



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

FINC 4331.600, Investments, Fall 2024, CRN: 10362
Department of Accounting & Finance, College of Business
Course Syllabus

Class Meeting Time and Place: Online – Synchronous (R 7:00 pm – 8:15 pm)
Class Duration: 08/26/2024 - 12/13/2024
Instructor: Dr. Shahil Sharma
Office: BLH 241M
Tel: (210) 784-2379
E-Mail: shahil.sharma@tamusa.edu
Student emails will receive a reply within two business days.
Course Website: <https://tamusa.blackboard.com/>

Office Hours (In-person or Virtual): <https://tamusa.zoom.us/j/7788798907> - Zoom

M	2:00 - 5:00 pm (online)
R	12:00 - 3:00 pm (online)
F	1:00 - 3:00 pm (online)

***And by appointment or talk to me before or after class

*** Using regular TAMUSA Email instead of Blackboard message will lead to prompt response.

Catalog Course Description: Principles governing the proper investment of personal and institutional funds; the characteristics of a sound investment and the analysis of the different securities offered to investor.

Course Objectives: The objective of the course is to provide an advanced understanding of the investment process and the various investment alternatives available. Students will learn practical techniques for analyzing investments and develop a way of thinking about alternatives in the ever-changing securities markets.

Prerequisites: FINC 3337. Students who do not meet the pre-requisites must contact the instructor immediately.

Student Learning Outcomes: After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Obtain an understanding of both fixed income and equity investments and the methods used for determining their valuation and demonstrate such.
- 2) Develop and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the elements of Investments, including the background and issues related to investing and the financial institutions involved in managing and handling investments and investment vehicles.
- 3) Explain the relationship between risk and diversification and returns. Also, demonstrate an understanding of the Capital Asset Pricing model and the parameters involved in using the CAPM.

- 4) Develop a fundamental understanding of options and option markets and how they can be used in portfolio management and diversification.
- 5) Obtain and show a fundamental understanding of behavioral finance and its impact on selecting investments and managing portfolios.
- 6) Hands-on-practical-experiences via two rigorous simulation projects which enforces analytical skills, critical thinking and reasoning skills, and public speaking skills.

The learner outcomes will be assessed by responses to various quiz/exam questions and evaluating the assignments/case studies.

AACSB Assessment: The College of Business is in the process of applying for AACSB accreditation. As part of that process, students will be assessed on program level outcomes based on course outcomes from various courses. The materials from this course may be used for assessing such program level outcomes, and hence students must follow the necessary rigor to ensure mastery and retention of the above course outcomes.

Required Materials:

- **Textbook:** *Fundamentals of Investing 14th Edition*, Smart, & Zutter. Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780135179314 / ISBN-10: 0135179319
- For FINC 4331 (Investments) we are using Pearson book, therefore the supplemental platform is **MyLab Finance**. The supplementary platform is not optional, it is required for homework and exams.
- **Blackboard:** You will have lecture notes, solutions to problems, multimedia materials and other supplementary materials in Blackboard. All class communications will be through Blackboard announcement and students should monitor this several times a day.
- **Calculator:** A Financial calculator (preferably TI BAI Plus).
- **Time:** You are expected to spend 4-8 hours per week on the course. Based on the background, some students may require more time. Time spent may be longer when assignment/exams are due.

Other Recommended / Reading Materials: Additional reading materials are available on the course website as recommended by the instructor. I will frequently update you on reading via Blackboard Announcements. I highly encourage you to follow current business news via Wall Street Journal, CNBC, NY Times, Financial Times, and Business Insider etc.

Course Requirements every student must fulfill to succeed in course:

1. Students should check the Course Calendar, Announcements, and Messages (e-mail) systems in Blackboard on a regular basis.
2. Students should keep current with all course assignments, quizzes, and examinations.
3. If the course uses remote proctoring for exams, students must schedule their exam early in the semester.
4. Students should ask questions and communicate with the instructor either in class, online, off-line or during office hours.
5. For all classwork, exams, quizzes etc., if a student is completing it off-campus, then they are responsible for availability of internet connectivity. Extensions will **not** be granted for lack of availability of internet connections.
6. Students should remember that online and hybrid courses assume greater responsibility and independent learning skills by the student for their own learning outcomes.
7. For online courses, students should keep current on class recordings, if not attending the live class (either in person or online).

8. For online asynchronous courses, there will be no online class sessions. All materials will be made available through Blackboard or through online links.
9. For online synchronous courses, there will be online class sessions as indicated. Students are expected to attend the online session at the given time. If a student is unable to attend a session, the instructor will make the recording of the session available for the student to view. All materials will be made available through Blackboard or through online links.

Grading Policy: The final course grade will be based on your performance on the quizzes, exams and assignments using the following weights:

Final grades will be based on below activities:	Due Dates	Points
Final Exam (non-comprehensive)		25%
Midterm Exam		25%
Assignments via Pearson's MyFinance Lab	All assignments due on Nov. 30	10%
Financial Modeling Project Simulation	Nov. 07	20%
Financial Modeling Project Presentation	Nov. 07	10%
Stock Trading Simulation & Report	Nov. 30	10%
Total		100%

The final letter grades will be assigned as follows: Above 90% ⇒ A; 80 – 89% ⇒ B; 70 – 79% ⇒ C; 60 – 69% ⇒ D; Below 60% ⇒ F.

Assignment/Quizzes/Examinations: There will be Mid-term Exam and a non-comprehensive Final Exam. All exams, quizzes, and assignments are administered either in-class (may require **Scantron**) or via Blackboard or via Pearson MyFinance Lab. The assessment activities such as: exams/assignments/quizzes will consist of critical thinking and reasoning, conceptual, and analytical problem-solving questions. The assignment/exam/quiz materials will come from assigned assignments, lecture notes, the text, and classroom discussions. Questions will emphasize understanding and applications of concepts and topics covered in class. The number of questions in each quiz may vary by chapter. Assignments are administered via Pearson MyFinance Lab.

Financial Modeling Project Simulation & Presentation: Individual project is due on **Nov. 07**. Summary is provided here, but for detailed instruction please refer to individual project instruction document (uploaded in Blackboard). Past 5 years of historical accounting, financial, and macroeconomic data are provided by Professor. For grading purposes, the individual Project is divided into three required categories. Students are required to submit three different files (excel workbook, word document, and power-point presentation). Students are required to get feedback from Professor throughout entire project to prevent any mistakes:

1. **Excel workbook - Financial Modeling Simulation:** Students need to analyze given problems and obtain appropriate solutions to the given problems. This is the most critical step as students need results from this step to support the report writing process and presentation.

2. **Word document – Report:** Students are required to provide answers to questions asked in the project with analytical support. *Please answer questions in brief, complete, and concise form.* There is no page requirement.
3. **Power-point – Presentation:** Instructor will let you know if presentation will be done in-class or offline (YouTube link or .mp4 video is required for offline presentation). In-class or video presentation will be decided later by Professor given the time allotment during respective semester. *Around 8-10 minutes of presentation is required.*
4. **Assessment and Feedback:** Student is required to work closely with instructor. **First**, select a publicly traded firm that issues regular dividends quarterly or annually. **Second**, get approval from instructor so that each student is working on a separate firm. Firm selection or assignment is on a first come first served basis. **Third**, students are required to submit a complete project before the final deadline, let's call it "feedback deadline". Project submitted before the feedback deadline will receive instructor comments and feedback for improvements. **Finally**, students are required to incorporate these feedback and comments to improve their project. If students successfully incorporate all the comments and feedback, this will increase the possibility of securing maximum points available. **Note:** Feedback and reflection process can be in-person, live-online (via web-ex) or offline (via email). However, in the past students have preferred in-person or live web-ex feedback process.

To get full points students are encouraged to show detailed analysis along with sustained and substantive discussion in a project report as per materials covered in this course for a project. More detailed instructions will be uploaded onto Blackboard. Projects are due around the end of semester, therefore there will not be any date extensions.

Stock Trading Simulation & Report: Trading Simulation will begin on **August 19** and conclude on **Nov. 19**. There are two parts to this simulation, i.e., Trading Simulation and Report. Complete project is due on **Nov. 30**:

1. **Trading Simulation:** Students are required to register on the third-party site provided by the Professor. Blackboard announcement email will be sent for registration. This is a free trading simulation platform, and students do not have to pay anything. The professor will give basic training on how to start trading securities, but more research is required while picking securities to buy or sell during the simulation. Grades are dependent on profitability of security portfolio at the end of the competition. **Note: students are competing for top 5 positions** (please see grading policy below for details). **For this simulation we will limit common and preferred stocks.**

Other important conditions:

- a) While registering for simulation use real names as it appears in Blackboard (First and Last Name). It will be helpful for grading purposes.
- b) Again, students do not have to pay anything. This trading simulation is free.
- c) Total paper money allocated to each student is \$100,000.

Grade Rules for Trading Simulation:

- a) The top 5 students' students will receive 100 points.
- b) Not within top 5 but with positive return will receive 70 points.
- c) Negative or break-even will receive 50 points.

- d) If you did not participate in trading simulation, that is automatically zero for Trading Simulation.
2. **Word document – Report:** Student is required to submit a report. Please prepare a brief 1 to 2-page(s) report about your trading experience. Document all securities bought and sold during the simulation. Please write and explain about your trading strategy and experience (explain both losing and winning positions).
 3. **Assessment and Feedback:** In this simulation students are required to use their experience learned during the course. Frequent tips and trading strategies will be shared during the lecture. Feedback will be provided to the final report submitted by the student. **Note:** Feedback and reflection process can be in-person, live-online (via web-ex) or offline (via email). However, in the past students have preferred in-person or live web-ex feedback process.

Make up and Late Assignment/exam/quiz policy: Generally, make-up or late submission will NOT be offered or accepted for any missed assignments/exams/quizzes. Late submissions or make-up may be accepted/administered only in extra-ordinary circumstances such as an excused official university activity, a severe illness, or a dire emergency. However, you must provide comprehensive documentation either before or within a few days of the missed assignment/quiz/exam.

Class conduct and civility code: Everyone in class is expected to follow all rules in the student handbook, as well as common courtesy during classroom lectures and discussions in class and online, including the following:

1. Attendance may be taken at the beginning or the end of the class.
2. It is the students' responsibility to obtain and be able to use the required materials and software for this class.
3. Students must retain copies of all assignments and graded work for verification purposes and provide it to the instructor, if necessary. Keep your own copies of all computer files and e-mails till the final grade is received.
4. Talking while the instructor is lecturing is extremely disruptive and discourteous to the instructor and other students.
5. Using computers or phones (except for a valid urgent need) during class for a purpose not related to class is disruptive. All cell phones and gadgets should be turned OFF and headphones removed.
6. For any questions about the exams and assignments, a student should contact the instructor well in advance of the day they are due, so the instructor may have enough time to provide feedback.
7. All communications will be via e-mail communications to the Texas A&M University e-mail account, and students are expected to use their school provided email account. The instructor will reply to a student e-mail messages and voice messages within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday).
8. All assignment submissions must be uploaded to Blackboard by the due date and time. The submission window may close or be marked late, even if late by one second.

Anyone violating these policies may be subject to disciplinary actions.

Class attendance and Participation: A vital part of every student's education is regular attendance of class meetings. Any absences tend to lower the quality of a student's work, and frequent or persistent

absences may result in a failing grade. Students are responsible for the materials covered in class. The course covers a lot of material, and most students find at least some parts of it difficult. Class participation is highly encouraged as it makes the class more interesting and enhances the learning experience. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions, participate in class discussions and problem solving, and visit/contact the instructor during office hours in case of questions or concerns. Good attendance and participation will be rewarded when final grades are assigned.

The course is intensive and challenging, and you are expected to master the materials presented in class. The structure of the class makes your individual study and preparation outside of class extremely important and may vary considerably based on student background. However, a **minimum** of two hours of work outside the class is expected for everyone hour of class period per week. Reading the assigned chapter(s) and having some familiarity with them before class will be very useful for understanding lectures.

Tentative Course Outline:

Week	Topics
Week 1	Chapter 1: The Investment Environment
Week 2	Chapter 2: Securities Markets and Transactions
Week 3	Chapter 4: Return and Risk
Week 4	Chapter 4A: The Time Value of Money
Week 5	Chapter 5: Modern Portfolio Concepts
Week 6	Chapter 5: Modern Portfolio Concepts
Week 7	Midterm Exam I — Chapters: 1, 2, 4, 4A, & 5
Week 8	Chapter 6: Common Stocks
Week 9	Chapter 7: Analyzing Common Stocks
Week 10	Chapter 8: Stock Valuation
Week 11	Chapter 10: Fixed-Income Securities
Week 12	Chapter 11: Bond Valuation
Week 13	Thanksgiving Break
Week 14	Chapter 12: Mutual Funds and ETFs
Week 15	Chapter 13: Managing Your Own Portfolios
Week 16	Final Exam — Chapters: 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13

Course Revisions: Any revisions to this tentative syllabus will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

COVID-19 protocol

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, had exposure to COVID-19, and/or are confirmed to have COVID-19, refrain from coming to campus and self-report in the online COVID-19 Reporting Portal found at: https://redcap.link/TAMUS_COVID_PORTAL for further guidance.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. The faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stress interferes with your academic performance and/or negatively impacts your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call [210-784-1331](tel:210-784-1331) between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM, Monday – Friday. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student’s academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

In a crisis, please walk-in to the Student Counseling Center (SCC) any time between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, to be seen by a clinician. For after-hours support, please call 210-784-1331. Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent.

Jaguar Writing Center

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/language-literature-arts/english/writing-center/index.html>. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment-based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through JagWire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight

services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have a Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at 210-784-4357.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance, if possible, about special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person, Room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under A&M System policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

Respect for Diversity

We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the classroom, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's

GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Drop Policy

You may drop the course with an automatic grade of W on or before the date listed in the academic calendar at www.tamusa.edu. The last date to drop a course or withdraw from the University is also indicated in the academic calendar on the university website (www.tamusa.edu). If you wish to drop the class, you must submit the necessary paperwork to the proper authority. Students dropping a course are subject to all conditions listed in the university catalog.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations of their disability. If you have a disability that may require accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamusa.edu.

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio’s mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in Jag E-Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university.

This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

5. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and staff, and the administration.
6. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
7. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.

Violations of Academic Conduct (Section 14.5 Student Handbook)

As a member in an academic community, students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, be self-directed and be able to manage their own affairs. Students who are unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Students are expected to share in the responsibility and authority with faculty and staff to challenge and make known acts that violate the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Code of Conduct. For more information, please visit the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities website <https://www.tamusa.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/index.html>.

Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an

unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, collusion, lying and bribery. For more information, refer to the Student Code of Conduct, Article III: Conduct Rules and Regulations. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty has the discretion to impose grade penalties as deemed necessary.

Faculty members are required to report such serious breaches of academic honesty to their chair, their dean and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. In cases of academic misconduct, students may be subject not only to grade sanctions in courses but to disciplinary action. Grade sanctions may be imposed only by faculty members, but suspension or expulsion may be imposed only by the Vice President for Student Affairs. If a student wishes to appeal against the decision of suspension or expulsion due to violations of academic misconduct, they must initiate their appeal as outlined within the Student Code of Conduct. Extenuating circumstances may cause the University to deviate from the defined time frames.

All student term papers, and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software. Posting of any class work given to students, or solutions, or discussion, on publicly accessible forums or on social media is not permissible.

Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If a student is unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please she/he should contact the instructor for an assessment of the situation.

Key Dates for Current Semester: Please refer to complete TAMUSA academic calendar for important dates and **drop date**, which is available at:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>