

FCS 5540 – Family Estate Planning

Prerequisites:	It is highly recommended that the Individual Taxation course be taken prior to or concurrent with this course.
Credit Hours:	3 credit hours (which requires a minimum of 6 preparation hours for class per week)
Meeting Time and Location:	Online
Instructor:	Heather Spencer, M.S.
Office:	AEB 234
Office Hours:	By appointment
Email:	heather.spencer@fcs.utah.edu or through Canvas
TA:	TBA

Course Webpage:

The class webpage can be found on Canvas. Login at <https://uonline.utah.edu/canvas/> or by linking through CIS. If you need help with Canvas, please call the Help Desk at (801)585-5959 or send an email to support@uonline.utah.edu. Or, ask me. I can sometimes help with more common issues.

Course Description:

The course in estate planning focuses on the efficient conservation and transfer of wealth, consistent with the client's goals. It is a study of the legal, tax, financial, and non-financial aspects of this process, covering topics such as trusts, wills, probate, advanced directives, charitable giving, wealth transfers and related taxes.

Course Objectives:

At the successful completion of the Estate Planning course the student should be able

- To understand the universal nature of estate planning needs
- To recognize the high level of ignorance regarding estate planning among the general population as well as among students
- To comprehend the fundamental objective of greater efficiency in wealth transfer.
- To appreciate the market driven nature of the profession
- To identify the dynamic nature of Estate Planning
- To distinguish the complexity of the subject
- To grasp the futuristic and contingent-based nature of estate planning

Evaluation Methods:

Technology Prep Assignment = 1%

Exams = 15% each = 30% total

Comprehensive Cases = 25%

Concept check questions (e.g., Quizzes) = 20%

Projects = 24%

Course Projects and Assignments:

All assignment/exams must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on the Saturday of the week it is due.

- Technology Prep Assignment
 - Complete a short quiz based on course expectations outlined in the syllabus
 - Post a message on the general class discussion board that states the reason you are interested in this class
 - Upload a Word document to the Assignment tool
- Two exams
- Comprehensive cases
 - Students will be provided with information about two or more clients, each with differing income, wealth, and other situational variations, and who, hence, would have different estate planning needs. Students will evaluate each client's needs, develop the appropriate strategies, and evaluate the tax ramifications.

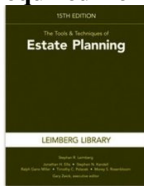
- Concept check questions
 - Three times during the semester, you will check your understanding of the concepts by taking a short quiz.
- Projects – Choose two
 - Interview members of an Estate Planning Team (e.g. lawyers, trust officer, CPAs, financial planner, etc.). Write executive summary of interviews.
 - Interview an individual (or a couple) about their knowledge of the tools and techniques of estate planning. Demographics could include people with a child, a homeowner, etc.
 - Attend an Estate Planning seminar presented locally and write a critical analysis of the presentation.
 - A research paper on a topic covered in the course (your choice).

Grading Scale:

The following grading scale is used for the course, for exams, quizzes, assignments, and your overall grade, expressed as percentages. Cut-offs exist, and I do not round up.

90.00-92.99 = A-	>93.00% = A	
80.00-82.99 = B-	83.00-86.99 = B	87.00-89.99 = B+
70.00-72.99 = C-	73.00-76.99 = C	77.00-79.99 = C+
60.00-62.99 = D-	63.00-66.99 = D	67.00-69.99 = D+
	<59.99 = E	

Required Textbook:



“The Tools & Techniques of Estate Planning,” Stephan R. Leimberg, Jonathan H. Ellis, Stephen N. Kandell, Ralph Gano Miller, Timothy C. Polacek, Morey S. Rosenbloom, and Gary Zwick, Executive Editor; 15th Edition, The National Underwriter Company, 2011.

A Note on Technology:

We will rely on technology exclusively in this online course. Excuses based on technology failure will not be allowed as a reason to extend a deadline or retake an exam. If your discussion posting does not make it in time, it will not count. If you do not get the concept check questions completed before the deadline, it will not count. If your project is late, penalties will be applied. Please take precautions and do not wait until the last minute. Make sure you understand how to use the tools in Blackboard Vista and that you have enough time to deal with contingencies.

I will not make any exceptions to this rule, so please do not ask.

Classroom Equivalency:

Please be considerate of others’ opinions and always be respectful. It may be difficult to determine tone in an online community, so please be mindful of this when reading and writing responses.

Discussion threads and emails are considered to be equivalent to classrooms, and student behavior within these environments shall conform to the Student Code. Specifically:

- Posting photos or comments that would be off-topic in a classroom are still off-topic in an online posting.
- Off-color language and/or photos are never appropriate.
- Using angry or abusive language is called “flaming,” is not acceptable, and will be dealt with according to the Student Code.
- Do not use ALL CAPS since it is the equivalent of shouting, as is overuse of exclamation points (e.g. !!!!!!!) and question marks (e.g. ???????).

- Course emails and discussion postings are part of the classroom, and as such, are University property and subject to GRAMA regulations and the Student Code. Privacy regarding these communications between correspondents must not be assumed.

ADA Statement:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Academic Honesty:

All honesty and plagiarism policies established by the University of Utah will be upheld in this class. Academic misconduct in any form in this class will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, and/or submitting the same work for more than one course without the permission of both instructors.

If you include information from outside the class or quotes in your written assignments, you must provide citations and a reference list. Avoid the urge to over-rely on quotes; a written assignment that is substantially made up of quoted material will not be considered to be your own work, even if you have used correct citations.

If it is discovered that you have engaged in academic misconduct of any type in this course, the Family & Consumer Studies departmental policy states that you will be given a failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Dean and the VP for Academic Affairs, who will keep your name on record. Should you be reported more than once, you may face expulsion from the University.

This is a very serious issue and I will not tolerate it in my classroom. If you are aware of any misconduct, please inform me immediately.

For further information about the University of Utah's policies regarding academic misconduct, please see the student handbook at www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html.

Incompletes:

In order to qualify for an "Incomplete" in any University of Utah course, you must complete at least 80% of the course work *and* be in good standing (i.e., have earned at least a C on all completed work) *and* receive permission from the instructor (if you can justify to the instructor that you cannot finish the course because of circumstances beyond your control). The FCS departmental policy is that students who do not complete the work within 1 year after the granting of an 'I' will automatically receive a failing grade. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Instructor Responsibilities:

I will

1. Be prepared for the course and have material posted in a timely manner.
2. Use a variety of teaching methods, including power point slides, audio files, discussion boards, web links, video clips, etc. in an effort to create a stimulating learning environment and accommodate different learning styles.
3. Provide feedback on assignments in a timely manner.
4. Be available for individual consultation during office hours or by appointment.
5. Reply to email within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays).
6. Follow all University of Utah policies regarding conduct within the classroom, incompletes, and accommodations. No exceptions will be made to these policies.
7. Comply with the Final Exam schedule determined by the University. The Final Exam will be offered during the appointed time.
8. Treat students equitably and with respect. This includes enforcing responsible classroom behavior.

Student Responsibilities:

You are expected to:

1. Spend 2-3 hours per credit hour in preparing for this class, including completing reading assignments & written assignments, and studying for the final exam. As this is a 3-credit course, you should plan on spending 6-9 hours per week in preparation.
2. Complete required reading assignments in a timely manner.
3. Complete all assignments and exams on time.
4. Treat one another, the instructor, the TAs, and the campus staff with respect.
5. Seek help from the instructor and TAs (and other resources such as the Center for Disability Services or the Writing Center) whenever necessary, and before minor problems become major barriers to learning.
6. Refer to the syllabus and the class webpage for important information pertaining to the exam, written assignments, and class policies.

Scheduling Accommodations:

Students should register for courses for which they have no scheduling conflicts. University policy allows you to make up assignments and exams if you are participating in officially sanctioned University activities, such as intercollegiate athletics. If you miss an exam or assignment deadline due to illness or a medical emergency, medical documentation (i.e., a doctor's note) must be provided in order to make up missed work.

Note on the Syllabus:

The syllabus is not a legal, binding contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.



"Mr. Frosty, it's March.
Time to talk estate planning."