

**Commerce 4FL3
Personal Finance
Fall 2020 Course Outline**

**Finance and Business Economics Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course is a general introduction to financial planning in the Canadian context. The objective of the course is to study individuals' financial goals and how to achieve those goals. Students will learn how to think logically and systematically about long-term financial planning (for individuals) in the presence of uncertainty. Completion of the course should enable students to properly plan for their financial future. The course will also be of interest to those who want to pursue a career in personal financial planning.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Narat Charupat
Office: DSB 314
Tel: (905) 525-9140 Ext. 23987
E-mail: charupat@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: To be advised
Class Location: On-line
Class Time: Wednesday 19:00 – 22:00

Course Website: Please visit Avenue to Learn at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	No	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	No	Numeracy:	Yes	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	No	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	No
Evidence-based	Yes	Experiential	No	Final Exam	Yes	Guest Speaker	No

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will cover various topics that are relevant to financial decision makings of individuals. These topics include mathematics and statistics of personal finance; personal financial condition and goals setting; human financial life cycle; personal income tax planning and strategies; personal risk management (life, health, disability, and property insurance); debt and credit management (loans, lines of credit, etc.); renting, buying and financing a home; building an investment portfolio (types of investments and their risks and returns); and retirement planning.

The course intends to provide students with a structured framework to combine their knowledge of the above topics and use it to solve various financial problems. To achieve this goal, class time will not be spent on topics that students can read on their own. Rather, we will spend more time on how to approach and solve problems. Therefore, to get the most out of this course, you should read the topics that we are going to cover in class ahead of time.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- have a good understanding of various personal finance topics and financial tools;
 - be able to identify individuals' financial goals and the constraints that they face;
 - be able to come up with a plan to help individuals achieve their financial goals;
- most importantly, be able to think logically and systematically, and to approach problems in a structured manner.

COURSE DELIVERY

This course will be delivered through live sessions. Each live session will be recorded and its video will subsequently be posted on-line.

TEXTBOOK

Strategic Financial Planning Over the Lifecycle: A Conceptual Approach to Personal Risk Management by Narat Charupat, Huaxiong Huang and Moshe A. Milevsky

EVALUATION

You will be evaluated based on four components according to the following weights:

Components and Weights

Assignment #1 (see Note 1)	10%
Assignment #2 (see Note 1)	10%
Midterm Exam (see Note 2)	40%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

Notes:

- 1) Both assignments can be done individually or with one partner. The first assignment will be given out on Wednesday October 7 and due back on Wednesday October 21. The second assignment will be given out on Wednesday November 25 and due back on Wednesday December 2.
- 2) The midterm exam is scheduled to take place on Wednesday October 28 from 19:00 to 22:00. Both the midterm exam and the final exam will be designed to reward your understanding *and* thinking.
- 3) Missed assignments/exams will receive a grade of zero unless the student has submitted and been approved for a Notification of Absence or MSAF.

Grade Conversion

I do not use a fixed percentage grading scale. That is, there is no fixed schedule that I use to map marks to letter grades. This means that raw marks are not in themselves very meaningful. Rather, your final grade will depend on how well you do relative to other people in your class.

Communication and Feedback

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants.

All students must receive feedback for at least 10% of the final grade prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at;

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

ONLINE COURSE COMPONENT

In this course, we will be using various on-line tools such as Zoom/MS Teams, Avenue to Learn and e-mail communications. Students should be aware that when they access these tools, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure.

If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

In this course, we may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their

computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and the link below;

<http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDEGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 4FL3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on Avenue to Learn. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC
1	Sept 9	Introduction. Mathematics of Personal Finance
2	Sept 16	Personal Financial Statements
3	Sept 23	Consumption Smoothing and Optimal Savings
4-5	Sept 30, Oct 7	Debts, Loans and Mortgages
6	Oct 21	Personal Income Tax Planning (Part 1)
	Oct 28	Midterm exam
7	Nov 4	Personal Income Tax Planning (Part 2)
8	Nov 11	Risk, Utility and Insurance
9	Nov 18	Mortality Risk and Life Insurance
10	Nov 25	Investment and Diversification (Part 1)
11	Dec 2	Investment and Diversification (Part 2)
12	Dec 9	Housing Decisions

Note: The above schedule is subject to change.