

The Well-Trained Mind Academy  
**Life Skills for the Young Adult**

*Course Blackboard site:* wtma.blackboard.com

*Required Texts:*

- *Personal Finance Simplified: The Step-by-Step Guide for Smart Money Management*, ISBN 9781623153144
- [Best Self Journal PDF \(Free\)](#)

*All additional course materials will be provided for the students on Blackboard, either as PDFs or links.*

*Course Description:*

Life Skills for the Young Adult will serve as an introduction to the knowledge every young adult will need to successfully navigate the world. The foundation of the course is a focus on sound personal finance practices, combined with the ability to intentionally set personal and financial goals, and how to evaluate and achieve those goals on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.

The personal finance portion of the course will work on the basics of money management, including budgeting, setting reasonable spending targets, purchasing within one's means, and saving for emergencies, unexpected life circumstances, major purchases, and retirement. Students will examine many forms of credit, including credit cards, personal loans, car loans, student loans, and mortgages (including the miracle of compounding interest); insurance, including car, renters, homeowners, and health; and taxes, including how to properly prepare and document for taxes, saving for taxes and the incentives built into the tax code.

The goal planning portion of the course will use the basics of task management to help students answer the questions "what would you like to achieve," "why do you want to achieve it," and "how will you set targets in order to achieve these goals." Students will work with a goal planning journal in order to learn how to evaluate their plans. This part of the course will also include long-term planning vis-à-vis the tradeoffs and costs of professional work, trade work, college, graduate school, and professional school, and life plans (home, family, etc.)

Finally, a number of life skills will be introduced to the students in class, via discussion boards, and through independent learning modules on the basic tasks that every adult should know how to do. This will include how to purchase a car (new and used), how to register to vote, how to navigate government services, how to do basic home fixes, how to maintain your car, and, most importantly, how to do laundry.

*Written Assignments:*

Weekly Discussion Questions (15%)—Students will participate in weekly discussion boards with their fellow students, interacting on topics related to the week's reading and selected life skill(s).

Weekly Written Homework (15%)—Students will complete comprehension questions based on each week’s reading.

*Projects and Planners:*

Personal Budget Modeling (20%)—In the first eight weeks of the course, students will be required to plan and maintain a personal budget based upon a number of different criteria that will be presented to them. The goal will be for students to think about their needs and deal with “unexpected circumstances” that challenge and change any budget in its execution.

Personal Goal Planning (20%)—In the second eight weeks of the course, students will work with a goal planning system to evaluate and set goals, and over the course of several weeks, work to achieve these goals. Students will turn in their goal planning journal for feedback.

*Evaluations:*

Student Presentations (10%)—Students will give three short presentations in class each semester (no more than five minutes in length) on a chosen life skill.

Mid-Semester Test (10%)—Students will be required to complete a mid-semester test which will be a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions on material covered in class and in the readings.

Semester Test (10%)—Students will complete a semester ending test with multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions, as well as an essay, on material covered in class and in the readings.

*Other Assignments/Requirements:*

Class Participation (5%)—Active participation in class.

Example Class Schedule:

*Weeks 1-4*

Personal Finance

- Setting a Budget
- Managing Accounts
  - Checking (including balancing a checkbook)
  - Savings
  - Investment
  - Relationship among bank balance, expenses, and net worth
- Using Credit and Loans
  - Credit Cards
  - Rewards Points
  - Car Loans
  - Personal Loans
  - Student Loans

- o Mortgage and long-term debt
- Insurance Needs
  - o Health
  - o Car
  - o Renter's and Homeowner's
- Life Events and Personal Finance
  - o Going off to College
  - o How to purchase your first car
  - o First job and steady paycheck: what's next
  - o Out in the real world
  - o Planning for adult life, like marriage and children
  - o How to split expenses with friends

### *Weeks 5-8*

#### Goal setting and planning

- The Daily Schedule
  - o Set morning and evening routines
  - o Weekly planner
- Intentionally setting goals
  - o Articulating achievable goals
  - o Setting intermediate goals
  - o Weekly planning
  - o Daily task evaluation
- Reviewing budget and goals

### *Weeks 9-12*

#### Navigating the Adult World

- Good Citizenship
  - o Voter Registration
  - o Government services
  - o Taxes: income, property, local, etc
- Job Interviews and Strangers
  - o How to navigate a job interview
  - o Skills to applying for work
  - o How to talk to people you don't know
- Social media and its perils
  - o Accounts: necessity and pitfalls
  - o Time management
  - o Emailing with employers and others

### *Weeks 13-16*

#### Practical Matters

- Things that break
  - o Basic home repairs

- o Tools every person needs
- o Basic Car maintenance
  - Checking fluids, indicator lights, and fuses
  - Changing a tire
  - Navigating car repairs
- Taking Care of Yourself
  - o When to do your laundry
  - o How to feed yourself
  - o Tips for good night's sleep
  - o Making a doctor's appointment
- Achieving a work life balance
  - o How to say "no" to opportunities
  - o Mentorship and studying
  - o Life stress points
  - o When to get help
  - o Time for mindfulness

*Week 17*

Final Exam