**Course Title:** Antepartum Physical Assessment  
**Credits:** 0.50

**Course Description:** This course is designed to prepare the midwife to identify symptoms, and to perform the skills needed to provide a complete physical assessment of women during the antepartum period within the scope of midwifery practice. Presented symptoms are used as a guide to discover the cause, and to discriminate between the normal and pathological. Emphasis is placed on increasing the student’s knowledge of how to perform physical assessment and understand abnormal findings. This course uses current research in midwifery and obstetrics to broaden the student’s understanding of the following NARM skills and MANA core competencies learned under clinical supervision:

**NARM Skills**

**I. Midwifery Counseling, Education and Communication**

(3) I C. Provides education and counseling based on maternal health/reproductive/family history and on-going risk assessment  
(6) I F. Educates the mother concerning the natural physical and emotional processes of pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum  
(7) I G. Applies the principles of informed consent  
(8) I H. Provides individualized care

**II. General Healthcare Skills**

(21) II A. Demonstrates Universal Precautions  
(23) II C. Demonstrates the application of aseptic technique  
II D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:  
(30) II D 7. Doppler and/or Fetoscope  
(40) II D 17. Speculum  
(41) II D 18. Stethoscope  
(43) II D 20. Tape measure  
(63) II M. Uses Doppler

**III. Maternal Health Assessment**

(66) III B. Performs an initial history and physical examination including vital signs  
III C. Knows pelvic exam, including assessing:  
(67) III C 1. The condition of the uterus, ovaries and cervix (by speculum)  
(68) III C 1 a) Performs a Papanicolaou (Pap) test  
(69) III C 1 b) Obtains gynecological cultures  
(70) III C 2. The size of the uterus and fetal age (by bimanual exam), the condition of the vulva, vagina, cervix, perineum and anus  
(71) III D. Estimates due date based upon a variety of methods  
(72) III E. Assesses fetal weight, size, lie, or lightening  
(73) III F. Assesses correlation of weeks gestation to fundal height'  
(74) III G. Performs routine prenatal physical exams  
(75) III H. Evaluates laboratory and medical records from other practitioners  
III K. Provides prenatal education and counseling for:  
(79) III K 2. Common complaints of pregnancy
Learning Activities:

A. Student reads appropriate sections from the Learning Materials/Resources.

B. Student answers the questions listed in the Learning Objectives by researching the Learning Materials/Resources for the course and correctly cites the sources and page numbers for each of their answers.

C. Student presents answers the questions listed in the Learning Objectives for review by preceptor.

D. Student participates in preceptor elaboration/discussion of Learning Objectives.

E. In the case that the required texts are more than 5 years old, the student must research, prepare & present a summary of current best midwifery care/practices appropriate to the topic of the course from a current journal article/study, less than 5 years old.

F. Recommended Role-playing and/or Clinical Interactions

Note: The clinical requirement of NARM /Clinical Skills is completed at any time throughout the ASM apprenticeship during actual clinical practice and is NOT a requirement to complete this academic course.

Activities specific to NARM skills learned in this section:

1. Practice doing several physical exams on other women, including:
   a. Explaining what you are going to do before beginning
   b. Examining the head and neck, including the thyroid
   c. Examining the chest, including listening for heart sounds and listening to the lungs
   d. Doing a breast exam
   e. Doing an abdominal exam, including listening for fetal heart tones, if appropriate, and assessing for fetal position and size
   f. Doing a genital and pelvic exam, including pelvimetry and bimanual exam
   g. Assessing baseline neurological reflexes
   h. Assessing for costovertebral tenderness
   i. Assessing extremities for varicosities or other abnormalities
   j. Practice charting the results of your physical exams

2. Make a drawing or describe the various sizes of the uterus at 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24, 28, and 32 weeks of pregnancy.

3. Practice Leopold’s maneuvers with a doll and blanket, or on a pregnant woman (greater than 28 weeks.)

4. Review laboratory results for a client with your preceptor and role play how you would explain the results to the client.
5. Make flash cards for at least 10 common complaints of pregnancy. On each flashcard, write down the etiology, comfort measures, and differential diagnosis possibilities.

6. Role play a prenatal visit in which a client is concerned about 3 common discomforts.
   Show your preceptor on a model pelvis how you would examine all the diameters of the pelvis for pelvimetry.

**Learning Materials / Resources:**
*Please use textbooks less than 5 years old or most recent edition.*


**Resources for all Courses:**


Midwives Model of Care®: [http://cfmidwifery.org/mmoc/brochures.aspx](http://cfmidwifery.org/mmoc/brochures.aspx)
Students must find 1 article/study less than 5 years old. Recommended internet links as needed for latest developments in midwifery care:
https://www.midwiferycollege.edu/resources-national-college-of-midwi

Evaluation Tools / Methods:
Minimum passing grade for each course is a cumulative 80% / B-. Students and preceptors are encouraged to work together until the student masters the information.

Final grade for the course is based on preceptor evaluation of the following:

A. Learning Objectives count for 50% of the final grade.
The preceptor evaluates each answer based on three elements:

1. Answers should reflect a thorough review of current literature regarding best current practices in midwifery care.
2. Each answer should be formed in the student’s own words or paraphrased from the text. The answer should be minimal, not a re-write of the entire text, but enough to show appropriate comprehension of the learning objective.
3. Student identification of sources and page numbers for each of the Learning Objectives. (Preceptor should do a random check to determine that sources cited are correctly identified.)

B. Enrichment Activities, including research essays and summaries of articles: 20%
C. Discussions: 15%
D. Tests and Exams: 15%

Course credit:
One Academic credit equals approximately 15 hours of formal time plus 30 hours of additional study or homework. Formal time is defined as the amount of time taken to answer the Learning Objectives to the level of 80% and to complete any learning activities to the preceptor’s satisfaction, including any time spent face to face with the preceptor. Informal time includes any time spent actively reading relevant sources and textbook/s, researching Learning Objectives, and studying for examinations.

Learning Objectives:

A. The student must research, prepare & present a summary of an aspect of current best midwifery care/practices appropriate to the topic of the course from a current journal article/study.
A-2: Read "Listening for the placenta" in Anne Frye Holistic Midwifery Volume 1 and write a brief summary of how to locate the placenta using a fetoscope or doppler.

B. Student answers the questions below and cites the sources and page numbers.
1. Discuss the importance of informing a client of what you are going to do before you begin a physical exam.

2. What are reasons that getting a physical exam might make some clients uncomfortable? How can a midwife respect these feelings and still complete her evaluation?

3. What is the difference between a physiological and pathological cause of a symptom?

4. Name some of the causes of weight loss including socioeconomic factors, which could contribute to weight loss.

5. Name some causes of fatigue.

6. Describe the vital signs systems that should be taken during the initial physical assessment of a pregnant woman. Which of these will be repeated at all subsequent visit with a midwife?

7. Name some causes of generalized itching without obvious reason.

8. Many symptoms can have both normal and pathological origins. Please discuss underlying causes for the following symptoms in pregnancy, including both physiologic and pathologic causes.
   
   a. Headaches.
   b. Blurring vision.
   c. Moving specks or strands in the eye.
   d. Epigastric pain
   e. Edema

9. Explain what is examined when examining the head and neck.

10. What should be observed when examining the skin?

11. Explain why a person might have a yellow tint in the eyes.

12. Name some of the causes of enlarged, tender lymph nodes in the neck.

13. Name a cause of enlarged thyroid gland.

14. What symptoms are associated with endocrine dysfunction? Name three common endocrine disorders and their symptoms.

15. Explain what should be checked and inspected for on the back and some of the causes of CVA tenderness.
16. Describe how the cardiovascular system of a pregnant woman is evaluated.

17. Describe 3 irregularities that can be heard when listening to adult heart sounds and what the implications of each might be.

18. Outline the steps for doing a comprehensive breast exam. Include which parts of the breast anatomy are evaluated and what the normal findings should be.
   a. Name some causes of lumps in the breast
   b. Name some causes of nipple discharge.

19. Discuss breast changes that are normal during pregnancy.

20. Explain how the abdomen is evaluated.
   a. Name some causes of abdominal bloating.
   b. What is suggested by right lower quadrant pain

21. Explain what should be checked for in the thorax and lungs.
   a. Name some causes of chest pain.
   b. Name 2 findings of a lung exam that are abnormal for a healthy pregnant woman and their underlying causes.

22. Discuss the scale upon which reflexes are graded. What are the implications of the various scores?

23. Name 2 causes each of the following symptoms:
   a. Internal burning while urinating
   b. Hematuria.
   c. Incontinence

24. Name some causes of amenorrhea and three methods of diagnosing whether amenorrhea is due to pregnancy.

25. Discuss what features are examined during a bimanual pelvic exam.

26. What are normal changes that can occur in the cervix during pregnancy?

27. What characteristics can be observed better with a speculum exam than a bimanual exam alone?

28. Why is it important to perform a pap test during pregnancy? Describe changes in the vaginal mucus that are normal during pregnancy and changes that are abnormal.

29. Discuss how to do a rectal exam.
30. Discuss pelvimetry:
   a. Reasons for performing it
   b. What is meant by the false and true pelvises
   c. What are the anatomical landmarks involved
   d. How are pelvic measurements taken?
   e. Four pelvic types

31. Discuss the proper use of universal precautions during any pelvic exam.

32. Discuss how to palpate for the fundus in early pregnancy. What are some pathological causes of uterine growth?

33. Discuss palpation of the fetus:
   a. When can palpation of the fetus begin?
   b. What fetal parts are felt for during palpation?
   c. How is the position of the baby determined based on the location of fetal parts?
   d. How is flexion assessed?
   e. What are barriers to easy palpation?
   f. How is palpation an important tool in assessing fetal age? Size?