Master's Seminar II Fall 2020

EPI 221 (1 unit)
Course Director: Jeffrey Martin, MD, MPH
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OBJECTIVES

Presenting one's own work to peers, instructing peers in methodologic topics, and critiquing the work of others are skills that clinical researchers will use throughout their careers. Accordingly, the Master's Seminar II will be dedicated to scholars presenting the current status of their research projects to their peers as well as instructing their peers in methodologic topics germane to all clinical researchers. The specific objectives for each scholar's presentation are for the:

- Scholar to get practice presenting his/her research in an oral format;
- Scholar to receive feedback on his/her research from the faculty and the other Master's Program scholars;
- Audience to practice critiquing the research of other investigators;
- Audience to learn about the presenter's substantive discipline; and
- Audience to learn about a general clinical research method that they can someday apply to their own work.

We strive to make these sessions valuable for both the presenter and the audience. These are lofty goals but well worth trying to achieve.

PREREQUISITES

Completion of three quarters of the Master's Seminar I (EPI 220).

FACULTY

Seminar Leaders:

Dave Glidden, PhD
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Jeff Martin, MD, MPH
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John Neuhaus, PhD
The Seminar will meet every other Tuesday afternoon starting on September 22 to December 8 from 3:15 to 5:00 PM.

What Should You Present?

**A. The status of your own work.** You should present the current status of your main (or one of your main) research project. In all cases, because seminar members are from diverse backgrounds, you should plan to start with a brief background as to the nature of the problem. For all projects with an analytic objective (i.e., everything other than descriptive work), a directed acyclic graph is expected in order to depict your research question with compact notation. Then, depending upon your progress to date, you should describe your current status. For most of you at this time, this description will include the actual study design, the sampling of participants, the measurements, and the preliminary stages of data analysis. However, if you have only recently started a project, then you will describe your proposed study design, participants, measurements, and analytic plan.

and

**B. A topic in clinical research methods as it pertains to your work.** In addition to the details of your individual project, we want you to spend at least about one-quarter to one-third of your session teaching the audience about a methodologic issue in your study. Every study has several interesting methodologic points that are easily generalized to other scholar’s work. The goal is to find one point about your study and tell the rest of the audience about it. This may be something about a particular sampling scheme (e.g., snowball sampling or case-cohort designs), a particular measurement (e.g., use of pharmacy refill data to measure medication adherence, or microarrays to measure SNPs, or use of the National Death Index); or a particular analytic technique (e.g., model selection in multivariable analysis; marginal structural models; negative binomial regression, etc.). We don’t want you to discuss things that are so idiosyncratic to your own work that no one outside of your field will ever use it (e.g., development of a new assay to measure exposure to wireless computer networks), but rather something that clinical and epidemiologic researchers in many other fields should know about or will likely encounter. The topic can be one that we have covered in our formal coursework (because repetition is good and you might explain it better than our courses do) or it can be something completely different. We are not asking for a lengthy lecture on all of the nuances of this topic but rather an introduction of the topic, the salient points for the clinical researcher, one good review article, and, in some cases, a more detailed reference list. Please contact your seminar director at least 4 weeks prior to your session to discuss and receive approval for your topic.

Tips for your presentation:

- Provide requisite subject matter background but be brief
- Early on, state which of the “Big 6” objectives/purposes of clinical/epidemiologic research you are addressing. It may be more than one.
- If your question involves causation, attribution, mediation, or interaction, show your DAG early on
- Identify one or two areas in your work in which you are struggling and would like the group’s help
- Be prepared for substantial discussion and questions such that you should only have a limited amount of prepared material. For example, for a 105 minute session, you might want to have about 50 minutes of prepared remarks, thus leaving another 50 minutes for discussion.
The deliverables for each session are:

- A Microsoft Powerpoint file with your presentation. We encourage you to keep your material brief as this session is meant to generate a lot of discussion and not be a monologue. In other words, please time your presentation to accommodate lots of conversation from your colleagues. Also, please point out at least two areas of your work where you would explicitly like to have feedback from the audience. Include these two areas in your cover note. In addition, we encourage you to distribute any written document describing your work to date. For example, if you are very far along in your project, you may wish to distribute a draft manuscript in addition to your presentation slide set. Or, if you are at the beginning of the project you may wish to distribute your research protocol.

- An article or book chapter or website that serves as a good overview of the methodologic topic you plan to discuss. Here, we are typically not interested in the original articles that describe these techniques because they tend to be very specialized and written for experts in the field. Instead, aim for overview articles that serve to introduce and explain the topic to non-experts.

These deliverables should be distributed by Thursday at 5 pm, 5 days prior to the Tuesday session. These materials will subsequently be housed in the course's password-protected syllabus website.

It is fine if you change your slide set between the time of submission and the time of your presentation. After all, this is work-in-progress. The point is that we want the audience to have ample time to read over the general nature of what you plan to present in order to provide intelligent feedback.

All materials will be available on the course's online syllabus.

Grading will be based on the scholar's presentation (50% of grade) and his/her participation during the other sessions (50% of grade). In the event a scholar does not present during the quarter, the grade will be based upon his/her participation during the presentations by other scholars.

The importance of attendance cannot be overemphasized. If you do not attend, you deprive yourself of the learning opportunity, but you also deprive your colleagues of your valuable feedback. We do understand that professional travel and health issues occasionally mean you will miss a session, and we expect that this may happen up to 2-3 times during the year for some scholars. For each absence, please:

- Inform your seminar leader ahead of time; and
- Submit written comments on the presenter's work to the presenter (and copy the seminar leader(s)).

If you anticipate missing more than three sessions during the year or more than one per quarter, please discuss this with your seminar leader. The course is available solely on a "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U)" basis.

UCSF Graduate Division Policy on Disabilities

This course is restricted to those enrolled in the Master's Degree Program in Clinical and Epidemiologic Research degree program.