



An Introduction to Cryptocurrency Investing

Time: 3x per week, TBA in April, after consulting with those who register and with my summer SAT students. There will likely be 2-3 sections of this course.

Class size: 6-8 students

Location: TBD

Dates: June 6th – August 7th

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and wisdom needed to take full advantage of cryptocurrency and the financial tools it offers. Students will gain a major competitive advantage relative to their peers in navigating the financial world of the future. This course will be comprised of three modules; each module will consist of two weeks centered on a particular topic, and a third week focused on investing.

Sufficient attention will be paid to the underlying technology and major areas of innovation, to introducing students to the market and investing, to prudent investment strategy, and to safely using the financial tools of centralized and decentralized finance.

Most importantly, I want my students to understand that the market rewards temperance, prudence, and emotional maturity – virtues that will serve them well in college and beyond.

Two classes each week will consist of lecture and discussion; the third will usually be a hands-on *practicum*.

Your Instructor: Kyle Rusciano is CEO of the Ember Quill, a company dedicated to kindling the futures of its clients through SAT/ACT preparation and digital finance education. He received his BA in History from Yale University and his MA in Theology from the University of Durham in the UK. He has been an investor in commodities and digital commodities since 2013, and was the digital finance writer for Quiet Speculation from 2015-2019. He began learning about cryptocurrency in 2020 after his brother wrote a technical paper on Polkadot at UC Berkeley, and he began investing in the stock and crypto markets in January of 2021. His approach to the crypto and stock markets is one of long-term wealth generation and preservation.

Module I: Bitcoin

Bitcoin is king of the cryptocurrency asset class. In this module, we will learn about Bitcoin, the blockchain technology undergirding it, and its potential its potential to affect governmental power and monetary policy. The goal of these first three weeks is to prepare students to cast reasoned judgment on the viability of Bitcoin to do what it purports to do and on the effects it may have.

Week 1: Bitcoin

- ❖ Introductory Lecture: On Self-Mastery
- ❖ Bitcoin and Blockchain: The Tech
- ✚ Storing Crypto: A Guide

Week 2: Bitcoin

- ❖ The Bull Thesis: Digital Gold & A Monetary Revolution
- ❖ The Bear Thesis: A Dwarven Trinket
- ✚ Exchanges: A Guide

Week 3: Investment Strategy I

- ❖ Theory of Lengthening Cycles: Contextualizing Bitcoin's Booms and Busts
- ❖ Prudent Approaches to Investing in this Asset Class

Module II: Base Layers and the Blockchain Trilemma

When Ethereum was created in 2015, there was hope that finance and the internet could undergo a revolution, a return of monetary power and agency back to individuals via decentralization. Reaching that goal has proven difficult because Ethereum's commitment to decentralization, security, and speed has led to prohibitively high transaction costs.

In this module, students will learn how to analyze and judge layer one blockchains through the lens of the Blockchain Trilemma – namely, that to achieve low transaction costs, some level of decentralization, security, or speed must be sacrificed. We will explore how Ethereum and competing blockchain projects are attempting to solve the trilemma, as well as how others skirt around it.

Week 4: The Blockchain Trilemma — Ethereum

- ❖ Ethereum: The Power of Smart Contracts
- ❖ Ethereum in the Shadow of the Blockchain Trilemma
- ✚ Lending: A Guide

Week 5: The Blockchain Trilemma — Ethereum's Competitors

- ❖ Decentralization as Hindrance: Solana, Fantom, Avalanche, & Luna
- ❖ Decentralization as Goal: Cardano
- ✚ Staking: A Guide

Week 6: Investment Strategy II: Good Info, Good Decisions

- ❖ Quantitative Data Tools: On-Chain Off-Chain
- ❖ How to Approach Media, Influencers, and Info Sources

Module III: Present and Future Applications

In this module, students will be exposed to, and think critically about, major ways that crypto is utilized today. Students will also learn how to use decentralized finance (“DeFi”) tools safely, effectively, and with an eye toward managing risk and reward.

Week 7: DeFi

- ❖ Finance with no Intermediary: The Geography of DeFi
- ❖ Stablecoins: Powering DeFi Ecosystems
- ✚ Metamask Demonstration
- ✚ DeFi Demonstration: A Guide to Providing Liquidity

Week 8: NFTs, Gaming, & the Metaverse

- ❖ Right-click Save? Rethinking Value and Ownership in a Digital Age
- ❖ Axie Infinity & Smooth Love Potion: A Case Study in Gaming Economy
- ✚ A Guide to NFT Marketplaces

Week 9: Investment Strategy III: Selling

- ❖ Preparing for Euphoria: Never Lose Perspective
- ❖ The Final Act: My Exit Strategy

Addenda:

- 1) Covid & Illness Policies:
 - a. I discourage the use of masks, as it detracts from the fraternal and collegiate atmosphere I want each section of the course to have. With that said, any student who wishes to wear a mask may do so. Vaccine status will never be asked. If you are sick due to covid or something else, please let me know and stay home. I will always have a recording of the lecture for you.
 - b. If I become sick, we will conduct class via zoom.
- 2) Vacation Procedures:
 - a. Students and their families often travel during the summer. This won't be a problem. Please let me know in advance the dates you'll be gone, and I will make sure to supply videos of lecture that you miss and consult with you over any tutorials and demonstrations you miss.
- 3) Portfolio Disclosure & Financial Advice:
 - a. Students will always have access to my portfolio. I update it monthly. Students will not be pressured to invest in the projects/assets that I have invested in. I am not a licensed financial advisor; the goal of this course is to give students the knowledge, wisdom, and know-how to make their own decisions.

- b. One of the major benefits of this course is that high school students and college freshmen will be receiving my counsel in class and seeing my portfolio as part of the course itself. One of the goals of The Ember Quill is to make digital finance education more accessible.
- 4) Additional Funding for Students:
 - a. As part of the tuition for this course, there is a \$500 investment minimum. This can be given directly to the student by his or her family, or it can be paid to me and given to the student by me. This is to guarantee that each student will be able to see and experience investing, lending, staking, using a Dex, and blockchain gaming.
 - b. I would probably recommend that students have access to \$1,000-\$1,500 of capital. But this decision is solely at the discretion of students and their parents.
- 5) Discord Access:
 - a. All students will gain lifetime access to the Ember Quill Discord server, a supportive community of peers their age. One significant benefit of this course is that students can forge friendships with other students who are involved in this space.