

FEDERAL TAXATION EM 340

FALL SEMESTER 2011

COURSE SYLLABUS

Gustavus Adolphus College

Department of Management and Economics

Instructor: Timothy Peterson

Assistant Professor Economics and Management Department

Classes this semester: E/M 130-001 10:30 -11:20 MTWF BH 311

E/M 130-002 11:30-12:20 MTWF BH 311

E/M 340-001 2:30-4:20 MW BH 219

Office Hours: 1:30 -2:30 MTWF or by appointment

Office: BH 145

Office Phone: 1-507-933-7410 Home 952-303-3074

E-mail: tpeterso@gustavus.edu

Course Web site: www.mhhe.com/spilker2012 Username: Spilkercomp2012

Course Materials

Text: Taxation of Individuals and Business Entities, Spilker, McGraw Hill, 2012 Edition, ISBN 978-0-07-811106-8

Course Learning Activities

A portion of the course time will be involved with reviewing the assigned homework problems from the text. Other course time will be spend discussing assigned cases and assigned Internet assignments. Course activities will be undertaken to apply the material in the text. A portion of the class time will be spend discussing tax concepts.

A variety of learning activities will be employed. I try to remain flexible and innovative in our daily learning activities. Activities may include group work, free writing, mini-tests, peer review, and writing for summary/question.

Assignments

All assignments will be posted using e-mail for that week.

Text Reading Assignments: Chapters in the textbook should be read by the first day that the chapters are discussed in class so that you can participate in the class discussion.

Writing Assignments: Discussion questions, tax research projects, and tax planning ideas are assigned to give you experience in identifying tax related issues and the resolution of these issues. These written assignments are not intended to teach basic writing skills, but are an application of that skill.

All written assignments must be completed using a word processing software program and printed on a laser printer.

All writing assignments are graded primarily on coherence, logic, and documentation. They are not subject to revision. The prescribed format for memos for client files, letters to the taxpayer, and your instructor will provide tax research memos.

If you have a scheduled event, then you must submit the assignment prior to the assigned day or have a classmate deliver the assignment for you to your scheduled class meeting.

Chapter Problem Assignments using Connect

We will be using Connect, an electronic computer assignment and scoring website. Your textbook purchase (if purchased in the College bookstore) includes access to Connect.

Approximately 50 assignments will be assigned utilizing Connect throughout the semester. Of the 50 assignments 45 will be counted towards the final point total. You have access to Connect anywhere that you have Internet access. Each Connect assignment will have a point total of 10 points. Connect will electronically score and record your assignment. Each assignment will have a certain period of time within which to complete the assignment. No assignments will be allowed to be completed after the due date for each assignment. You will have electronic access to your Connect assignments and the score you received on each of them. I will eliminate the scores on the lowest 5 Connect assignments in your final grade determination.

I would suggest you print out the assignments in Connect for future reference.

Tax Return Projects Each student must submit a printed return.

All tax return projects will be completed using the tax preparation software (Lacerte) in the computer lab.

A completed tax return must be submitted as follows:

- Tax return project No. 1 Individual Return Form 1040
- Tax return project No. 2 Corporate Return Form 1120
- Tax return project No. 3 S Corporation Return Form 1120S
- Tax return project No. 4 Partnership Return Form 1065

Additional information concerning all assignments.

Any assignment involving multiple pages of paper must have the pages stapled together. Paper clips do not suffice. Use the front side of paper only. One piece of paper for each assignment. Any assignment violating these rules will not be accepted for credit or considered late.

No assignments will be accepted via e-mail. All assignments must be hand delivered in class or posted to the board outside of my office per instructions.

Course Grade

1) Quizzes

A quiz will be given for each chapter at the conclusion of each chapter. Each quiz will consist of ten multiple-choice questions. No make-up quizzes will be given. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. Quizzes will be closed book and closed notes.

2) Unit Examinations: Exams will be a combination of calculations and will be problem oriented. Points on each examination may vary due to the depth of the material, its complexity, and number of chapters covered. I have scheduled the examinations to capture a set of concepts and procedures that are interrelated. Some questions may be drawn from topics discussed in class, in assignments, or in assigned supplementary materials. Examinations will be reviewed in class on announced dates. If you wish to review the exam, be in class the day we review it. Unit examinations will be open notes and open book.

Examinations will be given covering the following text chapters

	<u>Approximate Points</u>
Exam No. 1 Chapters 5,6,7,4	100
Exam No. 2 Chapters 9,10,11	100
Exam No. 3 Chapters 12,13,14	100
Exam No. 4 Chapters 16,20,22,	100

Policy: If you miss a test or quiz, you will be assigned a score of "0" unless you present sufficient evidence that the test was missed due to extenuating circumstances beyond your control. These extenuating circumstances should be presented to me prior to the scheduled examination date. If you are committed to an event during a scheduled Federal Taxation examination time, then you must arrange to take the examination before the scheduled examination date. Multiple examinations on the same day and family vacations are not acceptable reasons for rescheduling a Federal Taxation examination. Examinations may be a combination of open book/note and closed book/note.

3) Final Examination: The final examination is comprehensive the final examination topics will be selected from all topics presented in the course. The final examination will be weighted more than unit examination. The five highest scored exams will be included in your final grade.

Policy: If you miss a test or quiz, you will be assigned a score of "0" unless you present sufficient evidence that the test was missed due to extenuating circumstances beyond your control. These extenuating circumstances should be presented to me prior to the scheduled examination date. If you are committed to an event during a scheduled Federal Taxation examination time, then you must arrange to take the examination before the scheduled examination date. Multiple examinations on the same day and family vacations are not acceptable reasons for rescheduling a Federal Taxation examination. Examinations may be a combination of open book/note and closed book/note.

Final Grade Determination:

The following table shows the components of the total possible points and the allocation of the total points amongst those components.

Quizzes (10 x 30)	300
Periodic Examinations (4 x 100)	400
Final Examination	200
Tax Return Projects (4 x 100)	400
Connect assignments	450
Total	1,750

I employ a relative grading system versus an absolute grading system. An absolute grading system establishes various cutoff points ahead of time and a student's grade is determined by the location of their total points between the cutoff points. A relative grading system establishes the cutoff points after all the points for all students have been computed. The difference is that in an absolute grading system if you get so many points you get a certain pre-established reward. In a relative grading system, your reward is based upon relative performance, how well you performed relative to the performance of your peers. I look for gaps in total points earned as the dividing line between different letter grade designations.

I feel a relative grading system is better preparation for life, because in real life you are evaluated and rewarded based upon your performance relative to others. An absolute grading system reinforces an artificial reward system. In life, there are few absolute reward systems. Most reward systems are relative. The only advantage of an absolute reward system is that it provides a higher level of certainty for the user, because at all times you know your reward. After each major assignment or test I will pass around a sheet

showing everyone's relative ranking and grade at that point to increase the level of certainty as to your current grade.

Formula for course percentage: Total points earned/ Total possible points = rank

Rank determines grade – students are ranked in descending order (highest total points to lowest total Points)

Grade Disputes: Any adjustments on exams, written assignments, tax returns, or tax research projects must be submitted in writing within five days after the disputed items was returned to you. Failure to do so on a timely basis may nullify any adjustment.

You are urged to maintain your own file of all graded items returned to you. After each examination, I will provide a summary of the points achieved by all students on all items.

All students are evaluated on the same basis. Supplemental assignments will not be provided for additional credit.

Class Participation

Class discussion and exchange of ideas is greatly encouraged in this class. This is a "risk free" environment to platform your thoughts and opinions.

You should expect to be called upon very frequently during class discussions to express your views on assigned readings and homework assignments. The quality of your participation may be a factor in your final grade, either to the upside or the downside.

Class participation is defined as asking questions about course topics, answering questions about course topics, and presenting or describing problem solutions in class. Participation is difficult to measure and hence it becomes a subjective factor. Participation is important and you will find you retain more as you participate. Learning to think and express yourself "on the fly" and "on your feet" is a valuable skill that can only be refined through practice.

I try to make class fun, interactive, relevant, and challenging. These motives drive everything that we do in class and everything you can expect from me.

Class Attendance

I do not take class attendance. Class discussion is a valuable use of your time and attendance is highly suggested on a regular basis. Your class input is a valuable resource to the rest of your classmates.

Honor Code

Academic Honesty: At the November, 2006, Faculty Meeting, the faculty approved changes to Handbook Section 2.2.9: "Through information provided in syllabi and/or other means, faculty members will explain to students how the Honor Code will operate in their respective courses. The following statement is suggested as pledge for students to sign on all graded assignments and projects.

"On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.

A similar statement may be signed by students at the beginning of a course indicating that their work for

that course will comply with the academic honest policy and the Honor Code.”

Working together on class assignments can be very beneficial, and is encouraged. Graded class activities, except those specifically designated as group activities, are designed to develop your skills and abilities and to measure your mastery and comprehension of the knowledge area. The line between collaboration and cheating sometimes gets blurred. Using another’s works as your own is cheating.

Gustavus has an honor code and honor code policy in effect. Every Gustavus student now agrees to abide by the academic honesty policy and honor code as a condition for enrollment. The honor policy stipulates:

“In all academic exercises, examinations, presentations, speeches, papers, and reports, students shall submit their own work. Footnotes or some other acceptable form of citation must accompany any use of another’s words or ideas. Students are especially cautioned that quoting from or paraphrasing from electronic sources without proper citation is as serious a violation as copying from a book or other printed source.

In this course, any violation of the academic honesty policy will carry a penalty at the discretion of me depending on the conditions, facts, and circumstances surrounding the incident. Penalties may vary from nothing to a failing grade in the course. Students who dispute an allegation of academic dishonesty may request a hearing before a joint student/faculty honor board.

In addition, the following code will be written in full and signed on every examination and graded paper. “On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated other’s use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.” As your instructor I will attempt to clearly define the level of authorized aid appropriate to a particular assignment. However, you are responsible to ask questions about any reasonable doubt you have regarding my definition of authorized aid.

An integral part of the honor code is non-tolerance of violations. Under the Gustavus code students are not expected to police other’s actions. Rather, you are to report violations of which you become aware. Failure to do so will constitute an honor code violation in this class.

Daily assignments that are not collected will not be subject to this honor code. Chapter assignments that are collected are subject to this honor code. Group project members can collaborate with members of their group, but not with members of other groups.

Disability Services

Last year the Academic Operations Committee recommended that faculty incorporate current catalogue language about Disability Accommodations into their course syllabi.

“Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 work together to ensure ‘reasonable accommodation’ and non-discrimination for students with disabilities in higher education. A student who has a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning or attentive disability that may have an effect on the student’s ability to complete assigned course work should contact the Disability Services Coordinator in the Advising Center, who will review the concerns and decide with the student what accommodations are necessary.”

Disability Services Coordinator Laurie Bickett(x6286) can provide further assistance.

How to Succeed in This Course

To do well in this course, you must commit to becoming an "active learner" at each class session. This requires that you come to class regularly and be well prepared to discuss assigned readings and individual

homework assignments. You must actively contribute to group and class discussions of assigned materials. A strong effort at individual and group assignments and discussions will provide you with a solid foundation of knowledge for taking the periodic examination. outside of the classroom. You are responsible for your performance. It is your responsibility to ask questions about the material you do not understand. I have no method of knowing your lack of understanding if you do not ask. Ask questions until you understand to your satisfaction.
