

COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Course Descriptions

PAS 500 Clinical Anatomy (5 cr)

This intense course covers advanced study of the structure and development of the human body. Structural features are studied by gross dissection, demonstration, cross section, and radiology. Emphasis is placed on structure and the relationship of anatomic configuration to diagnosis clinical problems. The format of the course includes lectures, laboratories, and demonstrations. Student evaluation is accomplished through written and practical examinations.

PAS 502 Physiology (5 cr)

This course will cover, at an advanced level, the fundamental principles of physiology. The course will cover cell physiology, neurophysiology, musculoskeletal system physiology, renal physiology, respiratory physiology, gastrointestinal physiology, endocrinology, and reproductive physiology.

PAS 504 Medical Pathology (5 cr)

This course will examine the underlying biochemical, cellular, and physiological changes which occur in human disease. Emphasis will be placed on the most common conditions. This course integrates general pathology and laboratory medicine to prepare the student for the clinical medicine course.

PAS 506 Immunology/Hematology (3 cr)

A study of normal immune system function (both acquired and innate), normal hematological function and common diseases and derangements of both.

PAS 508 Professional Practice (1 cr)

This course will introduce the students to the physician assistant profession. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the physician assistant role and professionalism. In addition, students will learn the history of the profession, the profession's organizations, the credentialing and certification process, as well as an introduction to the health care system.

PAS 513 Clinical Medicine I (8 cr)

The Medicine I course is designed to introduce students to the process of clinical decision making by utilizing critical reasoning skills to diagnosis and treat illness and disease. Students will develop their knowledge base in the etiology, clinical presentation, differential diagnoses, and therapeutic approach to disease processes. This course will focus on the most commonly diagnosed medical problems. In addition to lectures and reading assignments, Problem Based Learning sessions in a small group format will allow for increased focus on the critical reasoning process.

PAS 517 Pharmacotherapy I (3 cr)

This course provides students the general principals of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of various classes of drugs. Drug actions on the various biochemical pathways and physiological systems will be discussed. The judicious use of drugs in physician assistant practice will be emphasized. This course will lay the foundation for the Pharmacotherapy II course.

PAS 519 Communication in Medicine I (2 cr)

This course is designed to provide students the skills necessary to become proficient in communication – including verbal communication, non-verbal communication and medical writing skills. Communication is a core component in the practice of medicine. Good communication between patient and provider improves patient outcomes. To effectively build communication skills, the course will address the basic fundamentals and integrate these skills into the clinical curriculum.

PAS 521 Neuroanatomy (2 cr)

An overview of the structure and function of the central nervous system will be discussed with a focus on principles related to clinical neurology and interpretation of the neurobiological examination.

PAS 527 Clinical Lab Science (2 cr)

This course will provide the student with an overview of commonly ordered laboratory tests, accurate application of the tests, and interpretation of the data. Proper laboratory technique for selected tests will also be covered along with quality control measures. Additionally, evaluation and correlation of laboratory data used in the diagnosis and treatment of common infectious disease states will be covered.

PAS 528 Healthcare Systems (1 cr)

This course will provide students an overview of the major types of healthcare systems along with clinical management practices. Coding and reimbursement will be reviewed as well as quality assurance and risk management. Access to care, socioeconomics, and legal issues will be covered.

PAS 529 Clinical Skills I (2 cr)

This course is designed to provide students instruction in the fundamental clinical skills necessary for patient care. A primary focus of instruction is on performance of complete examinations of patients across the lifespan. Weekly lectures combined with small group instruction assist students with learning proper exam techniques, recognizing and appropriately describing physical findings, and using the clinical data to formulate differential diagnoses.

PAS 533 Clinical Medicine II (8 cr)

This course builds on material presented in the Medicine I course and prepares students for the clinical phase of their education. The course focuses on etiology, risk factors, underlying pathologic processes, and epidemiology for disease processes encountered in the practice of medicine. Recognition of signs and symptoms of medical conditions, appropriate diagnostic work-up, development of differential diagnoses, treatment options, patient education, and prevention are focused topics in the course. The course will follow a systems-based approach.

PAS 537 Pharmacotherapy II (3 cr)

This course is designed to build upon the material presented in the Pharmacotherapy I course and will emphasize pharmacotherapeutic practice. Commonly prescribed drugs will be examined with the focus on appropriate drug selection based on individual patients, common adverse reactions, and drug interactions. The cost and efficacy of drugs will be studied. Prescribing for special patient populations will be addressed to include pregnancy, lactation, pediatrics, and geriatrics.

PAS 539 Communication in Medicine II (1 cr)

This course allows students to build upon the knowledge and skills obtained in Communication in Medicine I and continue to increase their competency level. Patient education and counseling skills are emphasized, as is more complex communication such as giving bad news. Significant emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary communication. The skills learned in this course will be integrated into the clinical curriculum, thereby allowing the student to become more familiar with medical communication.

PAS 540 Behavioral Medicine (4 cr)

This course will focus on neurobiological, psychobiological, emotional, social, and cultural influences and their effect on health and illness in the practice of primary care medicine. Human development across the lifespan will be presented, as well as end of life issues. Normative and maladaptive responses to developmental tasks and life stressors in relation to physical and emotional health will be covered. Health disparities and societal issues are examined. Psychiatric disorders are covered to include psychotic disorders, personality disorders, and mood and anxiety disorders. The importance of practicing biopsychosocial medicine is stressed throughout the course. In addition, preventive healthcare and patient counseling will be emphasized.

PAS 549 Clinical Skills II (1 cr)

This course is a continuation of Clinical Skills I and the student is introduced to technical skills of increased complexity to include suturing, casting, splinting, IVs/injections, gowning, gloving, and a general orientation to the operating room. Students will learn proper sterile technique. Students are given an introduction to common minor procedures. In addition, Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support, and Pediatric Life Support classes will be part of this course so as to certify the student prior to clinical rotations.

PAS 550 Medical Ethics (1 cr)

This course examines the application of human and professional values, judgments, and choices to selective ethical dilemmas arising in clinical practice. Students will be introduced to a structured approach for identifying, analyzing, and resolving ethical issues in clinical medicine. Topics related to patient rights, medical practice laws, professional liability, and medical malpractice are explored.

PAS 552 Research I (1 cr)

This course covers topics relevant to clinical research and the principals of evidence-based practice. Topics include research design, sound measurement principles, basic descriptive statistics, and an introduction to the efficient use of information systems. A major portion of the course will emphasize the critical appraisal and synthesis of the findings of clinical research.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPEs) Course Descriptions

PAS 660/670 Family Practice Rotation 1 and 2 (Required)

This is a primary care experience under the supervision of a community-based primary care setting designed to acquaint the student with those aspects of the practice of medicine unique to the community setting. The student works with the preceptor in each of the settings the preceptor works. These locations may include the hospital, the office, long-term care facilities, and other areas. If inpatient experience is available with the preceptor's practice, the student makes rounds with the preceptor and assists him or her in fulfilling his inpatient responsibilities. In the office the student learns about management procedures in a medical practice and helps the preceptor by providing services consistent with his or her individual background and clinical training. Students will observe the team practice concept of health care.

PAS 671 Internal Medicine Rotation (Required)

This four-week clinical rotation will provide the student experiences in adult medicine. The student will have the opportunity to evaluate and treat acute and chronic illness encountered in Internal Medicine - including outpatient settings, with the potential for inpatient settings if available per the preceptor's practice. This rotation will allow students to learn how to manage more complex medical cases and further develop their critical thinking skills.

PAS 672 Pediatrics Rotation (Required)

This four-week clinical experience provides the student with learning opportunities in pediatrics. The rotation will mainly consist of working in outpatient clinics, but may also have some inpatient exposure. The student will learn to manage various acute and chronic childhood illnesses and learn to evaluate normal variations of growth and development of infants and children.

PAS 673 Women's Health Rotation (Required)

This four-week clinical experience studies the broad spectrum of obstetrics and gynecology problems. During this clinical rotation, the management of pregnancy, labor, and delivery including prenatal, birth, and postnatal complications is taught. The student is responsible for taking obstetrical histories, performing obstetrical physical examinations, and following patients through labor, delivery, and the early postpartum period. The student also gains experience in gynecologic care to include well-woman care, cancer detection, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and menopausal issues. Students will take gynecological patient histories and perform complete and accurate gynecological examinations, in addition to performing office based procedures with supervision.

PAS 674 Emergency Medicine Rotation (Required)

The Emergency Medicine rotation is four weeks in length and provides the student opportunities to gain experience in evaluating and treating common medical emergencies encountered in the Emergency Department. The rotation will expose the student to cases of trauma, life-threatening conditions, acute illness, and injuries seen in an emergency setting.

PAS 675 Behavioral Health Rotation (Required)

This four-week clinical experience is in an outpatient and/or inpatient Behavioral Health setting. There will be special emphasis on the role of a physician assistant in Behavior Health. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate patients, perform psychiatric interviews, assess mental status, and develop a

working diagnosis. The student will develop a tentative medical management plan, make referral to a physician or community agency, and learn follow-up management with the treating physician or agency.

PAS 676 General Surgery Rotation (Required)

During this four-week rotation, students will acquire knowledge and skills in the area of general surgery to include pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. Students participate in the pre-operative evaluation of the patient, observe/assist during surgery, as well as care for the patient post-operatively. At the end of the rotation, students are expected to understand the course of surgical illness, conduct themselves appropriately in the operating room, and have gained the skills necessary for care of surgical patients.

PAS 677, 678, 679, 691 Elective Rotation I, II, III, and IV

Students complete 4 four-week clinical preceptorships in an elective. Electives may include a specialty or repeat of a core rotation as an elective.