



**FIN 107, Personal Finance
Elite Learning—Spring 2021
Virginia Highlands Community College**

Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network

Contact Information

Instructor: Adam L. Tolbert

E-mail: The best way to reach me is by sending a message within your Canvas course; however, my email address is adam@adamtolbert.com. My email should only be used as a last resort. Students should expect to receive message responses within 48 hours. I will post a message under your course Announcements if I will not be available so be sure to read the Announcements!

Asynchronous Online Course via Canvas: <https://vh.my.vccs.edu>

Course (Catalog) Description

VCCS Master Course Description:

Presents a framework of personal money management concepts, including establishing values and goals, determining sources of income, managing income, preparing a budget, developing consumer buying ability, using credit, understanding savings and insurance, providing for adequate retirement, and estate planning.

Prerequisite: None

This course is offered by Elite Learning, a part of the Southwest Virginia Education & Training Network (SVETN). By successfully completing this course, students will earn 1 high school credit and 3 hours of college credit.

Course Materials

No physical textbook is required for this class. In lieu of textbooks, various online resources, electronic text, presentations, and videos will be used to deliver the lessons and topics to be covered in this course. Students should have access to a computer with high-speed Internet access. Students should also have access to an E-Mail account, preferably the one provided by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). Students may also use an E-Mail account provided by their county or city school system if unable to use the VCCS E-Mail account. Additionally, students may use any other E-Mail account so long as its use does not violate any school policies.

Time & Location of Class Meeting:

This course is asynchronous, which means the learner will be able to access the material at any time of the day or night. The learner should have a specific time in the school day to work on the assignments. This course is structured to offer students who wish to study business a way to learn through the Internet. It is expected that the student will follow the assignments as outlined on the webpage which includes links to Internet sites that contain information related to lesson objectives. The student will use the information at the sites as supplements to text materials. The course is designed so the student will spend 60-90 minutes per week day on the assignments.

Questions/Comments/Concerns/Feedback:

Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor regularly any questions, comments, or concerns about the course. My contact information is included at the top of this syllabus. I prefer to be contacted via the Canvas messaging feature. I will return a response ASAP but no later than 48 hours. The instructor will also provide each student feedback regularly.

Technology Requirement:

Students will be required to complete and submit assignments by using Canvas, the learning management system for Elite Learning. Students will need use of the Internet for all coursework.

The Virginia Community College System offers Microsoft Word for free to currently enrolled students. Students are eligible to install Office 365 on up to 5 devices at no cost. The Office 365 product includes Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Students can download Microsoft Office 365 by going to: <http://office.vccs.edu>. Students will use their full My VCCS email address as their username, and their My VCCS password to log into the site.

Technical Support:

Technical problems are not common but occur from time-to-time. Trouble tickets, for the most part, will be sent directly to the technical support team at the community college. Students should refer to the *How to Receive Technical Support* document to receive prompt support. This document is found in the *Elite Learning Guide for Students* on Page 28. You should receive a response within 24 hours (usually much sooner). After you have submitted the trouble ticket, please send me an email or message to let me know what problems you are having.

Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

As a result of this course, students will have a better understanding of financial issues as they relate to their personal finances. More specifically the goals of this course will be for students will develop an understanding and working knowledge of:

- Setting personal financial goals
- Managing personal income and setting personal budgets
- Planning for college and understanding the types of financial aid available (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
- How a bank and other types of financial institutions operate
- Various types of banking accounts (checking, savings, certificates of deposit, etc.)
- Loans and borrowing (lines of credit, mortgages, personal loans, credit cards)
- Various types of insurance (auto, life, homeowners, renters, health)
- Taxes (income, sales, real estate, personal property, and other types of taxes)
- Saving and investing
- Retirement planning
- Various consumer skills

Method of Evaluating Student Achievement

Grading Scale & Weighting:

Students will be evaluated on each assignment submitted. Each assignment will generally be worth 100 points.

The grading scale for this course will be as follows:

100-90 % = A 89-80 % = B 79-70 % = C 69-60 % = D 59 % or less = F

Term and final grades will be determined using an average of the grades subject to the following weights:

Test Results:	35%	(tests on chapter material)
Learning Activities:	30%	(quizzes, chapter activities, other assignments)
Exams:	25%	(mid-term and final exams)
Research Project:	10%	(research paper/project activity)

NOTE: All grades will be reported by SVETN to each school with a numeric grade and a recommended letter, but assignment of a final letter grade will be at the discretion of the student's school. Please contact the instructor with any grade questions or concerns.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Procedures

This course will be organized into topics by week throughout the semester. For each week, students must complete the assigned work. This includes reviewing all online content (digital text, presentations, notes, videos) and completing the assigned quizzes, tests, discussion forums, and writing assignments.

This course is taught on the college level and it is important to complete all assignments in a timely and complete fashion. Please promptly contact the instructor should you have any questions or concerns about a particular assignment.

Elite Learning Late Assignments Policy:

It is your responsibility to be logged on each and every school day. Students are expected to work on course assignments for a minimum of 60 minutes per school day. If you are absent or unable to log on, please send a message explaining your absence as soon as possible. If you do not log on for more than three school days in a row, your guidance counselor will be contacted.

This is a college course, and you are expected to plan ahead for due dates and give yourself plenty of time to complete all work. DO NOT wait until the last minute. For example, if an assignment is open for an entire week, but you wait until ten minutes before the assignment closes and experience a technical problem, you will not be given an extension because ample time was provided for you to submit your work. Plan accordingly if you will be out of school on trips. All work must be completed before leaving for a school trip to prevent them from being late. Due dates are located on the calendar and throughout the course.

If you do not turn in an assignment on the deadline, you will be allowed to submit it with point deductions for one week (exceptions may apply). For example: If assignment is due on August 10, you will have until August 17 to submit it for partial credit. There will be an automatic 25 point deduction for all late submissions.

Exceptions to the late work policy will only be allowed IF a documented excuse is provided by your school's guidance counselor or administrative staff (illness, family emergency, etc.). Contact the teacher if problems occur so they can be handled on a one-on-one basis. Please be aware that Elite Learning's schedule requires that we adhere to deadlines, even when schools are closed. If you have Internet access at home, continue to log in and participate in class even if your school is closed. If you do not have home Internet access, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Attendance Policy:

Because this is an Internet based course, there is not a scheduled time set for your coursework. Each student must be dedicated to completing assignment independently. The student will be required to log in to this course on a regular basis, which will be checked by the teacher. The school and/or parents will be notified if a student has not logged into their course for a three day period. Contacts will also be made if a student is logging into their course with only a minimum amount of work each day. Expect no less than 60-90 minutes of work each day. Actual progress must be made toward assignments. Therefore, simply logging into the course to avoid being flagged for non-attendance and making no actual progress toward completion of assignments will not be tolerated.

At least once every school day, you are required to log on to CANVAS and perform three tasks:

1. Check your inbox for new messages.
2. Check for new course announcements.
3. Check the calendar to see what work is due.

Schedule Conflicts: Students from several different school divisions are participating in this course. As a result, some schedule variations may occur from time to time. (i.e.: holidays, breaks, school closings). The instructor will be flexible to accommodate these schedule differences. Students should inform the instructor of any changes to their school schedules in advance.

Elite Learning Calendar Policy: Each academic year, Elite Learning adopts a calendar which aligns with calendars from the four supporting community colleges. Some flexibility exists to meet the secondary school system's extended semester requirements. Fall semester courses usually begin the third week of August and extend until mid-January. Spring semester courses usually begin in mid-January and extend until the third week of May.

Elite Learning Inclement Weather or School Closure Policy:

Asynchronous online courses have many advantages over the traditional classroom. Among those advantages are the availability of the instructor, the opportunity to "attend" class from many locations, the flexibility of schedule, and no make-up days due to snow. To provide the required amount of "seat-time" for students, Elite Learning instructors will continue to present class material and require assignment submissions. When some schools are temporarily closed, it is necessary to require a continuation of assigned work even if students are absent from school due to weather or school closures. It is the responsibility of the student to access the class via Internet during this type of absence. **Students without Internet access beyond school hours will need to discuss this with their instructor at the beginning of the semester.**

This policy will also be in place due to Covid-19 school closures or any other unexpected closures.

Academic Integrity: Each student will be bound by the academic codes of their school. Any violations will be reported to the student's school for appropriate disciplinary action. Cheating, plagiarism, or other dishonesty will not be tolerated. Because this course is considered a college level course, each student is considered a responsible adult. It is assumed that students will maintain standards of conduct appropriate to being a student of Elite Learning as well as the community college. Emphasis is placed on standards of student conduct rather than on limits or restrictions. Guidelines and regulations governing student conduct are developed by the Elite Learning faculty, staff, and administration. More detailed information is found in the *Elite Learning Student Guide* available at www.svetn.org.

Emergency Procedures: In the event of an emergency, follow the emergencies procedures and instructions as established and communicated by your school or school division.

Online Etiquette for SVETN Elite Learning Courses:

These standards of conduct apply to both formal and informal communication within your online course.

Personal Conduct

This standard applies to both formal and informal discussions within your course.

Show respect for others.

- Always ask yourself ‘would I say this to a person’s face?’
- Avoid offensive language.
- Be tolerant of diverse opinions and perspectives.

Communication Procedures

These standards apply primarily to formal communications including discussion forums, course mail, drop boxes and other instructor-assigned topics.

- 1) Responses must be more than a simple agreement or disagreement.
- 2) Do not be afraid to disagree with others in the group.
 - If you agree or disagree, choose a position and defend it while respecting the opinions of others.
 - Make sure discussions are intellectual not emotional.
 - Point out mistakes politely.
- 3) Course communication must follow directions for the specific assignment.
 - Submit using the appropriate tool—drop box, discussion forum, course mail, etc.
 - Respond in a timely manner and stay focused on discussion topic.
 - Follow the format provided by the instructor.
- 4) Proofread submissions carefully.
 - Observe rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling including avoiding use of slang, Internet abbreviations or lingo.
 - Make sure what you write makes sense.
- 5) **Plagiarism will result in a zero.**

Accommodations for Disabilities: Students may request academic accommodations for disabilities through the Office of Student Services (or other similar entity, as appropriate). That office will evaluate the request and make recommendations for appropriate and reasonable

accommodations, which the student will provide to the instructor. Students should consult the instructor, their guidance counselor, or SVETN Elite Learning with any questions or concerns on the applicability of this policy.

Important Information:

- It is critical that all students read the *Elite Learning Student Guide*. This guide is located at www.svetn.org as well as within your course. Contact Dawn Stafford, SVETN Executive Director, if you have questions or concerns at dstafford@swcenter.edu or by phone at 276-619-4363.
- **Course syllabus and schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Course Information

The following is a tentative outline of the topics that will be covered in this course and their order of presentation. This schedule is subject to change based on actual progress and other factors.

Chapter:	Topic:
1	Education & Income
2	Investing In Yourself
3	Understanding Financial Forces
4	Taxes and How They Affect You
5	State and Local Taxes
6	Setting Financial Goals
7	Creating a Budget
8	Your Personal Net Worth
9	Banking Basics
10	Handling Your Account
11	Banking Basics
12	Credit and Credit Cards
13	Maintaining Creditworthiness
14	Managing Debt
15	The Role of Incentives
16	Comparison Shopping
17	Automobiles – Lease or Purchase?
18	Housing – Rent or Buy?
19	Developing Consumer Skills
20	Understanding Contracts
21	Consumers and the Environment
22	Buyer Beware! Frauds, Scams, and Schemes
23	Investments
24	Excess for Investment
25	Wise Planning
26	The Business Cycle
27	Low-Risk Investment Options

28	High-Risk Investing
29	Insurance Basics