COURSE TITLE: Show Me the Money: Why Financial Capability Matters in Social Work (Share, Explore, Engage, Discover (SEED) Mini-course)

COURSE NUMBER: 510 (Section 015), Tuesday, August 29, 8:30am – 5:00pm, Thursday, August 31, 9:00am – 5:00pm; 1 credit hour

PREREQUISITES: None

LOCATION: SSWB B631

SEMESTER: Fall 2017

FACULTY: Mathieu Despard, Ph.D., MSW
Trina R. Shanks, Ph.D., MSW, MPH

CONTACT INFO: mdespard@umich.edu • trwilli@umich.edu

Course Description
The overall goal of this course is to help students respond to the "Financial Capability and Asset Building for All" Grand Challenge by increasing their personal financial literacy and understanding how to assess and intervene concerning financial problems clients may experience. This course will cover essential personal finance topics including household budgets and balance sheets, income, expenses, assets, and liabilities, unsecured debt, credit cards, credit scores, bankruptcy, different types of financial products and services, taxes, saving and investments, homeownership, and loans.

Students will also learn about the latest evidence in the field of household financial security, including financial shocks, income volatility, access to financial services, and consumer protection, as well as a brief summary of evidence regarding asset-building and financial education and counseling interventions and a review of key state and federal policy initiatives.

The course will cover financial insecurity as an important issue of social and economic justice, explaining how racial income and wealth gaps exist due to unequal access to economic opportunities born of current and past public policies and market behavior that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, and gender identity. Students will also gain awareness of financial social work as an emerging field of practice, which includes interpersonal, community, and policy practice interventions for promoting household financial security and resources for seeking more in-depth training and professional credentialing.

Course Objectives
1. Understand why so many individuals and families struggle with financial insecurity.
2. Understand key personal finance concepts and how to apply these concepts in assessing household financial capability and security.
3. Understand interpersonal, community, and policy practice interventions to boost financial capability and security among vulnerable populations.
4. Apply knowledge gained in the course to students’ personal financial lives, including a deeper understanding of student loans and loan repayment.

Course Content
Course content will be a blend of lecture, videos, live polling, interactive learning exercises, cases, and class discussion to examine both micro and macro social work perspectives and skills in promoting financial capability, with a focus on economically vulnerable households. The course will be delivered in the following segments:
1. **Overview of financial security in the US, inter-sectionality, social work & financial security.** A review of key research findings concerning the economic well-being of US households, how economic well-being varies by race, and how NASW Code of Ethics relates to this topic.

2. **Financial security 101:** In this segment, students will learn about a range of key personal finance topics including budgeting, household cash flow and balance sheets, financial slack, credit and debt, savings, public benefits, and financial products and services.

3. **Assessment and Interventions:** Using case vignettes, students will learn how to assess the economic well-being and financial health of a household and based on this assessment, develop goals and consider various intervention strategies to help achieve these goals.

4. **Community Interventions and Innovations:** Students will learn about and critically assess a range of community intervention strategies and innovations that seek to promote financial capability and security among low-income households.

5. **Promoting policies to increase financial security in low-income households:** Students will review contemporary policy issues affecting the financial capability and security of low-income households, including bills currently under review in Congress, and consider advocacy strategies for promoting certain policy positions.

**SEED Goals**

This course relates to the goals of Share, Explore, Engage, Discover (SEED) in the following ways

**SEED Goal 1 Attainment:** Strengthen connection and community at the School of Social Work

We will highlight the Poverty and Inequality Learning Community and Poverty Solutions Initiative and invite students to join so they can remain connected to related learning events throughout the academic year. The course will also include learning activities completed in pairs and small groups.

**SEED Goal 2 Attainment:** Explore PODS (privilege, oppression, diversity, & social justice)

We will discuss racial income and wealth gaps, how they developed via discriminatory markets and public policies, and the policy proposals that can help eliminate these gaps. Cases we will examine include examples of diverse households and will offer an opportunity to discuss how interventions should be tailored to different cultural backgrounds.

**SEED Goal 3 Attainment:** Learn foundation-level social work skills

We will follow an assess/plan/intervene/evaluate practice model in discussing how financial problems can be addressed through interpersonal practice and we will illustrate ways in which financial capability interventions are being integrated in a wide array of practice fields.
Course Assignments & Grading

Students are required to do the following to satisfactorily complete this course:

1. Attend the entirety of class sessions on 8/29 and 8/31.
2. Actively participate in all class learning activities.
4. Complete an open-note, online, and timed quiz on personal finance topics by 9/23/17 at 11:59pm and score at least 80%.

Students who fulfill all of these requirements will receive a grade of “Pass”. Students who do not fulfill all of these requirements will receive a grade of “Fail” and will not receive academic credit.

Recommended Reading


Friedline, T., & Kepple, N. (2017). Does community access to alternative financial services relate to individuals’ use of these services? Beyond individual explanations. Journal of Consumer Policy, 40(1), 51-79.


Some of these readings, plus course presentation, video links, assignment materials, and external websites for continued learning are available on the course Canvas site ([https://canvas.umich.edu](https://canvas.umich.edu)).

**Accommodations**

If you are differently-abled or have a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disability office at 734-763-3000 in room G-664 Haven Hall.

Please notify me in advance if a religious observance(s) conflicts with class(es) or a due date(s) for assignments so I can assign make-up work or adjust a due date(s). The official University of Michigan
policy on religious holidays, and a list of possible conflicts with classes, can be found at:
http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing
University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

Electronic Devices Policy
Use of electronic devices is permitted for learning purposes such as taking notes and looking up information relevant to a discussion or small group activity, but is prohibited for purposes not relevant to the class, except during breaks.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness
In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu.

Office of Student Services
School of Social Work | Room 1748
734-936-0961