

# SYLLABUS: FUNDAMENTALS OF TAX RETURN PREPARATION

**Class Name:**

Fundamentals of Income Tax Preparation

**Semester:** Spring 2019      **Location:** LRC 234

**Class Number:** 19684

**Instructor:** Anna Barsegayan   **Phone #:** (818) 573-0324 (cell phone)

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**Course Description:** This course introduces you to the fundamentals of individual federal and state income tax. You will learn to apply and explain tax law affecting a client's individual income tax returns, including the following topics: filing status, gross income, adjustments to income, deductions, personal and dependency exemptions, credits, and the Affordable Care Act. This class is associated with the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance program (VITA), which allows you to assist taxpayers in preparing actual tax returns. In order to participate in the VITA program as return preparers, you will need to pass a certification test provided by the IRS. The advanced certification test is an open note and open book test. You will need to score at least 80% in order to pass the certification test.

**Purpose of Course:** The purpose of this course is to provide you with a fundamental working knowledge of tax law, and to allow you to apply this knowledge in the preparation of individual income tax returns for the community. This course will also provide you with interview skills as you interview individuals needing return preparation, technological skills through the use of the electronic filing software, and critical thinking skills as you work with your peers to correctly apply the tax knowledge to specific factual situations.

**Instruction Dates/Topics:**

Thursday, February 7, 2019: 7pm-10pm (Office Hours)

Please come to pick up your books from LRC 234.

Saturday, Feb. 8, 2019: 10am – 6pm (Instruction)

1. Course Introduction
2. Filing Basics
3. Filing Status
4. Personal Exemptions
5. Dependents
6. Unique Filing Situations

7. Income – Wages, Interest, Etc.
8. Income – Business
9. Income – Capital Gain or Loss
10. Income – Retirement Income
11. Income – Schedule K-1 and Rental
12. Income – Unemployment Compensation
13. Income – Social Security Benefits
14. Income – Other Income
15. Adjustments to Income
16. Standard Deduction and Tax Computation

Homework:

1. **Publication 6744, Volunteer Standards of Conduct Test Questions #1-10 (p.11-14) and Intake/Interview and Quality Review Test Questions #1-10 (p. 21-22)**
2. Read Publication 4491, Chapters 1-1, 4-1, 5-1, 6-1, 7-1, 8-1, 9-1, 10-1, 11-1, 12-1, 13-1, 14-1, 15-1, 16-1, 18-1, 20-1
3. Review Publication 4012, Tab A (Who Must File), Tab B (Starting A Return/Filing Status), Tab C (Dependents), Tab D (Income), Tab E (Adjustments)

Tuesday, February 12, 2019: 7pm-10pm (Instruction)
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1. Itemized Deductions
2. Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses  
Education Credits
3. Child Tax Credits and Credits for Other Dependents
4. Miscellaneous Credits

Homework:

1. Read Publication 4491, Chapters 21-1, 22-1, 23-1, 25-1, 26-1, 27-1, 28-1, 29-1
2. Review Publication 4012, Tab F (Deductions), Tab G (Nonrefundable Credits), Tab I (Earned Income Credit), Tab J (Education Benefits)
3. **Publication 6744, Do Advanced Scenario 1, 2, 3, 4**

Thursday, February 14, 2019: 7pm-10pm (Instruction)
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1. Other Taxes
2. Payments
3. Earned Income Credit
4. Refund and Amount of Tax Owed
5. Completing the Return

6. Amended and Prior Year Returns
7. Affordable Care Act

Homework:

1. Read Publication 4491, 30-1, 31-2, 33-1, 3-1
2. Review Publication 4012, Tab H (Other Taxes, Payments and the ACA), Tab K (Finishing the Return) Tab L (Resident/NR Alien Decision Chart), Tab M (Other Returns) Tab N (Using Taxslayer Online), Tab O (Using Taxslayer Pro Online)
3. **Publication 6744, Advanced Scenario 5, Advanced Scenario 6, Advanced Scenario 7, Advanced Scenario 8**

Tuesday, February 19, 2019: 7pm-10pm (Instruction)

1. Earned Income Credit (EIC)
2. Refund and Amount of Tax Owed
3. Completing the Return
4. Amended and Prior Year Returns
5. Affordable Care Act

Homework:

1. Read Publication 4491, 30-1, 31-1, 32-1, 34-1, 3-1
2. Review Publication 4012, Tab I (Earned Income Tax Credit), Tab K (Finishing the Return), Tab L (Resident/Nonresident Return), Tab O (Using TaxSlayer Pro Online)

Thursday, February 21, 2019 7pm-10pm (Certification Testing)

It is highly recommended that you attend this class to take the certification test. It is an open note and open book test, and pairing with another student is acceptable. Failure to pass the certification test will preclude you from preparing returns for individuals in the VITA program, which is a major component of your class grade.

Also, this year VITA will run on Wednesday and Saturday per week. However, you do NOT need to attend both days. You can alternate which day you participate depending on your schedule

Saturday, February 23, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation begins)

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 4pm-8pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, March 2, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation continued)

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 4pm-8pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, March 9, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation continued)

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 4pm-8pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, March 16, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation continued)

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 4pm-8pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, March 23, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, April 6, 2019 10am – 3pm (VITA participation continued)

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 4pm-8pm (VITA participation continued)

Saturday, April 13, 2019 10am – 3pm (last day of VITA participation)

**Resource Materials:**

Resource Materials will be provided to you during office hours on 2/7/2019 and on the first day of class. They can also be found online. Resource materials include:

1. Publication 17: Your Federal Income Tax
2. Publication 4012: Volunteer Resource Guide
3. Publication 4491: VITA Training Guide
4. Publication 4491-W: Comprehensive Problems and Practice Exercises Workbook (electronic only)
5. Form 6744: Volunteer Assistor's Test/Retest
6. Publication 4961: VITA Volunteer Standards of Conduct
7. Publication 5101: Intake/Interview & Quality Review Training
8. Intake and Interview Sheet
9. Form 13615

You can also access the materials at:

<https://apps.irs.gov/app/vita/sitemap.jsp> (we will be doing Advanced certification)

You will be using the TaxSlayer software to prepare income tax returns. You can access the PracticeLab for software training at:

<https://vita.taxslayerpro.com/IRSTraining/en/Account/Access>.

The login password for the software will be provided in class.

### **Expectations:**

**Self-Motivation and Self Discipline** – This is a fast-paced class. To succeed in this class, you should attend all classes, keep up with the curriculum, and participate in the class exercises.

- **Take an Active Role**- The instructor's role in this class will be to provide you with resources and opportunities to explore and use them. I am here to guide you through as you learn therefore you will need to take an active role in the learning process.
- **Time Requirements** - This is a regular 3-unit class.
- **Interaction** - We stress interaction with your fellow students. Many times you will learn just as much from each other as from your instructor. Look forward to finding solutions, applications and other neat stuff and sharing it with your fellow classmates.

**Attendance and Participation Policy** – attendance when the VITA program is in effect is required to pass the class. Once you receive certification to prepare returns for members of your community, attendance is essential in order to apply the skills learned in the course in real-life situations. **As a component to your grades, you will be required to prepare ten (10) income tax returns for individuals once the VITA site opens to the public beginning February 23, 2019.**

### **Office Hours**

**Office hours will be held 30 minutes prior to the beginning of each class.** I am also available via email or telephone. You can email me or call me. If you need to see personally, it's best to set an appointment.

### **Holidays (College CLOSED)**

1. February 15, 2019 - February 18, 2019  
President's Day College Closed Spring 2018

2. March 29, 2019 - April 05, 2019  
Spring Break Spring 2019

### **Grading Structure**

Passage of Certification Test	120 pts. (40% of grade; pass/fail test)
Attendance	60 pts. (20% of grade)
Return Preparation	120 pts. (10 returns @ 12 pts. ea. = 120 pts.)
<b>Total points</b>	<b>300 points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	270-300
B	240-269
C	210-239
D	180-209
F	179 and below



### **Course Ground Rules:**

- Participation is required.
- Learn how to navigate in your Course Management System
- Keep abreast of course announcements
- Address technical problems immediately

### **Disabilities Policy:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all qualified students enrolled in this course are entitled to "reasonable accommodations." Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course.

Disabled Students Program & Services office strives to accommodate any special need requirements.

Disabled Students Program & Services Office (DSPS) (<http://lamission.edu/dsps/>) strives to accommodate any special need requirements. The program is dedicated to meeting the educational, occupational and personal needs of disabled individuals. "

**Recording devices** in the classroom- Section 78907 of the California Education Code prohibits the use of any electronic audio or video recording devices, without prior consent of the instructor. (including cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, and more)

**Reasonable Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and require accommodations, please send me a private email. The sooner I am aware of your eligibility for accommodations, the quicker I will be able to assist the DSP&S Office in providing them. For students requiring accommodations, the DSP&S Office at Mission College provides special assistance in areas like: registering for courses, specialized tutoring, note-taking, mobility assistance, special instruction, testing assistance, special equipment, special materials, instructor liaisons, community referrals and job placement. If you have not done so already, you may also wish to contact the DSP&S Office in Instructional Building 1018 (phone 818/364-7732 TTD 818/364-7861) and bring a letter stating the accommodations that are needed. All students should have the Sheriff department # in cell phone (818) 364-7843

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance in all scheduled courses is essential for academic achievement. Perfect attendance – no absences, tardiness or early departures (this includes online classes)– is encouraged as punctuality develops within you a sense of responsibility that will have a positive impact upon your professional career.

Once the VITA program begins you cannot miss more than two sessions. Please let your instructor know prior to your absence.

Attendance is taken each day at Mission. You are **strongly** encouraged to make nonschool personal appointments at times that will not conflict with your scheduled classes. I have prepared a small acknowledgement section for you to sign as way to let me know that you have read and that you understand what has been mentioned in the syllabus.