

FIL 141

Personal Financial Literacy for the College Student Fall 2026



Course Information

Class Meeting Times:

Section 004 and 005: Online, Asynchronous

[ISU Academic Calendar](#)

Textbook Requirements:

All course materials will be provided to you in Canvas. You will find the course materials in the Modules section of Canvas.

The standard due date for the class will be Monday night at 11:59 p.m., unless Monday falls on a holiday and the campus is closed. Due dates are listed for each activity in the Modules.

Course Description from the University Catalog:

Development of skills that promote financial responsibility by exploring the relationship between careers and money management. Not for Teacher Licensure. Equivalent course offered as BE and FIL 141; repeat policy will apply. The course is part of the General Education Curriculum at ISU in the domain of Quantitative Reasoning.

Course Rationale: The growing emphasis on financial literacy has highlighted the need for students to learn how to navigate the financial decisions they must make and how to make informed decisions related to managing finances and budgeting, saving and investing, living independently, earning and reporting income, buying goods and services, using credit, banking, and protecting against risk.

Note: This course does NOT satisfy the Illinois State Board of Education requirements for teacher licensure in the area of Personal Financial Literacy, Consumer Education, Consumer Economics, or any related courses.

Instructor Information:

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Professor

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Meet your Professor



Dr. Tamra Connor
Professor
Finance, Insurance, and Law
Department

I am a veteran teacher with over 40 years of classroom experience. I am the author of *Managing Your Personal Finances, 8e*, which is a textbook used in high schools in the U.S.

I am active in several professional associations, including SIEC and WIBE. To

learn more about me, visit my [LinkedIn Page](#).

All office hours will be virtual. To accommodate as many students as possible, please check the weekly Office Hours announcement in Canvas or contact me to schedule an appointment.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of FIL 141, the student will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of career exploration, planning, and management
- Explain the relationship between employment and personal financial wellness
- Evaluate job-related financial transactions
- Explain the purpose of taxes in the U.S. economy
- Complete required forms to file personal income taxes
- Evaluate a financial institution to make an informed decision in selecting and using a financial institution
- Utilize money management techniques to plan personal finances
- Explain economic factors that impact personal finances
- Discuss the importance of saving and investing in a personal financial plan
- Calculate future value and interest
- Explain the importance of managing credit
- Calculate the costs of credit
- Discuss the importance of saving and investing in a personal financial plan
- Evaluate personal financial decisions using a decision-making process
- Create a Risk Management Plan
- Develop a Personal Financial Management Plan

In this course, success is not defined by grades; it is defined by growth. You succeed when you can apply financial concepts to real situations, make informed decisions, explain your reasoning, and feel confident navigating your financial life. The goal is not perfection, but progress, practice, and the ability to use these skills beyond the classroom.

In Quantitative Reasoning courses, students examine the principles, practices, instruments, and systems of mathematics and logic used to measure, quantify, analyze, and represent social, scientific, technological, and other phenomena as a basis for decision-making. Problems and examples in the course are drawn from a variety of disciplines to represent a rich diversity of applications. Mathematics and logic will provide a basis for addressing the quantitative dimensions of problems confronting individuals, societies, and humanity.

Courses generally assess basic mathematical skills, understanding of elementary mathematical concepts, and the ability to reason quantitatively and to model and solve problems with quantitative methods.

Courses in the Quantitative Reasoning category of General Education address the following learning outcomes:

1. Knowledge of diverse human cultures and the physical and natural world, allowing students to
 - a. use theories and principal concepts, both contemporary and enduring, to understand technologies, diverse cultures, and the physical and natural world
 - b. *explain how the combination of the humanities, fine arts, natural and social sciences, and technology contributes to the quality of life for individuals and communities*
2. Intellectual and practical skills, allowing students to
 - a. make informed judgments
 - b. analyze data to examine research questions and test hypotheses
 - c. *report information effectively and responsibly*
3. Personal and social responsibility, allowing students to
 - a. demonstrate ethical decision making
 - b. demonstrate the ability to think reflectively
4. Integrative and applied learning, allowing students to
 - a. identify and solve problems
 - b. transfer learning to novel situations
 - c. *work effectively in teams*

Primary learning outcomes are indicated in plain text, and secondary learning outcomes are indicated in *italics*.

Mutual Responsibilities

This class is a community of scholars from all ISU colleges. For a community to function well, we need to have a common understanding of expectations.

What You Should Do:

- Substantially participate in all coursework
- Complete assignments on time
- Plan your time to allow for technology glitches. A brief Canvas outage is not a sufficient reason to request an assignment extension.
- Join me for office hours or schedule one-on-one meetings
- Notify me immediately if you find a broken link, a module fails to load, or a file is missing. This does not extend assignment deadlines unless the issue prevents completion.

What We Should All Do:

- Treat one another with respect
- It is okay to disagree with one another; however, we must always remain civil while disagreeing
- Remember that everyone comes to this class from different places, and there is no such thing as a stupid question

What I Will Do for You:

- Respond to your communications (**please use Canvas for all communication**) within **two business days**
- Cultivate an atmosphere of respect by moderating online discussions
- **Be a resource for you when you need additional help with the content, please ask for help**
- Provide feedback on your assignments within a reasonable time frame (generally within five to seven days of the assignment due date)

Required Textbook and Technology

Textbook Information

All course materials will be provided to you in Canvas this semester.

Required Technology

All materials for this class will be within the Canvas Learning Environment. Access to the internet and a **computer** will be required to complete the class. All students are encouraged to take the Introduction to Technology Quickstart Orientation, found here: IllinoisState.edu/Quickstart.

Technology support is available at help.illinoisstate.edu/technology/, including hundreds of help articles on everything involving ISU technology, online chat, and phone support at (309) 438-HELP (4357). Walk-up support and computer repair & purchases are available from TechZone, located on the first floor of the Bone Student Center. Online support is available at TechZone.IllinoisState.edu.

ISU provides access to [Microsoft 365](#) (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) and Adobe Express (to read and create PDF documents) free of charge. Students can install these programs on their personal computers. Only Microsoft and Adobe PDF files will be accepted for this class.

Students who do not have access to the technology they need to be successful in their coursework should contact the Technology Support Center using this [link](#) or by calling (309)438-HELP (4357) to discuss options.

Students who do not have a computer, may [request a loaner laptop](#).

It is the expectation that all students have access to the available technology before starting this class. Please do not plan to complete this class using a tablet. A computer is necessary for success.

*“Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving.”
~ Warren Buffett*

Professional Responsibilities

As a professional, you are expected to participate in class with maximum effort each day. All students are expected to be prepared to discuss the class content and how the activities apply to their future careers.

Although some of the information may be redundant for individuals in the class, discussion about how to apply the learning to your future career will be incorporated into most sessions.

This is an online class; all assignments will be completed outside a classroom.

For a 3-credit-hour class, you should spend a minimum of 9 hours per week working on this class if you are in the 16-week section.

You are expected to log into Canvas **frequently**. Students who fail to log in at least three times per week may result in missed announcements, deadlines, or feedback. Students are responsible for all posted information regardless of login frequency.



Photo by [Pakata Goh](#) on Unsplash

Evaluation and Course

This course will be using weighted categories; certain types of assignments are collectively worth a percentage of the course. The Canvas gradebook will calculate your average automatically. The categories include:

1. Final Project/Exam (25%)
2. Quizzes (35%)
3. Assignments and Activities (40%)

Grading Scale:

- A = 90 – 100%
- B = 80 – 89.99%
- C = 70 – 79.99%
- D = 60 – 69.99%
- F = 0 – 59.99%



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“When it comes to money, ignorance is NOT bliss. What you don’t know CAN hurt you.”

~Sandra S. Simmons

If you experience a technical issue, you must document it (with a screenshot and timestamp) and notify me within 12 hours. This does not extend assignment deadlines unless the issue prevents completion of an assignment.

Course Policies

Participation and Due Dates

This is a 100% online, asynchronous course. You are responsible for completing all assigned academic work. You should familiarize yourself with university policy to understand which absences are excused and which are not.

You are responsible for planning with your professor to complete missed coursework before an excused absence, unless it is an emergency absence. If you need advice on managing an extended absence or want to notify your instructors of your absence, contact the Dean of Students Office.

As responsible adults investing in their future, Illinois State University students are encouraged to take control of their education, especially when life and health challenges disrupt the planned process. When students are unable to complete the course requirements, they must be swift and proactive in working with their professor to take advantage of learning opportunities, develop mastery of the course materials, meet the learning objectives outlined in the course, and prepare for more advanced learning.

For this class, all due dates are final. A 5% per day penalty will be applied to all late work. The timestamp of the final attempt determines lateness. Any attempt submitted after the deadline incurs the late penalty.

There are no exams in this class. Quizzes are designed as learning tools. Repeated attempts must show meaningful improvement. Random guessing or brute-force attempts may result in score adjustments. Quizzes can be submitted a maximum of five times. The highest grade will be recorded.

All assignments can be submitted up to 5 times before the due date. All submissions must be complete. Submissions lacking required elements will be graded as incomplete. Placeholder or blank submissions may result in the earliest valid submission being graded.

The final project has a specific due date. No final projects will be accepted after the due date for any reason. You will have approximately two weeks to complete the final project. Please plan your calendar appropriately.

“Financial freedom is available to those who learn about it and work for it.”

~Robert Kiyosaki

Religious Observance Guidelines

Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS) assists students who are seeking religious accommodations. Visit their Religious Accommodations website or contact SAAS at AbleISU@ilstu.edu or (309) 438-5853 for assistance with this absence request. Due to the nature of 100% online, asynchronous courses, it is the responsibility of the students to plan for religious holidays and submit work on or before the published due date.

Classroom Behavior

In the classroom and other learning environments, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with Illinois State University's Code of Student Conduct, and you should familiarize yourself with the University Classroom Disruption Policy 4.1.17.

Disruptive student conduct is behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (including in-person and virtual settings at on- and off-campus locations) that disrupts the educational process.

Free peer tutoring is available for math, writing, and everything in between. All ISU tutoring opportunities are now conveniently located on one centralized website.

Office Hours

Office hours will be announced each week and are typically in the mornings because I have other professional responsibilities later in the day.

All office hours will be held during the University's normal operating hours (8:00 – 4:30 CT).

I will announce the times I will have an open online chat room by Monday morning each week. Office hours are optional but recommended.

Feel free to log in to the online room if you have questions. You may also request a one-on-one meeting with me. We will find a convenient time that works with both of our schedules.

All meetings should take place during standard working hours; however, you may request a time outside the standard working day, and I will do my best to accommodate you.

You will be required to turn on your camera during meetings. I am hearing-impaired; this is an ADA accommodation for me that allows me to “hear” you by enabling me to use the ADA tools built into the online meeting software. Camera use is required unless SAAS provides accommodation. If you have an ADA accommodation that affects camera use, you should notify me so that an alternative communication method can be arranged.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, including the use of AI, as your own, is a form of academic dishonesty under the Code of Student Conduct.

The [Dean of Students Office](#) provides guidance and support in several ways. You can contact them weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Academic Integrity, continued

Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper authorization and attribution is a form of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about whether something used in your work requires attribution, please reach out to your professor to discuss it as soon as possible. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be referred to [Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities](#) for review under the Student Code of Conduct. Students found responsible for academic dishonesty may also be assigned a grade penalty by the instructor.

Generative AI can be used in this course at specified times **with proper attribution**. AI use is permitted only when explicitly stated in the assignment instructions. All other uses of AI will be considered Academic Misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

In this course, students may use generative AI tools (such as CoPilot, ChatGPT, or Claude) when specified in the assignment instructions, provided that their use is **properly disclosed through in-text citations, quotations, and references**. Please use the most current version of APA for all citations in this class.

Note that any use of generative AI must be both responsible and ethical. This means that students using generative AI must comply with all privacy laws and research requirements to protect data, and must have appropriate permissions to enter data into a generative AI tool. Students should clarify any questions on whether data or information may be entered into a generative AI tool with the instructor. Co-Pilot is included as part of your Microsoft 365 subscription at the University. Students should understand that using generative AI tools outside the university system can expose their personal information. When you access **Copilot through My.IllinoisState.edu**, anything you enter stays within the university's protected environment. However, when you use **any external generative AI platform**, the information you provide may be stored, shared, or visible to others, depending on that company's data policies.

Student Basic Needs

Student Navigator Program--The Student Navigator program is a student-led, peer-to-peer initiative in the Dean of Students Office designed to assist students facing economic hardships and basic needs crises. Referrals are available to resources for food, textbooks, housing, finances, health, and more.

For more information, please visit the following link: <https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/services/student-navigator/>

Redbird Well is ISU's centralized hub for on-campus well-being and recreation resources, finding help, and getting involved.

All electronic communications to your professor should be professional. Inappropriate messages will be returned for revision before the question is answered.

Student Accommodation Statement

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact [Student Access and Accommodation Services](#) at 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone [\(309\) 438-5853](#), Video Phone [\(309\) 319-7682](#) or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.



*“Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship.”
~ Benjamin Franklin*

General Calendar for the Class

Please check Canvas for the official due dates for each assignment. The standard due date time will be posted in Canvas.

The Final Project is due as indicated in the class Modules posted on Canvas. Files must be readable and accessible at the time of submission. Corrupted, blank, or incorrect file types will be treated as non-submissions.

Please plan to spend 9-12 hours per week working in the class over a 16-week course. The 8-week courses will require you to work between 18 and 24 hours per week. Summer session courses will also require approximately 18–24 hours per week.

It may take 5-7 days for all grading to be completed each week.

Students are expected to turn work in on time. If you submit work late, a 5% per day penalty will be applied to your grade. You may work ahead in class, as individual modules are opened. Regular participation, e.g., completing activities, engaging with feedback, and maintaining consistent progress through the modules, is required for course completion.

Course Outline

Orientation to the Online Course (located in Canvas)

Textbook

- Chapter 1: Personal Planning
- Chapter 2: Employment and Finances
- Chapter 3: Taxes
- Chapter 4: Financial Transactions
- Chapter 5: Credit
- Chapter 6: Managing Resources
- Chapter 7: Risk Management
- Chapter 8: Putting It All Together

Final Project (located in Canvas)

In the 16-week course, you will complete approximately one chapter every other week. In the 8-week course, you will complete approximately one chapter every week. Summer sessions will complete a chapter approximately every five calendar days.

Time Expectations in College Courses

Illinois State University follows the United States Department of Education's definition of a credit hour (34 CFR 600.2). A credit hour is the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement, which is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for a standard semester. Short-term courses lasting fewer than 15 weeks (plus finals) will have higher per-week requirements.
2. For traditional courses, a three-credit-hour class meets 3 hours per week over the course of the semester and will have at least 6 hours of outside classroom work expectations.

What this means for you: Students typically need 9 or more hours per week to work through the course content. Time expectations are provided to help you plan. While not directly graded, insufficient engagement will impact classroom performance.

You are enrolled in an online, asynchronous course with no in-person component. Because you are in an online course, the U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission require that all courses include regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and student. The definition of regular and substantive interaction is interactions that engage students in teaching, learning, and assessment, are consistent with at least two substantive activities, provide scheduled and predictable learning opportunities, and involve responsive and proactive monitoring of the student's academic engagement and success. ISU ensures regular interaction between a student and a professor before the student completes the course or competency by:

1. Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis (office hours); and
2. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that the professor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student (this means grading your work promptly, office hours, and written correspondence).

As a student, you will meet this requirement by:

1. Timely submission, engagement with activities, and responsiveness to feedback.

As your professor, I will meet this requirement by:

2. Assessing your coursework
3. Providing feedback on your coursework via grades and/or written commentary
4. Provide information and respond to questions about the content of the course
5. Holding at least 3 hours of office hours per week and offering one-on-one meetings at mutually agreeable times, when requested

References:

<https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-19/> and <https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-21/>

Philosophy of the Class Design

During this class, you will find several different types of activities that should appeal to most students most of the time, but not all students all the time. As you work through the assignments, you may find some that you do not like. The course aims to accommodate all learning styles at some point during the class.

I want to share a little of my philosophy for teaching an online class with you. I do this for several reasons.

I believe that if you, the student, understand the "why" behind what I ask you to do, you will be more receptive to completing the activity to the best of your ability. None of the work in this class is "busy" work. Each task I ask you to complete is leading you to a greater overall understanding of the topic. There will be many short activities in the class. The reason for this model is that we do not have the benefit of being in a classroom space where I can read your expressions and body language to gauge your understanding. Some of the activities may not seem to be "personal finance," and yet all of them are related to the class. Please trust me and complete every assignment to the best of your ability. Because personal finance is *personal*, there may be assignments that you do not wish to complete. That is your choice. However, if you decide not to complete an assignment, please be aware that it will impact your grade. I have designed the class so that if you miss one or two assignments, your overall grade will not be affected. If you have any questions, please contact me. I will respond to you as quickly as possible.

FIL 141 is a skills-based class. You are learning how to complete the skills of personal finance. Just like other skills (learning to play an instrument, becoming a great athlete, etc.), the class will take time to complete. I do not design my classes so that you read the text, memorize facts, take a quiz, and then forget everything. My classes, even online, are designed to get you active and involved in the learning process. I will ask you to complete the examples and work toward becoming a competent money manager for your personal finances by practicing the skills being taught. **You will not be asked to memorize anything in this class.** Instead, you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge of the topics through a task that needs to be completed and a reflection. There are no exams where you are expected to memorize something to answer a multiple-choice question. This does mean more time and effort on your part throughout the course. It should also mean that you remember what you have learned in this class.

Another reason to explain my philosophy is to reinforce for you that I am truly here to help you learn. If you have questions, ask them. I will do my best to answer promptly. Normally, you will receive a response from me within two business days.

Stay in touch with me. Follow along in the book. Participate with your peers. Have fun. Learn. I can be reached via the Canvas Communications Tools.

Specifics for each activity will be provided in the Modules. You need to follow along in the book to understand what you need to do for each assignment.

Please do not attempt to complete any activity or assignment without reading the corresponding course materials and information in the book provided.