



First Ascent Asset Management

Introduction—What This Course is All About

We all should have received a class in school about investing, but most of us never did. That is too bad because understanding what to do and what not to do with your money can make a huge difference in your future financial security.

My colleagues and I would like to do something about that. We have been in the financial services industry for many years and we would like to pass along to you some of what we have learned. Really what we would like to do is create the course on investing that we all should have had in school and offer it to you—free of charge.

So that is what we are doing. It will be an ongoing project for us, but we already have a good start on it and we'll continue to add new classes over time.

The problem we are trying to address is pretty straightforward. Most people just don't understand the fundamentals of investing. This makes it hard for them to make good decisions and results in a lot of anxiety and confusion.

We are hoping to bring a little light to the subject and reduce the pain and uncertainty that people feel when they are confronted with investment decisions. We're not trying to turn you into a world-class investor, but we are going to try to make you a better, more confident investor who will be more comfortable making decisions whether you invest on your own or work with a financial advisor.

The classes will cover three areas. The first area will be the fundamentals of investing. We'll help you understand the basics and try to bring some clarity to what, for most people, is a very confusing and sometimes overwhelming area.

The second area we will cover is the investment landscape. Here we will talk about the financial markets and the various players in the financial services industry itself. This information will give you context and help you better understand the environment in which you are making decisions.

The third area will be the behavioral aspects of investing—how you can become a more successful investor simply by understanding and controlling your own behavior.

If this sounds like a lot of information, it is. But we are going to make sure that each lesson is short and sweet. And above all, we're going to make sure that each one is understandable, without a lot of charts and graphs and jargon. The goal is to bring clarity, not confuse you even more.

There is some logic to the order in which we present the material, but if you already feel comfortable with the material in a lesson, feel free to skip ahead. Each lesson is designed to stand alone. There will not be any grades or tests and we do not take attendance so just have fun and focus on the topics that are of interest to you.

As you do, keep in mind that these classes are not a substitute for the kind of customized advice you receive from a financial advisor. We don't know you, we don't know your goals or attitudes about risk and we don't know your individual financial situation or personal preferences. So we won't pretend we can make specific investment recommendations or advise you on particular investment strategies.

But we can help you become a more informed investor. We can help you better understand your choices. We can help you ask better questions. And we can help you approach decisions feeling more confident and secure, less anxious and less fearful.

Based on the studies we have read and the conversations we have had with both clients and their financial advisors, we know there is a huge need for this type of information. We hope you find it helpful and we welcome your feedback.