# The Economics of Personal Money Decisions — Syllabus

**Foundation Course 3 of 3** · Alliance Unlimited Inc. **Instructor:** Dr. Kareem Tannous — DBA International Business · MS Applied Economics & Predictive Analytics · MBA Finance & Accounting · Series 65 (passed 2025) · multi-state real estate / mortgage / insurance broker (FL, GA, MD, PA, TX) · university-level instructor since 2014 **Format:** Self-paced video · 8 modules plus capstone · interactive worksheet and quiz per module · private capstone · 12-month access from enrollment **Price:** $189 per course. $504 for the bundle of three. **Effective:** 2026-10-14 · **Version:** v3

## Who This Course Is For

Adults with actual money on the line — a mortgage or a lease, a pension or a brokerage account, a family — who want to read their own money decisions the way an economist reads a firm. It will not tell you what to buy.

**Prerequisites:** none formal. Courses 1 and 2 are not required; this course stands alone. You should be comfortable with arithmetic and with typing a simple spreadsheet formula such as `=B3*(1-B4)` — the worksheet prompts every cell and shows the expected form. For the capstone you'll need your own statements: income, debts, policies, balances. Examples use US dollars and US account types; the frameworks transfer — a tax-deferred account in Canada, the UK, or Australia plays the role a 401(k) plays here.

## What You'll Be Able to Do

- You'll read any money decision through 4 practitioner questions — all-in cost, worst plausible outcome, compared to what alternative, and whose interest the recommendation serves.
- You'll separate a financial product — a mortgage, a policy, a fund — from the decision it is meant to serve.
- You'll apply opportunity cost, marginal analysis, present value, risk, and behavior to situations in your own life.
- You'll name your household's recurring money patterns and build structural fixes that don't depend on willpower.
- You'll complete a private personal economics audit covering income, borrowing, real estate, insurance, investing, major life decisions, and behavior.

## Time Commitment

Total video runtime is **1 hour 41 minutes** across 9 videos — 8 modules of about 11 minutes each plus a 10-minute capstone briefing — measured from the final renders. Budget 3 to 5 hours for the 7 worksheets (25 to 40 minutes each), about 1.5 hours for the 8 quizzes, and 8 to 12 hours for the capstone. Plan on 14 to 20 hours in total; 2 weeks of evenings is a realistic pace.

## Module-by-Module

Each module: watch the video, complete the worksheet, pass the quiz. Every quiz has 7 multiple-choice questions; 5 correct passes. Modules 2 to 8 each build one tab of your audit — Income, Debt, Real Estate, Insurance, Investing, Life-Decisions, Patterns — exported as an .xlsx file that generates in your browser and downloads to your machine. Alliance Unlimited never receives it.

**Module 1 — The Economic Lens — How Economists Read Money Decisions** (11:00) Most personal-finance teaching is repackaged marketing. This module gives you the economics underneath it — the 4 questions a practitioner asks before any money decision and the 5 frames an economist uses to answer them — and the line between education and licensed advice. It also lays out the 8-section audit map for the rest of the course. *Deliverable:* a printable Excel reference card (no worksheet). *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 2 — Income, Saving, and the Optimization Problem** (11:37) The right saving rate is not 10% or 20%. It is the output of an optimization problem — income, tax treatment, obligations, and horizons in; a rate out. You'll classify spending into needs, obligations, wants, and discretionary, and size an emergency fund to the emergencies you face. *Worksheet:* the Income tab — gross-to-net bridge, spending by class, saving capacity and rate, plus a 200-word emergency-fund note. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 3 — Borrowing — When It Makes You Richer, When It Doesn't** (11:23) Debt is a tool. It works when the asset it buys earns more, risk-adjusted, than the debt costs after tax. You'll run that test on car loans, student loans, credit cards and a mortgage, compute the all-in cost of every tranche — rate plus fees plus opportunity cost — and run the refinance arithmetic. *Worksheet:* the Debt tab — a debt schedule with all-in annual cost, an income-producing vs consumption classification, and a 200-word refinance note. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 4 — Real Estate as a Financial Instrument (Not a Home)** (11:39) A home is housing and a leveraged, illiquid, concentrated asset at the same time. You'll build the all-in annual cost of ownership — interest, tax, insurance, maintenance, and the opportunity cost of equity — compare it with renting, and learn to name the premium when the math says rent and the family says buy. *Worksheet:* the Real Estate tab — total cost of ownership and a 200-word rent-vs-buy breakeven. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 5 — Insurance as Risk Transfer (Not a Product to Sell)** (11:15) Insurance transfers a risk you cannot absorb to someone who can, at a premium above the expected loss by design. You'll

sort tail risks from everyday risks, run deductibles and term versus whole life on the math, and see where households pay for the wrong ones. *Worksheet:* the Insurance tab — a policy schedule, a tail-risk classification, and a 200-word four-question review. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 6 — Investing — The Four-Question Framework** (11:23) Built on the Series 65 curriculum — goal, time horizon, risk tolerance, tax wrapper: the 4 questions to answer before any investment decision. Asset allocation as an output of horizon and risk tolerance; tax efficiency by account type; fee drag in dollars. Framework only — no allocations, funds, or platforms; those are questions for a licensed adviser in your jurisdiction. *Worksheet:* the Investing tab — balances, expense ratio, fee drag, an asset-location classification, and a 200-word note on where education ends and licensed advice begins. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 7 — Major Life Decisions — The Decisions That Eat Most Money** (11:33) Education, marriage and family formation, career changes, and when to retire and claim benefits — 4 inflection points that move more lifetime money than any fund choice. You'll do the math the framework can do and write down the values inputs it cannot. "Math says X, family says Y" is a defensible outcome when the premium is named. *Worksheet:* the Life-Decisions tab — lifetime-cost estimates and a 200-word, 6-section decision write-up. *Quiz:* 7 questions.

**Module 8 — The Behavioral Economics of Your Own Money** (11:14) Most household money mistakes are patterns, not ignorance. You'll name your household's 2 or 3 recurring patterns, their triggers, and the structural change that prevents the next one. *Worksheet:* the Patterns tab — a pattern / trigger / fix table and a 200-word note on 2 patterns of your own. *Quiz:* 7 questions. Completing Modules 1 to 8 at 100% unlocks the capstone.

### Capstone — Your Personal Economics Audit (9:57)

**Deliverable.** One workbook in 8 sections: the 7 module tabs, filled with your own household's real numbers, statements open, plus the Audit Summary cover — a one-page summary of 400 or more words that ends in your top 3 actions ranked by dollar leverage, with an annual review date. The capstone briefing also teaches you to read the finished audit: start with the cover, look for signals that reinforce each other across tabs, act on the top 3, and re-read the audit in 6 to 12 months. The workbook generates in your browser and downloads to your machine. Alliance Unlimited never receives it.

**Rubric.** To record completion you submit the Capstone Self-Assessment: 6 dimensions scored 0–3, maximum 18 — Accuracy, Reasoning, Use of Evidence, Communication, Application to a Real Business Decision, Depth — plus a memo of 200 or more characters. Bands: Developing (0–9), Proficient (10–13), Distinguished (14–16), Exemplary (17–18). Your completion record stores the submission, so keep household numbers out of the memo. The Capstone Rubric document on the capstone page adds 6 audit-specific lenses for your own use: honesty of the numbers, the four-question lens, education-versus-advice discipline, behavioral candor, life-decisions integration, action-list defensibility.

**Done looks like:** all 7 tabs filled with real numbers, the cover written, the workbook saved somewhere private, the self-assessment submitted, and a re-read date on your calendar 6 to 12 months out.

## How Completion Works

Complete the course at 100% — video, worksheet, and quiz in every module (Module 1 has no worksheet), plus the full capstone video and the capstone submission — and you receive a Certificate of Completion with a public verification URL at allianceunlimited.com/verify/?id=. The certificate evidences completion, not a grade. Certificates do not constitute CE accreditation, professional certification, or licensure.

We use AI heavily and we're transparent about it. AI renders the module videos — Dr. Tannous's licensed avatar and cloned voice delivering his scripts, with narrated explainer segments; captions are on by default. An "Ask Alli the Tutor" panel sits inside every module page during your access window — Alli the Tutor, our AI tutor, trained on the course materials and answering in Dr. Tannous's teaching voice. It teaches the framework; it will not tell you what to buy.

## Access, Renewal, and Refunds

Access runs 12 months from enrollment. No auto-renewal. Renewal is $72 for a single course or $171 for the bundle, for 6 more months at the curriculum version active at renewal, available for 90 days after expiry. Re-purchase at $189 per course or $504 for the bundle grants a fresh 12 months.

Refunds: 100% refund within 3 days of enrollment AND zero module access. Accessing any module — even briefly — waives the right to a refund permanently. Decisions are final; no appeals.

## Disclosures

We don't pursue CE accreditation. The courses are pure education, not credentialing.

This course is education, not advice. Nothing in it is personalized financial, legal, or investment advice, and enrolling does not make you a client of any Alliance entity. Modules 3 through 6 touch mortgages, real estate, insurance, and investing, so the standing disclosure applies: All real estate, mortgage, and insurance advice runs through Alliance Realty & Financial Services, Inc. (alliancerealtyandfinancial.com), a separate business. Alliance Unlimited Inc. is purely educational.

## Where This Fits

The 3 Foundation courses share one practitioner and one lens. Course 1, Reading Financial Statements for Decision-Makers, teaches you to read a company's statements. Course 2, Excel Modeling for Financial Decisions, teaches you to build the models behind them — it is built in Excel and expects you to work in a workbook. Course 3 turns the same lens on your own household. Take them in any order. A Core tier above the Foundation courses is planned.