

01-06 First Day of Semester: Lecture Personal Finance Class

Senior Personal Finance: Course Rationale and Expectations

Addressing seniors, Mr. Burkhard frames personal finance as a crucial life skill, infused with candid life experience:

- Why this matters: In his 21st year at Highland, he notes alumni return asking why they weren't taught studying or money. He sought permission from Mr. Naughton last spring to teach this class specifically to address that need. He has lived through highs (college, income, family, kids, cars, home) and lows (unemployment, accidents, marrying the wrong person, debt, foreclosure, divorce, bankruptcy court, his dad's death). He admits making "really dumb relationship and financial decisions" and intends to help students avoid similar mistakes.
- Realistic success path: Students don't need to be millionaires by 25; they must be disciplined and intentional now. He guarantees to show a path to become a millionaire by age 55. Less than 1% of millionaires achieve it before 30; the average 25-year-old in the U.S. has a net worth under \$10,000.
- Early wealth and risk: He outlines paths requiring scalable income, risk, luck, timing, and rare opportunities:
 - LeBron James had \$18.8 million/year as a draft pick and a \$90 million/year Nike contract at 18.
 - Technology wins: Dong Nguyen created Flappy Birds at 23 (2014), earning 50,000/day (18 million/year) before shutting it down.
 - Influencers: Out of 50 million YouTube channels, under 0.5% earn \$100,000+ per year. Success hinges on consistency, quality, humor, audience, algorithm fluency, and hard work. He mentions Obsidea's lost wealth (current net worth \$130,000) and Piper Rockell's claim of \$2.9 million in 24 hours on turning 18 via OnlyFans, followed by regret due to backlash. He counsels against relying on such paths as financial plans.

- Financial fragility of sudden wealth: 78% of NFL players encounter financial trouble or bankruptcy within two years post-career; basketball figures are similar, baseball slightly better. A New Jersey lottery winner who took \$5.3 million twice fell into poverty within two years—illustrating pitfalls of poor planning, predatory “friends,” bad investments, and lack of financial knowledge. Many athletes lack marketable skills post-career, and financial advisors can exploit them.
- Policies mirroring freshman rules: No phones (Mr. Naughton does not want phones out; phones belong in backpacks). The teacher is unwilling to get written up for students’ TikTok usage. He records and posts AI summaries and full transcripts on the website; absentees can review. Late work follows the same email-explanation-grading approach. Hall pass/extra credit rules.
- Starting assignments: Seniors begin with a “Five-Year Future Planning Sheet” requiring honest, realistic research of expected salary using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini). Following that, they complete “My Life, My Choices,” answering 30 questions about expenses one year from now, sending certification to the teacher (25 points with an additional 20 extra credit points for beating the teacher’s score).
- Seniors—finance tasks:
 - Five-Year Future Planning Sheet: due today (first class day). Use AI tools to research realistic salary expectations for a chosen career and location.
 - My Life, My Choices: complete before next class period, answer 30 questions about expenses for one year ahead, send certification to the teacher. If email submission errors occur, take a screenshot of the final score and send it instead.
- Operational notes:
 - The classroom big screen consistently shows the date, a grade graph (with D’s and F’s), bell ringer, and objectives.
 - Computer login conventions include a username pattern (“small t, tech space 1, 2, 3, whatever” by computer number) and a password (“capital T, technology, one exclamation point”)

Action Items

- @Students (Seniors)
- Complete the Five-Year Future Planning Sheet with honest, realistic salary research using AI tools - Today

- Complete the “My Life, My Choices” assignment (30 expense questions) and send certification to Mr. Burkhard - Before next class period
- If “My Life, My Choices” email submission fails, take a screenshot of the final score and send it to Mr. Burkhard - Before next class period
- Bookmark the personal finance site (highlandtechnology.org/personalfinance) - [TBD]