WELCOME

Welcome to the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai! We’re so excited to welcome you to campus, and I hope you’re looking forward to the next four years!

Starting in a new school and moving to a new city, we’re sure you have many questions regarding medical school (we did!). In order to help answer those, students have created this guide to first year. It is supplemental to the Life in NYC guide that was also sent out and goes into detail about courses, student groups, and more. We hope you find it useful to get started. And remember, we – and the rest of the Class of 2021 – are always here to help and guide you!

This guide includes information on:

ISMMS ESSENTIALS – maps, supplies, and traditions

STUDENT GROUPS – get the inside scoop on everything happening on campus

ACADEMICS – what to expect in your first year classes + general advice from students

Enjoy the rest of the summer and we can’t wait to see you in August!

Steph Hojsak & Manali Sapre
Insider’s Guide to First Year Editors
Class of 2021

With many thanks to our predecessor:

Benjamin Asriel
Insider’s Guide to First Year Editor
Class of 2020
ISMMS ESSENTIALS

(WHERE AM I GOING? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING?)
A NOTE ON TEXTBOOKS

As a general rule, don’t buy textbooks before coming to medical school! Students often sell the books from previous years at a steep discount, and for many courses, most students rely almost exclusively on lecture slides and syllabi.

MAPS

It can be really hard to get around our giant and labyrinthine campus. To help show you the ropes, there will be a hospital scavenger hunt this year during orientation. But just in case:

Also, there are MAGIC TUNNELS! (That’s what the colored lines represent)
ISMMS TRADITIONS

Here are a few of our favorites:

FALL SEMESTER:

Orientation: A fully scheduled week of both academic and social events to learn about your first year and get to know the people in your class.

White Coat Ceremony: The big ceremony of first year where you’ll receive your new white coats. Family and friends are invited!

Annual Sinai Halloween Bash with the 2nd yrs: Come dressed in your goofiest and/or spookiest costume for some cider, dancing and good old-fashioned fun.

Annual Memorial Service for Anatomy Donors: Honor your first patient.

Winter Formal: Come together as a school for the first classy formal of the year.

SPRING SEMESTER:

Ski Trip: Spend a weekend skiing and tubing with your friends!
Spring Break: Whether you are going on an aid trip, relaxing in the city, or traveling back home, Spring Break is a great time to recharge your batteries.
Revisit: Welcome your future classmates!
First Year Show: Reminisce and make fun of everything (and everyone) from first year.
Summer Formal: Come together as a school for the second classy formal of the year.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

BEFORE YOU BUY EVERYTHING ON THE LIST: you likely won’t need the supplies until the spring semester, when you learn the physical exam and go on clinical site rotations. Your ASM course reps will probably organize a group purchase of supplies through the bookstore at a discount. Also, many graduating students will be selling their equipment at a deeply discounted rate via email.

If you do want to purchase your own supplies early on, we recommend comparison shopping online on Amazon, eBay, etc. The small pharmacies on Madison will also have most simple items and equipment, e.g. blood pressure cuffs and bandages.

FILLING PRESCRIPTIONS
The cheapest place to go if they stock your medication is the employee pharmacy at Mount Sinai, which is on the MC level. Enter Annenberg, go down the escalator north of elevators, and stay to your left until you spot signs for the Pharmacy. If they don’t have it, you should then try the CVS on 97th and Lex, the pharmacies on Madison south of the hospital, or the Duane Reade at 102nd and Madison.

DOCTOR’S VISITS
Student Health can accommodate most physical exams, illness visits, vaccine needs, and travel consultations. There is no co-pay, and students are seen regardless of insurance status. An appointment can be made via the MARC system on Blackboard, or you can call 212-241-6023 during office hours. For a primary care physician, you can contact Primary Care Associates or Internal Medicine Associates to select among Sinai doctors, or use ZoeDoc to find other doctors in the city that accept your insurance. The student healthcare plan should also allow you to contact and make direct appointments with Sinai specialists.
STUDENT GROUPS

(PROUD SPONSORS OF FREE FOOD AND ALSO INTERESTING EVENTS)
Student life is extremely vibrant at ISMMS and a large part of that is due to so many student organizations. Below are many of the organizations currently active. And if you have one you want to start, go for it!

**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT ISMMS**

Student organizations are an important part of the Sinai community!

There are more than we can list here, so please feel free to browse [https://webcommons.mssm.edu/student-group-websites/](https://webcommons.mssm.edu/student-group-websites/) for a complete list of active student groups, their websites, and email contacts.

Don’t feel like scrolling through a boring website? Go to the Student Activities Fair!

**HOW DO I START A NEW ORGANIZATION?**

Is there an organization you’d like to see? Starting a new organization at Sinai is easy! Just follow these instructions:

1. Come to the Student Council Financial Management Team meeting and present your group idea!
   a. The dates/times will be available on BlackBoard under the Student Council Page
2. Have a good idea of what you want to do:
   a. What kinds of activities are you planning?
   b. For whom are you planning them?
   c. How many times a semester will you do them?
3. Is there a group that already does what you want to do?
   a. Can you be just a branch of it?
4. Do you want funding?
   a. How much?
   b. Ask for the Student Council Organization Excel form, which you can email in advance of the meeting
5. Do you have a faculty advisor? You’re going to need one!
6. Voting for approval is usually done at the meeting itself, which includes the proposed budget
7. If your group needs to be recognized before the next meeting, please email student.treasurer@mssm.edu making that clear, and they will try to do the process via email.

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES FAIR**
Don’t miss the student activities fair early in the upcoming semester! The date is Wednesday, September 5th in the West Lobby of Annenberg at 5pm. Organizations will be tabling and you’ll be able to talk with the group leaders and find out more! *Word to the wise:* don’t depend on the person at the table to contact you if you give them your email—mistakes happen. If you’re interested reach out to them!

**ACADEMICS**
(DOCTOR CLASS AND MORE ACRONYMS THAN YOU’VE EVER Wanted!)

A Personal Note From the Editor on Academics:
Welcome to 17th (or more) grade! So load up your backpacks and pose for your First Day pictures! We’ve all been in school a really long time, so it makes sense to think that this is just another classroom.

However, medical school requires a new and different type of academic lifestyle. Professors and lecturers present you with the bare-bones material (each a little differently) and it is up to you to synthesize this material and, in a way, make it your own.

As per our very eloquent predecessor, Ben Asriel: “Unlike the various kinds of school I have experienced so far, medical school is self-taught and lightning-speed.” I’ll add my own (less eloquent) explanation of why medical school is different (in my personal experience, which is not representative of many, many people). College classes and lectures are like a road trip that gives you both the destination and the route. If you just sit back and follow the route as given (aka attend lectures, skim the textbook, practice a little, and cram) you’ll end up right where you need to be. Medical school only gives you the destination. You have a solid idea of what you need to know, but how you get there is ultimately up to you. Hence, there is a self-taught aspect of it all. There are many resources that can help guide you along the way, and these are included in the sections that follow. Just know that you might get lost on your road trip and you might have set backs, but you will get there eventually.

“Everyone studies and learns differently.”—you will hear this 567 times (give or take) during the first few weeks of orientation/medical school and approximately zero times when you need to hear it most.

Whether you’re watching Netflix, taking a nap, going out for a night, or anything else—DO NOT let anyone guilt you, whether passively or actively, for taking you-time. If you finish your study goals for the day, do not feel obliged to continue to work in the library. Many a time did I find myself putting in extra library/work hours despite feeling like I was done because I’d look around and see many classmates continue to work. “What were they doing that I missed? Maybe there’s no way I could be done already if no one else is. Oh geez is that person studying stuff we haven’t learned in class yet? They’re so ahead! Why can’t I work that hard? I’m screwed!”

We, as editors, provide you with descriptions of each class along with responses from former first year students on what study techniques and practices worked for them. These are NOT intended to completely define your study techniques and say that there are no other ways to master the material, rather they are meant to make you aware of just some of the many resources available to you. I recommend you use this guide as something to look back on as a reminder of resources if you find yourself struggling or wanting to change your study patterns.

Congratulations on beginning your journey to MD! You deserve to be here! With that said, welcome to Mount Sinai and start your engines…

-Steph Hojsak
"High Yield..."

This will be you very, very soon.

YOUR FIRST YEAR COURSES

Below is a brief description of each of the first-year courses that has been updated by the course directors for this year’s Guide. Don’t sue me if the description is off; course directors make changes each year, so things could change significantly after this guide goes to print.
ART AND SCIENCE OF MEDICINE (ASM):

Course Directors: Joanne Hojsak, MD and TBD

You may not know what these are now, but soon you’ll never be able to forget.

The Art and Science of Medicine (ASM) is your introduction to clinical medicine. Throughout your first year you will be working in small groups of ~8 students to understand your role as a medical student and as a future physician. In this course you will begin to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior in the context of clinical care. In your first semester, you will learn how to conduct a thorough and sensitive medical interview to obtain a complete medical history through lectures and demonstrations. The second semester is dedicated towards mastering the physical exam. You will work with classmates, standardized patients, and patients in the Sinai health system as you learn and relearn the principles. There is a midterm assessment, called an OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination), where you get to demonstrate these specific skills at different stations and receive feedback in a timed setting. The final exam for the first year places you in a standardized patient scenario wherein you become the doctor who must take a full medical history and physical exam and try to figure out what’s going on.
ASM also includes the Longitudinal Clinical Experience (LCE), where you and a partner will follow a chronically ill patient all year. You will attend appointments and complete various assignments that will help you gain a broad understanding of chronic disease and longitudinal care.

**What We Liked:** By the end of this course, more than any other first year course, you will really be able to see the progress you’ve made towards becoming a physician.

**We We Struggled With:** Unlike other courses, ASM does not have a simple set of slides or syllabi to memorize. You have to learn by practicing, which can include doing and talking about things that can be awkward or uncomfortable.

**Books and Tips:** Bates’ *Guide to the Physical Examination & History Taking* is the only book recommended for this course, although most students use class materials instead. There is plenty of material available online and through other free references and resources. Accessing the Bates book online through the Sinai library gives access to several helpful videos, if you are more of a visual learner. Additionally, David Berman (ISMMS ’13) and Dr. Soriano have made an iPad e-book that goes over the physical exam; it is available through Blackboard.

**FALL COURSES**

**STRUCTURES**

*Course Director: Jeffrey Laitman, PhD*
Your first year will begin with Structures, a 9-week class that combines embryology, anatomy and histology. In this course, you will simultaneously learn about human development (embryology) and the human body on both a macro (anatomy) and micro (histology) scale. The key of the embryology block is to understand the origins of structures and the depths of the structures themselves. In the gross anatomy portion, you will dissect a cadaver and observe the structural complexities of the human body firsthand. Lectures are given primarily by the animated Dr. Laitman and Dr. Reidenberg (an expert on whales—be sure to watch her on episodes of “Inside Nature’s Giants”). Histology lectures are given by Dr. Mak. Dr. Mak also helps in the anatomy lab and is truly a wizard when it comes to finding the most difficult structures. There are opportunities to try a guided laparoscopic surgery on a cadaver, practice fine surgical skills on a da Vinci robot, and attempt emergency central line placement. The third component of the block, histology, explores the structure and function of specialized cells and tissues at the microscopic level, using digital slides to examine these elements. The new course has integrated these three content areas in such a way that you will learn how organs and structures develop and synchronously consider the gross anatomical and microscopic cellular structure of the body. Also of note, anyone having any trouble or concerns in specifically anatomy, or Structures in general, should take advantage of seeing Dr. Laitman as early as possible. He has a genuine passion for learning and really enjoys getting to know his students. He would be happy to discuss strategies to help you out or to assign a TA to work with you one on one. Structures can be overwhelming in the sheer volume of information available, and there is no shame in asking for help!!
**What We Liked:** Working with and learning from a cadaver is a truly incredible experience. By the end of the course, you will be in awe of your own body and how it continues to function despite the many things that can go wrong.

**What We Struggled With:** The sheer volume of information presented to you can be overwhelming to say the least (but there are many resources to help!!). Also the anatomy lab smells.

**Books and Tips:** The lecture PowerPoints are very thorough. The assigned book for Embryology was *The Developing Human, Clinically Oriented Embryology* by Moore and Persaud. The lectures follow the information in this textbook almost perfectly, so if you learn better by reading than you do by lectures, this textbook is extremely helpful. Some students have also found *Board Review Series (BRS) Embryology* or *High Yield Embryology* to be useful. Finally, an extremely complete study (called “Diamond Review Guide”) guide is posted on the Student Council website on Blackboard; many students have used the study guide as the basis for Embryo studying. If you have trouble finding the Diamond Review Guide on the website, ask an upperclassman! We’re happy to help.

For anatomy, the assigned book has been *Gray's Anatomy for Students*. Many people prefer to use it as more of a reference source; students have also used the *Big Moore* and *Baby Moore* books. As for Atlases, *Grant's* is the most detailed, however *Netter* was a common favorite. *Netter* also makes great flash cards that use many of the important images from the atlas. All students must buy the Grant’s dissector for the course, and you will probably want 1-2 for your group in the lab itself (you won’t want to take it outside of lab). As for exams, studying old exams/study guides was a must, and these resources can be found on the Student Council page on Blackboard. Read the dissector before each lab and stay on top of anatomy throughout the year. Structures is the most fast paced course you will take in first year, so being on top of the material is extremely important. In addition, TAs will hold a review session a few days before the midterm and final - during these, they will review some of the most high-yield information before your exams! These review notes will cover the boards of the small group rooms on the 12th floor, but don’t worry, they won’t be erased before the weekend, so you can go through the rooms at your own leisure later. In addition, since the course will be a fast paced one over 9 weeks and you don’t have any other competing foundational science courses while you are taking Structures, you should avail yourselves of the TA’s by reaching out to them early and frequently. Don’t shy away from asking questions of the TA’s and the faculty during this course.

The required text for the histology component is *Wheater's Functional Histology*, although many students do not use a text during this class. Everything you need to know will be in the lab or lecture slides and will be reviewed in the histology TA reviews.

**INFOCUS WEEK 1**

InFocus is a week-long course after the Structures block finishes in October. InFocus classes are a newish part of the curriculum and, so, are often different from year to year. This week is a time to study topics that might otherwise get lost in the med school shuffle. First-year topics include ethics, social justice, health policy, global health, and health activism. These in-depth experiences will be offered throughout your four years of medical school. The content for each InFocus period is targeted to your training level. Since you will be required to have a scholarly product by graduation, the InFocus week in the fall will also include critical research skills. InFocus 1 is an invaluable time to start thinking about your future as well as to decompress after completing anatomy.
The test results are in...you are not the final electron acceptor.

The rest of fall semester will consist of MCG (pronounced “McG”--like something you’d buy at McDonald’s), a course that focuses on understanding cellular mechanisms and genomics. MCG will give you the molecular basis for signaling, regulation of gene expression, protein trafficking, genetic variation, cancer, cell differentiation and metabolism, and it will help you discover how errors in these pathways can lead to disease. In addition to lectures, you will attend a series of presentations where you will meet patients that suffer from specific disorders, gaining insight into the clinical manifestations and lifestyle changes associated with these conditions. Case-based, small group discussions will further elaborate on the mechanisms discussed in class. The amount of material covered increases as the course progresses, so it is important to figure out and implement a system that really works for you. This is especially the case in the final 2.5 weeks of the course – the metabolism section – which contains much information on metabolic pathways, requiring you to know pathway concepts, to know some of the biochemical details, and also appreciate the big picture. Dr. B has a TA program set up and he will match you with a second year TA if you find yourself struggling. The TAs will also provide you with review sessions and practice questions.

MOLECULAR, CELLULAR AND GENOMIC FOUNDATIONS (MCG)

Course Director: David Bechhofer, PhD
What We Liked: The syllabi provided by the lecturers were often extremely helpful—they provide a lot of the core information so you don’t have to go digging. There are also weekly quizzes that count for very little towards the final grade—they are great for identifying troublesome areas that require more studying.

What We Struggled With: There is so much information presented every day (in my opinion, more so than Structures) that it can be hard to keep up with it all. The information is also somewhat abstract in that we can’t really observe these processes directly. This course is also socially different from Structures because you go from spending dozens of hours in classes and lab with your peers to just a few hours of mandatory class per week. This means you may have to more purposefully seek out time to socialize with your peers. Avoid the “I’ve been studying alone in my room too long and now I feel depressed” trap!

Books and Tips: Essential Cell Biology, 3rd edition, Alberts et al., 2010, and Lippincott Illustrated Reviews: Biochemistry, 4th edition by Champe, Harvey, and Ferrier, 2008 are recommended by the course director. However, absolutely everything you need to know is in the lectures! Many of the professors provide detailed lecture syllabi in addition to their PowerPoints. If you’re struggling, talk to Dr. B! He is very helpful and can set you up with a TA as-needed.

SPRING COURSES

IMMUNOLOGY

Course Directors: Peter Heeger, MD

Do try this at home.

Immunology will teach you about the immune system in health and in disease, particularly detailing its role in preventing or containing various types of infection. The first part of the course focuses on how the immune system works normally and why and how it does not
usually cause any damage to the host. The second half of the course addresses **problems that arise when the immune system fails** (e.g. immunodeficiency) or **responds inappropriately** (e.g. autoimmunity, allergy and transplant rejection). These clinical applications of core concepts provide a foundation for applying immunology to clinical care. The course lectures are supplemented by **small group, clinical case discussions** to emphasize important concepts and to provide a conducive environment for addressing any questions or concerns about the material.

**What We Liked:** The course introduces the immune system in a very step-by-step fashion at a good pace. Also learning about what can go wrong with the immune system, like autoimmunity, is super relevant and interesting for many people.

**What We Struggled With:** Like McG, this is on a microscopic level and therefore you can’t picture the information in a concrete way. Many of the cells and compounds also have very similar sounding names and it can get very easy to mix them all up.

**Books and Tips:** *Basic Immunology* by Abbas is the required book and many students find it helpful. Everything you need to ace the course is right in there in the book, with nice illustrations. Reading Abbas will clarify anything you don't understand in the lectures, which are also very thorough. There is also *How the Immune System Works* by Lauren Sompayrac that many students find helpful. Many older students have pdfs of this book, so ask around! Given that this course is after winter break, I recommend giving this book a read during the break. Also be on the lookout for excellent TA reviews, as well as a giant review guide (“Marin”) on the Student Council page in Blackboard.

**PATHOLOGY**

**Course Director:** Alexandros Polydorides, MD
You’ll see some gnarly fluids in this class.

General Pathology serves as an introduction to the cellular basis of disease, focusing on general concepts such as cell injury, inflammation, and neoplasia. This will be the last course in the curriculum dealing with human structure and, at the same time, the first one discussing specific disorders, their diagnosis and pathogenesis. It also provides an excellent foundation for second year courses, which focus predominantly on the pathophysiology of each organ system. Lectures will be accompanied by small-group labs which reinforce the same concepts on actual patient cases and where you will examine digital images and learn to recognize abnormal tissue at the microscopic and macroscopic levels. There is an additional component of reviewing corresponding gross organ specimens in the anatomy lab, presented by pathology residents in an interactive format.

What We Liked: The slides for this course were amazing--each clearly laid out with the important information highlighted in some form. Dr. Polydorides also include many tables and charts that made organizing the material so much easier. Also looking at the diseased organs in the lab was gnarly.

What We Struggled With: This course is concurrent with Immunology, and while the topics sometimes overlapped, other times it was hard to keep the information straight.

Books and Tips: The three books recommended by the course director are Abbas Basic Pathology 8th Ed. (similar to the Abbas Immuno book), Rubin's Pathology 6th Ed., and Robbins and Cotran Pathologic
Basis of Disease 8th Ed. Students also used BRS Pathology or Goljan Rapid Review Pathology for the course. Since pathology and pathophysiology are a large portion of Step I, these review books will come in handy in the future. However, for the purposes of succeeding in this course, the lectures and lab materials are sufficient. The PowerPoint presentations are excellent, so many students do not use a textbook. Some students found flashcards to be extremely helpful. There is also a complete glossary on Blackboard that details all the terms and concepts with images. Dr. Polydorides also gives a comprehensive review at the end of the course that is extremely helpful.

INFOCUS WEEK 2

InFocus 2 is another week-long course occurring at the end of January, after Immunology and Pathology finish. InFocus 2 will build on material from InFocus 1 and include critical research skills and knowledge development in global health, service learning, health policy and careers in medicine.

PHYSIOLOGY

Course Director: Staci Leisman, MD
GUIDE TO FIRST YEAR – 21

Physiology is one of the most useful as well as most difficult classes of first year. The course focuses on the physical and chemical processes that control normal bodily functions, and is taught by an organ systems approach. You will cover the autonomic nervous system, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, renal, and endocrine systems. Physiology consists of lectures, small groups, patient presentations, large group discussions and labs. These labs include experiment-based discussions as well as human simulators. Highlights of the course include interactive sessions where anesthesiologists demonstrate physiologic principles on high fidelity patient simulators. The Large Group discussions are excellent reviews and a great time to ask questions, so if I were you I’d be sure to attend these and to come prepared.

What We Liked: This course really does give you a “whole-body” learning experience. Dr. Leisman is also fabulous and very accessible.
What We Struggled With: In this course more than others, I found myself needing to do a lot of self-teaching. Because there is so much to teach, the lecturers often don’t have time to dive into the detail and mechanisms. The lecturers switch for each organ system, which I found difficult given the constantly-changing teaching styles.

Books and Tips: The syllabi for this class are typically fantastic and replace texts for many students, but it doesn’t cover all of the topics for the class, so you’ll also need other resources. The required texts are Costanzo’s Physiology, which is an excellent book that presents the material in a straightforward manner--I personally found it most useful in the pulmonary section. Many students also like BRS Physiology, which is also written by Costanzo and is mainly an outline of the required text (but reads much faster).

POST-SPRING BREAK

MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY

Course Directors: Roberto Posada, MD and Daniel Caplivski, MD

Choose your class:

- **STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)** Fighter
- **ESCHERICHIA COLI (E.COLI)** Paladin
- **CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE** Specialist
- **BURKHOLDERIA CEPACIA** Mage
- **MYCOBACTERIUM TUBERCULOSIS** Warrior
- **Bacilliphage Structure** Assassin

*C. diff: apparently diarrhea is Special.*

Medical Microbiology will introduce you to all those pathogens you get from eating raw foods, drinking unsanitary water and sitting on the subway next to that guy who’s sneezing. You will learn about almost all the **clinically relevant pathogens**, from bacteria and viruses to fungi and parasites. **Mechanism of disease, epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment options** will be emphasized for each organism. The course also addresses the growing concerns of hospital-acquired infections and antibiotic resistance. In
addition to lectures, there are case-based small group discussions and **labs that teach you various diagnostic techniques**. Dr. Caplivski also offers students the opportunity to attend **Microbiology Bedside Rounds**, during which students examine microscopic specimens at a lab and round on patients one morning. At the end of the year, each student will receive a case history and an unknown sample and be asked to identify the pathogen in question. You will also learn how important it is to never walk barefoot, eat chicken, touch anything, or simply breathe air. Welcome to medical school!

**What We Liked:** Along with ASM, this course really makes you feel like a doctor. All those crazy antibiotic names that never seemed to matter? Yeah you’ll master those.

**What We Struggled With:** After Physiology, which required you to deeply understand concepts and patterns, Microbiology is a memorization-heavy course.

**Books and Tips:** While there was no official textbook this past year, many students found *Clinical Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple* to be the most helpful book. The TA review sessions were also extremely helpful in consolidating the information about each pathogen, and the PowerPoint slides used in these reviews will be available on Blackboard. Most students will swear by an invaluable online resource called “Sketchy Micro”, which is a series of illustrated nonsensical stories that uses memory hooks to help you remember pathogens and their properties. Sketchy Micro is indispensable if you have trouble memorizing lists of factoids. Some students also used excel charts that organized the pathogens and their characteristics. Other resources included First Aid and Firecracker (an online question bank).

**FLEXTIME**

The curriculum includes one protected half-day per week that allows you to pursue self-directed learning and leadership opportunities outside of the required coursework. The time will also allow you to meet milestones that you will need to achieve by certain deadlines. You can take classes in the library, complete IRB training, meet with community partners or meet with mentors during this time.

You can also use this as time to pursue shadowing opportunities or begin engaging in research (especially since you will have a required scholarly product by graduation). In addition, some content sessions will be scheduled during Flex Time such as how to find a mentor, careers in science and medicine, how to seek feedback, compliance sessions, and career meetings - these are generally posted in advance so check the Google calendar. Basically, this is really protected time for you to meet your milestones and really grow as a medical student! However, sometimes you might just want to use Flextime to take a nap or go for a walk- that’s okay too. Just do what’s best for you.

**GENERAL STUDY ADVICE**

Med school is quite different than undergrad, but you’re definitely up to it! The most important thing to remember is that everyone has different approaches to studying, and you should do whatever works best for you. Plus, your strategies may change during the year depending of the specific class. That said, here are some tips that made studying a bit easier for many in our class.

1. **P = MD (formerly known as “Never forget that it’s pass/fail.”)**
   While I dislike math, this is one equation I’m really on board with: Pass = MD. Don’t stress out – if you think you know the material, you’re probably ready to take the exam. Pass/Fail means it is okay if you don’t know everything about everything; you’re now learning for your own enrichment, not just to ace a test.
2. You can take exams when you are ready and wherever you are comfortable. 
Gone are the days of being squeezed into a 300-person lecture hall and having to conform to strict exam schedules! As long as you take them over the test period window (generally Friday at 4 pm - Monday at 8 am) you’re good! Take them in the library! Take them in your pajamas! Take them in another country! You have the power! A wired connection is strongly encouraged.

3. Keep up with the material. 
Most classes have small (as in less than 5 percent of your course grade) quizzes every weekend. This can be stressful if you allow yourself to fall multiple lectures behind, but it can save you from overwhelming cramming before the exam. By reviewing the day’s lecture every day, you can put yourself in a less frantic frame of mind. Plus, you’ll remember everything better long-term! The curriculum avoids the difficulties of having multiple overlapping classes, which means that, for the most part, you will be able to focus on one conceptual area at a time. But, this also means that courses move pretty quickly, so keeping up with the material is going to be key. You should really use the great student resources like peer tutors, senior tutors and review sessions during the year if you ever feel that you need an extra hand to keep on top of your learning.

4. In that vein, read before class! 
Particularly for Structures, reading the material before class/lab makes lectures clearer and dissection smoother.

5. Review books can be your friend. 
Don’t think about the boards yet. Don’t even think about STEP 1. BUT the Board Review Series (BRS) and High Yield books can be very helpful to simplify the material and focus your studying.

6. If you’re a group studier, work in a group. But don’t stress out if you’re not! 
If you’ve found you do well studying with others, that can be a great way to approach the material. But don’t stress out if everyone around you is doing it and you aren’t – many students prefer studying on their own.

7. Take advantage of the resources at Icahn. 
We have lots of resources here, so utilize them! Meet with your advisor, talk with older students, attend TA review sessions, meet with faculty and use the peer tutor program (sinaitutors@icahn.mssm.edu). Make sure to go to the Student Council page on Blackboard, where you’ll find study guides and old exams. Also, check your inbox for study guides from friendly upperclassmen.
FROM STUDENTS THEMSELVES

One of the hardest parts of medical school is how quickly the courses, each with their own unique set of challenges and opportunities, go by—often before you have time to figure out how to best handle each one. Below are the results of an informal poll of our classmates asking them what advice they have for a new medical student starting at Sinai.

This section begins with some broad strokes advice about starting medical school and general study tips. This is followed by a section on specific First Year Courses. We asked our classmates what they liked about each class, what they found most challenging, and what advice they have to tackle it. It’s certainly a lot of information to digest, but that also makes it good practice for what medical school classes will be like. My advice would be to read what’s relevant to you right now, and keep returning when you feel like you could use some more advice.

We’ve also created Yelp-style ratings (out of 5 stars) for each of the various resources available in each class. Take these with a grain of salt, as these are averages of the overall response, and there’s always at least one person who’s an outlier (which could be you!). Hopefully this section will provide you with more insight on what to expect from each class, and give you a head-start on figuring out which study strategies might work for you. We’ve included responses from the previous year’s class as well -- it’s a lot to parse through, but we hope it offers a well-rounded array of perspectives.

Best of luck!
GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICAL SCHOOL & LIFE

What do you wish you had known before starting medical school classes?

Everything seems overwhelming at first but it will soon become so manageable. It's also normal to freak out the first few days/weeks before realizing that things aren't as stressful as they seem.

Med school can be lonely and isolating, for anyone, even at Sinai where everyone mostly lives together. Take time for individual conversations and don't feel a need to get wrapped up in group stuff all the time.

Say your guesses with confidence - you know just as much as anyone else

Anki is a lifesaver. So is Instacart for groceries when you're in a bind, but it can be expensive. Trader Joe's on the upper west side is gold.

Medical school isn't that bad. You can do it, and there are many resources to help you along the way. Just be sure you prioritize what YOU believe is important - it doesn't matter if Gary Gunner is working 24/7 to publish 50,000 papers. That's his agenda and you don't have to follow it, but FOLLOW IT IF YOU WANT TO AS WELL!!! There's sometimes a counter-culture to persecute Gary for working hard, but there shouldn't be any judgement either way.

It definitely took me the entirety of first year to get adapted to medical school in terms of making friends, learning how and when to study, how to see college friends and family, etc. For some reason I thought it would only take a month or two but it took much longer, and I was even familiar with NYC before starting at Sinai. Honestly I’m still adapting now.

The grade to pass structures is usually below a 70 so don’t freak out if you fail a test--if you find yourself struggling, don't freak out, but definitely seek help early on. The course directors, TAs, are all here to help.

It was a little jarring to realize so many of my classmates had connections to Sinai in one way or another, so don't feel too bad that you feel lost if you don't have a similar background.

Someone told me it was easy. It's not. But it is the most gratifying work ever; this is our future career, and we are learning the skills to be the best we can be.

Keep up with material daily and weekly

don't be so damn nervous about starting. things will feel and fill out. they don't want you to fail.

Accept your mediocrity. If you're used to being a big fish in a small pond, you will come to find that you are a tiny fish here. Anyone who has any tips on this, please get back to me, because I am still struggling to accept that I'm consistently below the class average, despite being far and away one of the best students in undergrad.
I wish I had known how to use Anki and what my study style was, because it changed dramatically from college. Take a break and relax the summer before, but make sure you're ready as far as resources and study skills go.

If making your own Anki decks isn't something you're good at, look for premade decks on reddit.com/r/medicalschoolanki

The hardest part is not the material--it's trying not to constantly compare yourself to others.

I wish I had trusted myself to learn and absorb materials quickly. You can do it.

Med school gets better over time. As someone coming to the east coast for the first time, with no friends or family here, it was definitely more rough starting out than I'd expected. I had days in Structures where I felt super lonely and wasn't sure if I was making enough friends and just felt like giving up and being a recluse. If you find yourself in the same boat, my advice would be to lean on friends and family back home for support and encouragement to stay optimistic. Put yourself out there, go to class, join groups you're interested in, study outside of your room, get free lunches, and you'll find your support system and make a home for yourself here. Also, if you're someone who wasn't used to living in the city, I would HIGHLY recommend making the most of living 5 mins away from Central Park -- it's amazing!

The best purchasing decision you can make during medical school is buying a second monitor/screen.

Have realistic expectations about how often you're going to see your friends, and make sure that your friends are aware of those expectations as well. That way, during times where studying is a little more intense, they can better understand your situation and support you.

Don't buy textbooks unless you love them. studentfiles.mssm.edu has tons of premade study resources

I thought it got easier after structures.

From previous classes:

“YOU ARE MEANT TO BE HERE AND ARE HIGHLY CAPABLE OF DOING GREAT THINGS. Be confident!”

“It's ok to be average in a class full of exceptional students.”

“How to study efficiently.”

“You'll probably need to change the way you study. It's not more conceptually challenging than college, it's just more material. So just keeping up with the courses and not letting stuff pile up is the best way to get through first year without too much stress.”
“I wish I had been more comfortable with the idea of not going to lecture. If you space out during lecture, you're screwed, but if you're watching on echo, you can just rewind and go back.”

“It is insanely fun, despite the occasional frustration, and there are so many opportunities inside and outside of school to take advantage of, that getting bogged down with studying all the time is entirely unnecessary and generally not worth the return on investment.”

“That I needed to buckle down and work hard! Also to not be afraid to ask questions and just put myself out there.”

**What advice do you have for a new medical student at Sinai?**

Enjoy the process, and learn to take care of yourself and set your own priorities

You're going to love it! And make it through the other side. Just keep a healthy sense of perspective: we are all incredibly lucky to be here.

Make friends early and decide which friend group(s) you want to be a part of. Aka don't isolate yourself. Even if you have an SO.

Take time to figure it all out, don't feel pressured to get involved from the beginning!

It's continually said but LISTEN- don't compare yourself to others. You will find out what works best for you with time. Do not be stressed that what works best for your friend(s) may not work well for you.

Do not feel the need to overstudy, even if you feel like everyone else is. Enjoy yourself and take advantage of NYC and all of your new friends in your class- do fun things. Studying is important but so is having fun, and all of your classes are pass/fail!

Don't take first year too seriously.

Don't believe people when they tell you not to worry and that you'll be fine - that's just Sinai trying to seem less intense. The truth is that med school requires hard work and effort - so you'll be fine if you consistently work hard. That said - you don't need to ALWAYS work super hard :)

Use anki!! It's a fantastic study tool and really, really really works. Also don't make any study guides until you look at StudentFiles and see if someone made one for the class already that you like.

Do you. You're going to hear a million things about what you should and shouldn't be doing. Just do what makes you happy/at peace.
Medical school is an opportunity to learn and grow so try to take this attitude towards your work. Every trial, every tribulation, will help define who you become. Try to learn what you prioritize in your life and you'll have to balance those varying priorities (School work, socializing, ME-time, Med school friends, OUTSIDE life etc.)

Some people will go zero to sixty very quickly in terms of signing up for 48 clubs and 32 research projects and accumulating many shadowing experiences, but resist the temptation to overcommit. I was cautious about getting involved in different activities, and I saw a lot of over committed classmates get overwhelmed when all their deadlines caught up with them.

Reach out to your classmates and upperclassmen for advice, early and often!

Be patient. Medical school requires some adaptation, and everyone varies in how long that takes. As long as you reach out to people for help, you'll be fine.

Don’t compare yourself to others. You do you!

Everyone's experience with the first year of medical school is very different, try your best not to compare yourself to your classmates!

They say med school is a marathon not a sprint, and it's true. However, do not take that as an excuse to get behind. While you want to make wellness and mental breaks priorities, there is no substitute for putting in that study time every day. I wish someone had told me this because all I heard from second years was "you'll be fine" and "enjoy first year."

Making friends can be really difficult. Don't be so hard on yourself if you don't find a "friend group" like everyone else in first year.

Remember that whatever happened before medical school, you and your classmates are now all in the same boat starting from scratch.

From previous classes:

“BE CONFIDENT, doubt/stereotype threat are real!”

“Don't fall behind on material - you don't have to study all day every day, but at least a little bit each day goes a long way - even if some days you only can bring yourself to do an hour - that's much better than taking a few consecutive days off.”

“Some tips for Anki notes: (1) Make them short & sweet so you're only testing one thing at a time. This will give you more cards, but you can flip through them faster! (2) Your questions should only have one answer. For instance, don't write "HIV" as a question, but instead write specifics, like "How is HIV transmitted?" or "What laboratory tests are used to diagnose HIV?" (3) For microbiology especially, better to frame symptoms as question rather than answer. So instead of a question saying "What are the clinical manifestations of X?" I would write "A patient presents with X, Y, and Z. What is the cause of their symptoms?" Useful to test
information in the way that you'll recall it - you're never going to have to list all the possible symptoms of a pathogen, but you will have to recognize them if you see them.”

“Remember who being in medical school is ultimately for. Is it for you or is it for your patients? For your community? Don't forget to look around you and see that there is real suffering around us and we are lucky to be in a school environment.”

“If you're interested in a particular area of medicine, try to find mentors early. Not only reaching out to faculty or residents, but also older med students interested in that field who can provide advice and a gateway into shadowing opportunities/research projects with faculty mentors who enjoy working with med students. You will still have plenty of time for outside interests and family/friends if you manage your time efficiently. Most importantly, never forget that it is PASS/FAIL!!”

“Don't get caught up in the crowd. If you want to do something here, go do it, but more importantly, don't waste time doing things that you don't want to do. There will be a lot of pressure to conform to the non-conformist attitude that Sinai takes towards medicine (ironic, I know). If you feel differently, that's good, and you should act on those feelings.”

“Explore! And do it by just reaching out to people (faculty, residents, older students). If you're professional and curious, people will be generous with their time seek out a mentor, talk to upperclassmen”

**Were there any study techniques that worked for you all year?**

Mainly, learning to go to bed early and wake up early and knock out a couple hours of work/studying before the day began and before my brain was tired

Anki.

Using the slides that are provided - the exams will test from these

ANKI - there have been so many additional resources for ANKI in recent years that it's a waste to not use this resource. Ask upperclassmen for their previous ANKI cards.

Use Anki strategically, don’t try to fit everything into an Anki template.

Didn’t really use Anki until the end - more so just looking at the lecture slides - there’s enough information there to excel in your classes

Discussing things out loud!

Read through the lecture slides before lecture, and definitely meet with Lauren Linkowski at some point in the year!
I stopped going to class after Structures. It saves me SO much time!

Talking concepts through with other people was often helpful. I found Anki to be really helpful for certain things, but definitely don't feel like you have to use it. Lauren the learning lady is a really helpful resource--I'd seek her out early on and at least hear her out. It's important to strike a balance between knowing what study methods work for you while also not being stubborn and stuck in your methods that you can't utilize new technology/tricks that are really helpful. Also I think it's helpful to have 2-3 resources/study techniques that you use, mostly because it makes studying more interesting and less monotonous.

If you're a person that needs the big picture to learn the details, make sure you recognize that about yourself and do things like make outlines, highlight, write notes, etc. However, this will not cut it, and you still need methods of recall such as Anki, quizzing yourself, Q & A sets, etc. still working on this

I never got into anki, but I would watch lecture, make a summary outlines, then more concise summary blurbs to study. Review quizzes before tests.

Doing all the practice questions available and going over them.

1. Anki for everything - I used it for every class. 2. Visual representations/tables of categorical information 3. Drawin' it out (most helpful for Structures and MCG)
White boards for structures. Tons of papers re-drawing pathways for MCG and Physio. Anki for Micro.

lots of repetition, in any form. also trying to come up with my own practice questions

*From previous classes:*

“Studying in groups whenever you can, especially with your lab group during Structures, can be very helpful to fill in gaps in your knowledge and help clarify confusing concepts with your friends."

“Going to Lecture and reviewing the lecture slides the same day”

“You get a lot more out of lecture if you look at the material beforehand."

**WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST DIFFICULT ABOUT FIRST YEAR?**

Finding work-life balance

Figuring it all out
Structures is brutal. It's one of the hardest classes of med school because it's all memorization, and you don't really know anyone and you don't know how to study yet. IT WILL GET EASIER. Rely on your friends and family for support when you need it and don't be afraid to ask your peers and upperclassmen for help.

Spending a ton of time staring at my computer trying to memorize things.

Getting used to the amount of studying/mindset after working a few years.

knowing how much to study and when to stop

Over committing myself

I wish I had a Time Turner; there are just not enough hours in the day. I found it hard to get enough sleep because I wanted to study and spend time with friends. Achieving balance is key.

Not letting school work take over my whole life - I spent a lot of first year worried that med school was making me boring

The first half of the year is completely different than the back half of the year. The first half I felt like I could barely breathe with Structures and MCG, and the 2nd half it was like I had hours of free time daily.

Sheer volume of information. Finding a study plan that worked for me for each class

Learning how to study/ handle the pace of new material- there's a learning curve for sure.

amount of material is overwhelming

The hardest part was adapting to the new pace of school, surroundings, and people.

Learning how to study and proper time management

Making friends

As an older student who lived off campus and already had a life in the city, I found it difficult to make room for new friends. It's worth it.

Making good friends (I made them but it was harder than I expected)

Everything outside of medical school - family health, relationships, personal issues - that creeps in and distracts from daily studying life

Academic: Motivating myself to study for certain classes when their clinical applicability was not so readily apparent (i.e: MCG, parts of Path/Immuno) Non-academic: Convincing friends who lived downtown to come to the Upper East Side to see me when I would be studying for exams.
figuring out how to study/stay organized for each class when we had an overwhelming number of resources

From previous classes:

Realizing that for the first time, I have no idea what I want to do with my career. I'm nervous about not being in a good position because I have no idea if I want to do optho, derm, family med, obgyn, ETC ETC

All of my classmates are awesome, but I put more pressure on myself to keep up with them. It ultimately helped me to be a better student and person, but it can be a tough adjustment coming in.

It often felt like everyone else was super intense and gunner-y, so I had to try and only talk school with people who approached it in the same way as me.

Getting used to being average for the first time ever.

Some of your classmates will really excel at certain subjects that you really struggle with. keep it in perspective. You're here for a reason. You'll make it through.

Feeling like I wasn't spending enough time studying or that I was behind always.

Finding an effective balance between maintaining non-academic activities and feeling that you've prepared enough to pass the exams. Also comparing yourself to your peers in how many activities you're involved in, research projects completed, hours shadowed, grades on exams, etc can be anxiety-inducing and challenging.

Trying to maintain relationships with existing friends, while devoting time to making new friends in medical school.

Figuring out which study method works for me, regardless of others' suggestions.

Realizing that everyone really is struggling with the same pressures and expectations that you are. Talk about these things with your classmates, and try to make others feel comfortable talking about them with you.

Every class requires a slightly different study technique and because we only take a class or so at a time, it feels like you're changing up your methods more than in undergrad, which was sometimes unsettling for me. That said, it did get easier throughout the year, and I realized that if I planned a little bit ahead (e.g. bought a $5 textbook off an older student before the class started) then I wasn't scrambling during the first week as much. Also, I happened to find pass/fail and the testing schedule difficult because it's hard to gauge what you yourself should be happy with. Not many people in my group really talked about grades first year, and everyone has different
standards for themselves. You just have to settle on an amount of work and a level of academic achievement that makes you feel good.

Balancing life in NYC with school work—saying no to friends when I needed to study

The transition. You may not realize it, but far more people than you may perceive have difficulty adjusting to first year— it's hard. Just recognize that you're not alone.

**HOW DO YOU MANAGE WORK-LIFE BALANCE?**


Not comparing myself to others and understand what I need to do to get the results I want and spending the rest of the time playing hard.

Never study past 11pm if that doesn't work for you. Also commit to the TV shows you're watching

I cut myself off from studying and ensure that I have set plans that I cannot back out of!

Work has to be part of your life not in this weird dichotomy opposed against it. Make working more enjoyable by studying with friends, doing flashcards outside, not going to the depressing library, etc

I consciously make a choice to not excel at that which I don't need to excel at i.e. I take pass/fail seriously and make sure to explore the city/host friends/travel when I can

Exercise. Also clean sheets and a clean room can make a huge change.

Make plans to do things ahead of time and get off of campus

Schedule out my time and treat everything like a to do list. Relaxing and hanging out with friends is necessary too.

Taking advantage of pass fail and being realistic about how much studying/review I can accomplish in a given study session.

Stay on top of your work. There's too much material to leave it to cramming in the night (or week) before the test. But it's manageable if you're disciplined and study/review on an ongoing basis

Study hard during the week, take your test on Friday knowing it's Pass/Fail, and give yourself a weekend to decompress and see the city

Exercise!

I try to take at least five minutes everyday to check in with myself— I set a reminder to do this so I make sure it's a priority.

I do at least 3 fun things a week— workout class, dinner with a friend, grabbing a drink. Weekends especially Sunday I took it easy if I could
it's really hard--you do your best and have to make sacrifices. Using my calendar was probably the most helpful thing I did. I would honestly forget things if I didn't put them in my calendar.

set aside time to study and set aside time for the things you love.

Find study spots away from Sinai and the library! Make time for friends who aren't in med school and who are from your time in other phases of life. Keep your family close and hold on to the hobbies that make you who you are and keep you happy outside of school.

Set a schedule and try your dang best to stick to it. Be kind to yourself when you take breaks and recognize that those breaks will make you a healthier person, not to mention a more resilient student.

Finding the right friends really helped. I like surrounding myself with people who are really motivated and work hard but not so gunner that it makes me feel bad, and who also make time to work out, have fun, etc. Positive peer pressure is real

Maintain relationships with people who aren't in your med school, and who will bother you incessantly until you hang out with them!

P=MD. Always remembering that you only need a 70% to pass and learning to prioritize social life over studying on the weekends. Also making sure to recognize that the administration, the faculty, your classmates, and the school as a whole wants you to succeed and will provide you with all necessary resources to do so, so make sure to take advantage of them.

lots of walks in the park, spending time with friends, calling non-med school friends/family

*From previous classes:*

I go home a lot and I always remember that yes we are pass fail, but we are also so lucky to be living our dreams which makes working hard worth it

Prioritize life - you can't really avoid work, so you'll get it done anyway.

I just make sure to carve out time for fun. You can always study more, but you need some time for yourself to stay sane.

I honestly completely prioritize non-school stuff; so the hard part for me was making sure to actually study. So I have a lot of cramming and moments where I think I might fail, but I sort of need that to motivate me.

Be reasonable in what I can expect to get done in a day; try to exercise as soon as I get out of class so I don't get tempted to skip it later

Breathing in-between my activities. Not scheduling too much for myself in one day. Taking walks in the park and calling my friends and family.

I try to schedule things that I enjoy. I'm good about being able to do things, even before I've taken an exam. I don't need to take my exam on Friday to be able to enjoy my weekend. That
being said, I get a lot done by spending long periods of time at coffee shops. Yoga and exercise are generally good for me.

Towards the end of the year I began to make it a priority to get my quizzes and Exams done on Saturday instead of Sunday, that way I could have at least 1 day of relaxing time before the new week comes.

Sign up for extracurricular things slowly. Find out what you are truly into and THEN dive into commitments. Get comfortable saying no to people, including yourself.

**WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT STUDYING AND STAYING HAPPY?**

Studying can be fun! Just remember to break it up and do other things

Being happy is all relative

V possible to do both!

Set a schedule for yourself and stick to it. Do not overstudy- classes are pass/fail!

Do less

Do it consistently and evade anxiety//be open to adjusting your strategy often because each class at Sinai is different

Med school is pass/fail for a reason. There will be people around you who study basically 24/7, so just remember that comparison is the thief of joy!! Do what you need to do to pass, and take time for yourself to see friends outside of med school, do activities that make you happy, and explore NYC!

Study off campus! It will make you feel less like a student and more like a person.

Find a way to study early on in the year.

I took most of my exams on friday- which meant working hard during the week, but left me dedicated time on the weekends to relax, see friends and family

I finally hit my stride in January: I would study after class until dinner time (6-6:30pm) for me, then go home to eat and go to the gym and not study any more no matter how behind I felt. Just setting a hard cutoff for myself and sticking to it was great. I think there’s little return on investment for the one or two extra hours of working that you’re tempted to squeeze in.

Find a studying situation that is enjoyable - if you find studying alone in your room depressing, try studying in groups with your friends or at coffee shops
Find time to laugh with friends. We are all going through the same struggles; use that to build camaraderie. Take your studies seriously (it will be your career!), but always maintain wonder and levity!

Pass fail is amazing - take it seriously and let yourself off the hook early on quizzes and exams. I enjoy studying and it makes me happy when I’m not feeling overwhelmed. When I feel overwhelmed I make a list and timeline for accomplishing it all.

Give yourself breaks. I found exercise to be a really helpful outlet (ideally with other people). Find whatever your outlet is and hold on to it. Also figure out if you study best alone/with other people/some combination and work that into your routine. You spend a lot of time studying, so it's important to figure out how you best like to do it.

I learned that you can't study at the cost of your happiness, but you also sometimes need to drop a little of what makes you happy outside of school in order to tend to what is making you the most anxious and unable to enjoy other parts of life. It's a fine balance, and you'll need trial and error and your friends, advisors, and upperclassmen to help you figure it out.

If you need to leave the Sinai area, do so. Go explore new areas of New York, and find new places to study. I found it to be good for my overall wellbeing to get away from med school and other med students every so often.

The key is not comparing yourself to others. You're told time and time again "everyone studies differently", but I know I had trouble taking that to heart. Even if you don't find what works for you immediately, be patient and do not view yourself as less than your peers.

A routine and task list worked well for me. If I put in x hours, and checked off x boxes on my list, then I felt good at the end of the day.

Studying CAN make you happy! If you find the way that works for you! I love drawing so I would take each lecture and challenge myself to turn it into an image/diagram connecting all the different ideas (also became very useful when reviewing for exams). I use like 10 different colors when I study, and and discover new songs on pandora, and that really keeps my energy up and makes studying something I look forward to.

Comparison is the thief of joy!

For low stakes studying/reviewing during non-test weeks, study with your friends - makes it easier to see everyone (especially if you don't go to class very often)

there comes a point of diminishing returns where it's better to stop studying and get some sleep or relax with friends. it's easy to convince yourself to study until the last minute and take the test monday morning, but there's no point - you'll never know everything. might as well take it on friday/saturday and have some time off.
From previous classes:

Don't attach your happiness to school. Make sure to have other shit that you love. Whether it's exercise, social stuff, or just something like cooking, make sure at least some of your self-worth comes from non-curricular things. The people who freaked out seemed to be the people who weren't able to detach.

Studying is not always a chore. Sometimes I remind myself of how lucky I am to learn this stuff and access all this incredible knowledge.

Reminding yourself of what an incredible opportunity and privilege you have been given to be studying to become a DOCTOR. The better you know the material, the more you will be of service to your future patients! That makes me smile!

We have a lot of classmates who seek to disconnect from medicine by doing other things in New York. That's great if it works for them. Honestly though, you're always with medical school folks, we live together, and we live a block from school. It's difficult to disconnect. I found it much easier to embrace the inner nerd and get excited about subject matter from classes than disconnect from medicine entirely. It makes the busy weeks go faster, and it helps remind me of why I'm here in the first place.

I try to treat studying like a job. From 8 or 9 - 6 or 7 I was on top of work! Then you can have the evening free. Get exercise also.

I'm happiest when I don't let myself fall behind

Get a tutor early – don’t wait!

Don't take everyone's advice. What worked for one person may not work for the next. It's really about trying different styles and figuring out what works for you.

I struggled with feeling of frustrations because I went to medical school to treat patients and little of the first two years is spent seeing patients. I found shadowing to be a great way to re-center my focus and remind myself why I was in medical school in the first place.

Be sure to spend time learning things that aren't tested on class exams. Meet patients, read about medicine in the news, and practice what you learned in ASM.

Surround yourself with positive people who will be your support throughout this time and whom you trust.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with Student Mental Health. They are a strong support and are very helpful no matter where your issues lie.

You are in NYC. Enjoy your time and remember that medical school is not supposed to be a time where you put your life on hold for some future ambition. Enjoy and have fun.
ADVICE ON FIRST YEAR COURSES

ART AND SCIENCE OF MEDICINE (ASM):

Resource Reviews: (26 respondents)

Attending Lecture:
★ ★ ★ ★ 3.0/5 stars

Watching Echo Lecture recordings:
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 1.2/5 stars

ASM Guide:
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.0/5 stars

Practice with classmates/friends:
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.9/5 stars

What did you like about this course?

My preceptors, how chill it is (until the evaluations..)

My preceptor was amazing!
You feel like you're learning how to actually be a doctor! It's super fun and you get to know your classmates in your small group really well.

Working with patients
You get to see patients and feel like a doctor!
Great mental break from the rest of the coursework.
It's fun to learn the physical exam with your pals.

MY PRECEPTOR WAS BOMB
Great guest lecturers, and you learn a lot! By the final, you feel way more comfortable in a doctor-patient setting.
I really enjoyed learning the doctoring part of medicine.
It's real doctoring! I learned a lot from my preceptors.
My preceptors and small group were great
getting to know my small group

**What was difficult about this course?**
Not knowing what to expect for evaluations
How long and boring parts of it were. How it was 5 hours second semester. How repetitive it got.
Lots of pressure on being able to do "doctor" things.
It was not clear from the beginning of this class what we would be expected to do for the midterm and final.
if you're awkward and don't have patient experience it can be daunting and nerve-wracking.
Surmounting the awkwardness that comes with talking to people and asking them questions about their health.
Not really difficult, just enjoy it and pay attention
It was always on the backburner and didn't get as much attention most of the year until the exam was upon us
Not meeting frequently enough, treating the course as secondary to our main class, LCE was poorly organized
not enough time to practice

**Any other advice?**
Practice, practice, practice -- you feel like you're learning nothing until you're learning everything for the exam...

Don't stress; it'll all fall into place

Practice physical exam on friends like once per week in weeks leading up to the ASM final and it'll become muscle memory and makes exam day less stressful.

Practice! (more than just during the dedicated ASM times)

Don't stress over this class - pay attention in small group, use the ASM guide, and practice with your friends a few days before each of the tests and you'll do great!

Practice practice practice! The only way you get comfortable with the history and physical exam is to do it over and over again on friends and family - and it's fun!

Use ASM guide, practice with friends. ASM is what you make of it! So spend the time outside of class

Before the midterm or final, practice on a classmate you don't know that well. It will mimic the innate awkwardness of the standardized patient and make you more comfortable with the situation.

Use the ASM guide for examples on how to do your writeup.

LCE is low yield- don't spend too much time on the reflections that no one actually reads

**From the Class of 2020:**

ASM requires more time than the one day per week you spend on it. A few tips:

a. Get a small book that will fit in the coat pocket of your white coat. The one I got measures 7" x 5", and sells for like $3 at Target. In that book, write down all the possible questions you will need to ask a patient to get their history. You'll find those questions under "midterm" at StudentFiles. They won't make sense when you first write them down, but you can revisit and revise them as you learn the details of history taking during the fall. Read through the book once in a while just so that over the course of the semester, you have the questions you need to ask in the back of your mind. If you have the questions down, you won't have to deal with forgetting questions during your midterm, like I did.

b. Or, you can just get such a book, and populate it during the course with all the possible questions you should ask a patient in the course of getting his/her history.

c. There is a format for HPI writeups. First source/reliability, then CC, then HPI. Yeah, this was not obvious from the first day.

d. You will be given a scoring rubric for your midterm. It isn't just a fancy piece of paper that you can ignore. Use it to know what you will be graded on, and practice accordingly.

e. You do not get nearly enough time to practice ASM outside of class, so you might as well make life easier on yourself by memorizing the questions you're expected to ask. When you do
the final, you'll find that there are questions that you're REQUIRED to ask. This might make you roll your eyes, but it turns out those questions are actually useful, especially if like me you take the history and still have absolutely no idea what the fuck is wrong with your patient.

Practicing history taking and the physical exam with classmates was the most important thing for me. Lectures are slow and tough to stay engaged in. I loved small group discussions, especially when we ran through differential diagnoses for common chief complaints.

ASM was very challenging for me, because I think most of the learning happens in small groups and I didn't like my preceptor. So I relied mostly on study guides and practicing on my family and friends, and I also learned a lot during clinical visits. Applying the material was the only way for me to learn it.

Extensive shadowing experience where I was able to practice skills learned in ASM was huge. Gave me confidence once exams came around.

I neglected ASM because it was only one day a week. Big mistake. However, I also struggled with history taking, not realizing that there was a history taking guide on studentfiles. I wish that students who struggled with ASM like I did had more ways to practice, so that their lack of proficiency does not come as a shock after the midterm like it did for me.

It was great to run over the final exam physical with a friend beforehand (while actually being completely serious, which my group didn't do in class). Also looking over the student guide before sessions even if you weren't the point person was actually useful.

**STRUCTURES:**

**Resource Reviews: (30 respondents)**

**Attending Lecture:**

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 3.5 stars

**Watching Echo recordings:**

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 3.8 stars

**TA Review sessions:**

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 4.0 stars

**Student Files (Bree's):**

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 4.9 stars
Labs:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.9 stars

Anki:

🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.3 stars

Grant's Dissector:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.7 stars

Gray's Atlas of Anatomy:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.4 stars

What did you like about this class?

Anatomy was cool!

Meeting the second years.

Laitman is so cute

The PROFESSORS

That it ends! I guess it is also a good bonding experience.

Really interesting, felt like medical school immediately, bonded w Anatomy group

You learn SO much new information in a very short amount of time. It's amazing!!! You'll also learn so much from your peers and really bond with your classmates. Lean into it and it'll be a lot of fun.

Lots of hands-on lab time

Hands on aspect.

Very cool intro to medicine- I still think back to my cadaver to remember things about the body Anatomy (most of the time)

Very hands-on, lots of exposure to different specialties and advanced techniques in medicine.

My anatomy group!

You get to dissect which is incredible and you’re finally learning relevant things for being a doctor
It felt so new and intense! I loved the lab portion.

You really feel like you're learning how to be a doctor

Because it's so involved, I made a ton of friends during lab. Everyone's Structures experience is different, but if you have the right attitude, it has a lot of potential.

Learning the anatomy in class and then applying to real life donor

Amazing bonding experience for the class.

Friend-making/community building/social aspects -- you really have to work with your peers.

dissection! my lab group!

Bonding with classmates, experiencing human anatomy as real as it gets

Everything! I adored this class--from the dissections to in-class demonstrations, to guest lecturers. I love anatomy and this course really allows your to immerse yourself in it.

new friends! cool to learn how body looks inside

Getting to dissect an entire human being from head to toe was an amazing experience and I still can't believe we did that.

Hands-on work, not questioning if/how the class would be applicable down the road, working with your group, and the faculty

lots of group studying because of table conferences

**What made this class difficult?**

Amount of material

Too many resources and different advice

It being the first course

Fast-paced, unclear what’s important for table conference vs exam

The unending barrage of information that was maybe not always distilled into succinct and easy to digest points. Uptight group members wanting to ace every table conference. Smell of rotting corpses permeating your hair

Super disorganized, unnecessarily confusing, overwhelming

They throw you into a crazy difficult course while you're also trying to get settled in med school/NYC AND make new friends. How you do in structures does NOT determine how you'll do in the rest of med school and as a doctor. Structures is a lot of memorization. Use anki and draw things out with lots of colors!
Huge amount of material being thrown at you

Varying sources of information and getting the right info needed for table conferences. PICK ONE RESOURCE, EXPAND ON IT IF YOU THINK IT'S NECESSARY, AND STICK TO IT

Long days of mandatory lab and class. A lot of information- hard to figure out what you need to know

Volume of info, lots of memorization, super disorganized class.

Disorganized course content

Not knowing what we needed to know (vs. what was superfluous)

First course of the year, a lot of different resources available and sometimes not sure which ones to use

The volume of information you need to learn

There was certainly a lot of intimidation associated with it. Also, the sheer volume of information!

It's the most involved course - the only course where you'll be required to be at school so much, constantly being told where to be and what to do. As a result, it's really really tiring, and of course information overload as well.

Rapid pace and amount of material to digest in a short amount of time.

it's your first med school class. the amount of info.

The teaching/table conference style, lack of organization, intimidation and low yield information

The volume of material and figuring out what you needed to study (aka what the high yield stuff is)

Embryology (yuck)

lots of info, grossness of gross anatomy

Large volume of information. Lab was poorly organized. It was really unclear what we had to know for table conferences

Lack of experience

first one, didn't know what to expect, lecture slides weren't great
Any other advice?

Just keep swimming

Essential Anatomy (app for iPhone / Macbook)

Work in groups!

Use the review sheets on student files--focus on HIGH YIELD!

To study histo, make Anki decks where the front of the card is an unlabeled image from lecture slides, and the back of the card is what the image is, PLUS one tidbit about it (ie what the structure does, this feature is a hallmark of thyroid tissue, etc). This is exactly the format of how you’re tested on the histo material on the exams. Study your histo Anki decks each day, then review it all right before starting your exam, and the histo questions will be a slam dunk.

Lecture slides and lab will more than get you by

Use Netter's for anatomy

Hunker down. Structures isn't like the other courses. That's uplifting bc if you're struggling, you should know that this is not representative of medical school. But it's also annoying because you won't be establishing your habit patterns for the rest of medical school in this course. My mentality was just to get through it and enjoy the experience as much as I could, and it worked out.

Use Bree’s notes! studentfiles.mssm.edu

Find a way to work with your lab group. They will make or break the experience. Not everyone's group will jive at first, and that's fine. But if you can find a way to make being in lab and studying together enjoyable, it will immensely improve your overall experience in the course (in my experience).

People will constantly tell you "it's so hard", but if you're getting the material, don't feel obliged to over-study because everyone else is.

Enjoy the dissection and don't go crazy about finding every little thing. Have fun with it!

Study with your group before table conferences. Take a deep breath and make it through!

This is definitely the most time consuming, intense course of first year.

From the Class of 2020:

Talked to classmates, focused on the review slides + student files. Didn't worry about knowing EVERYTHING, just focused on knowing what was on the TA reviews and student files very well.

For exams, discussing the material with other students after studying alone was most helpful - especially drawing tables together and quizzing each other on material.
The TA whiteboards are a godsend -- by far the most useful tool I used in structures. I learned best by just writing things down over and over (and over and over and over) to make them stick in my memory.

I was lucky because my group was amazing, so sharing resources and quizzing each other made learning very easy. Also, TAs are incredible. They hold the keys to success in this course because they’ll tell you what you need to know and what you can ignore.

Drawing things out on a small whiteboard I carried around with me

**MCG:**

**Resource Reviews: (29 respondents)**

**Attending Lecture:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.7 stars

**Watching Echo Recordings:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.7 stars

**TA Review Sessions:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.2 stars

**TA Review Slides:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.2 stars

**Small Group Cases:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.9 stars

**Anki:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.0 stars

**Student FIles:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.4 stars

**Textbook:**
1.3 stars

Dr. B's Matchmaking tutor service:

2.7 stars

What did you like about this course?

Peer tutoring system

The study guides allowed me to not watch a single lecture. I still don't know what Dr. Bechhofer looks like.

Boring and easy to study for - also the electrophysio was really fun for me

the clinical relevance

Patient presentations

I really liked the small group discussions.

Well-organized and all the professors are very accessible

I felt annoyed a bunch at it while taking it, but then later in physiology it connected a lot of dots which was really cool. So I appreciated the investment of time in this course a bunch down the line.

Cancer bio.

The material is actually really interesting, and it's really well organized and well taught.

no mandatory labs.

Very organized & straightforward, nice faculty

More free time

I think it's interesting to learn how your body processes everything (metabolism). If you've already taken biochem/genetics classes, this class is largely review.

A lot of the questions were very straightforward, no need to watch lectures (syllabi were very thorough)

more time flexibility than structures because no lab

What was difficult about this course?
The material is biochemistry heavy
If you haven't seen biochem stuff before it will be hard.

Physics concepts
Boring and lots of detail to memorize
So much memorization.

Relatively dry material
A ton of memorization of cold facts

The volume of information - write out the pathways over and over on a white board and eventually they’ll stick (until you forget them after the course)

The questions on tests involved serious analytical thought.

Complex material that didn't always feel relevant to clinical medicine

I was FlexMed and I just didn't have a lot of background.

Everyone has a different level of familiarity with the material--I often felt like I was playing catch up or had to work double as hard to keep up. The tests are also much harder than in Structures--you are very much expected to think in the exam rather than regurgitate information.

So much material and the test questions were extremely complex. It was really hard to prepare for those in-depth questions.

fast pace
Figuring out whether what you were learning was clinically applicable, no mandatory classes --> no seeing classmates for a while, lots of independent studying

**Any other advice?**

Definitely let Dr. B set you up with a tutor if you have ANY inkling that you might struggle in this class. You can see your tutor during the parts of the class that you struggle with and stop seeing them when you get the hang of things. So much better to be set up with one in advance than to regret it!

The syllabi (not listed above) are the pure gold for the course. People use them in a variety of ways, but really everything you need to know is there. I also found having a tutor really helpful. I think I really missed having a group to study with (as it was in Structures), so I really enjoyed having someone to go through the material with.

Again, just get through it. Second semester is much better

Use Syllabi- either read before or after lecture and annotate those- better than slides
I only read the syllabi and did not attend or watch lectures and this was definitely sufficient to do well on quizzes and exams (except for metabolism for which I both watched lectures on 2x speed and used syllabi).

Get a whiteboard and draw out pathways for metabolism

Draw out the pathways! If you do it enough you’ll remember them

Syllabus is everything

The syllabi were magical for this course. Really saved me time.

You don't need an A, you just need to pass. It's hard, even if you have some biochemistry background.

syllabi are great

**From the Class of 2020:**

Making summary sheets of pathways was helpful; Anki was a bit awkward to use for this class; TA practice questions were great, enjoyed many of the lectures

I should've talked out concepts in McG more with others. This was my most isolated course.

I really benefited from the TA reviews.

This was a class where I read the syllabus before going to lecture, then again afterward, and it helped SO MUCH. I really recommend doing this.

MCG is so memorization heavy, that I relied almost exclusively on Anki and textbooks to learn the material.
IMMUNOLOGY:

Resource Reviews: (26 respondents)

Attending Lecture:

🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.7 stars

Watching Echo Lecture Recordings:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.9 stars

TA Review Sessions:

🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.3 stars

TA Review Slides:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.1 stars

Small Group Cases:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.7 stars

Anki:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.0 stars

Student Files:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.0 stars

Textbook:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.1 stars

What did you like about this course?

only one exam at the end!
Not stressful
It was pretty easy
Immuno is also an exciting parallel feedback system! Intellectually fun to learn, better organized than other courses up until then
It's the first class that's not really memorization heavy, and you learn a lot that feels very medical!
It was well organized and interesting
A lot of it is clinically relevant
The immune system is so fascinating!
The quizzes are really easy. I also liked the TBLs, although I know they were controversial.
chill. good teachers.
Dr. Heeger is a very nice man and a good lecturer. I also liked the Small Group Discussions--they were a low stress way to really hammer the material home via providing a clinical context.
Really interesting material! Make sure you skim the "How the Immune System Works" book for an overview.
Great animations in the slides. The way our immune system works is really interesting to learn about

**What was difficult about this course?**
It's a hard topic.
Immuno is complicated - lots of material detail and concepts to keep up with
They zoom in to the small things without really explaining the big concepts.
Did not have a strong background in immunology before starting med school
The way it was taught was sometimes not easy to understand.
This was the first course that wasn't difficult for me!
It's sort of disorganized and not that well taught.
It was relatively fast-paced.
A little poorly organized
doing it at the same time as path- figuring out which course to study when
Any other advice?

Get Rapid Review.

Reading the overview textbook chapters can be helpful to get the big picture before the class starts.

Get a copy of How the Immune System Works, and read the chapter that corresponds with each lecture topic either before lecture or soon after. It breaks things down in very straightforward terms. The lecture slides seemed to be random screenshots of figures/images from different textbooks so HISW really ties it all together.

First aid condenses this material really well

Read ahead in "How the Immune System Works" to give you a good basis for each lecture

Get "How The Immune System Works" by Sompayrac! It's not comprehensive, but it's readable and actually makes sense of immunology.

Read this before or at start of class for great foundation: How The Immune System Works

Immuno is really easy, but the concepts come back to haunt you at the beginning of micro. I never really found a great study resource in immuno--the lecture slides are only okay. How the Immune System Works can be a helpful resource for sure.

Stay on top of it!

From the class of 2020:

Just make sure you actually understand stuff; it's the first class where memorization might kind of mislead you.

Class was very helpful -- all the information was in the slides, but the profs also elaborated. I never used the textbooks.

If you don't find immuno interesting, going to class will not help. Watch it on echo, use the syllabi, and start making flashcards.
PATHOLOGY:

Resource Reviews: (25 respondents)

Attending Lecture:

🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.8 stars

Watching Echo lecture recordings:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 4.0 stars

TA Review Sessions:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.4 stars

TA Review slides:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.1 stars

Small Group Cases:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.0 stars

Labs:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.9 stars

Anki:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.1 stars

Student Files:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.1 stars

Textbook:

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 1.3 stars

What did you like about this course?

Dr. P, lab, easier material
POLYD <3!!!!!!

Material gets reinforced easily through lab
So organized, clinical, surprisingly interesting, and Poly D is cute
PolyD is amazing
Dr. PolyD

Very straightforward

I thought the path labs (gross specimen examinations) were really relevant to the course and cool to check out, but not helpful for exam review or anything.

It was very well organized. Dr. Polydorides' final review was really helpful!

PolyD is awesome and the material is straightforward and clinically relevant

The lab is so helpful, the lecture slides are beautiful and extremely easy to study from, the quizzes are challenging but fair and make you feel like you're really starting to think about medical problems. Dr. Polydorides is fantastic.

the labs honestly. learned everything there.

Dr. Polydorides is great. I loved the slides and the organization of the course--everything was very clear and the course was dividing into sections that made sense. I also enjoyed the gross aspect of lab. Seeing all the diseased organs made what we were learning very real.

Really well organized lectures. The final review lecture is key-- hits all the high yield points.

I really enjoyed pathology lab. Having the specimens explained by experts was very fun.

Very well organized, review slides were perfect for the exam

material was interesting (clinical) and fairly straightforward. Professor was great

**What was difficult about this course?**

Too many mandatory things concurrently with immunology

Lectures are long with a loot of material

Amount of material

Memorization heavy.

This was the easiest course of first year

Nothing--this course is amazing.

combining it with immunology

SO many dull, boring charts to memorize. Just didn't find most lectures interesting
Not as much system-specific pathophysiology as you'd see in second year, so it was tough to really get a good understanding of some of the concepts we were learning doing it at same time as Immuno

**Any other advice?**

If you go to Poly D's final review lecture before the test and absorb you will probably be fine

Just anki the pictures of the slides in Dr. P's lectures, that's all you need!

Memorize the slides - it’s very straightforward

Make an Anki deck where front of card is an *unlabeled* histological image from lecture slide, and back of card is name of tissue/quick fact about it.

He gives a review PPT at the end of the class with enough information to pass the class - use this time to decompress

Study Dr. P’s slides!

This is one of the easiest and most interesting classes of first year--enjoy it. Everything you need to know is in the lectures, especially the tables. Go to Dr. Polydorides' final review--he'll tell you everything you need to know.

GO TO THE REVIEW SESSION RIGHT BEFORE THE TEST! he basically gives all of the answers

**From the class of 2020:**

Just paying attention in class, reviewing powerpoints, and paying attention in lab should be sufficient for this class. It's well organized and they emphasize well what's important / what will come up on tests.

Labs were great for going over lecture material. Use them as a review.
PHYSIOLOGY:

Resource Reviews: (28 respondents)

Attending Lecture:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.4 stars

Watching Echo lecture recordings:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 4.5 stars

TA Review Sessions:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.7 stars

TA Review Slides:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.6 stars

Small Group Cases:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.4 stars

Labs:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.6 stars

SIM Sessions:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.9 stars

Anki:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.0 stars

Student Files:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.3 stars

Costanzo Textbook:
🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.0 stars

BRS Textbook:
1.7 stars

**What did you like about this course?**

Everything but renal

Dr. Leisman

Stacey is a rockstar

Lecturers are great - Dr Leisman is amazing

Dr. Leisman is a goddess. Her lectures are so organized, she is so helpful, and she will tell you everything you need to know. I know she's intimidating at times, but she is REALLY friendly and always willing to help!

Very clinically relevant material

First time you start learning about the body

Dr. Leisman was amazing

It’s clinically relevant!

All the words we had learned finally fit together into a coherent process!

It felt very medical! I felt like a doctor!

Dr. Leisman

Felt like we were really learning medicine!

Dr. Leisman is fantastic, it's very well taught overall. And it's really interesting--MCG and Structures really come together.

labs, the teachers

Dr. Leisman is super cool.

The course director is an incredible educator! It was fascinating to learn more about organ function.

I prefer conceptually challenging material to rote memorization. Dr. Leisman (the course director) is also THE BEST.

LOVED Dr. Leisman, clinical applicability was very clear

stacey is amazing, reviews were helpful, quizzes were good practice questions

**What was difficult about this course?**
The material really requires a lot of thinking and is constantly building on itself. If you don't understand the fundamentals of the organ system, it's really hard to fake it. Memorizing doesn't work well.

Renal

Lots of processes to know
Lots of material
Some difficult concepts
A lot of conceptual stuff (which I like more than memorization) and more math than I’d seen in a while.

The information is more conceptually complex and not just memorization

Very conceptual for the first time in first year- can't just memorize the material.

The concepts are hard.

detail.

Massive amount of material, varying lecturer clarity

There is less rote memorization and more conceptually challenging material you have to understand

Lots of information

lots of material

Any other advice?

Really spend the time to understand what is going on instead of trying to brute memorize

Work to actually understand the concepts and you’ll be fine

Use YouTube videos!

Study slides

Don't let yourself get behind in this class! It can get away from you very quickly.

Don't go to the LGDs unless you're entirely caught up on material--otherwise they'll just freak you out. Physio is great, really interesting but definitely challenging. It's really conceptual. Writing/drawing things out was helpful for me, but this is not a memorization course, so keep that in mind when thinking about study techniques.

From the Class of 2020:
It involved much more critical thinking and wasn't straight memorization. It was also incredibly well organized, and actually offered an abundance of practice problems which is massively helpful.

Going to class/TA review/anki was all I needed to pass. I will say the Constanzo book was quite helpful! It is also free from the library!

The syllabi were great, and whenever Dr. Leisman sends out a resource, at least give it a look. It helps to see that stuff in multiple ways.

This is a conceptually difficult course so I found that using multiple learning methods was most effective: reading in textbook, drawing out graphs (esp for cardiology), and listening to explanations in lecture and lab.

The sample problems that were provided for independent study as well as the large group problem discussions were insanely helpful. If every class had those opportunities I would be a very happy camper.

**MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY: Resource Reviews: (25 respondents)**

**Attending Lecture:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 2.4 stars

**Watching Echo Lecture Recordings:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.3 stars

**Sketchy Micro:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 5.0 stars

**Sketchy Pharm:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 3.0 stars

**TA Review Sessions:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 1.9 stars

**TA Review Slides:**

🌟🌟🌟🌟 4.2 stars

**Small Group Cases:**
3.1 stars

Lab manual:

2.6 stars

Anki:

4.2 stars

Student Files:

2.1 stars

Textbook:

1.3 stars

What did you like about this course?

SKETCHY AND CLINICAL RELEVANCY!

Sketchy

Good pace

It wasn't that hard and sketchy is amazing

SKETCHY IS LIFE.

clinically relevant material

Super clinically relevant stuff.

Was really interesting, and I liked that the questions were presented as cases

It’s very clinically relevant - learn it well!

It felt very clinically relevant.

You really feel like you're starting to get some core medical education--learning diagnoses and treatments feels like actual medicine rather than basic sciences.
That it was totally taught through a clinical perspective. You get to learn about not only the microbes, but distributions and how to treat the symptoms. By the end, you feel almost like a doctor.

Sketchy! Also it's the first really medical class, so the material is much more interesting.

You actually feel like a doctor who can diagnose illnesses! The exams were fun, a little like mystery solving.

Super straightforward, lectures weren't usually necessary clinically interesting

**What was difficult about this course?**

Sometimes unclear what was important from lecture

Memorization required

Volume and amount of memorization

Lots of memorization.

EVERYTHING LOOKS THE SAME

A lot of memorization

It’s literally just memorization

There is a lot of overlap between Micro, which is hard to keep straight.

SO much content!

It's a lot of material

lollllll the amount of shit you have to memorize at the end of the year

High volume of mostly memorized information.

Lots and lots of bugs to memorize and a lot of them present in similar ways. Make sure you focus on the few distinguishing features to each to differentiate them.

Not using Sketchy or Anki sooner

moves quickly, hard to know what's important to know at first

**Any other advice?**
Most time efficient= sketchy/pepper deck + TA reviews. Don't bother with the lectures, they are super bloated and disorganized. The exception is the case studies. Review them before the exams

Sketchy microbiology is enough to get you like a 70%. You need to go over class slides to score higher, but if you really just want to pass, you can rely on sketchy.

WATCH SKETCHY!

Sketchy!

Download the Pepper Deck (freely available on internet). It’s an Anki deck that some random medical student made and it’s based off of the Sketchy videos. Watch the sketchy videos as you learn the bugs in lecture, then study the corresponding Anki cards from the Pepper deck. Separately, make another Anki deck of random facts, key points, and clinical notes from lecture slides that weren’t covered in Sketchy (to avoid duplicate effort). Study these 2 decks daily and you won’t even need to review lectures before exams.

Sketchy + pepper anki deck (you can download it online) with a skim through the PPTs will get you through this class

Sketchy was critical for this course. Get started watching and knowing the videos early. This might be controversial advice, but it was the first course I bought First Aid for - the microbiology section in First Aid is amazing! Also, learning the drugs from First Aid was easier for me than learning it from Sketchy Pharm.

USE SKETCHY

This was the first class I used Anki for and it was so helpful to reinforce Sketchy!

Sketchy sketchy sketchy sketchy -- it's so refreshing to have a new study resource by the last course of the year. It definitely doesn't work for everyone, but I think it's at least worth trying it, just to make studying a little more interesting and somewhat fun. I found Sketchy more helpful than lecture, so I stopped going to lecture. The exams are also really fair, which is nice--no curveballs.

I thought investing time in sketchy was worth it for bacteria, parasites and fungi, not as much for viruses. Also, use the TA review slides!!! They're so helpful!!! Student files also has good charts that I would check out before you start making your own

look at the TA slides, watch sketchy as much as possible, lectures are sort of a waste of time

From the Class of 2020:

I am probably the only one that did not use sketchy. I felt like it was not great for doing well in the class/my brain doesn't need random associations

SKETCHY ISN'T FOR EVERYONE!
I actually only used sketchy for the first half of class. It helps, but my brain can only retain so many cartoons. You can DEFINITELY pass by just using the TA slides. Not kidding. I literally only looked at those for the viruses/fungi/etc.

TA reviews are amazing. Sketchy is amazing. Advice here: keep up with the class, it piles up so can seem overwhelming but it all comes together as you learn more. And use the TAs + their slides because they have great tips on how to study / how to synthesize the information.

Microbio was really tough for me. In class and the slides, the information felt very disjointed, but the TA reviews were outstanding because they consolidated the important information and pointed out the big similarities and differences between pathogens. Sketchy + Anki + TA reviews were my study schedule the entire course and I did okay.

Much harder class than i bargained for

Where do you study best?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Library”</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My room”</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Small group rooms”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“NYU Bobst Library”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cafes/coffee shops”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“5th floor study lounge”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Levinson Student Lounge”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Aron Hall with friends!”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL responses: 25

PLACES TO STUDY

LEVY LIBRARY
The Levy Library, entrance on the 11th floor of Annenberg, is a two-story library that boasts panoramic views of New York City, including Central Park. There are large tables, individual cubicles, and group study rooms. The library also offers an extensive array of public computers and printers for your use. Sometimes, you may stumble upon a sleeping student, resident, or even attending in one of the lounge chairs!

ANNENBERG 12TH FLOOR SMALL-GROUP ROOMS
Many first-year small-group sessions take place in these rooms, but when they are not in use, students often use them for studying. The large whiteboards can be great for writing or drawing structures, charts, pathways, and more! First-years also have lockers in these rooms, so it can be especially convenient if you want to leave your stuff there while getting food in the middle of a long study session.
ANNENBERG ATRIUM
In the atrium of the main hospital entrance, there are many tables and chairs around the Starbucks cafe. Although it can get pretty crowded and busy from 9-5, this area is basically deserted after hours and can provide a great alternative study location.

NYU LIBRARY (BOBST)
Located on the south side of Washington Square Park in the heart of the NYU campus, Bobst Library has numerous private rooms, cubbies, and great views of the park. A favorite study location is the 8th floor, as the north side provides a view of the arch and all of uptown. The food nearby is unbeatable, from Five Guys to Mamoun’s falafel and Chipotle. One caveat is that this area does get a bit crowded during NYU’s finals period.

CENTRAL PARK
In the spring, summer, and fall, Central Park becomes one of the most popular studying locations for Icahn students. Several entrances to the park are located only a few steps from the hospital’s 5th avenue exit. Grab a blanket and get some sun, or stay cool while relaxing on a bench in the shade. If you sit close enough to the hospital, you can still access the school’s wireless network.

STARBUCKS (96th and Madison)
For those who want to get out of the ISMMS campus but still stay close to home, the Starbucks down the street is a perfect option. There is free wireless, and you’ll have easy access to an espresso if you’re feeling drowsy. Unfortunately, there is also limited seating space.

LE PAIN QUOTIDIEN (97th and Madison / 88th and Lexington / 84th and Madison)
There are many branches of this chain restaurant across NYC. Although the food is a bit on the pricier side, it has extensive table space and can be a great option for when you want to grab a latte and camp out for a bit. Again, just watch out because it can get pretty crowded around meal times.

CAFÉ JAX (84th and 2nd)
It may be a little more of a hike than many of the spots on this list, but many Sinai students swear it is worth it. There is a basement study-room filled with comfortable chairs, work tables, and all sorts of strange furniture. Almost everyone there uses the room as a place to study, so it is usually much more quiet than a typical coffee shop would be, making it ideal for med school studying. There is usually room to study during the week, but you have to show up pretty early to stake out a place to work on the weekends.

YURA ON MADISON (92nd and Madison)
This place has the best food and desserts! The tables are small but well-lit, and it is definitely worth trying out. However, it gets really crowded during lunchtime or right when school gets out.

DA CAPO (97th and Madison)
This authentic Italian cafe looks small from the front, but it has a big room with tables in the back. It is usually relatively quiet, so it is a great place to study close to campus. Also, they serve wonderful espresso and the famous Dough Donuts.
GOOD LUCK & ENJOY THE JOURNEY!

:)

"What's the craziest thing you've done for money?"
Me: