

**Bronx Community College, City University of New York
Department of Continuing Education**

Spring 2021

Understanding Digital Assets: A Survey of Money and its Role in the Economy

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Class location: Online via BraveTogether
Class dates: March 27th through May 1st,
six Saturday sessions
Class Meets: Saturday 11-11:45 AM.
Guest Lecture will start at 12 noon and
the discussion ends at 12:45 PM.
Office Hours: Saturday 8:30 AM – 10:30
AM. Or, Monday, Wednesday, or
Saturday by appointment.

Course Description:

This course provides an understanding of the asset class of cryptocurrency and its role, if any, in a complex economy. Throughout the course, a meta question is considered: can cryptocurrency serve as money. In order to address whether cryptocurrency can be money, this course addresses a wide range of concerns pertaining to the roles of money and how the functions of government issued currency has changed over the last fifty years. As both a survey and an introductory course to cryptocurrency, this class weaves together diverse topics, including the history of money, the short history of digital currencies, and how governmental currency policies tend to undermine the role of money as a store of value. Specifically, this course covers six specific topics, listed below, and covered over one term. Additionally, to move the class beyond the conceptual, this course includes industry professionals as course guests and hands-on workshops to provide both context and clarity on how the industry faces the multifaceted concerns of cryptocurrency and exploring whether the asset class can serve as money.

CRYPTO 10: Understanding Digital Assets

Class 1: Government Money and Digital Scarcity

This class focuses on preparing class participants to understand how government (fiat) money works and how this may intersect with the citizenry's ability to store value for the future.

Discussion Topics:

- What is wrong with today's money?
- What problems could Bitcoin solve in the Bronx?
- Why do the U.S. Dollar, British Pound and Dominican Peso all have different values?

Guest Speaker: Tyrone Ross (OnRamp)

Class 2: Cypherpunks, Self-Sovereignty, and Private Digital Money

This class focuses on open-source tools and internet activism that emphasize privacy, self-sovereignty and individual freedom. The Cypherpunk movement led to the first iterations of digital money, and eventually cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Zcash.

Discussion Topics:

- How does the Cypherpunk Manifesto apply in the Bronx?
- How are money, power and activism connected?
- What does privacy mean to you?

Guest Speaker: Zooko Wilcox (Zcash) / Moe Ghashim (Bannaa)

Class 3: The Unbanking of America

This class focuses on access to financial services and financial tools. This class will explore existing and emerging payment technologies, their opportunities and limitations.

Discussion Topics:

- Financial exclusion: how does credit scoring, payday loans and alternative financial services affect citizens in the Bronx?
- Can crypto be a substitute for Western Union?

Guest Speaker: Teresa Rodriguez (SEC) / James Morgan (Bitgo)

Class 4: Global Currencies and the of Future Digital Payments

This class focuses on the evolution of payment systems from Barter to Precious Metals to Paper to Plastic and now Crypto. We will discuss how cross-border

payments and global monetary policies have empowered and impoverished communities around the world.

Discussion Topics:

- What happens if we move to a cashless society?
- What are your favorite digital payment apps and why?
- How to ensure your cryptocurrency is secure?

Guest Speaker: Trevor Filter (Flexa) / Vladislav Alimpiev (LocalBitcoins)

Class 5: The Short and Colorful Life of Digital Currencies

Considering that Digital Currencies experiments started out as just that - experiments, this class fleshes out their early attempts. By understanding early Digital Currencies, the ideas, and the people behind these projects, this class facilitates a discussion about how these ideas are still very much relevant to the blockchain & cryptocurrency industry today.

Discussion Topics:

- Cryptocurrency: a global, permission-less store of wealth?
- How do you build an investment strategy?
- How to evaluate digital assets?

Guest Speaker: Casey Taylor, Samantha Bohbot (DCG)

Class 6: Governance, Money and the Future

The class, surveying the themes covered throughout, considers the future of money and how the degree to which government can influence what becomes money in the future. Additionally, considering the Austrian claim that, 'the market determines what money is,' this concluding class will weigh how much of that phrase is propagated in the financial world.

Discussion Topics:

- What's next for digital currencies?
- How to jump start a career in crypto?

Guest Speaker: Carolyn Vadino (Gemini) / Eric Turner (Messari)

Primary Texts

DRAFT CURRICULUM - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

- The Internet of Money, Andreas Antonopoulos
- The Bitcoin Standard, Saifedean Ammous

Course objectives: Pedagogical and professional knowledge

1. Study and become current with the idea, methods, and trends in the field
2. Read, experience, and reflect on the money focused concerns in the Bronx
3. Integrate and implement research informed ideas into one's way of thinking about money
4. Be conversant in current ideas in the field of cryptocurrency