

2009/2010 Medical Pharmacology Course Information

Course Objectives:

This course is intended to instruct students in the basic mechanisms by which drugs interact with human cells and tissues. It is not intended to be a course in applied therapeutics, or clinical pharmacology, whereby students learn how to apply a specific dose of a specific drug to a specific combination of pathological conditions. Rather, our overall intent for this course is to provide students with a basic foundation in the principles of pharmacology and therapeutics; armed with this information, students are then prepared to enter clinical rotations with the ability to understand the rationale for prescribing specific drugs in specific clinical situations. While discussion of therapeutic paradigms is an important part of many topics in the course, the primary objective of this course is not one of comprehensive therapeutic instruction. Rather, it is to provide exposure to and establish an understanding of basic pharmacological mechanisms and principles. This understanding will equip the student to eventually make rational and correct therapeutic decisions, which should be taught in the appropriate clinical setting.

Lectures:

Lecture attendance is not required, but is strongly recommended. The lectures are the heart of this course, and students will miss much by relying solely on reprinted handouts or assigned readings to learn the material. The most consistent predictor of student success in this course has always been faithful lecture attendance. Exam questions are derived from information and concepts presented and explained in the lectures.

Course Materials:

Textbooks: Students may use either the 6th (2007) edition of Rang, Dale, Ritter and Moore: *Pharmacology* or the 11th (2009) edition of Katzung: *Basic and Clinical Pharmacology*, as a primary course textbook, and readings in both books are assigned for each lecture or multi-lecture topic. Both texts are equivalent in depth and appropriateness for this course, and students are given the choice of using either. The readings are required, rather than recommended, but we do not draw exam items solely from the assigned text readings. It is our intent that these reading assignments are necessary for mastery of the material. We feel that much of the task rote memorization of drug names, applications, and side effects that mastery of the course material demands, is most appropriately accomplished via individual study using an appropriately detailed text. We strongly discourage the use of a review book (e.g. Lippencott) or “pharm cards” as a sole or primary source of information. These are too superficial to serve as substitutes for the assigned readings. They may, however, be useful secondary study guides. We recommend two helpful supplemental sources, which provide a more in-depth discussion of therapeutic principles and practical clinical pharmacology, for those who are interested. These sources are Goodman and Gilman’s Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics, which is comprehensively encyclopedic, and recognized as the most authoritative pharmacology reference text, and Pharmacology and Therapeutics: Principles to Practice, by Waldman and Terzic, which is a new, highly readable and authoritative text written primarily for clinicians. It is

the best alternative to Goodman and Gilman. In addition, for exam review, we recommend the use of Pharmacology Smart Charts (part of the Lange Smart Chart series), a well-organized “flash card”-type data set, in a spiral-bound format, which past students have found extremely helpful for memorizing drug names and associated facts.

Website: A variety of course materials (lecture handouts, study guides, problem sets) are available on the course web site at <http://www.uic.edu/classes/pcol/pcol425/>. The class schedule and syllabus (including handout links) are updated as need arises. Please check the version of the web site you access. Out-of-date versions may be retrieved from browser caches. Make a habit of using the “refresh” or “reload” button on your browser, to make sure you are seeing the most recent version.

Exams and Grading:

The course is graded on the basis of four non-cumulative exams over two semesters. Each exams comprises 35-45 multiple choice questions, and is weighted according to the proportion of lectures, out of the total 85 for the course, that it covers. The final grade is based on the weighted average of these four exams. In the past, passing grades have been above 55-60%, and honors grades have been above 85-90%. Graduate students receive a separate grade for each semester. They take the same multiple choice exams as the medical students, in a separate room, and are required to sit for an additional essay exam following each multiple-choice exam.