



Department of Physician Assistant Education
Master of Science in Medicine
2 Units

MSM 6010 Medicine and Society IV

Fall 2025

Meeting days: Tuesday	Instructor title and name: Sarah Mayer
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Meeting location: room 153	E-mail: smayer1@pointloma.edu
Final Exam:	Office location and hours:
Additional info:	Additional info:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Medicine and Society is a sequence of four integrated and consecutive courses designed to examine the intersection of the individual and the larger community relating to healthcare. This course covers public health, patient safety and medical errors, quality improvement and risk management, and medical ethics in healthcare. Students will also participate in community learning groups.

COURSE GOALS

The goal of this course is to provide a foundational framework essential for the student to understand concepts of public health, risk reduction, and the principles and the practice of medical ethics. Students will also practice team-building skills, utilize peer interactions, and learn the roles and responsibilities needed for a PA to develop as a medical professional.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The content in this course will contribute to the student's proficiency in this/these area(s):

1. Gather a history and perform a physical examination. (MK, IC, PC, PR)
2. Prioritize a differential diagnosis following a clinical encounter. (MK, PC, PB, PR, SB)
3. Recommend and interpret common diagnostic and screening tests. (MK, IC, PC, PR, PB, SB)
4. Enter and discuss orders and prescriptions. (MK, IC, PC, PR, PB, SB)
5. Document a clinical encounter in the patient record. (MK, IC, PC, PR)
6. Provide an oral presentation of a clinical encounter. (MK, IC, PC, PB, PR)
7. Form clinical questions and retrieve evidence to advance patient care. (MK, PR, PBL, SB)

8. Give or receive a patient handover to transition care responsibility. (MK, PC, PR, IC, PB)
9. Collaborate as a member of an inter-professional team. (IC, PC, PR, SB)
13. Identify health systems success/failures and how these contribute to the culture of safety and improvement. (MK, IC, PC, SB)

Initials indicate PA core competency required to meet the PLO/CLO.

PA Core Competencies:

MK = Medical Knowledge	IC = Interpersonal Skills & Communication	PC = Patient Care
PR = Professionalism	PB = Practice-based Learning	SB = Systems-based Practice

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Successful completion of this course requires demonstration of the skills and knowledge outlined here at, minimally, the ADVANCED BEGINNER level.

1. Identify and apply public health concepts, principles and methods related to health care needs and populations. (PC4, PC8, SB3, SB4, SB5, SB6, SB8, SB9)
2. Recognize the most common medical errors and propose solutions to improve patient safety. (MK3, MK4, MK5, SB6)
3. Describe quality improvement and risk reduction strategies and their impact on healthcare and policy. (SB5, SB6, SB7)
4. Recognize the responsibility of a PA professional to apply ethical and moral principles when making healthcare-related decisions. (IC1, PC4, PC9, PR1, PR6)

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the **Public Health** section of the course the student will be able to: B2.15

1. Discuss disease prevention, surveillance, reporting, and intervention. Comprehension B2.15a
2. Analyze the role of data in public health and disease surveillance. Analysis B2.15a
3. Explain disease reporting requirements for healthcare providers. Analysis B2.15a
4. Discuss the role of interventions through public health initiatives. Comprehension B2.15a
5. Summarize the concepts of public health and the impact on healthcare. Comprehension B2.15b
6. Describe the public health system's organization and resources. Comprehension B2.15b
7. Discuss the environmental issues in public health. Comprehension B2.15b
8. Discuss patient advocacy. Comprehension B2.15c
9. Examine the importance of maintaining population health. Comprehension B2.15d
10. Discuss the measures used to identify, contain and eradicate both established and emerging infectious diseases in the U.S. and around the world. Comprehension B2.15d

Upon completion of the **Patient Safety and Medical Errors** section of the course the student will be able to: B2.16

1. Discuss how patient safety impacts healthcare. Comprehension B2.16a
2. Identify and discuss factors that contribute to patient fall risk. Comprehension B2.16a
3. Discuss the prevention of medical errors. Comprehension B2.16b
4. Apply the elements of patient safety and errors to the "Room of Errors". Application B2.16b

Upon completion of the **Quality Improvement and Risk Management** section of the course the student will be able to: ^{B2.16}

1. Identify the elements and importance of quality improvements in healthcare. ^{Comprehension B2.16c}
2. Discuss how quality improvement studies impact health policies. ^{Comprehension B2.16c}
3. Discuss the importance of risk management in healthcare. ^{Comprehension 2.16d}
4. Discuss the elements of a risk management investigation. ^{Comprehension B2.16d}

Upon completion of the **Medical Ethics in Healthcare** section of the course the student will be able to: ^{B2.18}

1. Describe how medically ethical behavior impacts healthcare and professionals. ^{Knowledge B2.18}
2. Distinguish between behavior that does or does not meet the "Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession." ^{Analysis B2.18}
3. Enumerate and define the four main bioethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. ^{Knowledge B2.18}
4. Delineate the moral and legal guidelines for biomedical research. ^{Knowledge B2.18}
5. Establish an awareness of legal accountability within the PA profession at the individual, institutional, state, and federal levels. ^{Comprehension B2.18}
6. Comprehend the relationship between socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and diversity issues in healthcare and medical ethics. ^{Comprehension B2.18}
7. Provide a theoretical framework to understand the moral principles behind patient advocacy. ^{Analysis B2.18}
8. Promote an understanding of ethical responsibility for the PA profession at the individual, institutional, and professional levels. ^{Application B2.18}
9. Develop and enhance skills in moral reflection through the application of moral principles and concepts to ethical cases relevant to the PA profession. ^{Application B2.18}
10. Discuss how HIPPA impacts healthcare systems. ^{Knowledge B2.18}
11. Evaluate how healthcare ethics impacts laws and healthcare policies. ^{Evaluation B2.18}

Throughout the course in **Learning communities**, students will be able to:

1. Use clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills in real-world scenarios. ^{Application B4.03b}
2. Demonstrate effective communication on a personal and professional level. ^{Application B4.03c}
3. Demonstrate professional behavior in various settings and develop teamwork skills. ^{Application B4.03e}
4. Compile essential and accurate information about patients in mock cases. ^{Synthesis B2.07a, PA Comp}
5. Explore ethical issues in a thoughtful, unbiased manner. ^{Application B2.18, PA Comp}
6. Participate in peer and self-evaluations related to professionalism. ^{B4.03e}
7. Discuss lifestyle medicine and its unique role in healthcare practice. ^{Knowledge B2.12b, B2.08b}
8. Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients. ^{Application B2.04}
9. Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with family. ^{Application B2.04}

10. Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with healthcare providers. Application B2.04

Note: Superscripts identify the Bloom's Taxonomy level for each objective.

UNIT INSTRUCTION BY WEEK

UNIT	WEEKS	LECTURES
Unit I	1 - 4	Public Health
Unit II	5 - 6	Patient Safety and Medical Errors Quality Improvement and Risk Management
Unit III	7 - 13	Medical-Legal and Medical Ethics in Healthcare
	13	Online Comprehensive Exam
	14 - 15	Community/Global Medicine

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

Note: All texts annotated with double asterisks are provided in Access Medicine.

Physician Assistant: A Guide to Clinical Practice: Edition 6
Ruth Ballweg, Darwin Brown, Daniel Vetrosky, Tamara S. Ritsema.
Elsevier Health Sciences
ISBN: 9780323401128

** Clinical Ethics: A Practical Approach to Ethical Decisions in Clinical Medicine, 8e
Albert R. Jonsen, Mark Siegler, William J. Winslade
ISBN-10: 0071845062
ISBN-13: 2900071845068

**Medical Management of Vulnerable and Underserved Patients: Principles, Practice, and Populations:
Edition 2
Talmadge E. King, Margaret B. Wheeler. McGraw-Hill Education
ISBN-13: 978-0071834445
ISBN-10: 9780071834445

** Understanding Patient Safety, 2e
Robert M. Wachter
ISBN-10: 0071765786
ISBN-13: 9780071765787

**Public Health and Preventative Medicine, 16th Edition
Matthew L. Boulton

ISBN-13: 978-1-259-64451-1

To Err Is Human: Building a safer Health System

Institute of Medicine

Kohn LT, Corrigan JM, Donaldson MS

ISBN-13: 978-0309261746

ISBN-10: 0309261740

LEARNING MODALITIES

Modalities include lectures, reading assignments, community learning activities, anatomy labs and clinical skills labs. The class schedule and assignments can be found in Canvas.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

1. Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog for additional detail.
2. Active participation in all class activities.
3. Completion of all class preparatory assignments prior to commencement of class.
4. Completion of all evaluations including quizzes, examinations, practicums, labs.
5. Respect for the class, peers and faculty.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. No partial credit will be given for late assignments. Incompletes will only be assigned under extremely unusual circumstances. Late assignments receiving no credit must still be submitted. Students failing an examination or practicum must complete the designated remediation (See REMEDIATION below) within the assigned time.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examinations (written and practical) **on their respective scheduled days**. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Student course grades are calculated using all assessment tools utilized during the course. These include quizzes, written examinations, written assignments, practicums, and evaluation of skills.

Learning community groups will be utilized to provide case-based instruction. A clinical case will be presented to each group by the group mentor. Students are expected to utilize knowledge acquired from prior readings and lectures, as well as self/group directed learning to work up the case, develop a working diagnosis, a differential diagnosis and a therapeutic regimen which will include a follow-up plan and patient education. Effective interpersonal communication, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, professional behavior and teamwork are paramount to success and development as clinicians. Cases will be issued no more frequently than every other week. Students will receive a collective grade for this exercise.

Learning community group performance expectations include; demonstrating effective interpersonal communication, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, professional behavior and teamwork skills. Application, B4.03b, B4.03c, B4.03e

ACTIVITY	% OF GRADE
Learning community Group	20%
Assignments/Examination	80%

Grading will be in keeping with Point Loma Nazarene University policy for graduate programs and grading will be as follows:

A=93-100	C=73-76
A-=92-90	C-=70-72
B+=87-89	D+=67-69
B=83-86	D=63-66
B-=80-82	D-=60-62
C+=77-79	F=0-59

REMEDIATION

Remediation is the process by which both the student and the program are assured that performance indicating a deficiency in knowledge or skills is subsequently demonstrated to be satisfactory. This may include a re-test over missed material, a skills demonstration or a review of missed material with completion of corrected answers. It is important to note that this is content remediation, not grade remediation and no grade will be changed based on these activities.

Within 48 hours of the posting of a grade of <70%, the student MUST contact the course director to discuss the student's performance and create a remediation plan. Unless otherwise directed by the course director, remediation activities must be completed within 5 days.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU RECORDING NOTIFICATION

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorize personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when, in reality, they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Graduate Academic and General Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, Grammarly, Perplexity, etc.) in this course. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.

[MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

[APA Style: How To Cite ChatGPT](#)

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an

accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

Mission Valley and Balboa Campuses:

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end we provide resources for our Graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. We have an onsite chaplain, Rev. Gordon Wong, at the Mission Valley (MV) campus to service Graduate students at the Mission Valley and Balboa Campuses. Rev. Gordon Wong is available during class break times across the week. If you have questions for, desire to meet or share a prayer request with Rev. Wong you can contact him directly at mvchaplain@pointloma.edu or gordonwong@pointloma.edu. Rev. Wong's cell number is 808-429-1129 if you need a more immediate response.

ARC-PA standards (5th edition) addressed in this course: B2.15, B2.16, B2.18

This syllabus is subject to change. Students are encouraged to check course messages and emails in order to remain current.