# FIPL 4610 / FIPL 5610 — Financial Planning Capstone

Wealth Management and Financial Planning Program
G. Brint Ryan College of Business · University of North Texas

## Course Information

**Term:** Fall 2026
**Credit Hours:** 3
**Meeting Days/Time:** Tuesday/Thursday, 3:55–5:15 p.m.
**Location / Modality:** Business Leadership Building, Room 050 (in person)
**Prerequisites:** Senior standing and completion of the required Financial Planning (FIPL) course sequence, or department consent. FIPL 3100, FIPL 4400, FINA 4200, ACCT 4300, RMIN 2500/3100 with C or better. Co-requisite FIPL 4500.

## Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Mark Evers, Ph.D., CFP®, CRPC®
**Title:** Clinical Assistant Professor; Director, Wealth Management and Financial Planning Program
**Office:** Business Leadership Building, Room 050
**Office Hours:** Immediately after class (Tuesday/Thursday 5:15–6:30 p.m.), or by appointment
**Email:** mark.evers@unt.edu

## Course Description

This is the capstone course of the CFP Board Registered Program. Students integrate knowledge from across the financial planning curriculum — the financial planning process, fundamentals and general principles, insurance and risk management, investment planning, tax planning, retirement planning, and estate planning — to develop and defend comprehensive financial plans. Through client-communication practice, a guided comprehensive case, and an independent capstone case defended before a panel of professionals, students demonstrate readiness to enter the profession and to sit for the CFP® examination. Successful completion satisfies the capstone requirement of the CFP Board Registered Program.

## Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply the CFP Board's financial planning process and Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct to client engagements.

- Analyze client data to identify planning issues, errors, and opportunities across the seven planning areas.
- Evaluate and correct financial planning recommendations for accuracy, suitability, and consistency with professional standards.
- Integrate the major planning content areas — fundamentals, insurance, investments, tax, retirement, and estate — into a single comprehensive financial plan.
- Demonstrate professional client communication and counseling through simulated client sessions.
- Construct a written comprehensive financial plan with defensible recommendations.
- Defend a comprehensive financial plan before a panel of professional judges.
- Graduate students (FIPL 5610) will additionally complete the final capstone case individually and submit a supplementary written analysis of their recommendations.

## Required Materials

- Dalton, Michael A., et al. Fundamentals of Financial Planning, 8th ed. Money Education. Print ISBN is 978-1-957-51-1542; eBook ISBN 978-1-957511-55-9. (or 7th Edition if that's what you have from previous courses)
- CFP Board Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct (current version), available at cfp.net (no cost).
- Texas Instruments BA II Plus financial calculator (Physical, you need it on the CFP® and Licensing Exams).
- Microsoft Excel and financial planning software (provided in class).
- Case materials and the final capstone case and rubric, provided in Canvas.

## Grading

| Component | Weight |
| --- | --- |
| Section 1 — Mock Client Sessions | 25% |
| Section 2 — Case 1: Guided Comprehensive Review | 25% |
| Section 3 — Final Capstone Case & Panel Presentation | 50% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

**Grade Scale:**

- A: 90–100%
- B: 80–89%
- C: 70–79%
- D: 60–69%
- F: below 60%

# Course Policies

## Attendance and Professionalism

This is a professional capstone; attendance and active participation are expected. There will be work on your own time when we get into the final case. The mock client sessions, the guided case, and the final panel presentation cannot be made up in the ordinary sense — they are live, scheduled professional events. Students are expected to conduct themselves, dress, and communicate as they would in front of a client or employer, particularly for the final panel defense.

## Late and Missed Work

Case deliverables have fixed deadlines in Canvas. Because the graded components are anchored to scheduled live events and will not be allowed to be made up after the deadlines unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor.

## Communication

Course announcements are posted in Canvas. Email is the best way to reach the instructor and is generally answered within one business day.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

AI tools may be used as drafting and analysis aids on case work, provided their use is disclosed and the student independently verifies every figure, citation, and recommendation. Images/Screenshots of AI prompts and artifacts must be disclosed in the appendix of the case. As a fiduciary, you are fully responsible for the accuracy of the AI tools used. The assessment in this course is the student's own professional judgment — demonstrated in the written plan and, above all, in the live panel defense, where students must explain and justify their recommendations without assistance. If you do not know the case and you cannot defend your plan, you will likely fail the course. Successful plan construction and defense is required by the CFP Board of Standards.

Fabricated or AI-hallucinated data, sources, or citations are an academic-integrity violation. Students are fully responsible for the accuracy of everything they submit and present.

## Panel Presentation (Section 3)

The final capstone case is presented and defended before a panel of two to four volunteer CFP® professionals. Presentation date, format, and the evaluation rubric will be distributed at the launch of Section 3. Attendance at the panel is mandatory.

## Graduate-Section Expectations (FIPL 5610)

FIPL 5610 is dual-listed with FIPL 4610. Graduate students complete the final capstone case individually (rather than in pairs), submit a supplementary written analysis of their recommendations, and are held to a higher standard in the panel defense with more rigorous questioning.

## Course Schedule

| Week / Date | Topic | Readings & Due Dates |
|---|---|---|
| **— SECTION 1 — Foundations & Professional Skills (25%)** | | |
| W1 · Tue Aug 18 | Course introduction & capstone expectations; the CFP® certification and examination overview; the financial planning process.<br><br>Setting up your Profile on the CFP Board Website | — |
| W1 · Thu Aug 20 | Ethics: CFP Board Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct; fiduciary duty; the disciplinary process | CFP Board Code & Standards |
| W2 · Tue Aug 25 and Thurs Aug 27 | Client psychology & behavioral finance; the psychology of financial planning | — |
| W3 · Tue Sep 1 | Communication & counseling: the client interview, data gathering, presenting recommendations; mock-session format & rubric introduced | — |
| W3 · Thu Sep 3 | Mock client session preparation: role-play practice, observation & feedback; Round 1 - Practice | — |
| W4 · Tue Sep 8, Thur Sept 10 | Mock client sessions (graded) — Round 2 and 3 | |
| | | |
| **— SECTION 2 — Case 1: Guided Comprehensive Review – Fix and Find (25%)** | | |
| W5 · Tue Sep 15 | Launch Case 1; the financial planning process applied; client goals & issue identification | Case 1 released |
| W5 · Thu Sep 17 | Fundamentals / general principles: statements, cash flow, debt, emergency fund — find & fix errors | — |
| W6 · Tue Sep 22 | Insurance & risk management: life, disability, health, LTC, property & | — |

| Week / Date | Topic | Readings & Due Dates |
|---|---|---|
| | liability — find & fix errors | |
| W6 · Thu Sep 24 | Retirement planning: 401(k)/403(b), Traditional & Roth IRA; needs analysis — find & fix errors | — |
| W7 · Tue Sep 29 | Investment planning & asset allocation: risk tolerance, allocation — find & fix errors | — |
| W7 · Thu Oct 1 | Tax planning: brackets, account tax treatment, basic strategies — find & fix errors | — |
| W8 · Tue Oct 6 | Case workday – no in person session (CFP Connections) | — |
| W8 · Thu Oct 8 | Integration: assembling the seven areas into one comprehensive plan - Executive Summary | Case Due in Canvas.<br>Sunday Oct 11, 11:59pm |
| **— SECTION 3 — Final Capstone Case & Panel Defense (50%)** | | |
| W9 · Tue Oct 13 | Final case launched (IARFC National Case Challenge); assignments (pairs / individual); rubric walkthrough | Final case released |
| W9 · Thu Oct 15 | Workday – NAPFA Nationals 2026 | |
| | | |
| W10 · Tue Oct 20 | UNT FP Day Alumni Event | |
| W10 · Thu Oct 22 | The CFP® exam: structure, domains, question style, and preparation strategy (With Dalton Education Guest)<br>Case analysis workshop: issue identification & planning-process application | — |
| W11 · Tue Oct 27 | Build & consultation: insurance and retirement sections | |
| W11 · Thu Oct 29 | Build & consultation: investment and tax sections | |
| W12 · Tue Nov 3 | Build & consultation: estate planning and plan integration | |
| W12 · Thu Nov 5 | Draft plan review; peer feedback; | |

| Week / Date | Topic | Readings & Due Dates |
|---|---|---|
| | presentation skills | |
| W13 · Tue Nov 10 | Dedicated case workday - No in person session (FPA Summit) | |
| W13 · Thu Nov 12 | Presentation dry-runs; panel Q&A preparation | — |
| W14 · Tue Nov 17 | Final plan polish; | — |
| W14 · Thu Nov 19 | Final preparations | — |
| Nov 24 & 26 | Thanksgiving Break — no class | — |
| W16 · Tue Dec 1 | Written comprehensive plans due;<br>Panel presentations & defense before CFP® alumni judges | Plans due Tuesday, 3pm In Canvas for the submission Time Stamp<br>Presentations Begin |
| W16 · Thu Dec 3 | Panel presentations & defense before CFP® alumni judges | |
| Finals Week | Graduation Celebration at Dave Ragan's House (Date and Time TBD) | We have the meats! |

*The instructor reserves the right to adjust this schedule as needed; students will be notified of any changes via Canvas.*

# University Policies and Required Statements

## Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

For more information, see: Policy 16.004 (http://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-004).

## Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

## ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course.

You can request accommodations at any time, but it’s important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access).

## Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 04.008, Records Management and Retention for additional information (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/04-008).

## Emergency Notification and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

## Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

## Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012) to learn more.

## Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to ensure there are numerous outlets available to you when seeking care, regardless of the nature of the issue or its severity. Listed below are Denton campus in-person and online student resources that can support your academic success and mental wellbeing, whether enrolled in Denton, Frisco Landing, Discovery Park, or online-only courses.

The Counseling and Testing Center (CTS) is located on the 3rd floor of Chestnut Hall, where students have free access to individual counseling/therapy, group counseling, workshops, and crisis counseling, with both in-person and virtual appointment options available (https://studentcounseling.unt.edu/).

Psychiatric Services are available at the Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC) on the 2nd floor of Chestnut Hall, where staff can see students for psychiatric evaluations, prescribe medications, and develop comprehensive treatment plans, with both in-person and telemedicine (online) options available.

Togetherall is an online peer support platform for UNT students. It is a safe community that is available 24/7, where you can connect with students from across the world who are going through the same struggles that you might be facing (https://togetherall.com/en-us/why-join/).