

Financial Literacy with Mr. 401(k)

['FinLit with Mr. 401(k)']

Winter Term 2024-2025

Learn. Save. Grow.

Welcome to **FinLit with Mr 401(k)**!

Get ready to explore how money works, how to grow it, and how to make smart decisions about it. This is your first step toward financial freedom!

Introduction

Money. People use it daily, but money is rarely taught in primary or secondary education. The fact is most students learn how to use a credit card before they learn how to manage debt. Most students learn how to consume and spend before they learn how to save and invest. Let's do something about this. Let's invest in our future by learning about money today.



FinLit with Mr. 401(k) emphasizes conceptual understanding over financial mathematics. The course covers the evolution of money, fundamentals of budgeting, and managing income and expenses. It also delves into understanding assets, liabilities, compound interest, and basic investing principles. Discussions extend to the complexities of the modern financial system, some of its flaws, and aspects of entrepreneurship, including considerations for starting a business.

Course materials will be available for download after each class at: <https://petros.us/finlit-winter-24-to-25>. Students are welcome to review the curriculum from prior terms if they wish. This material is made freely available to help anyone through their financial journey.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand the basics of budgeting and managing money.
- Learn how to identify assets and liabilities.
- Know what it means to invest and understand the difference between saving and investing.
- Explore entrepreneurship and develop a business concept.

Setting Expectations

Class Summaries

FinLit with Mr. 401(k) incorporates a unique daily correspondence component. After each class, a summary email is sent to both students and their parents. This daily update keeps parents informed about what their children are learning and encourages meaningful family discussions about money. This approach not only reinforces the day's lessons but also fosters a supportive learning environment at home. Students are encouraged to retain these class summaries and build a catalog of the course curriculum for later reference. These summaries can also serve as a resource to students for project refinement or future financial decisions.

Homework and Tests

Other than one group project and presentation, there will not be any assigned homework, nor will we have any tests. The group project serves as the capstone for the course, enabling students to synthesize, apply, and present what they have learned.

Each class will conclude with “3 key takeaways” to reinforce key lessons and provide actionable insights, along with “*where to learn more*,” for students who want to dive deeper into a concept.

How Students Are Graded

Students are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Since there is no graded homework or exams, classroom attention, collaboration with classmates, group presentation quality, and participation determine passing grades. In addition, the final day of class will include a reflective questionnaire to help students assess what they have learned and provide feedback on the course.

“Money Journal”

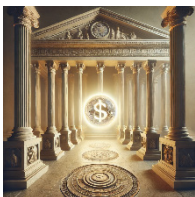
Each student is provided a blank notebook during the first week of the course (a “Money Journal”). Students should bring their Money Journal to each class along with a writing instrument. Students can use their Money Journal to take notes and complete practical application exercises. Students should also use their Money Journals to brainstorm business ideas and to develop their Money Mavericks Workgroup Business Plan Projects.

Course Structure

Teaching Approach

1. Learn – Lecture and in-class videos
2. Discuss – within Money Mavericks Workgroups and classroom discussion
3. Apply – Individual exercises and Money Mavericks Workgroup practical applications

Course Modules



Module 1: Foundations of Money

What is money, and why does it matter? Discover the history, theories, and fundamental principles of money, setting the stage for understanding its role in our modern economy.



Module 2: Making & Spending Money

Learn how to manage income, expenses, taxes, and budgets to build a solid foundation for personal finance.



Module 3: Owning & Owing Stuff

Explore the concepts of assets, liabilities, equity, and how banks operate to better understand net worth and financial health.



Module 4: Exploring Bitcoin

Discover what makes Bitcoin unique as a digital currency, how it works, and its potential role in the future of money.



Module 5: Time & Money

How do time and money work together? Learn about inflation, interest, compound growth, and annuities to appreciate the power of time in financial decision-making.



Module 6: Getting Started with Investing

Dive into the basics of stocks, bonds, and funds, and learn how anyone can start making smart investment decisions.



Module 7: Planning For Your Future

Synthesize course concepts and develop strategies for lifelong financial success and adaptability to financial challenges.

Typical School Week

FinLit with Mr. 401(k) is taught on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during Winter Term. The typical school week is as follows:

Monday Classes

- Monday Money Matter\$ – 10 to 15 minutes
- Lecture or Videos – 20 to 30 minutes
- Discussion and Application – 5 to 10 minutes

Wednesday Classes

- Lecture or Videos – 35 to 40 minutes

- Discussion and Application – 10 to 15 minutes

Thursday Classes

- Lecture or Videos – 20 to 25 minutes
- Discussion and Application – 5 to 10 minutes
- Money Mavericks Workgroup Business Plan Project Work – 20 minutes

Monday Money Matter\$

Each Monday we will have a short segment entitled Monday Money Matter\$. During this segment we will review a current financial event, recent economic data, or notable financial news. Monday Money Matter\$ tries to bring the concepts discussed in class to life with real-world applications and case studies. Students are invited to suggest topics for future discussion, making this segment more personalized and engaging.

Money Mavericks Workgroups

Money Mavericks Workgroups are small collaboration and discussion groups of 3 to 4 students each. At the beginning of the course, students will break into a Money Mavericks Workgroup and will remain in that workgroup for the duration of the course. Students will discuss certain financial concepts in their Money Mavericks Workgroups and often share their insights with the entire class.

Business Plan Project

Students will develop a business idea and a business plan in their Money Mavericks Workgroups. Most Thursdays, Students will have class time to work on their business ideas and business plans. Students may allocate additional time outside of the classroom to this project if they wish.

This project will help reinforce and apply financial concepts through the lens of entrepreneurship. Specifically, students should consider what customer problems the business idea solves? Who are the business's target customers? How does the business earn money? What are the costs to start the business? Where will the money for the start-up costs come from? What are the business's ongoing costs? How will the business promote its products or services? Who else competes with the business? How will the business differentiate itself from competitors?

Past student projects have included childcare services, AI personalized book recommendations, video content creation, and sneakers online retailing.

Each Money Mavericks Workgroup will present their business idea and business plan to class during the last week of the course. Presentations may be up to 15 minutes in length, incorporating visuals, and each team member should contribute.

Cashflow Financial Board Game

FinLit with Mr. 401(k) turns financial concepts into practical, relatable experiences. One way we achieve this is through [Cashflow](#), a dynamic and interactive board game designed by Robert Kiyosaki, the author of the bestselling personal finance book [Rich Dad Poor Dad](#). Students play [Cashflow](#) in their Money Mavericks Workgroups.

[Cashflow](#) transforms abstract ideas like budgeting, investing, and passive income strategies into engaging gameplay, helping students apply classroom lessons in real-world scenarios. The game emphasizes critical financial skills, such as managing budgets, making investment decisions, and planning for financial independence, all while having fun. It has become a favorite among students and a valuable tool for reinforcing core financial literacy principles.

Guest Speakers

The tentative course schedule calls for guest speakers to visit our class and share their backgrounds. Guest speaker topics may include career paths in finance, basics of real estate investing, the future of digital assets, and starting a small business. Please know that each of these guests is investing their time speaking with you. Your courtesy, attentiveness, and polite engagement with guests is appreciated and expected. Students may prepare thoughtful questions in advance to maximize the value of these sessions.

About Your Instructor - Petros Koumantaros (“Mr. 401k”)

Instructor’s Email Address & Website

pkoumantaros [at] stjosephsea [dot] org

<https://petros.us>

Instructor’s Biography

Petros is a principal and shareholder in seven closely held financial service and retirement plan consulting, administration, and technology businesses. Collectively, these businesses work with 2,200 workplace retirement plans, representing \$10+ billion in retirement plan assets, and support over 100,000 retirement plan participants. Through his businesses, Petros advises and consults with employers, households, individuals, and institutional investors.

The eldest son of an immigrant small business owner and a schoolteacher, Petros was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington. After earning a BA in Business Administration, Information Systems Option from the University of Washington, Petros began his career in the technology sector at the world’s largest semiconductor manufacturing company.

Soon after earning an MBA from Arizona State University, Petros joined Spectrum Pension Consultants, the company his father founded, under challenging circumstances. After his father’s tragic passing from bladder cancer in 2005, Petros was called upon to lead the organization. Since then, the company has grown significantly, made strategic business acquisitions, expanded into new geographic markets, and delivered new service offerings to clients.

In 2011 Petros co-founded GROUPIRA, a fintech company that empowers people to invest better within individual retirement accounts (“IRAs”) and enables investment advisers to grow their IRA businesses.

Petros has testified before the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions to [improve retirement and enhance savings in America](#). He has advocated for expansion of retirement plan coverage to the Washington State Legislature. In addition, Petros provided

insights on [best practices concerning beneficiary designations in retirement plans](#) to the U.S. Department of Labor Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans.

The Puget Sound Business Journal honored Petros in 2013 as one of the region's [40 Under 40](#) -- an award recognizing the top business leaders under the age of 40 who excel in their industry and show dynamic leadership.

Passionate about giving back to the community, the Koumantaros family launched the Pano Koumantaros Cancer Research Fund, named after Petros's father, which has raised over \$1.7 million in support of cancer research, care, and treatment initiatives.

In 2018, Petros became a Financial Consultant with intellicents, a financial services firm with \$5.0 billion in assets under management, \$3.0 billion of which is ERISA Retirement Plans, and he leads the intellicents Seattle Area Branch Office. Petros spearheaded intellicents's investment consultant RFP services and facilitated investment advisory services searches for large retirement plan sponsors.

Petros is a member of the [Forbes Finance Council](#) – an invitation-only organization for senior-level financial services executives and leaders. Petros has earned professional qualifications from the American Society of Pension Professionals and Actuaries and the National Association of Plan Advisors, and he serves on National Association of Plan Advisors government affairs committee. Petros is active in the retirement plan service provider industry and speaks regularly at conferences and professional societies. Petros advocates to expand financial education throughout America's classrooms.

FinLit with Mr. 401(k) Winter Term 2024-2025 Tentative Course Schedule

Week #	Class #	Date	Module	Topics	Notes
1	1	Monday, December 2, 2024	Module 1 – Foundations of Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Overview & Introductions Monday Money Matter\$ 	First Day
1	2	Wednesday, December 4, 2024	Module 1 – Foundations of Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Is Money? A Historical and Functional Perspective 	
1	3	Thursday, December 5, 2024	Module 1 – Foundations of Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theories of Money Business Plan Project 	
2	4	Monday, December 9, 2024	Module 2 – Making & Spending Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Money Matter\$ Income 	
2	5	Wednesday, December 11, 2024	Module 2 – Making & Spending Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses 	
2	6	Thursday, December 12, 2024	Module 2 – Making & Spending Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxes Business Plan Project 	
3	7	Monday, December 16, 2024	Module 2 – Making & Spending Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Money Matter\$ Budgets 	
3	8	Wednesday, December 18, 2024	Module A – Financial Board Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cashflow 	
3	9	Thursday, December 19, 2024	Module A – Financial Board Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cashflow 	
4	N/A	Monday, December 23, 2024	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
4	N/A	Wednesday, December 25, 2024	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
4	N/A	Thursday, December 26, 2024	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
5	N/A	Monday, December 30, 2024	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
5	N/A	Wednesday, January 1, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
5	N/A	Thursday, January 2, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	Christmas
6	N/A	Monday, January 6, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	In-Service
6	10	Wednesday, January 8, 2025	Module 3 – Owning & Owing Stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets 	
6	11	Thursday, January 9, 2025	Module 3 – Owning & Owing Stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liabilities Business Plan Project 	
7	12	Monday, January 13, 2025	Module B – Guest Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest: TBD 	TBD Speaker
7	13	Wednesday, January 15, 2025	Module B – Guest Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest: TBD 	TBD Speaker
7	14	Thursday, January 16, 2025	Module B – Guest Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest: TBD 	TBD Speaker
8	N/A	Monday, January 20, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No School 	MLK Day
8	15	Wednesday, January 22, 2025	Module 3 – Owning & Owing Stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity and Net Worth 	

Week #	Class #	Date	Module	Topics	Notes
8	16	Thursday, January 23, 2025	Module 3 – Owning & Owing Stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Banks Work • Business Plan Project 	
9	17	Monday, January 27, 2025	Module 4 – Exploring Bitcoin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Money Matter\$ • Bitcoin Teaser • Business Plan Project 	
9	18	Wednesday, January 29, 2025	Module 4 – Exploring Bitcoin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitcoin 101: The Basics 	
9	19	Thursday, January 30, 2025	Module 4 – Exploring Bitcoin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Bitcoin • Business Plan Project 	
10	20	Monday, February 3, 2025	Module 5 – Time & Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Money Matter\$ • Inflation and Interest 	
10	21	Wednesday, February 5, 2025	Module 5 – Time & Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compound Interest • Lump Sum Formulas 	
10	22	Thursday, February 6, 2025	Module 5 – Time & Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annuity Basics • Business Plan Project 	
11	23	Monday, February 10, 2025	Module 6 – Getting Started with Investing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Money Matter\$ • Introduction to Investing I 	
11	24	Wednesday, February 12, 2025	Module 6 – Getting Started with Investing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Investing II 	
11	25	Thursday, February 13, 2025	Module 6 – Getting Started with Investing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of Bonds • Business Plan Project 	
12	N/A	Monday, February 17, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No School 	Midwinter
12	N/A	Wednesday, February 19, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No School 	Midwinter
12	N/A	Thursday, February 21, 2025	No School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No School 	Midwinter
13	26	Monday, February 24, 2025	Module 6 – Getting Started with Investing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Money Matter\$ • Basics of Stocks 	
13	27	Wednesday, February 26, 2025	Module 6 – Getting Started with Investing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of Funds 	
13	28	Thursday, February 27, 2025	Module A – Financial Board Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashflow • Business Plan Project 	Last Project Workday
14	29	Monday, March 3, 2025	Module 7 – Planning For Your Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Money Matter\$ • Putting it All Together 	
14	30	Wednesday, March 5, 2025	Module 7 – Planning For Your Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Mavericks Business Plan Presentations 	Long-Term Project Due
14	31	Thursday, March 6, 2025	Module 7 – Planning For Your Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering Student Questions • Life Lessons 	Last Day

Week #	Class #	Date	Module	Topics	Notes
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class Wrap-Up• Assessment & questionnaire	