Federal Income Taxation
Syllabus

Course #: TAX3300 - Federal Income Taxation of Individuals
Section #: MNFA
Professor: Steven V. Melnik

Office #: 11-278
Tel: (646)312-3227
Email: steven.melnik@baruch.cuny.edu
Office hours: Mon 5:55– 7:20pm; Fri – 4:55-5:40pm.
And by appointment.*

PLEASE NOTE THAT 1) I INTEND ON KEEPING ALL CLASS-RELATED INTERACTIONS 100% ONLINE. 2) I PLAN ON MAKING ALL LECTURES (INCLUDING RECORDINGS OF LIVE ONLINE RECITATION SESSIONS) AVAILABLE IN A VIDEO FORMAT SO YOU CAN WATCH THEM AT YOUR CONVENIENCE AT ANY TIME. DURING PAST YEARS, ALL EXAMINATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ONLINE/REMOTELY. I NEVERTHELESS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CONDUCT THE FINAL EXAM IN-PERSON/ON CAMPUS.

Mission Statement, Stan Ross Department of Accountancy: The missions of the Stan Ross Department of Accountancy are (1) to operate the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs in accountancy, (2) to provide accounting knowledge to students with majors in areas other than accounting, and (3) to serve its student, academic, and business constituencies through engagement in high quality research. Consistent with the Zicklin School's mission, the Department seeks to provide high quality, high value education to enhance the professional aims of its students.

Course Description: This course concentrates in the area of taxation of individuals, covering the concepts of gross income, capital gains, losses, basis, deductions, and credits. It is an introductory course and, as such, assumes no prior exposure to, or knowledge of Federal income taxation. The course will not focus on the actual preparation of tax forms. The main goal of the course is to expose students to the fundamentals of the tax system. Students are responsible for regularly (at least every 2 days and the Thursday before scheduled class time) checking Brightspace for the class-related announcements.

Learning Goals: 1) Be able to work with key concepts of federal income taxation of individuals and 2) become innovative thinkers and recognize ethical and legal issues in tax planning.

Required MATERIALS:

The materials required for this class—and any other classes using Cengage products—are included in ONE Cengage Unlimited subscription. For $129.99 per semester, you get access to ALL your Cengage eTextbooks and online homework in ONE place (it is much cheaper to buy a subscription than to purchase a book or an access to the platform only for this book ($182). If you purchase a Cengage Unlimited subscription, you will need to add the item(s) below to your dashboard:

- Title: South-Western Federal Taxation 2025: Comprehensive (48th Edition)
- Author: Young/Nellen/Maloney/Persellin
- ISBN: 9780357988824

Note: You only need to purchase one Cengage Unlimited subscription to add any Cengage eTextbook or online homework for other classes to your dashboard at no additional cost. Download the free *Cengage Mobile App* to get your Cengage eTextbooks and study tools on your phone. Ask for Cengage Unlimited in the bookstore or visit cengage.com/unlimited to try it for free.

Beware of sites that are selling discounted Cengage Unlimited subscriptions. These sources are likely unauthorized sellers who have acquired access codes illegally, and transactions with such sources may pose a risk to your personal information.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE CENGAGE PLATFORM:

Go to Brightspace and log in to your account. Then click the link for this course. In the Content Area on the top of the page, click on "CNow Access." Please either watch and follow the instructions in the "CNow Registration Video" or follow the instructions described in the "CNow Registration Instructions PDF" in order to access your Cengage course materials. Please turn off pop-up blockers. **Please note that you do not need a course key to register.** Make sure you are in Brightspace when registering for CNow.

To view textbook chapters on the platform, please go to the "Study Tools" tab of the CengageNowv2 (CNow) dashboard. To access and complete homework assignments, please go to the "Assignments" tab.

YOU SHOULD DO YOUR ABSOLUTE BEST TO PURCHASE THE COURSE MATERIALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

PLEASE NOTE: 1) YOU MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE PLATFORM IN ORDER TO BE IN THIS COURSE, 2) ONCE YOU HAVE AN ACCESS TO THE PLATFORM, YOU DO NOT NEED TO PURCHASE THE BOOK SEPARATELY, 3) ANY AND ALL QUESTIONS THAT ARE RELATED TO SUBSCRIPTION, PLATFORM, AND ONLINE MATERIALS AND RELATED TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES MUST BE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLISHER, **NOT TO THE PROFESSOR**. THE PUBLISHER OFFERS FULL TECHNICAL SUPPORT, IN CASE YOU WILL EXPERIENCE ANY TYPES OF TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.

Contemporary Topics and Additional Learning Opportunities: We will discuss contemporary topics whenever time permits. The class is encouraged to access the following resources for latest tax information and research:

(Accessing Electronic Resources: On-Campus From the Newman Library's homepage,

http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu select "Information Resources)

* CCH Tax Research, WestLaw;
* Office of Management and Budget http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/
* U.S. Department of Treasury – Taxes http://www.treasury.gov/topics/tax/index.html
* Internal Revenue Service, http://www.irs.gov;
* Congressional Resources: U.S. Congress Joint Committee on Taxation http://www.house.gov/jct/
* U.S. Senate Finance Committee http://finance.senate.
* U.S. House Committee of Ways and Means http://waysandmeans.house.gov/

A Librarian is available to assist students in accessing Newman Library resources.

GRADES:

TWO EXAMINATIONS WILL BE ADMINISTERED ONLINE (EACH WEIGHTED 45% TOWARDS THE FINAL GRADE, AN ADDITIONAL 10% WILL BE GRANTED FOR CLASS PARTICIPATION/HOMEWORK PROBLEMS/PROJECT). (HW Problems are to be submitted via a platform only. The Platform will accept HW submissions on or before the HW deadline only).

The weights above are identical for everyone. **There will be no extra credit assignments or other opportunities to pull up your grade.** Department guidelines require me to follow the grade distribution/curve for 3000 level classes.

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ONE CHAPTER AHEAD IN THEIR READINGS FROM THE CHAPTER DISCUSSED IN CLASS AT ANY PARTICULAR TIME. HOMEWORK WILL BE ASSIGNED FOR EACH CLASS.

All online, hybrid, partially online, and web-enhanced classes at Baruch College assume that students have:

- A reliable Internet connection.
- Regular access to a laptop or desktop computer with an updated operating system.
- Working knowledge of how to use word processing software and web browsers.
- An active Baruch College webmail account that is checked daily (or forwarded to an email that is checked daily).
- A CUNY Portal account.
- Access to Blackboard/Brightspace.
- A Blogs@Baruch account.
- A CUNYFirst account.
- Off-campus access to the library's online databases.

EXAM POLICY and PROCEDURE:

Make-up exams are **not** given under any circumstance. During each exam, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that he or she will have a stable Internet connection and Internet back-up options so there are no issues. Prior to each exam, all students are required to enter Zoom and to keep the Zoom session running during the duration of the exam. The sole purpose of the Zoom session is to give students instructions, guidance, and the opportunity to ask for or receive technical assistance if anyone experiences technical difficulties or has questions regarding access to the exam. We will **not** use the Zoom session to proctor the exam. Therefore, students are **not required** to turn on their cameras or unmute themselves during the exam.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

I fully support Baruch College's policy on Academic Honesty, which states, in part: "Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and the students' personal and intellectual growth. Baruch students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for disobeying them. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned. "

Academic sanctions in this class will range from a D or F on the assignment to a D or F in this course. A report of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of the Dean of

Students. Additional information and definitions can be found at http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. The following definitions are based on the College's Academic Honesty website:

Cheating is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on a take home assignment or examination*
- Using unauthorized notes during a closed book examination
- Using unauthorized electronic devices during an examination
- Taking an examination for another student
- Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Changing a corrected exam and returning it for more credit
- Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to two classes without consulting the second instructor
- Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers including the use of commercial term paper services
- Posting exam questions and/or related solutions, or accessing such, on homework help or expert help websites such as Chegg.com.**

*Any exam-related collaboration is completely prohibited and anyone participating or engaging in any type of exam-related collaboration or even being present/part of a group (i.e. WhatsApp group chat) where any type of exam collaboration is taking place will fail the course (or receive a D) and be referred to the Dean of Students for an academic integrity violation.

**Please be aware that Baruch has the ability to track and ascertain offenders (and has done so in the past).

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own, such as:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes (a functional limit is four or more words taken from the work of another)
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging them

- Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledging the source
- Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignment

My policy is to give a failing or D grade to any assignment that has been plagiarized or an exam in which you have cheated. In addition, I am required by College policy to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

Learning involves the pursuit of truth, which cannot be pursued by presenting someone else's work as your own. By following the procedure outlined below, you will establish a basis of trust that will remain unless you provide reason to suspect it has been violated.

1. Visit the college's homepage and look under the **Current Students** menu for **Academic Honesty** (under **College Policies**).
2. Go to that web page:
   http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html
3. Read the material it contains.

For further discussion of plagiarism and clarification of its parameters, see the online plagiarism tutorial prepared by members of the Newman Library faculty at http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/help/plagiarism/default.htm If questions remain, ask me. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for unacceptable practices. For the record, if you violate the precepts of academic integrity, you will receive a zero for the assignment and your name will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students, where a notation will become part of your file at Baruch.

Zoom Platform: "Students who participate in this class with their camera on or use a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded solely for the purpose of creating a record for students enrolled in the class to refer to, including those enrolled students who are unable to attend live. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live."

Use of a Lockdown Browser: Enrollment in this section of this course means that the student knows that the instructor may employ a Lockdown Browser for the class's exams. This system

restricts what students can access on their computers during online Brightspace quizzes and tests—preventing students for example, from accessing other websites or applications. It does not monitor students using real-time or recorded video and does not access the content on students' computers or keep a record of students' activities for later inspection or use by CUNY. If students enroll without agreeing, they will be advised within the first week of the spring semester to drop the course or change sections.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities may receive assistance and accommodation of various sorts to enable them to participate fully in courses at Baruch. To establish the accommodations appropriate for each student, please alert your instructor to your needs and contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, part of the Division of Student Development and Counseling. For more information contact Ms. Barbara Sirois, Director of this office in B2-271 or at (646) 312-4590. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations for exams if he or she is entitled to extra time on exams. If you fail to email a photocopy of your Student Accommodation letter or card to my assistant, you will not be granted extra time on exams.

COURSE OUTLINE*:

01/31 – Intro. – Basic Overview of Taxation – Basic Concepts; Tax Determination; Tax Formula, Ethics and Professional Responsibility (Addressed Throughout the Course) (Chapter 1)

02/07 – Tax Determination; Tax Formula – cont'd; Tax Planning (Addressed throughout the Course); Standard Deduction; Personal and Dependency Exemptions (Chapter 3)

02/14 – Standard Deduction; Personal and Dependency Exemptions – cont'd. Overview of Property Transactions (Chapter 3)

02/21 – Gross Income – Inclusions (Chapter 4)

02/28 – Gross Income – Exclusions (Chapter 5)

03/07 – Review of Class 5 and Trade and Business Expenses (Chapter 6)

03/14 – Midterm Exam

03/21 – Review of Expenses (Chapter 6); Accounting Methods for Expenses (Cash, Accrual) (Chapter 6); Business Investigation Expenses (Chapter 6); Hobby Expenses (Chapter 6)

03/28 – Rental of Vacation Homes (Chapter 6); Conversion of Property from Personal to Business Use; Losses incurred in Transactions with Related Parties (Chapter 6)

04/04 – Business and Non-Business Bad Debt Expenses (Chapter 7); Casualty and Theft Losses (Chapter 7)

04/11 – Employee vs. Independent Contractor, Transportation Expenses (Commute), Travel (Domestic/International) (Chapter 9)

04/18 – Spring Recess – No Class

04/25 – Selling/Buying an Intangible Asset (Goodwill, Covenant not to compete, etc.)

05/02 – Property Transactions – Section 121 (Chapter 13); Online group research project, Group Presentations

05/09 – Last Day of Class

05/16 – Final Exam

*This is an approximate, *tentative* schedule and an outline of the course. Additional topics may be covered while certain topics listed above may be skipped.

BBA Learning Goals	**Significant Part of Course**	**Moderate Part of Course**	**Minimal Part of Course**	**Not Part of Course**
Analytical Skills	X			
Technology and Data Literacy			X	
Communication Skills: Oral			X	
Communication Skills: Written			X	
Civic Awareness and Ethical Decision-Making	X			

Global Awareness				X

Assignments	***Course Learning Goals***	***BBA Learning Goals***
Lectures	Discuss basic concepts in federal income taxation Become more informed and effective as practitioners	Analytical Skills Civic Awareness and Ethical Decision-Making
Homework Assignments	Reinforce, review, and demonstrate understanding of basic concepts in federal income taxation that were discussed in lectures	Analytical Skills Civic Awareness and Ethical Decision-Making
Project	Reinforce, review, and demonstrate understanding of basic concepts in federal income taxation that were discussed in lectures Recognize, communicate, and analyze tax issues and propose tax strategies for resolving such issues in writing and/or orally Become more informed and effective as practitioners	Analytical Skills Civic Awareness and Ethical Decision-Making Communication Skills: Oral Communication Skills: Written Technology and Data Literacy
Midterm and Final Exams	Reinforce, review, and demonstrate understanding of basic concepts in federal income taxation that were discussed in lectures	Analytical Skills Civic Awareness and Ethical Decision-Making

	Recognize and analyze tax issues	