

MEDI 7003: INTERNATIONAL MEDICINE

Course Title: MEDI 7003: International Medicine

Course Director: Ruth Berggren, MD

Length of Rotation: 4 weeks

Participants: 4th-year medical students

Course Objectives:

1. To advance knowledge of global health issues through clinical and/or community service in the following ways:
 - Provide medical service and compassionate care to individuals with limited access
 - Broaden clinical skills with respect to the practice of primary care medicine in a resource-poor setting
 - Appreciate the art of history taking and physical examination for bedside diagnosis, when adjunctive means of testing are limited
 - Gain experience in the evaluation/ management of common issues in tropical medicine including fever, diarrhea, respiratory disease, dehydration, and dermatological conditions
 - Approach the management of chronic medical problems – diabetes, hypertension – from the perspective of a resource limited setting
 - Strive to address community-identified needs
2. To gain insight into health care disparities and the social determinants of health
3. To increase cultural competency
4. To engage in self-reflection as a physician, contemplating the roles of health care providers and health care systems both at home and abroad

Course Description:

Students will work with the course director to identify an appropriate international elective site, with which faculty sponsors have pre-established connections or that the students discover on their own. All rotations will adhere to a **community service-learning** model, that is, a structured educational experience combining community service with preparation and reflection.¹ We strive to shape the learning experience around community-identified needs and advance insight related to the context in which service is provided, the connection between service and academic coursework, and your roles as citizens and professionals.

Students will spend up to 4 weeks living at an international service site and participating in patient care, under the supervision of qualified health care providers. There may be opportunities for patient education and emphasis on efforts of local empowerment, aiming to build up the communities in a sustainable way. Students are encouraged to integrate themselves into the health care delivery system, to explore community needs that they could address, and when possible, to strive to make an impact through community education and home visits. Reflection essays serve as a way to process your experiences, including clinical cases, new perspectives gained, analysis of health care disparities, and strategies for the overcoming poverty-related health problems. Students are encouraged to share their experiences upon return through a formal presentation.

¹ Seifer SD. Service-learning: Community Campus Partnerships for Health Professions Education. Acad Med 1998; 73:273-277

Requirements:

- Pre-trip orientation and preparation (based on site) must commence a minimum of two months prior to departure.
 - See additional handout “**MEDI 7003 Preparation and Planning Pointers**”
- It is strongly encouraged that students take **INTD 4030 “Preparing for Global Health Work”** to provide practical foundation in global health. It is offered in the last 2 weeks of Period 5.
- Regular meetings with CMH&E staff to assist in the selection of an international site (6-9 months prior to anticipated elective time is ideal) and to facilitate preparation and planning for the global health experience.
- Purchase either international roaming for your personal cell phone or a trac phone and give contact information to the Center (if not possible due to location, please let us know)
- Identification of a preceptor (at international site) who will supervise the student, monitor the student’s goals, and be involved in shaping his/her experience
- Review and completion of required UTHSCSA paperwork, regarding travel health and safety
 - Students review travel guidelines on US State Department website, review CDC recommendations for vaccinations specific for the region in which they’ll be traveling, and obtain additional health coverage for international health problems and evacuation.
- Meet with the Office of International Services (OIS) Director Mr. Harlan Smith, after your site has been approved by the director of the course
- Provide the Center and OIS copies of your flight itinerary, contact information, and on-site itinerary
- **Reflection essay**, including a description of the setting in which health care was provided, a discussion of the types of patients and medical problems seen, internal processing of public health experiences, and personal insights
 - see additional handout “**MEDI 7003 Reflection Essay Recommendations**”
- **Patient log** that chronicles the patients and diseases seen with dates
- **Student evaluation of the international rotation site** to be included in our global health resource file for future students’ use.
- **History & Physical** of one patient with expanded discussion of a tropical illness seen or a familiar disease and how it is managed differently in a resource-limited setting
- **Preceptor Evaluation**

Means of Evaluation:

- Final evaluation will be based on the reflection essays, patient log, H&P, professional conduct and feedback from on-site preceptors, converted into a quantitative grade format by the Course Director
- Professional Competencies in which students will be assessed include: Patient care (appreciated through the student’s written log of patients), Medical and Public Health Knowledge (through the written essay in which student discusses a case and tropical illness), Interpersonal communication and professionalism (extent to which student is integrated into and interacts with host country in a respectful, flexible and considerate manner), and Educational initiative/ self-directed learning (appreciated through depth of reflections within the written essay).
- Evaluation of the India Elective is based on student reflection essay, a case study of a patient with an in depth discussion of their illness, participation in the CMC rotations, a debriefing upon their return, and a presentation of their experience

Suggested Study/ Additional Reading

- Drain PK, Huffman SA, Pirtle SE, Chan KE, Caring for the World: A Guidebook to Global Health Opportunities, Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 2009
- Markle WH, Fisher M, Smego Jr R, Understanding Global Health.
- Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, by Tracy Kidder
- For medical experiences in rural settings: Where There is No Doctor by David Werner
- For medical experiences in rural settings: La Clinica by David Sklar
- The Life You Can Save by Peter Singer
- For cultural insights: Fadiman A, The Spirit catches you and you fall down
- For Guatemala: consider Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchu y asi me nacio la conciencia (by Elizabeth Burgos)
- For Ethiopia: consider Epidemiology & Ecology of Health and Disease in Ethiopia
- Online courses on <http://www.globalhealthedu.org> Go to Resources
 - “Professionalism 101: How to be Professional and Act Ethically when Abroad”
 - By Child Family Health International
 - “Why is the Third World the Third World”
 - “Preparing for your Overseas Experience”