - V. Estate Planning ("Estate Planning")

VI. Other Relevant Topics (based on your own reading and interests)

This is a significant paper. Please note that while 4,000 words is the "minimum", the average length is usually much longer. Done correctly, this paper is a tool for you in the future. You should think about writing it for you, now and at each of the milestone periods in the future for purposes of assessment. (Are you on the right track? Did your goals change? What is different that you hadn't thought about before? What should you do more of? What should you do less of? and so on.) Again, this paper is especially for your own future reference. We hope that this paper will be an ongoing work in progress that you will revise and update from year to year as your life develops. **Please get started early** keeping your notes, doing the PFP worksheets (available on WileyPLUS), thinking about what goes into this paper, and actually working on your outline and draft. Done right, you should be able to write the draft of the paper a little at a time over the whole semester so that you can avoid the "end of the semester panic".

Have fun. We hope this is a very rewarding, indeed life-changing, assignment.

Grading Example

- (1) *Suppose you successfully do all the Information Comparison Essays (30 points), the Book Report (say, 9 points earned), and the Unit Personal Reflection Essays (30 points). That is 69 points, a C-. Suppose you turn the Information Comparison Essays in by the bonus deadline or earlier so you earn an additional 3 bonus points. Then, you would have 72 points, a C.*

- (2) *Suppose you do Information Comparison Essay #1 (6 points) and Information Comparison Essay #5 (6 points), the Unit Personal Reflection Essays (30 points), and the Personal Financial Plan Essay (40 points). You would have earned 82 points, a B.*

- (3) *Suppose you do three of the Information Comparison Essays ($3 \times 6 = 18$ points) and three of the Unit Personal Reflection Essays ($3 \times 6 = 18$ points) and turn these in on by the bonus deadline or before. These would earn $.10 \times (18 + 18) = 3.6$ additional points, for a total of 39.6 points. If in addition you write the Personal Finance Book Report and earn, say, 8 points and then do write the Personal Financial Plan, you would have earned a total of 86.6 points, a B. Had you done just one more additional Information Comparison Essay (6 points), you would have 92.6 points, an A.*

Your grade is based on the total number of points that you earn, not on the percentage of possible points that you earn. There are many more points possible than are needed to earn an A in this course. Please choose assignments that are helpful and interesting to you.

The following are various policies and notices that relate to this class.

The University requires that these notices be included in the syllabus.

Please read them carefully.

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 REQUEST AN INCOMPLETE AND DO NOT ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH POINTS ASSIGNED FOR A PASSING GRADE PRIOR TO THE INITIAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE (generally 2 weeks before the final revision deadline), THE INCOMPLETE WILL NOT BE APPROVED. That means, you need to have at least 65+ points by the initial submission deadline.

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

- ***Life Long Learning***

Goal: Students will develop cognitive, physical and affective skills, which will allow them to become more integrated and well-rounded individuals within various physical, social, cultural, and technological environments and communities.

Student Learning Outcomes Students will:

1. Identify and actively engage in behaviors conducive to individual health, well-being or development, and understand the value of maintaining these behaviors throughout their lifespan.
2. Identify and apply strategies leading to health, well-being or development for community members of diverse populations.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills of science and technology and evaluate how they impact individuals, the community and/or society.

- ***Information Competence (IC)***

Goal: Students will progressively develop information competence skills throughout their undergraduate career by developing a basic understanding of information retrieval tools and practices, as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically.

Student Learning Outcomes Students will:

1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
2. Demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information using a variety of sources and methods.
3. Locate, retrieve and evaluate a variety of relevant information, including print and electronic formats.
4. Organize and synthesize information in order to communicate effectively.
5. Explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information.

- ***Writing Intensive (WI)***

Goal: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course, students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2,500 words.

Student Learning Outcomes Students will:

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing.
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing.
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising and completing a finished product.
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims and coherently structuring complex ideas.
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity.
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc.) where appropriate.

Key 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
- Life insurance and long-term care 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
- Estate planning

(Additional topics covered in the class are identified in the textbook and the supplemental resources section of the class website and also are available on www.cfpionline.com.)