

# Welcome to PreMed 101!

Fall 2010 | Wednesdays 6-7:30pm | Location 390 Hearst Mining | 1 Unit Pass/Fail



Faculty Sponsor: Dr. David Presti, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

**\*\*Please do not contact Dr. Presti, MCB personnel, or the DeCal board regarding enrollment.**

## *PreMed 101 Coordinators for Fall 2010*

**Catherine Aguilar** | catherineaguilar@berkeley.edu

**Abiram Bala** | abirambala@berkeley.edu

**Salma Bahadarakhann** | salma3@berkeley.edu

**Britnee Campos** | bcampos09@berkeley.edu

**Roky Truong** | rokyjtruong@gmail.com

## *Secretaries / Historians for Fall 2010*

**Vicki Hsieh** | vickih09@berkeley.edu

**Frank Lu** | frankyanglu@berkeley.edu

For homework grading and support throughout the course,  
all students will be assigned to a student coordinator based on their year.

Your Coordinator is here to help and support you.  
We welcome all questions, comments, and concerns.

**For enrollment concerns, please email the Lead Coordinator, Catherine Aguilar  
([catherineaguilar@berkeley.edu](mailto:catherineaguilar@berkeley.edu)).**

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to help students interested in or curious about becoming medical doctors navigate the complex and often confusing world of medical school applications. We will also address issues related to the field of medicine including alternatives, ethics, and financial concerns. The scope of this course can be expanded to fit student needs and interests.

“An inquiring, analytical mind; an unquenchable thirst for new knowledge; and a heartfelt compassion for the ailing—these are prominent traits among the committed clinicians who have preserved the passion for medicine.”  
-Lois DeBakey, MD

## **Recommended Texts (but NOT required):**

1. MSAR: The Medical School Admission Requirements 2011-2012. Price: \$25.00. Visit <http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/msar.htm> for more information.
2. “Med School Rx: Getting In, Getting Through, and Getting On With Doctoring” by Dr. Walter Hartwig from Touro University

## PreMed 101 Course Policies

### Attendance

- Class participation is a major component to your grade. As a result, **attendance is mandatory**.
- Conflicts with midterm exam times will **NOT be excused**.
- **Please be on time**. Being late is disrespectful to the guest speakers and to your fellow students. Chronic tardiness is not acceptable and will result in the equivalence of an absence
  - (i.e. 2 tardies = 1 absence).
- More than **two unexcused absences or four tardies** will result in a **No Pass** grade.
- Excused absences include sickness, doctor's appointment, and other emergency situations. Excused absences **DO NOT** include midterm exams.
- **The last class of the semester is REQUIRED** in order to receive a passing grade. We will be filling out course evaluations. Plus, you won't want to miss the exciting guest speaker we have planned for that day! 😊

### Assignments

- In this class, we will explore necessary skills to be successful during the application process for medical school. The assignments are a practical application of those skills.
- The Coordinators reserve the right to request a redo of any assignment.
- All students **must complete 4 out of the 6** homework assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

### Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and any plagiarism on assignments in this class will result in a **NO PASS** grade, as well as possible disciplinary action from the University Office of Student Conduct. ☹️

### Grading

- Grading is based on your attendance record and completion of homework assignments.
- Assignments will be graded based on the following:

Check plus ✓ +	Excellent!
Check ✓	Satisfactory
Check minus ✓ -	Unsatisfactory, please redo

### Assistance

- We want this class to be a great learning experience for you. It is our pleasure to assist you in any way we can. If you have questions about an assignment, concerns unrelated to this course, or if you need help please notify a Coordinator. If you have health, family, or work situations that interfere with your ability to study or attend class—let a Coordinator know right away so we can discuss how best to resolve it.

# LECTURE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change.*

*Please check the course website (<http://premed101.org>) and come to class to receive updates.*

September 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>An Introduction to the Pre-Med Experience at UC Berkeley</b> <i>Course Overview and Student Expectations</i>	
September 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>An Over view of the Medical School Application Process</b> <i>Catherine Aguilar and Abiram Bala</i>	<b>HW #1 Due</b>
September 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Everything You Need to Know about the MCAT</b> <i>Dale Schmidt from The Berkeley Review</i>	
September 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>"Applying to Medical School – What it's Really Like"</b> <i>Panel of Cal alumni who applied in the June 2009 or June 2010 cycles</i>	<b>HW #2 Due</b>
----- <b>Add/Drop Deadline: Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup></b> -----		
September 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>PBL: Problem Based Learning</b> <i>Maxwell Jen, Third-Year Medical Student at UCSF</i>	
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>"The Global Health Perspective"</b> <i>Alexander Ayzengart, MD MPH</i> <i>Senior Resident in General Surgery at UCSF</i>	<b>HW #3 Due</b>
October 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>"Life According to the Medical School Student"</b> <i>Laurence Cook, Third-Year Medical Student at Case Western University</i>	
October 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>"Psychiatry"</b> <i>Murray Krelstein, MD</i>	<b>HW #4 Due</b>
October 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Podiatry – Is It For You?</b> <i>Cal Sports Medicine Podiatrist Tim Dutra, DPM, MS, FAASPSM</i> <i>and Tony Poggio, DPM</i>	
November 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>"Life in the ER"</b> <i>Desmond Carson, MD</i> <i>Emergency Medical Doctor at Doctors Medical Center in Richmond</i>	<b>HW #5 Due</b>
November 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>"Just What is a DO Exactly?"</b> <i>Touro University School of Osteopathic Medicine</i>	

November 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>“Working in the Health Field as a Physician’s Assistant”</b> <i>Connie Melcher, PA</i> <i>Physician’s Assistant at Doctors Medical Hospital in Richmond</i>	<b>HW #6 Due</b>
November 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO CLASS – ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HOLIDAY</b>	
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR COURSE EVALUATIONS</b> <b>“Medical Economics”</b> <i>Jordan Shlain, MD</i> <i>Medical Director of Current Health</i>	

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

All homework assignments will be turned in via bSpace. To be considered a complete homework assignment, please follow these criteria:

- All assignments must be typed, double spaced, and 12 point font.
- The pages must have 1 inch margins.
- The minimum amount to be written is 1.5 pages. The maximum amount is 2 pages.
- In cases of plagiarism, you will receive a NO PASS grade and will be reported to University Officials .
- Assignments will be graded based on the following:
  - Did the student meet all of the above criteria?
  - Did the student plagiarize?
  - Did the student answer all of the assigned questions?

### **Homework #1: Personal Reflection and Semester Goals**

Part 1: Please reflect on the following questions: Why do you want to be a doctor? What experiences in your life have shaped your desire to be a doctor? If you are not sure that being a doctor is the right path for you right now, please reflect on why you do or do not want to be a doctor.

Part 2: What are your goals for this semester? What do you hope to accomplish by December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010?

Please write about your academic, pre-med, and personal goals.

This assignment will only be graded on length. Feel free to be as honest as you feel is necessary. You will be given a chance to review this particular assignment at the end of the semester to see your progress. 😊

### **Homework #2: Writing About Your Activities for Your AMCAS**

For many pre-med students, little is known about the AMCAS until they are finally ready to apply. In an effort to avoid any “surprises,” we’d like to help you prepare the activities, awards, and work section of the AMCAS. When you end up applying to medical school, you will have 15 opportunities to write about your activities. However, for this assignment, please write one paragraph each about THREE of your favorite extracurricular activities or jobs. Remember, you want to impress the medical school admissions committees, so do your best to make yourself shine! 😊

### **Homework #3: Research Two Health-Related Institutions of Your Choice**

For this assignment you will get the chance to research TWO different health related institutions that you are curious about. You could look into medical schools or other institutions that offer programs such as post-bacc programs, dentistry, optometry, pharmacy, nursing and etc. Choose two of your favorite ones and write about them. Find out and tell us about:

- 1) The name of the institution.
- 2) The location of the institution
- 3) The length of the program and if you can, the annual cost \$\$\$
- 4) The requirements (i.e. MCAT, DAT, PCAT, GPA, GRE)
- 5) What other programs they may offer (i.e. school of dentistry, optometry, pharmacy)
- 6) Why you chose the institution/other details about the institution that appeal to you

Try to choose them wisely because you can always use this in the future.

You will have to do this sometime anyways...so you might as well get credit for it.

### **Homework #4: Research a Medical Specialty of Your Choice**

For this assignment, your task is to describe a medical specialty that you may be interested in pursuing as an M.D. (i.e. dermatology, pediatrics, neurosurgery, etc). Think about the tasks/commitments demanded by this particular specialty and choose ONE to discuss in your paper. You should include the following:

- 1) Reasons you are interested in this field (personal or otherwise)
- 2) Any significant development in that area in the last few years (new treatments, research, "breakthroughs")
- 3) Any schools, hospitals, or centers in the world that are known for their work in that area.

### **Homework #5: Plan B**

Though we may not enjoy considering the possibility, many students realize that they cannot handle the workload of a premed or medical student, decide that medicine is not the right career for them, or are rejected by medical schools (50% of medical school applicants every year are rejected). In the event of any of those occurrences, it would be wise to have a realistic Plan B.

Please write about what you would do if you could never go to medical school (for this assignment, applying again is not an option). Include a description of the alternative studies or careers you might pursue, the requirements, why you have chosen that as your alternative, and how you intend to achieve that aim (e.g. pursuing another degree, seeking an internship, etc.). This assignment is not intended to discourage you in any way since you have a very high likelihood of reaching your goals (far more than 50% of UC Berkeley medical school applicants are accepted into a medical school). However, just in case you don't, you will never be caught in the situation of not knowing what to do with your life since you have a well thought out alternative.

### **Homework #6: Your Personal Statement**

The personal statement is one of the most critical elements of any medical school application. Therefore, we hope that this assignment will give you an idea of the type of composition that medical schools will be looking for. Please answer this question: "Why do you want to be a doctor?"

We understand that this will be a rough draft and are more interested in ideas, themes, and overall organization as well as the feel of the essay rather than in grammar, spelling, or character count (though be aware that medical schools will heavily scrutinize spelling and grammatical errors and will not allow you to surpass the character limit).

PLEASE NOTE: For your benefit, your essay will be edited by your TA. Therefore, please only include information that you are comfortable sharing. After all, if you are unable to share your story in a setting as informal as a DeCal, then it is doubtful that you would be comfortable sharing with a hostile admissions officer during a high-pressure interview.

ADVICE: Medical school admissions officers will often emphasize that they don't care what you choose to write about in your essay. They stress this because most writers try too hard to meet the expectations of their imagined readers, discarding all of their own personality in the process. If you try to impress everyone, you will end up impressing no one. In addition to the challenge of crafting a fresh take on standard ideas, you face the difficulty of integrating multiple, sophisticated themes into a single coherent piece. The themes can be grouped into two basic categories: those that speak to your motivation for becoming a doctor and those that demonstrate the characteristics and abilities that qualify you for the profession.