MOLECULAR MEDICINE (MMED)

MMED 400. Research Rotations. 0 Unit.
Research rotations are conducted to expose the student to several laboratory environments, a variety of research problems and numerous laboratory techniques as well as to assist them in the selection of their Research Advisor. Rotations will begin immediately upon enrollment and continue through the second semester of the first year. Usually rotations will last 12 weeks, however if a student decides that he/she is not interested in the assigned laboratory a shorter rotation is appropriate. The student is responsible for arranging each rotation with an approved trainer with the consultation of the Graduate Program Director. To assist in this endeavor, the Graduate Program Director will provide a list of approved trainers who have space, time and money to support a graduate student. During the rotation, students are expected to participate in all lab and departmental activities, e.g., lab meetings and seminars. At the completion of a rotation the student is required to submit a written Rotation Report including an outline of the problem being studied, a description of the experimental approaches, a discussion of the results of performed experiments as well as future directions.

MMED 402. Tools for Research. 1 Unit.
The goal of this course is to provide a thorough and comprehensive review of current laboratory technology essential to research in molecular medicine, focusing on basic underlying principles, important controls and caveats. The students will clone a cytokine during a laboratory component of the course, which will involve designing appropriate primers, obtaining RNA from cytokine-expressing cells, performing RT/PCR, and ligating isolated, characterized fragments into cloning- and expression vectors, followed by transfection into mammalian cells. Additional bench work will include characterizing the cloned product using real time PCR, ELISA, western blot analysis, and immunohistochemistry. One week of the course will also be devoted to learning flow cytometry, taught by the director of the Flow Cytometry Core. Seminars on commonly used molecular techniques will be given intermittently by guest lecturers with the relevant expertise. Evaluation will be based on the student's lab techniques, class participation, and contribution to the group learning process.

MMED 409. Biostatistics and Epidemiology. 1 Unit.
The Biostatistics and Epidemiology course provides a comprehensive introduction to the principles and methods used to analyze and interpret biological and health-related data. Students will learn how to formulate research questions, design studies, and apply statistical techniques to explore relationships and patterns within populations. The course emphasizes practical skills in data management, statistical programming, and visualization, alongside foundational concepts in probability, hypothesis testing, regression modeling, and survival analysis. Additionally, students will explore epidemiological study designs, sources of bias, and the evaluation of diagnostic tests, with an emphasis on real-world applications and critical thinking. The course integrates hands-on training in R, a powerful statistical programming language, to equip students with practical skills in data management, analysis, and visualization.

MMED 410. Introduction to Human Physiology and Disease. 4 Units.
The purpose of this course is to give an introduction to the physiology of the major human organ systems, as well as selected associated pathophysiologies. The course will provide a physiological basis for subsequent study and research in Molecular Medicine. The integration of clinical faculty into the course will emphasize the importance of bringing scientific knowledge to bear on clinical problems, a theme which will be stressed throughout the Molecular Medicine curriculum. The course will also acquaint students with medical terminology.

MMED 411. Computational Approaches to Genome and Transcriptome Analysis (CAGTA). 1 Unit.
This course provides a practical introduction to computational methods for analyzing modern genomic datasets, with emphasis on hands on programming skills and the biological interpretation of results. Students will learn core analytical workflows for RNA sequencing (RNA seq), whole exome sequencing (DNA seq), and single cell RNA seq, including data preprocessing, quality control, normalization, differential expression, variant analysis, and cellular clustering and annotation. Instruction will combine interactive lectures, guided coding sessions, and problem based exercises designed to build proficiency in command line tools and reproducible bioinformatics pipelines. A major component of the course is a team based research project in which students identify a publicly available dataset, develop a testable hypothesis, design and execute a computational workflow, and present their findings in a seminar style format. Evaluation will be based on class participation, and the final project presentation.

MMED 412. Metabolism. 2 Units.
The course will include a combination of interactive lectures, research presentations, related journal club article, and group projects with presentations. Topics to be covered include: bioenergetics/oxidative phosphorylation, carbohydrate metabolism; lipid and lipoprotein metabolism, amino acid and nucleotide metabolism.

MMED 413. Nucleic Acids, Gene Expression, and Gene Regulation. 2 Units.
The course will include a combination of interactive lectures and problem-based learning. Each week will conclude with at least one clinical correlation where the weekly topic is presented in the context of a clinical problem. Topics to be covered include: DNA structure, chromosome structure, replication and repair; RNA synthesis and RNA processing, the organization of eukaryotic genes and the genetic code and translation; and gene regulation.

MMED 414. Mammalian Genetics. 2 Units.
The course focuses on genetics, genomics, and bioinformatics, and it will include a combination of interactive lectures, problem-based learning and a week-long group project. Topics to be covered include: genetic variation; linkage studies; association studies; complex traits, linkage disequilibrium, the Hap Map, pharmacogenetics; genome-wide expression studies, and mouse models of human disease, and bioinformatics.

MMED 415. Cell Biology. 2 Units.
The course will include a combination of interactive lectures and problem-based learning. Each week will conclude with at least one clinical correlation where the weekly topic is presented in the context of a clinical problem. Topics to be covered include: cell structure and organelles, prokaryotes/eukaryotes; intracellular compartments and protein sorting; receptors/endocytosis/rafts; the nucleus; cell communication; cell division; introduction to pharmacology.

MMED 416. Host Defense: Infection and Immunity. 2 Units.
The course will include a reading program, lectures, and weekly problem-based student-led presentations. Weeks 1 and 2 are dedicated to establishing the scope of the field and forming vocabulary. Week 3 and part of Week 4 will cover immune mechanisms. The remainder of the course will deal with clinical aspects of immunobiology. On a regular basis Clinical Correlations, relevant to weekly topics, are integrated into the material. Topics to be covered include: biology and molecular biology of infectious agents; fundamentals of immunology; innate and adaptive responses to infection, immune effector mechanisms; and clinical aspects of immunobiology.

MMED 501. Principles of Clinical and Translational Research. 2 Units.
This course provides an introduction to the ethical, methodologic, and informatics foundations of clinical and translational research. Students will examine the history of the field, regulatory frameworks governing human subjects research, and core principles of clinical trial design. The course will explore the ethical obligations of investigators and address conflicts of interest, responsible recruitment of research participants, and standards of research and publication ethics. Additional topics include technology transfer, the design and use of biobanks, and the development and utilization of clinical and research databases.

MMED 504. Student Seminar Series. 1 Unit.
This course is designed as a weekly seminar series that will include presentations by the MMED graduate students. The format will be as follows: seminar talks by students in years 3 and beyond to provide a research update presentations by second year students involving basic science-clinical case translation topics, and short presentations on lab rotation accomplishments by first year students. Additional sessions include Clinical Connections presentations by practicing physicians and continuing Responsible Conduct of Research case studies with small group discussions led by program trainers. The primary goals of this series are to gain experience and improve oral presentation skills, to share results and thoughts with peers during research discussions, and to learn to take the lead in developing and asking questions during seminars.

MMED 521. Molecular Aspects of the Diagnosis, Pathology, and Treatment of Selected Human Diseases. 3 Units.
The goal of this course is to integrate medical knowledge into PhD training. This team-taught seminar course focuses on a top down examination of selected human diseases starting with clinical presentations of the manifestations, diagnoses, and treatment of disease. This is followed by study of the pathology, cell biology, and molecular biology of the disease. This information forms the foundation of a final discussion of current treatment strategies and ongoing research to identify new strategies. One to two separate disease areas will be discussed during each semester, such as diabetes, colon cancer, and heart failure. The specific areas of discussion are selected to demonstrate the strength of an integrated team of clinical and basic scientists; and to provide a model for students to follow in future studies in their own area of expertise. Emphasis will be given to the basic scientific observations that formed the basis of successful clinical practice, and how this was utilized by integrated teams of basic and clinical investigators to provide better patient care. Students will prepare for discussions with close reading of the literature. Faculty will present an overview in a discussion format. It is anticipated that each disease area will be presented by an integrated team of clinical and basic scientists. The remainder of the sessions will be devoted to instruction in grant proposal writing and student preparation of a research grant proposal based upon their thesis research in advance of the student's qualifying exam. Grading will be based both upon preparation for and participation in discussions, and upon the research proposal. Recommended Preparation: Introductory Graduate or Medical School courses in Cell Biology, Molecular Biology, and Physiology.

MMED 522. Grant Proposal Writing. 2 Units.
The goal of this course is to learn about the NIH institutes and grant proposal review and administration, how to compose the various sections of an NIH style grant proposal, and to gain practice in grant proposal writing skills. The course includes weekly writing assignments covering the different sections of an NIH style grant proposal. Upon completion of the grant proposal, students engage in a mock study section to review each other's proposals. Grading will be based on grant writing assignments and participation in the mock study section.

MMED 601. Dissertation Research. 1 - 9 Units.
Research leading toward the Ph.D. dissertation in Molecular Medicine.

MMED 612. Clinical Experience. 2 Units.
Each student will be assigned a Clinical Mentor who will co-advise the student and serve on both the Qualifying Examination Committee and Thesis Committee. The Clinical Mentor will develop an individualized curriculum for the student in consultation with the Thesis Research Mentor and Program Director. The curriculum will be organized around the integrated, multidisciplinary disease groups at the Clinic. The students will attend and actively participate in the regularly scheduled multidisciplinary clinical conference organized by their disease group (most meet for one hour every week or every other week), usually involving a combination of case presentations and research presentations. At the conclusion of the semester the student will make a presentation to the group focused on a relevant translational research problem. The Clinical Mentor will also organize a series of supervised clinical experiences (with a Mentor) to various locations where students will observe clinician interactions with patients to better understand the disease from the patient perspective and to disease-related diagnostic and research laboratories.

MMED 701. Dissertation Ph.D.. 1 - 9 Units.
Research leading toward the Ph.D. dissertation in Molecular Medicine. Recommended preparation: Advancement to candidacy in MMED. Prereq: Predoctoral research consent or advanced to Ph.D. candidacy milestone.