SOCM Electives Notes for Faculty

Please see Student Notes!

For all electives
In advance: faculty members should convey **key information** to departmental electives coordinator (Barry Saunders) & course manager (Kathy Crosier): **student name, phase of training (MD graduation year), general topic of elective, dates of elective, course number of elective.** Before agreeing to supervise an elective, please discuss the proposed elective with Barry, who will convey departmental permission to course schedule administrators. Students bear responsibility for actual registration. Afterward: faculty preceptors should advise Kathy once their **final grades/evaluations** have been filed through One45—and retain their own **archival copies of student projects and syllabus/schedule.** All UNC schools and departments are being asked to ensure quality of independent study coursework.

Intensity and frequency of **faculty mentorship/contact** vary across different electives. Faculty preceptors should anticipate particular need for direct contact with students early in developing project/methods, and late in review of final products. Other meetings can be at discretion of student and preceptor. Faculty may agree to supervise elective work at an “away” location (Charlotte, Asheville, Wilmington, distant clinic, remote village), but it is reasonable to require the student to meet in person at the front end.

**Timing of elective work** can be expanded beyond official registration period on the front end. That is, students are permitted to “bank” advance work accomplished prior to their official elective slot, so long as this is not effort included in other credited or paid work, and preceptor has approved. This longitudinal flexibility may be of special importance to 4-week Individualization Phase electives.

Also, students should consider tuition implications of particular scheduling choices. (E.g. summer elective work could be scheduled officially for the fall after return to campus, or even the following spring.) Generally an elective should be scheduled for the academic period when a student plans to submit final written products. With protracted projects, it is advisable to have a clear mechanism for tallying student effort and ensuring progress toward project consummation. Structure, such as a syllabus, is a necessary antidote to ordinary procrastination and inabilities of students to anticipate changing priorities. If a student discontinues or cancels an elective, please notify electives staff.

**Choosing or declining to precept:**
Faculty members are not required to accommodate all student elective requests. The Department does want to accommodate HSS Scholarly Concentration students where possible. Faculty members should inform elective staff if they decline to precept an elective, so that students can receive help in finding alternative mentorship, and so the department can understand its capacity limits—as well as any challenges that particular students might present. Faculty members should not feel rushed in deciding whether to precept. Inform electives staff if a student presents special logistical constraints. A placeholder course number may be available for students scrambling to register within a deadline but requiring more time to negotiate project/preceptor.

Any/all guidance that faculty members provide in student-preceptor “matchmaking” is appreciated. If faculty members know in advance they will be unavailable for elective precepting for specific periods
(leaves, inpatient attending months), that information can be helpful to electives coordinator/s in directing student inquiries. Conversely, if a faculty member knows s/he will be involved with projects that would welcome student participation, that information is also helpful to elective coordinators.

Faculty members may co-precept an elective with a colleague outside the department, but the preceptor of official record must be a Social Med faculty member, and must take full responsibility for ensuring that quality of student work merits elective credit. Please discuss any co-precepting arrangements with Barry, and provide a copy of the co-preceptor's CV to Kathy for course files.

Grading:
The faculty preceptor will receive an email prompt from One45 to complete an evaluation of the student's work shortly after the close of an elective. (Advise Kathy if no prompt arrives so she can ensure the student was properly registered.) Foundation Phase electives are graded P/F. Application and Individualization Phase electives are graded H/HP/P/F. It is worth discussing criteria for honors for your elective (important for residency-bound students)—perhaps in view of the clinical elective standard of top 20%. Evaluations may include Likert-scaled boilerplate questions. Ignore these questions or mark N/A when they pertain to clinical activities or otherwise do not fit the elective. Narrative comments are the core of elective evaluations. Please include in all evaluations a clear description of the elective topic and the scale/format of the student’s final work products. Preceptors should separate official/“Deans-letter” comments from “formative” comments intended only for the student. UNC shares Deans-letter comments verbatim (unedited) with residency programs. The medical school now requires the course director (Saunders) to sign off on all evaluations.

Individualization Phase (~4th-year) SOCM electives
Students should devote time/effort comparable to that expended by a student doing a four-week clinical elective: 40 hrs/wk = 160 hours. There is no official obstacle to a student's logging some of the 160 hours of work in advance. Preceptors should be prepared to submit grade/evaluation within a couple of weeks of the end of the month of official record.

In any four-week elective, phases of work may feel quite compressed. Preceptors may want to plan for some face-face contact at beginning and end of a project. Other meetings can be at discretion of student and preceptor.

Official schedule of Individualization Phase “blocks” is here. Students begin compiling their Individualization Phase calendars in mid-October of their Application Phase. We will have some MS3 students contacting us each September to begin exploring SOCM electives during their Individualization Phase.

SOCM 403B is an elective option for the Science of Medicine Course taken by all students during Individualization Phase. Like all SOCM electives, 403B requires students to work out a project with a faculty preceptor. Science of Medicine is open to a range of ethics, policy, STS approaches to medical sciences—but some other Social Medicine subdisciplines will not be appropriate for this particular course (e.g. creative writing). Science of Medicine requires students to make a final presentation of bench-to-bedside connections of a bit of bioscience knowledge or technology—a “translational” framework. Most Science of Medicine students are doing clinically-based electives; they present evidence from randomized controlled trials that changes clinical outcomes. This framework need not govern final elective paper for a student doing SOCM 403B, but it does need to structure the 15-min
slide presentation (5-10 slides) that the student gives to peers as a Science of Medicine requirement. SOCM 403B elective preceptors are invited but not required to attend the final presentation.

**SOCM 412** is a clinical ethics elective precepted by Arlene Davis in association with Elizabeth Sonntag (Pulmonary Fellow & former MacLean Center Ethics Fellow). It is available in some Individualization Phase blocks.