

## **ECON 344: Finance & Society**

*Mondays and Wednesdays (8:00 am-9:20 am), Pettengill 257*

*Fridays (8:00 am-9:20 am) are reserved as makeup classes when required*

*Fall 2025*

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Dr. Anamika Sen (she/her) – please call me Professor Sen

Email: [asen@bates.edu](mailto:asen@bates.edu)

Office: 270 Pettengill Hall

Drop-in hours: Mondays (3:00 pm–5:00 pm). Alternative hours upon request.

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course will explore the relationship between finance and society, focusing on how financial systems influence social, political, and economic forces. We will cover topics such as financial inclusion, sustainable finance, and the impact of emerging financial technologies. A key component of this course involves collaborating with community partners to apply your knowledge to real-world financial applications. Through this course, you will gain a critical understanding of the broader societal implications of finance and the skills to engage in impactful financial solutions.

Modes of Inquiry (MOI): Historical and Social Inquiry [HS]

Lyceum course link: <https://lyceum.bates.edu/course/view.php?id=9076>

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically examine how financial systems influence economic, political, and social structures.
- Develop communication, collaboration, and project management skills.
- Propose a research project grounded in relevant economic literature.

### **PREREQUISITES**

You are expected to have completed ECON 255 and ECON 270 previously to take this course.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

There is no required textbook for this course. Lectures and class discussions will be based on a compilation of articles and book chapters. Detailed information on this can be found in the weekly [reading list](#).

## COMMUNICATION

### Course materials and class updates

All course materials (slides, problem sets, etc.) will be posted on Lyceum. Please check frequently for updates. I will also use the class mailing list to communicate any updates/changes to the class. Please check your Bates email regularly for any such communication.

### How to reach me?

The best ways to reach me outside of class are either during my weekly drop-in hours or via email. I will typically respond to emails **within 48 hours except on weekends and holidays**. If an issue is time-sensitive, please mention it as such in the subject line of your email.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Regular attendance is expected in this class. Attendance will be important not only for your learning but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another. Your presence in class matters. If you need to miss class one day, you are welcome (but not required) to email me and let me know why. However, please note that we will learn new material every class and it is your responsibility to be up to date with the course. To this end, you can refer to the lecture slides on Lyceum, ask a classmate for their lecture notes, and ask them follow-up questions if needed. If there are still parts you are not clear on, please stop by during my drop-in hours or email me.

## USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

You may use your laptop or tablet to take notes during lectures. However, that privilege will be lost if I find that you are using them for non-course-related reasons (e.g., news, social media, shopping). Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and hidden. Failure to abide by this policy will lower your participation grade. If there is an emergency and your phone must be on/visible, please inform me of this at the beginning of class.

## ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Reading Notes: You are expected to make handwritten notes of up to 2 pages based on the assigned readings. Reading notes must be uploaded to Lyceum before the start of class. Instructions regarding the structure to be followed for reading notes will be provided in the assignment instructions.

In-class Reading Quizzes: Throughout the semester, there will be 11 short in-class quizzes based on the assigned readings. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of the class. You will be allowed to refer to a physical copy of your reading notes during the quiz. Your 3 lowest scores will be dropped when determining your final grade.

Class Participation: Every day, you can earn points by

- Being mentally present during class – staying focused, taking notes, adhering to the class policy on devices
- Asking interesting questions and actively engaging during lectures and paper presentations
- Bringing creative examples from outside class into discussions
- Demonstrating professionalism by treating me and your peers with respect

What if you need to be absent?

- You can make up points by participating more on other days.
- Do note that class participation is a valuable part of the learning experience for everyone. With this in mind, missing more than 3 classes might pose a risk to your learning in this course.

Group Presentations: You are required to make 1 in-class presentation on an assigned reading. Presentations will be made in groups of 2. Presentations cannot be rescheduled except under extraordinary circumstances. If you have an extraordinary circumstance that prevents you from completing a presentation on your assigned date, please speak to me as soon as possible. More details on presentation assignments and expectations will be shared at the start of the semester.

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) Project: You will be assigned to a CEL project based on your interests and skills required by the community partner managing the project. You will work in groups to complete a sequence of 4 assignments: (i) Project Proposal; (ii) Mid-term Check In; (iii) Final Presentation; and (iv) Project Deliverable.

The **final presentation** will **tentatively** be held on **Tuesday, December 9** from 1:15-3:15 pm (note that this is the allotted final exam time slot for this course). The due date for the project deliverable should be decided during the initial meeting with your assigned community partner. Please note that this due date should be **no later** than **Monday, December 15** to ensure timely tabulation of your final grade.

Research Proposal: At the end of the semester, you will submit a research proposal on a topic of your choosing. The research proposal will comprise a sequence of 3 assignments: (i) Research Focus; (ii) Research Context; and (iii) Final Research Proposal.

Please adhere to the deadlines for each assignment associated with the CEL Project and Research Proposal. If you need to request an extension, email me **at least 24 hours before the deadline**, explain the situation, and tell me how much extra time you believe you need. I will not accept late work after 2 days.

## GRADING POLICY

Assessment	Percentage	Additional Details
Reading Notes	4%	Assignments are completion-based. No credit will be given for late submissions.
In-class Reading Quizzes	16%	
Class Participation	10%	
Group Presentations	12%	
CEL Project	20%	Workshop Attendance (3%), Project Proposal (3.5%), Mid-term Check In (3.5%), Final Presentation (5%), Project Deliverable (5%)
Research Proposal	38%	Meeting Preparation (3%), Research Focus (5%), Research Context (10%), Final Research Proposal (20%)

### Contesting of Grades:

Every effort is made to ensure that grades are accurate and consistent. I do not want to give any student an erroneous grade. If you believe that a grading error has been made, please bring it to my attention promptly after an assignment has been handed back. I will only consider possible grading errors for one week after an assignment has been returned.

### Scale:

You will receive an overall score between 0 and 100 that will be converted into a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	93-100	B+	86-88.9	C+	76-78.9	D	60-68.9
A-	89-92.9	B	83-85.9	C	73-75.9	F	<60
		B-	79-82.9	C-	69-72.9		

Exceptional students may receive an A+ at the discretion of the professor. I reserve the right to curve the grade if deemed necessary.

Note: Your overall score will not be rounded. For example, 88.6 will not be rounded up to 89 and will be converted to B+.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All members of the Bates community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following exam/assignment rules
- Using only permitted materials during an exam/assignment

- Viewing exam materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Keeping what you know about an exam to yourself
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your original work
- Not submitting work done for another course to this course

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam
- Accessing exam materials without permission
- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source including open artificial intelligence, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including the use of Internet material without proper citation
- Using cell phones or other electronics to obtain outside information during an exam or assignment without explicit permission from the instructor
- Submitting your work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.

## **USE OF AI TOOLS**

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted in this class. Therefore, the use of such AI tools for work in this class will be considered a violation of Bates' Academic Integrity policy, since the work is not your own.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also wish to work with the Office of Accessible Education to discuss a range of options for removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Please visit their website for contact and additional information: <https://www.bates.edu/accessible-education/>. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Accessible Education, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

## **RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

This course is intended to serve students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I will try my best so that all students' learning needs can be addressed both in and out of class. It is an important part of my teaching philosophy that the diversity that students bring to class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is always my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings or deadlines conflict with your religious events, please let me know within the first three weeks of the semester so that we can accommodate you. Finally, all people have the right to be addressed and referred to by their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify

the pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to everyone accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.

## **PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY**

I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning. To this end, I ask all members of this class to:

- Be open to and interested in the views of others
- Consider the possibility that your views may change over the term
- Be aware that this course could ask you to reconsider some “common sense” notions you may hold
- Honor the unique life experiences of your peers
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
- Listen to each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- Ground your comments in the texts we are studying. Refer frequently to the texts and make them the focus of your questions, comments, and arguments. This is the single most effective way to ensure respectful discussion and to create a space where we are all learning together.

## **STUDENT RESOURCES**

There are multiple resources available to help you succeed in this course. Please take advantage of my drop-in hours. These are times when you can just come in and no scheduling is needed. If you cannot make it to my drop-in hours, please contact me to schedule an appointment.

I also recommend using the services provided by the **Student Writing & Language Center (SWLC)**, which provides a supportive environment for you to understand and generate ideas for your writing assignments in any subject or course; to draft, revise, and edit your writing for any purpose, context, or audience; to practice and get feedback on your oral presentations; and to study or practice writing and communicating. SWLC is located in the Peer Learning Commons (PLC) on the Ground Floor of Ladd Library. You are invited to stop by SWLC anytime they’re open to meet with a writing or language tutor. You can also search for subject-specific support hours or make appointments with a tutor using the Penji app: <https://web.penjiapp.com/>. For more information, please visit [www.bates.edu/swlc](http://www.bates.edu/swlc). Or, email [swlc@bates.edu](mailto:swlc@bates.edu) to ask additional questions.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Pre-class readings marked in *italics* are optional.

Date	Topic	Pre-Class Reading(s)	What's Due?
09/03 – Wednesday	Syllabus, Introduction		Presentation Sign Up
09/08 – Monday	Financial Crises	Aliber et al. (2023)	
09/10 – Wednesday	Financial Crises	Schularick & Taylor (2012)	
09/15 – Monday	Financial Crises	Schularick & Taylor (2012)	CEL Project Survey
09/17 – Wednesday	Financial Crises	Müller & Verner (2024)	
09/22 – Monday	Financial Inclusion	<i>Barajas et al. (2020)</i>	
09/24 – Wednesday	Financial Inclusion	Baradaran (2015, 2016) Ahamed & Mallick (2019)	Group Presentation 1
09/29 – Monday	CEL Workshop		
09/30 – Tuesday	<b>NO CLASS</b>		CEL Project Proposal
10/01 – Wednesday	Financial Literacy	Lusardi & Mitchell (2023)	
10/06 – Monday	Financial Literacy	Behrman et al. (2012)	Group Presentation 2
10/08 – Wednesday	Individual Meetings	Bernheim & Garrett (2003)	
10/13 – Monday	Individual Meetings		
<b>10/15-17</b>	<b>NO CLASS – Fall recess</b>		
10/20 – Monday	Private Equity	<i>Kaplan &amp; Stromberg (2009)</i>	
10/22 – Wednesday	<b>NO CLASS</b>		Research Focus
10/27 – Monday	Private Equity	Davis et al. (2014) Singh et al. (2022)	Group Presentation 3
10/29 – Wednesday	Digital Currencies	<i>Kosse &amp; Mattei (2022)</i>	
11/03 – Monday	CEL Workshop		
11/04 – Tuesday	<b>NO CLASS</b>		CEL Check In
11/05 – Wednesday	Digital Currencies	Alvarez et al. (2023) Greenberg & Bugden (2019)	Group Presentation 4
11/10 – Monday	Individual Meetings		
11/12 – Wednesday	Individual Meetings		
11/17 – Monday	Sustainable Finance	<i>Baranes (2009)</i> Campiglio et al. (2018)	
11/19 – Wednesday	Sustainable Finance	Brutscher et al. (2021)	Group Presentation 5
11/21 – Friday	<b>NO CLASS</b>		Research Context
<b>11/24-28</b>	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving recess</b>		
12/01 – Monday	Writing/CEL Workshop		
12/03 – Wednesday	Writing/CEL Workshop		
<b>12/09 – Tuesday</b>	<b>Tentative Date</b>		<b>CEL Final Presentation</b>
<b>12/12 – Friday</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>		<b>Research Proposal</b>

Disclaimer: This outline is intended to give you guidance on what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, I reserve the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as the course needs arise. Any changes will be communicated via email and in class.