Spring 2010
BIMS 4295
Biomedical Practicum
BayHall 234

Faculty:  Suzzette F. Chopin, Ph.D., M.B.A.
Professor of Biomedical Sciences
CS 130; 825-6022
Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:00-6:00 PM + Wednesdays 2:00–3:00 PM
suzzette.chopin@tamucc.edu

Meeting Times:

◆ Three group meetings at 1:00 pm in BH 234
  Wednesday: January 13 in BH 234
  Wednesday: February 3 in BH 234
  Wednesday: April 21 in BH 234

◆ Five hours/week with your professional mentor. The exact days/times vary according to each student and mentor
  From January 18 – March 7, there are seven weeks. You will be with your mentor 5 hours/wk; each hour is worth 2 points, for a total of 70 points
  (5 hrs x 7 wks x 2 pts)
  From March 8 through April 25, there are six weeks. You will be with your mentor 5 hours/wk; each hour is worth 2 points, for a total of 60 points
  (5 hrs x 6 wk x 2 pts)

Course Description:
This course is learning experience under the guidance of a community professional who serves as the student’s mentor and under the guidance of Dr. Chopin. Students are matched with a health care professional practicing in the area of chiropractic, dentistry, genetic counseling, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, public health or veterinary medicine. Each student will devote a minimum of five hours per week to the office to which he or she is assigned. There are three group meetings -- January 13, February 3 and April 28 in BH 234.

A student will work under the direction of a community professional at that person’s place of business, which could be an office or a clinic or a local agency. The five hours per week may be shadowing the professional and/or completing a project designed by the professional.

In all cases, students are expected to dress and act professionally. You are representing yourself AND the university. Your professional mentor may require you to wear a lab coat or other special clothes. Check with your mentor to learn what, if any, special clothes are required. You are expected to assume the cost for these clothes.

Hospitals require orientation meetings, completion of paperwork, CPR certification, background checks and verification of immunizations prior to beginning your internship. These requirements must be fulfilled no later than January 13.
**Student Outcomes:** At the conclusion of the practicum, the student will have:
1. Perfected his/her personal statement or, if taking this course for the second time, the two other application essays;
2. Decided if the profession in which he/she performed the practicum is a viable career choice;
3. Gained experience in professional practice;
4. Practiced professional behavior; and
5. Experienced the day-to-day duties of the professional.

**Evaluation:** Your practicum grade is calculated on **500 points**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points &amp; Dates</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum Experience</td>
<td>Five hr/wk, two points/hr for 13 weeks</td>
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<td>By March 7, you should have accumulated 35 hrs, 70 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>By April 25, you should have accumulated an additional 30 hrs, 60 points</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>THERE IS NO MAKE-UP FOR MISSED PRACTICUM WORK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Meetings</td>
<td>Three meetings:</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Group meeting, January 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Group meeting, February 3: How to Write Your Personal Statement &amp; Other Essays</td>
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<td>♦ Group meeting April 21</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>THERE IS NO MAKE-UP FOR MISSED MEETINGS</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor’s Evaluation</td>
<td>Two evaluations from the professional mentor, due on</td>
<td>130</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ March 8 (Mid-term evaluation)</td>
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<td>♦ April 28 (Final Evaluation)</td>
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<td>Essay(s) A or B</td>
<td>Due February 22*</td>
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<td>A. Personal Statement</td>
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<td>(first time biomedical practicum students)</td>
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<td>OR</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Other two essays</td>
<td>(second time biomedical practicum students)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>500</td>
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*If you submit your essay after the due date, you will lose five points for each late day.

**Students taking biomedical practicum for the first time will write a personal statement (See A below). Students taking biomedical practicum for the second time will produce the unique circumstances and diversity essays (See B below).**

**A. Personal Statement:** All professional and graduate schools require a personal statement, which is your opportunity to demonstrate who you are, why you want to become a member of that profession and why the admissions committee should choose you.

On February 3, we will have a workshop on writing a personal statement. Using the information and tips learned in that workshop, you will write your personal statement for the admissions
committee of your selected profession. I suggest that you begin writing your statement prior to class so that you will have something to revise. Essays you used for college entrance are not appropriate, even for revising. Start fresh – you’ve come a long way since high school.

I have listed the prompts used by professional/graduate schools for their application process. Select the personal statement prompt for the professional school to which you plan to apply. Respond to that prompt for your personal statement essay. Include the prompt at the top of your essay. Remember to respond to all elements of the prompt.

Your personal statement should be 5000 characters, including spaces (about two pages, double spaced in Arial 11 point). Your personal statement should follow the formatting guidelines below. Be sure to include your name and the prompt to which you are responding on the first page of the essay; these two items do NOT count as characters. Bring your personal statement to me by 5 PM February 22.

Prompt for Dental School
Explain your motivation to seek a career in dentistry. Discuss your philosophy of the dental profession and indicate your goals relevant to the profession.

Prompt for Genetic Counseling Graduate School
Provide a personal statement describing your educational background and research experience, reasons for applying to the graduate program, study plans and research interests, and professional goals.

Prompt for Medical School
Explain your motivation to seek a career in medicine. Discuss your philosophy of the medical profession and indicate your goals relevant to the profession.

Prompt for Optometry School
Describe yourself, who you are and your interests. Tell us about how and when you became interested in optometry and why you are motivated for a career in health care. What are your immediate and long-term goals once you become an optometrist?

Prompt for Pharmacy School
Pharmacy is a “people profession.” With your career goals in mind, discuss how your background has helped to prepare you to interact effectively with people. Include information about your motivation for seeking a career in pharmacy and about research you’ve conducted into the field and into professional issues relating to pharmacy. Describe any unique circumstances, responsibilities or life experiences that may be relevant to your application, such as caring for a sick family member, medical circumstance you have overcome or other circumstances or opportunities that have helped to foster your growth as a future healthcare professional.

Prompt for Physician Assistant School
Provide a narrative explaining why you are interested in becoming a PA. This is your opportunity to let the program or programs that you are applying to know a little more about you.

Prompt for Physical Therapy School
What impact do you hope to make in the program and to the profession as a whole and what characteristic do you have that will allow you to make that impact? What is your goal in becoming a physical therapist?
Prompt for Public Health Graduate School
Describe your interest in Public Health. The essay should include the reasons for wanting to enroll in the degree, your focused interest within the field of Public Health, and your career goals upon completion of the program. This is your opportunity to inform the Admissions Committee about your qualifications, passion, and potential to make a contribution to the field on Public Health. You are encouraged to describe how your academic record may have been impacted by significant life experiences.

Prompt for Veterinary School
Explain your motivation to seek a career in veterinary medicine. Discuss your philosophy of the profession and indicate your goals relevant to the profession.

B. Essays for students who are taking biomedical practicum for a second time:
You produced your personal statement during your first semester in biomedical practicum. You now have the opportunity to perfect essays frequently seen in applications. First, most schools provide the applicant an opportunity to discuss situations, activities and/or special conditions that are not addressed elsewhere in the application. Second, schools also want to know how you will contribute to the diversity of the class.
Your class assignment is to respond to both of these prompts (include your name and the prompt at the beginning of each essay). Each response should be 2500 characters, including spaces (about one page for each essay, double spaced in Arial 11 point).

1. Briefly discuss any unique circumstances or life experiences that are relevant to your application, which have not previously been presented.
2. Describe any personal characteristics and/or important or challenging experiences you have had that will contribute to the diversity of or provide educational benefits to the student body.

I will grade your essay(s) extremely hard. There will be no re-writes allowed. You need to do your best work because your essay determines whether or not you get an interview. Follow instructions and apply what you learned in the personal statement/other essays workshop on February 3.

Some info about formatting your essay:
Double spaced
One-inch margins
11 point
Spelling and grammar count: YOU MUST SPELL/GRAMMAR CHECK
Do NOT put your essay in a folder or plastic holder. Just staple the pages. Be sure to include your name.

Computation:
500 – 450 = A
449 - 400 = B
399 - 350 = C
349 - 300 = D
299 – 0 = F
Practicum Standards:

Your community mentor is volunteering his or her time to mentor you. It is imperative that once you commit to the days and times of your practicum, you will be at your mentor's office on those days and times. Your mentor is a practicing professional and does not have the time to arrange make-up sessions with you. You are now in the real world with practicing professionals. You will be interacting with patients who expect professional behavior. You must dress and act professionally. You are in a professional situation and are expected to treat patients, clients and consumers of health care with respect. You must also maintain patient confidentiality.

Each student is placed in a different practice setting and should dress appropriately. For example, if you are working at a vet’s office you can wear scrubs. If you are doing fieldwork with vector control, you could wear jeans and sneakers or boots. If you are working at a public agency, you should dress as the professionals at that agency dress: Your office might be informal and allow you to wear slacks and a polo shirt, or your office might expect you to wear a jacket. Some mentors will require you to wear scrubs and a lab coat. Check with your mentor for appropriate attire.

The student has several opportunities to demonstrate competency in the course. Assessment and computation are performed by the instructors according to objective criteria. If a student experiences difficulty in the course, Dr. Chopin is available for consultation. However, it is the responsibility of the student to seek help, preferably when the investment made by the student can still be salvaged.

Academic integrity is expected. All students are expected to conform to University standards of ethics, academic integrity, grammar and spelling; review the 2009-2010 A&M-CC catalog for more information.

*Disability and Veterans’ Services: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to providing persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to access campus facilities, resources and programs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Support and accommodations are also available for returning veterans who experience cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus. Our Office of Disability Services arranges such support and academic accommodations. To make a request, or for more information, call (361) 825-5816 or visit Driftwood 101. It is important to contact the Office of Disability Services in a timely fashion as it will take time for them to review requests and prepare accommodations and accommodation letters.

**Grade Appeals: As stated in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi University Rules and Procedures (Section B [Academic Program], Part 13 [Students]: 13.02.99.C2 [Student Grade Appeals] and 13.02.99C2.01 [Student Grade Appeal Procedures]), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, consult the University Rules and Procedures specified above (accessible through the University Rules and Procedures website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For
assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Academic Advising:** As soon as students are ready to declare a major, they should meet with an Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor will guide the student through the requirements of the major, including developing and maintaining the student’s degree plan and directing the student to an appropriate Faculty Mentor. Specific requirements to complete degrees differ from college to college (including signatures needed, timetables to follow, examinations to take, etc.), so each student should consult an Academic Advisor in the college that houses his or her chosen major:

- College of Business: Faculty Center 104, 825-2653
- College of Education: Faculty Center 201, 825-2662
- College of Liberal Arts: Driftwood 203E, 825-3466
- College of Nursing & Health Sciences: Faculty Center 162, 825-2461 / 825-3748
- College of Science & Technology: Faculty Center 178, 825-6094

**AGENDA**

The practicum consists of five hours weekly under the guidance of a community professional plus three on-campus meetings with Dr. Chopin.

Wednesday January 13  
Group Meeting: Course Introduction

Monday January 18  
Begin working with your community mentor

Wednesday February 3  
How to Write Your Personal Statement and Other Application Essays

Monday, February 22  
Your Personal Statement due by 5 PM in CS 130

Monday March 8  
Your Mentor Evaluation 1 due to me
Your mentor will email or fax the evaluation to me

March 15-19  
Spring Break: You do not have to be with your community mentor

March 27  
Saturday, 8:30 am – noon: Breakfast and TMDSAS Application Workshop with Budge Mabry, Director of TMDSAS
CI  Free but registration required

Wednesday April 21  
Group Meeting

Sunday, April 25  
Your last day of shadowing

Wednesday April 28  
Your Mentor Evaluation 2 due to me
Your mentor will email or fax the evaluation to me
Scoring Biomedical Practicum Work

1. Personal Statement Essay
   All elements of the prompt were addressed (60 points)
   Your specific response to the prompt (60 points)
   Flow of your statement (40 points)
   English mechanics (40 points)

Some remarks on writing the personal statement:
It is imperative that you clearly, explicitly respond to the topics in the prompt. Some prompts have three topics, some four or more. The admissions committee wants information on ALL topics, not just the ones you decide to answer. In addition, use paragraphs and have some “white space.”

Virtually every prompt asks what motivated you to this profession. Your motivation should be at least one paragraph long. You should be explicit and state, “My motivation to be a _____ is __________.” You will have this or a similar sentence either at the beginning or the end of your motivation paragraph(s). If at the end of the paragraph(s), then sum up what you have written and conclude by saying, “Thus, my motivation to be a _____ derives from my _____, _____ and _____.

Virtually every prompt asks what your goals are. They want to know your long-term goals; graduating from college and getting into professional school do NOT count as goals. Think of when you finish professional school and start to practice – what and where would it be? Goals include, but are not limited to: what type of practice you would like; where would you like to practice; how you would like to practice; the population you would like to serve; the community activities you would like to do.

If the prompt wants your philosophy of the profession, be explicit in stating, “My philosophy of “whatever” is _______. The reader does not have the time or inclination to ferret out your philosophy, which is buried somewhere in your statement. Do NOT assume that your philosophy is obvious – it is not!

If the prompt wants your views of professional issues, then write about that, and be sure to say something like “One professional issue in which I am interested is ______.”

Notice that in each case, you have included phrases to alert the reader that “here-i-am-answering-this-part-of-the-prompt.”

Things to avoid:
1. Do NOT begin by saying, “My name is ___. “ They know your name because they have your application packet in their hands. This is a waste of words that could be used more meaningfully in your statement.
2. SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK; SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK; SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK; SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK; SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK
3. Do NOT name a specific school in this assignment. If you have to prepare a separate application packet for each school, then you can name the school to which you are applying.
4. Fewer Words = Better Words
   We all use too many words in our writing. Go over your statement and eliminate words that do not add to the sentence or words that you are repeating from an earlier sentence. Do not use words if you are not sure of their denotation and connotation.
5. Numbers zero to nine are spelled out. For 10 or higher, use Arabic numbers.
6. Numbers at the beginning of a sentence are always spelled out.
7. Choose your words carefully. For example, avoid using elite, best, and most intelligent. Some words make it seem as though you are quite conceited.
8. Do not use contractions in formal writing.
9. Do not make claims without backing up your claim with specific examples. Statement like: “I am compassionate” or “I am a leader” cannot stand alone. Give examples to back up your claim.

2. Other Essays (100 points each essay)
   Your specific response to each prompt (50 points)
   Flow of your statement (30 points)
   English mechanics (20 points)

3. Biomedical Practicum Evaluation Form to be completed by the community mentor

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Score (5 points maximum)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
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<td>Work Habits</td>
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<td>Motivation toward Profession</td>
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<td>Ability to Follow Instructions</td>
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<td>Imagination/Creativity</td>
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<td>Initiative</td>
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<td>Ability to Work with Others</td>
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<td>Maturity</td>
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<td>Stability</td>
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<td>Communication Skills</td>
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<td>Professional Demeanor And Behavior</td>
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<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
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<td>TOTAL (65 maximum)</td>
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Attendance (2 points/hr) Maximum 70 pts by March 1 & 60 pts by April 25