

DESCRIPTION OF BASIC SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SELECTIVES (BSHS)

Course Committee Members:

Werner Braun, Ph.D. (Chair), Judith Aronson, M.D., Jose Barral, M.D., Ph.D, Ramona Carter, M.D., Simon Lewis, Ph.D., Michael Smith, M.D., Wayne Snodgrass, M.D.

The effective practice of medicine requires that physicians remain students of the art and science of medicine throughout their careers. Health care in the 21st century is challenged by rapidly evolving new threats, for example new emergency infectious diseases, the global impact of health care conditions in the developing countries, and the ethical problems and opportunities of potential new therapeutic approaches provided by the technological advances of genomic sequencing, proteomics and bioinformatics. Students of medicine should therefore be encouraged to remain well informed on a wide range of basic science and humanities disciplines by self-directed learning. The possible basic science disciplines include traditional biomedical sciences and areas as diverse as entomology, agricultural sciences, epidemiology, population and behavioral sciences, ecology, evolutionary biology, etc. The possible humanities disciplines include areas as diverse as bioethics, history of medicine, literature and medicine, medical jurisprudence, visual students, etc.

The 4-week basic science and humanities selected (BSHS) should be a full time activity (approximately 40 student hours per week) designed to fulfill the requirements of a basic science, social science, or humanities experience as described in the Course Criteria. Activities which qualify to fulfill this requirement may include those offered by any UTMB medical school faculty, and must include either original research, a scholarly project, or an immersion experience which emphasizes in-depth study of one or more basic science, social science, or humanities topics. Any of these must result in a graded written product.

Criteria:

A Selective will be a four-week, full-time scholarly activity for 4th year medical students emphasizing the integral role of the sciences and humanities in the practice of medicine and involving a large measure of self-directed, independent learning. Selectives will meet the following additional criteria:

- A UTMB faculty member with appropriate expertise for supervision of the subject matter under study will be responsible for the direction of the selective, although other faculty (at UTMB or elsewhere) may participate in the course at the discretion of the selective director and the Selectives Course Committee.
- A Selective may be designed either by faculty or by student(s) in conjunction with a member of the faculty.
- The selective will be appropriately rigorous for a 4th- year student.
- It may be organized within a single department or interdepartmentally.

- It must result in a graded, written product, such as a research paper, literature review, science or humanities-based clinical report, grant proposal, or other such written report, although grades may be based partly on examinations and oral presentations.
- Grades will be given according to a scale of Pass, Not Recorded (NR), or Fail in accordance with grading criteria specified by the selective faculty director. Such criteria must be communicated to the student prior to the start of the selective. A student must pass every evaluated component of the selective to receive a passing grade. A student producing highly meritorious work may be recognized through a letter of commendation to the Dean from the selective director. In the case of a failing grade, the selective director will determine whether a student receives an F or NR. When a student receives a grade of NR, remediation will be designed by the Selective faculty director with approval of the BSHS course directors and the Academic Progress Committee. In receiving an F, the student must repeat the entire selective or choose another selective.
- A course may serve simultaneously as a Selective and an Elective if it meets the criteria for a Selective, but students must choose in advance whether to take it for Selective or Elective credit.
- Selectives are optional for MD/PhD students.

Acceptable Components of Selectives:

BSHS may include one or more of the following components:

- Seminars or tutorials culminating in a research paper.
- Basic science research plus documented report.
- Humanities, social sciences, biostatistical, or epidemiological research culminating in a scholarly paper or report.
- Clinically-based reports focusing on a basic science or humanities problem.
- Journal Club reports.
- Grant proposals.
- Literature review.
- Oral presentation plus written report.
- Other modality with a self-directed, scholarly research component culminating in a written report.