

PRE-HEALTH STUDIES

Campus Contact: (See Below for specialties.)

Pre-health studies are a roadmap through the liberal arts that begins with your admission to college and ends with your admission to a health professional school (such as a medical school). At St. Olaf College, this route intersects with our commitment (as stated in the Mission Statement) to an education that fosters critical thinking, heightens moral sensitivity, promotes lives of unselfish service to others and challenges you to become responsible, knowledgeable citizens of the world. Pre-health studies are supported by the dedication and efforts of the faculty of the Health Professions Committee (HPC) and the staff of The Piper Center for Vocation and Career; the Chair of the HPC, Professor Kevin Crisp, serves as the academic advisor for all pre-health students while coaches at the Piper Center support pre-health student professional development and experiential learning.

Overview of Pre-Health Studies

The following information is intended for St. Olaf students who are in the process of deciding what path their future career will take in the health professions. There are many health careers in addition to human and veterinary medicine, dentistry, and nursing. Some of these areas are listed below, along with the advising specialist in that area:

Health Careers	Advising Specialist
Athletic Training	Charles Fountaine
Audiology	Jeremy Loebach
Chiropractic Medicine	Kevin Crisp
Exercise Physiology	Jennifer Holbein
Genetic Counseling	Laura Listenberger
Health Administration	Ashley Hodgson
Mental Health	Carlo Veltri
Nursing	Susan Huehn (nursing majors), Kevin Crisp (non-nursing majors)
Occupational Therapy	Charles Fountaine
Optometry	Jay Demas
Pharmacy	Doug Beussman
Physical Therapy	Charles Fountaine
Physician Assistant	Kevin Crisp
Podiatry	Kevin Crisp
Public Health	Andrea Conger
Speech Language Pathology	Jeremy Loebach
Veterinary Medicine	Diane Angell

Preparing for any health science profession requires careful planning, as prerequisites vary by field and even by school or program. More information concerning professional preparation for these areas can be found on the Piper Center website. Students should seek advice from their academic advisor, the Piper Center staff, and the HPC as they plan and prepare for health science professions.

Pre-Nursing Students Not Majoring in Nursing

For specific details about the undergraduate nursing program at St. Olaf, please see the nursing major catalog page. Students who are not nursing majors interested in pursuing a Nurse Practitioner degree or

a Master of Science in nursing most often will need to complete the following pre-requisites:

Code	Title	Credits
Two semesters of anatomy and physiology:		2.00
BIO 143	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues (Not Recommended for Biology Majors)	
BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	
BIO 231	Microbiology	1.00
BIO 290	Medical Terminology (0.25 credit)	0.25
CHEM 125	Structural Chemistry and Equilibrium	1.00
NURS 110	Nutrition and Wellness	1.00
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology	1.00
PSYCH 241	Developmental Psychology	1.00
SDS 172	Statistics 1	1.00

Prerequisites for Pre-Medical, Pre-Dental, Pre-Physician Assistant, and Pre-Podiatry Students

Each medical school (whether MD or DO), dental school, and physician assistant program differs somewhat in their exact list of courses required for admission. However, St. Olaf's OLE Core curriculum provides students with most of the non-science prerequisites typical of these programs. The following courses are recommended for all students planning on entering medical schools (either MD or DO) or dental schools.

Code	Title	Credits
Recommended Coursework (for MCAT preparation and medical school admissions)		
MATH 119 or MATH 120	Introduction to Calculus Calculus I	1.00
Two semesters of general biology (typically BIO 150 and BIO 227)		2.00
Select one of the following:		2.00-3.00
CHEM 122 & CHEM 126	Introductory Chemistry and Energies and Rates of Chemical Reactions ¹	
or		
CHEM 125 & CHEM 126	Structural Chemistry and Equilibrium and Energies and Rates of Chemical Reactions ¹	
CHEM 247 & CHEM 248	Organic Chemistry I and Organic Chemistry II	2.00
CHEM 379	Biochemistry I (organic chemistry is a prerequisite; required at some medical schools)	1.00
PHYS 124 & PHYS 125	Principles of Physics I and Principles of Physics II	2.00

BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems (one semester of physiology, human or animal)	1.00
or BIO 247	Animal Physiology	
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology	1.00
One sociology course (SOAN 121 is open to first-year students only)		1.00
One statistics course (typically SDS 172)		1.00

1

MATH 119 or MATH 120 is a prerequisite for CHEM 126

Pre-medical students should note that there is much more to being a competitive candidate for medical school than course planning. A competitive candidate to medical school might have a GPA of 3.7 or above, an MCAT score of greater than 510, significant experience with patients in a medical setting, and long-term volunteer experience (especially working with marginalized populations).

Pre-dental students should note that many dental schools recommend that students take a semester of introductory psychology, a semester of statistics, and coursework in studio art and English (e.g., composition), and both BIO 143 and BIO 243 in addition to the recommended natural science and mathematics coursework above.

Prerequisites for podiatry programs are similar to those for medical school, and some podiatry schools may accept the MCAT, DAT, or GRE. A student who will use the MCAT when applying to podiatry school should take courses in psychology, sociology, and statistics in addition to the natural science and mathematics courses recommended for pre-medical students.

Prerequisites for physician assistant programs are similar, but prerequisites can vary by program. Students are also recommended to take:

Code	Title	Credits
PSYCH 125 & PSYCH 241	Principles of Psychology and Developmental Psychology	2.00
Medical terminology (typically as BIO 291)		0.25
One course emphasizing speech and communication		1.00
BIO 143 & BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues and Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	2.00
One statistics course		1.00

Recommendations for Graduate Study

Health professions graduate schools (such as medical schools) are looking for well-rounded individuals who are interested in a wide variety of areas and have demonstrated their interest in both medicine and people. Students should take advantage of the many opportunities to obtain patient contact and observe practitioners at work in their field of expertise. Medically related experience is essential to successful application to many health profession programs; medical schools strongly recommend potential applicants obtain

medically related work or other contact with patients, and successful candidates to physician assistant programs often have 2000+ hours of paid, hands-on work with patients before the student submits an application. The Piper Center's coaches and peer advisors can assist students in finding shadowing opportunities with physicians in their hometown, with alumni, or with healthcare professionals in the Twin Cities. Internships during the January term and summer of the student's sophomore or junior year work well. Students may also shadow healthcare professionals during the summer, or work in a hospital, clinic, or nursing home (e.g., as a CNA); note that formal registration for credit is **not** required.

Some medical schools value research experience, whether in the laboratory, the field, or internships (such as the Innovation Scholars or the Norway Innovation Scholars Program, or the Rockswold or Mayo Health Scholars Program). Students should also maintain a high level of involvement in extra-curricular activities. They should select and involve themselves in activities of genuine interest. Extensive involvement in a few activities ranging from music to athletics to clubs (such as the pre-health professionals club, AMSA, Alpha Epsilon Delta, etc.) can demonstrate and develop valued traits such as dedication, commitment, leadership, perseverance, and professionalism. However, extracurricular commitments should not be permitted to negatively influence academic performance.

Health professions schools are also interested in students who have demonstrated compassion and empathy through volunteer activities. Examples of volunteer activity include hospice programs, home health aide, crisis-line counseling, working with individuals with physical disabilities or individuals with developmental delays, working with survivors of abuse, or with disadvantaged youth. Long periods of service involvement are preferred to brief stints in many activities. Note that some medical schools require non-medical volunteer experience, and some physician assistant programs specify that volunteer activity should be unpaid and emphasize working with marginalized populations.

Special Internships and Opportunities

The Physician in Clinical and Hospital Health Care

This program occurs during the St. Olaf January term at the clinics and hospitals of the M Health Fairview Health System in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Students at the M Health Fairview locations shadow designated physicians and providers through their daily activities in pertinent clinical and hospital settings. The student experience involves exposure to primary and specialty care area settings involving patients from all age groups. Students may experience emergency care and will become acquainted with many providers in discussions about the field of medicine. If appropriate and possible, students will be invited to attend lectures and grand rounds that are held during the student observation period. Students are observers only; they will not participate in the delivery of medical care unless cleared to do so in an emergency. The M Health Fairview Clinics involved may include but are not limited to: M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Medical Center - East Bank, M Health Fairview University of Minnesota - West Bank, Cedar Ridge, Eden Center, Hiawatha, and Lakes Regional Medical Center. Students are responsible for their own transportation to the assigned clinic site either from their home or from campus. Contact Professor Kevin Crisp (crisp@stolaf.edu) or Dana Rechtzigel (rechtz1@stolaf.edu) in the Piper Center for further information.

Innovation Scholars Program

Innovation Scholars at St. Olaf College offers a high-impact experiential learning opportunity during January term and involves selected students working on cross-disciplinary teams on real-world challenges in technology transfer and entrepreneurship. Innovation Scholars programming utilizes a hybrid format and offers multidisciplinary teams the opportunity to engage in the business development of new innovations in real time by working on projects drawn from Mayo Clinic, Medical Alley companies, NASA, Medtronic, and other institutions. This program is an initiative between a select group of Minnesota Private Colleges and medical companies, with funding through the Medtronic Foundation. A team of four students will represent St. Olaf College each January and summer in the Innovation Scholars Program. The project team will be composed of students representing a variety of science and economics backgrounds who demonstrate strong analytical and communication skills and success as an effective team member. Kevin Crisp, Biology and Neuroscience, will serve as the faculty advisor. The team may also be mentored by an MBA graduate student. Students apply through Handshake (Piper Center).

Norway Innovation Scholars Program

Norway Innovation Scholars Program offers an opportunity for selected undergraduate science, nursing, and business majors to complete research projects submitted by Norway Health Tech, a Norwegian Biotech cluster facilitating the country's growth of new and innovative healthcare solutions. A team of four students will represent St. Olaf College each January, and typically have the unique opportunity of spending four weeks in Norway in January performing market analysis, evaluating intellectual property issues, and creating a strategic plan. The project team will be composed of students representing a variety of science and business backgrounds who demonstrate strong analytical and communication skills and success as an effective team member. Kevin Crisp, Biology and Neuroscience, will serve as the faculty advisor. Students apply through Handshake (Piper Center).

Rockswold Health Scholars

This clinical and research internship program provides current St. Olaf students an unparalleled hands-on experience at the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, MN. HCMC is known for its dedication to providing care to vulnerable, diverse, and underserved populations regardless of their ability to pay for medical services. Students will expand their professional network and improve their knowledge regarding potential paths within the healthcare field. Selected participants are provided housing and live together in the spirit of support, learning, and mutuality. Students apply through Handshake (Piper Center).

Health Scholars at Mayo Clinic

St. Olaf alumni at Mayo Clinic have established a research internship program that provides current St. Olaf students an unparalleled hands-on experience at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Healthcare is undergoing transformative changes. Understanding how the healthcare team interacts and collaborates to serve the needs of the patient is critical in order to provide the best quality of care. Students will be exposed to how Mayo Clinic provides comprehensive integrated care through weekly seminars and exposure to healthcare innovation/administration. In addition, students will conduct directed research projects. Selected participants are provided housing and live together

in the spirit of support, learning and mutuality. Students apply through Handshake (Piper Center).

Human Gross Anatomy (Cadaver Dissection)

Offered for more than 20 years, the Human Gross Anatomy course presents a unique opportunity for eight undergraduate students to dissect two human cadavers. Dissection is completed during the fall with the expectation that dissectors will also participate as teaching assistants for the lab component of the Human Anatomy and Physiology II course. Students apply through the Biology Department. Note that this course is now offered as a section of BIO 299.

Courses

Additional Courses of Interest

BIO 143: Human Anatomy and Physiology: Cells and Tissues

The study of the anatomy and physiology of the human body is founded on a thorough understanding of the structure and function of cells and tissues. Students attend lectures plus one three-hour laboratory per week. This course may not be taken after completion of CH/BI 227 or BIO 227. Offered in the fall semester.

BIO 231: Microbiology

Microbiology examines the morphology, composition, metabolism, and genetics of microorganisms with emphasis on bacteria and viruses. Students examine the dynamic impact of microbes on humans, the immune response, and the role of microbes in the environment. Students attend lectures plus one three-hour laboratory per week. Offered annually during Fall semester.

Prerequisites: BIO 143 or BIO 150, and one chemistry course.

BIO 243: Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems

Students journey toward greater understanding of the human body through an integrated study of the structure of the body (anatomy) and how organs such as the brain, heart, and kidney perform their remarkable functions (physiology). The course is designed primarily for students intending careers in the health sciences. Students attend lectures plus one three-hour laboratory per week. Offered each semester.

Prerequisite: BIO 143, or BIO 150 and BIO 227 or CH/BI 227.

BIO 382: Immunology

Immunology focuses on the structure, development, and function of the immune system. The course explores the molecular and cellular basis of the immune responses. The application of immunological principles to allergy, autoimmunity, AIDS, transplantation, and cancer are included. Students attend lectures plus one three-hour laboratory per week. Offered annually during fall semester.

Prerequisites: BIO 227 and BIO 233.

ECON 245: Economics of Health Care

The health care sector in the U.S. is undergoing rapid change that affects patients, providers and payers. Managed care and managed competition are restructuring the delivery of health care services and reducing costs, while frustrating physicians and patients. The course examines the economic factors leading to the changes, current issues and controversies, and federal health policies. Students interested in nursing, medicine, and the sciences are encouraged to enroll. Offered annually.

Prerequisites: ECON 121 or permission of instructor.

PHIL 250: *Biomedical Ethics*

This course clarifies central concepts and distinctions developed in the literature of moral philosophy and applications of those concepts and distinctions to concrete moral problems that arise in the practice of medicine. Issues may include euthanasia, abortion, medical paternalism, allocation of scarce medical resources, culturally sensitive medical care, pandemics, and conflicts of loyalty in managed care. Readings are drawn from both philosophical and medical discussions. Offered annually.

SOAN 267: *Medical Anthropology*

How do people understand illness and healing? How does social inequality shape health? These are among the questions explored by medical anthropology. In this course students examine the ways people in different societies experience their bodies, by looking at AIDS in Haiti, old age in India, and childbirth in the United States. Students investigate diverse understandings of health, different means of promoting healing, and the role of power in providing medical care. Offered annually.