I. Course Introduction and Objectives

George Mason University Catalog Description:
Introduction to fundamental topics in taxation using a business-entities approach. Specific topics include gross income, deductions, losses, and property transactions. The course emphasizes the identification of planning and compliance issues and the application of tax law to resolve those issues. Both tax and non-tax factors affecting decision making are considered.

Course goals: The goal of this course is to build a sound conceptual and technical foundation for the study of federal income taxation that provides students with the tools necessary to stay current with the ever-changing tax law.

Specific student learning objectives include:
- Students will identify issues and relevant facts for assessing tax problems.
- Students will apply the tax law to solve compliance and planning problems.
- Students will recognize ethical dilemmas and develop a framework for addressing them.
- Students will develop tax research skills that will allow them to identify facts, issues, and relevant tax law to resolve those issues.
- Students will communicate effectively in written and oral form.
Students will work effectively in groups.
Students will use technology to resolve tax problems and communicate results.

GMU School of Business Undergraduate Program Learning Goals (those in bold will be addressed in this class):
1. Our students will be competent in their discipline.
2. Our students will be aware of the uses of technology in business.
3. Our students will be effective communicators.
4. Our students will have an interdisciplinary perspective.
5. Our students will be knowledgeable about global business and trade.
6. Our students will recognize the importance of ethical decisions.
7. Our students will be knowledgeable about the legal environment of business.
8. Our students will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams.
9. Our students will understand the value of diversity and the importance of managing diversity in the context of business.
10. Our students will be critical thinkers.

Students who are competent in the accounting discipline will meet the following learning goals.
1. Students will understand the accounting cycle from analysis of original transactions through the preparation of financial statements.
2. Students will record, analyze, interpret and communicate financial and non-financial information for users of such information in accordance with applicable professional authoritative literature.
3. Students will assess risks inherent in financial and non-financial information and provide appropriate assurance to users of such information and they will be able to develop, validate, and evaluate processes and controls which serve to ensure the integrity of financial and non-financial information.
4. Students will understand the environment and role of the accounting profession in the proper functioning of commerce, and in society at large, and the ethical and regulatory responsibilities associated with that environment and role.
5. Students will possess the following technical competencies: (1) research skills to access, understand, and apply relevant professional authoritative literature; (2) decision modeling skills to identify issues, analyze alternatives, and implement solutions related to financial and non-financial information; and (3) technology and data analysis skills to manage financial and non-financial information.
II. Grades

\begin{align*}
A & \geq 90 \\
B & \geq 80 \\
C & \geq 70 \\
D & \geq 60 \\
F & < 60
\end{align*}

Grading breakdown:

- Quizzes (using the average after dropping the lowest 1) 10%
- Assignments (using the average after dropping the lowest 1) 15%
- Midterm 1 25%
- Midterm 2 25%
- Final Exam 25%

Quizzes:
There will be approximately 9 or 10 reading quizzes throughout the semester that must be taken online on Blackboard (mymasonportal.gmu.edu) prior to the beginning of the class that will go over the related chapter. These quizzes will focus on higher level concepts from the chapters. There will be no make-up quizzes. However, I will drop the lowest quiz for each student. NO EXCEPTIONS - QUIZZES MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF CLASS AS NOTED ON THE SCHEDULE.

Assignments:
There will be approximately 10 or 11 out-of-class assignments throughout the class. Primarily, the assignments are homework problems for the material to help give students experience with the types of problems that will be on the midterms and final. These are more detailed than the quiz problems (e.g. involve calculations and story problems for different taxpayers) and are intended to give students regular feedback on their understanding of the material prior to exams. As with the quizzes, there will be no make-ups, which is why I drop the lowest assignment grade. Unless otherwise stated, homework assignments must be uploaded onto Blackboard using the answer sheet in PDF or Microsoft Word format. Homework submitted no more than 24 hours late will receive partial credit.

A few assignments are not based on typical homework style problems. The first is a take-home research project related to techniques learned in Chapter 2, since Chapter 2 will not be on Midterm 1, and another is the take-home ethics project. Details on these assignments

---

1 Plusses and minuses will be used only in “borderline” cases as determined by the instructor. They will only be used in cases where the plus or minus helps the student. In other words, if a student’s score meets the threshold above (say, an 81% final grade), then the student has earned no less than that grade (in the 81% case: B), having crossed the threshold. Below the threshold, and on the borderline, a plus or minus will be given solely at the instructor’s discretion, based on factors like grade trends, distributions, participation/attendance, etc. Student lobbying efforts, however, play no role in final letter grade determinations.
2 The number could vary depending on whether we make it through all the planned Chapters or not.
3 The number could vary depending on whether we make it through all the planned Chapters or not.
(and others) will be discussed in class and posted to Blackboard in a separate document as the assignments come up.

**Midterms 1 and 2:**
The midterms are in-person exams to be taken in class on Wednesday, May 30th and Tuesday, June 12th, respectively. See the course policies below regarding make-up exams.

**Final Exam:**
The final exam is scheduled for 10:30 am-1:15 pm on Thursday, June 21, 2018. It will cover material since Midterm 2 and is not comprehensive insofar as it will not have detailed questions focused on testing pre-Midterm 2 material; however, some questions on post-Midterm 2 material may still require a general understanding of pre-Midterm 2 material (for example, Ch. 16 references some material from Ch. 9). The exam must be taken at the scheduled time unless you’ve made different arrangements with me in advance.

### III. Course Policies

**Attendance:**
If a student misses more than 5 days of class (which is a significant portion of the semester) then I have the right to assign a course grade of “F” or drop the student from the course. The option of dropping the student will depend on how far into the course we are when the absences exceed this limit.

**General Make-Up and Extra Credit Policy:**
There will be no make-up quizzes or assignments given (but I will drop the lowest quiz grade and the lowest homework grade). If you have a foreseeable conflict with an exam date, then please notify me at least one week in advance of the scheduled in-class exam date to allow accommodations to be made. The exception to this is absence because of sudden illness or family emergency, which will require official documentation to support the absence. An unapproved absence will result in a grade of zero on the exam. Midterms must be taken within a reasonable time limit (usually within a week from the scheduled date). The final exam must be taken within 3 days of the scheduled time. Note that it is a student’s responsibility to make required arrangements for alternative exam dates in advance, otherwise the grade will be a zero for that exam.

**George Mason E-mail and Blackboard:**
Students are expected to check their George Mason e-mail and Blackboard on a daily basis. In order to comply with student privacy laws, students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class, and when corresponding with me or fellow students for our class.
Course information and supporting materials will be available through Blackboard. I will disseminate course information using both outlets, including announcements, course content, grades, and (possibly) class cancellations. If you have any questions or problems about accessing these, please see me or IT.

**Students with disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. Facilitation for disabilities in the classroom will be applied after I receive the appropriate faculty contact sheet from ODS.

**Honor Code:**
Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

All academic work in this course, including quizzes, assignments, and exams, is to be your own work, unless otherwise specifically described by the instructor. It is your responsibility if you have any doubt to confirm whether or not collaboration is permitted. In this class, an honor code violation would occur if unauthorized collaboration took place or if unauthorized materials were used on quizzes, assignments, or exams. Examples of unauthorized collaboration include but are not limited to copying off another student’s quiz, assignment, or exam, discussing questions on the quiz, assignment, or exam during the exam, and a student who has taken an exam earlier telling other students answers or specific questions on the exam. Examples of unauthorized materials include but are not limited to use of laptops, phones, calculators, notes, or the textbook on a quiz, assignment, or exam in a way that is different that I have explicitly allowed. If any part of this honor code statement is not clear, ask me for a clarification.

I expect all students to follow the GMU Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code will be forwarded to the Honor Council for resolution. The following are the recommended responses for honor code violations for the School of Business.

| School of Business Recommendations for Honor Code Violations | Approved May 2016 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **UG-Non Freshman Students (including transfer students)** | |
| **Type of Violation** | **First Offense** | **Second Offense** |
| Plagiarism | An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion | An F in the class; referral to the Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion |
| 1. Failure to cite/attribute sources | | |
| 2. Representing someone else’s work as the student’s own (e.g., copying and pasting) | | |
Cheating
1. On a minor assignment (e.g., homework, quizzes)  
   An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion
2. Cheating on a major assignment or exam, submitting course work from another course as original work  
   An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension
An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion

Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data)  
An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension
An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion

Egregious Violation (e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work across multiple courses; lying to an employer about academic performance, false identification or posing as another, in person or online)  
An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension
An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and expulsion

Bad Weather Days:
If you are unsure if classes will be taught on days when weather is especially bad, please e-mail me. If I am unable to get to class, I will inform you via your George Mason e-mail and/or our course’s Blackboard site. If you have not heard from me, then the default is to assume that class will proceed as scheduled.

Other Policies:
Policies not explicitly stated in this syllabus are delegated to the UNC George Mason University Catalog General Policies and the George Mason University Honor Code.
IV. Tentative Course Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Dates for Quizzes &amp; HW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-May</td>
<td>Monday Syllabus, Chapter 1 An Introduction to Tax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-May</td>
<td>Tuesday Chapter 2 Tax Compliance, the IRS, and Tax Authorities</td>
<td>Quiz 1 (Ch1/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 4 Individual Overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-May</td>
<td>Wednesday Chapter 5 Gross Income and Exclusions</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (Ch4/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-May</td>
<td>Thursday Chapter 6 Individual Deductions</td>
<td>Quiz 3 (Ch6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-May</td>
<td>Friday No Class</td>
<td>HW1 (Ch1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-May</td>
<td>Monday Memorial Day Holiday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-May</td>
<td>Tuesday Midterm 1 Review</td>
<td>HW3 (Ch4/5) &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HW4 (Ch6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-May</td>
<td>Wednesday MIDTERM 1 (Ch. 1, 4, 5, and 6).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-May</td>
<td>Thursday Chapter 9 Business Income for Individuals</td>
<td>Quiz 4 (Ch9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Jun</td>
<td>Friday No Class</td>
<td>HW2 (Ch2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Jun</td>
<td>Monday Chapter 10 Property Acquisition and Cost Recovery</td>
<td>Quiz 5 (Ch10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Tuesday Chapter 11 Property Dispositions</td>
<td>Quiz 6 (Ch11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>Wednesday TBD</td>
<td>HW 5 (Ch9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>Thursday Online Ethics Class (No Class)</td>
<td>Ethics Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Jun</td>
<td>Friday No Class</td>
<td>Ethics HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Jun</td>
<td>Monday Midterm 2 Review</td>
<td>HW6 (Ch10) &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HW7 (Ch11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Jun</td>
<td>Tuesday MIDTERM 2 (Ch. 9, 10, and 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Jun</td>
<td>Wednesday Chapter 16 Corporate Operations</td>
<td>Quiz 7 (Ch16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Jun</td>
<td>Thursday Chapter 20 Forming and Operating Partnerships</td>
<td>Quiz 8 (Ch20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Jun</td>
<td>Friday No Class</td>
<td>HW8 (Ch16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-Jun</td>
<td>Monday Chapter 24 The U.S. Taxation of Multinational Transactions</td>
<td>Quiz 9 (Ch24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-Jun</td>
<td>Tuesday TBD</td>
<td>HW9 (Ch20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-Jun</td>
<td>Wednesday Final Exam Review</td>
<td>HW10 (Ch24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Jun</td>
<td>Thursday FINAL EXAM (Ch. 16, 20, and 24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the syllabus and course schedule with appropriate announcements in class and on Blackboard.