



Academic Term: Spring 2026

Course Syllabus

Course Title: PTA Clinical I

Course Dept. and Number: PTA 163

Credit Hours: 1

Length of Course: 8 Week

Didactic/Lab/Clinical (or Practicum) hours per Semester: 1/ 0/ 45

Time and Day of Class: Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Clinical course orientation occurs first session.

Format of Delivery: Face-to-Face

Instructor: Justing Helbing, PTA, MA
Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE)

E-mail: justin.helbing@mchs.edu

Phone # (Optional): (515) 643-6773; Microsoft Team phone number (515) 257-6243

Office location (as applicable): Building One, Room 303

Office hours: M-Th 8:00-9:00a.m., Tues. and Thurs. 12-1:00p.m., and by appointment

Expected response time: Faculty will respond to emails/phone messages within two business days. Grading of exams and assignments will be completed 1 week from the submission date. Canvas gradebook will be updated continually.

Course Description:

This course provides students with the opportunity to interact with physical therapy staff and other health care practitioners in a clinical setting and to continue practicing skills. Students will correlate theory to clinical practice and perform physical therapy data collection techniques and interventions under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist and/or physical therapist assistant. This experience provides an introduction to progression and monitoring of a care plan in the clinical environment. Students will incorporate the core values of Mercy College into their interactions with patients, families, and the healthcare team.

Prerequisites:

PTA 101, PTA 130, PTA 135, PTA 137

Corequisites:

PTA 160, PTA 162

Note: Students must pass competencies in PTA 160 and PTA 162 before performing them in the clinic.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the student will:

1. Review health records prior to carrying out the plan of care.
2. Accurately document clinical encounters.
3. Perform bed mobility and transfers in a safe manner.
4. Perform gait training activities on level surfaces and stairs in a safe manner.
5. Analyze gait patterns on level surfaces and stairs.
6. Perform range of motion exercise appropriate for a given patient based on the plan of care.
7. Perform goniometric measurements within 5 degree accuracy.
8. Accurately measure blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and perceived exertion at rest and during activity.
9. Apply physical agents as outlined in the established plan of care.
10. Describe skin characteristics following application of a physical therapy modality.
11. Perform manual muscle testing with 100% accuracy.
12. Demonstrate standard precautions.
13. Utilize safe body mechanics during all aspects of physical therapy practice.
14. Display effective communication with patients, physical therapy personnel, and other healthcare professionals.
15. Effectively seek clarification from the supervising physical therapist when indicated.
16. Effectively report changes in patient status to supervising physical therapist.
17. Explain the role of the PTA to patient/caregiver using appropriate level of language.
18. Identify specific and appropriate goals for the clinical education experience.
19. Display professional behaviors as outlined in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA, the Generic Abilities, and Mercy College's core values.
20. Accept responsibility for one's own learning.
21. Value constructive feedback from faculty and peers.
22. Display time management and resource utilization strategies to enhance learning

Required Textbooks and other required material:

PTA Program Student Handbook
Clinical Site Contact Information form
Clinical Education Weekly Logs/Reflection
Copies of evaluation forms
Curriculum textbooks and notes

Suggested Readings: See course schedule.

Evaluation Methods:

This course is graded on a pass/not pass basis. In order to earn a passing grade for this course, the student must:

- 1) submit the Student Information Form with a cover letter to the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE) at the assigned facility and provide copies to the ACCE (Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education) at least one month prior to the start of the clinical experience. One revision is accepted. Multiple revisions may delay the start of the clinical experience.
- 2) submit the Clinical Site Information form to the ACCE by the end of the first on-site clinical day
- 3) submit the Clinical Education Weekly Log/Reflections by the following Monday at noon
- 4) submit the Generic Abilities forms (self-assessment with clinical instructor comments/sign off), PTA Student Assessment of the Clinical Experience form, PTA Student Assessment of the Clinical Instructor form, and a copy of the thank you note to clinical instructor and/or department to the ACCE by Monday, February 19 at noon.
- 5) display no significant safety concerns

6) score, at a minimum, meets expectations for all evaluation criteria performed AND at least 50% of the generic abilities behaviors at developing level.

7) attend the Des Moines Area Interprofessional Education (IPE) Collaborative Student IPE Day – February 27th

If a submission deadline is missed, an additional project is assigned to meet course expectations. The content of the project is at the discretion of the course coordinator.

Evaluation methods are subject to change per the Program Chair. The American with Disabilities Act Accommodations Policy link is found under College-wide Policies.

The following grading scale will be used:

This course is pass/not pass. No letter grades are assigned.

Grades are posted on Canvas to assist students in keeping track of their academic progress. Canvas grade calculations show a student's approximate current status, but this grade may or may not reflect the student's actual overall final grade. This may be due to the weight given to different assignment categories, complex grading formulas, and rounding differences. Final grades are posted in MyMercy. Contact instructor for any additional questions.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory during all clinical education experiences. There are no unexcused absences. In the event you must be absent, please notify the clinical instructor at the designated number and the Program's ACCE by email or calling (515) 643-6773 at least one half (½) hour prior to the start of your shift. Any time not spent providing direct patient care or enhancing learning and skill development must be reported to the ACCE.

Make-Up Policy:

There are no unexcused absences. Excused absences (illness, injury and family emergencies) will be made up at the discretion of the clinical instructor, the site coordinator of clinical education (SCCE) and the ACCE.

Late work Policy:

If a submission deadline is missed, an additional project is assigned to meet course expectations. The content of the project is at the discretion of the course coordinator.

Student Expectations:

Attendance, punctuality, and professional behavior are expected. Refer to the Clinical Education Section of the *PTA Program Student Handbook* and *Class Covenant* for student expectations.

Course Expectations:

The student is expected to have read and understood the information contained in this syllabus and comply with the requirements as set forth herein. The syllabus, however, is not a contract between the department and its students and the information contained in this syllabus is subject to change at any time with notice to the student.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Mercy College of Health Sciences complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. To request accommodations, students with disabilities must register with the Student Success Center (SSC) located in the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center-ACE building. Mercy College faculty are not obligated to

provide accommodations for students with disabilities without proper notification from the SSC and the student. Students may initiate the accommodation process at any time. However, accommodations are not retroactive, and the registration process takes time. Therefore, the SSC recommends that students initiate the process as soon as possible rather than wait for academic responsibilities to become extra stressful and overwhelming. Contact the Dean of Student Affairs, 181 Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center-ACE building, at (515)-643-6659 for more information.

College-wide Policies:

The student is expected to have read and understood the information contained in this syllabus and comply with the requirements as set forth herein. <http://www.mchs.edu/syllabuslinks>

The following policies include:

- Academic Integrity Policy.
- Accessibility Statement.
- Adverse weather.
- Attendance.
- Campus Resources.
- Cell phone policy.
- Grievance & Student Academic Complaint Procedure.
- Incomplete grade.
- Plagiarism.
- Student Code of Conduct Policy.
- Withdrawal from a course.

Class Session Schedule for the Course:

Clinical course orientation: January 9th 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.

Individual schedules are developed in consultation with the clinical instructor. Students are expected to follow schedule of the clinical instructor(s).

Student Interprofessional Education Day: February 27th 12:00-3:30 p.m.

Instructional Procedures: Direct patient interactions and hands-on experiences in the following: standard precautions, documentation, bed mobility/positioning, transfers, gait analysis and training, range of motion, vital signs including pain assessment, goniometry, manual muscle testing, application of physical agents, and patient-related instruction. Interactions with other healthcare professional students.

Faculty Roster:

Various clinical education faculty members