Course Title: Postpartum Physical Assessment
Credits: 0.5

Course Description:
This course is designed for students to gain a thorough understanding of the physiological and anatomical changes of the postnatal period. The student will learn how to conduct a physical examination during the early postpartum period and evaluate the normal changes that occur through six weeks postpartum. The students will gain an understanding of how to assess the breasts postpartum and how this relates to critical breastfeeding support for mothers. 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
(9)I I. Advocates for the mother during pregnancy, birth and postpartum
(20)I J 11. Postpartum care concerning complications and self-care

II. General Healthcare Skills
II D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:
(26)II D 3. Blood pressure cuff
(41)II D 18. Stethoscope

V. Postpartum
(131)V A. Performs postpartum reevaluation of mother and baby at appropriate intervals
(136)V F. Performs thorough and appropriate maternal four- to six-week postpartum check-up

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 a topic covered in this 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/role play with your instructor or another student how you would perform a complete postpartum evaluation of a mother immediately postpartum, one day postpartum, three days postpartum, and six weeks postpartum.

2. Practice/role play with your instructor how you would perform a postpartum breast exam.

3. Practice/role play your instructor or another student how you would perform an exam for diastasis recti.

4. Practice/role play with your instructor or another student how you would evaluate a mother for postpartum blues.

5. Make a list of normal parameters for blood pressure, pulse, temperature and respirations and uterine involution for the mother in the postpartum period.

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


8. MEAC Abbreviated NARM Skills Form:  

9. MEAC Essential Competencies:  

10. Midwives Model of Care®:  
http://cfmidwifery.org/mmoc/brochures.aspx

11. 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-midwifery

**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 a topic from this course from a current journal article/study.

B. Student answers the questions below and cites the sources and page numbers.

1. Discuss the intervals at which a mother should be physically evaluated during the immediate postpartum period.

2. Involution is the same in a woman who has delivered vaginally, by cesarean section, or had a SAB/TAB. Describe uterine involution. Include a general timeline for the events involved.

3. Describe how the uterus is assessed postpartum and the significance of the findings. Give not only immediate postpartum changes, but those expected in the first two weeks as well. What are the signs and symptoms of sub-involution.

4. Describe the amounts and colors of lochia and the names given to each type.

5. How is the lochia evaluated postpartum and what is the rationale?

6. Describe the expected course of healing of the vagina and perineum from the time of birth to 6 weeks postpartum. How is this evaluated?

7. Describe the physiological mechanisms of breast-feeding.

8. Discuss how breast-feeding is evaluated during routine postpartum care.

9. Discuss how the breasts are evaluated during early lactation.

10. Describe how to tell if colostrum is being produced.

11. What breast changes are normal during the first 6 weeks postpartum?

12. Explain why blood pressure should be evaluated postpartum.

13. What are the appropriate intervals for checking blood pressure postpartum?

14. Cite normal temperature postpartum and how it is evaluated. What is the timing for temperature evaluation?

15. What differences in temperature are expected between the first 24 hours and succeeding days and why?

16. How and when is pulse assessed postpartum, and what are the parameters of normal?
17. What factors, both pathologic and physiologic, affect pulse rate postpartum?

18. Discuss the normal condition of the bladder postpartum and how this can be evaluated.

19. Discuss the changes in renal function and urine output that occur in the postpartum period and why these changes occur.

20. Discuss the average weight loss following delivery. Why does this occur? How and when is this evaluated and why?

21. Describe what the woman's appetite will be like just after birth and why.

22. What bowel gastrointestinal changes often occur in the first days postpartum and why?

23. Discuss how to assess hemorrhoids postpartum. What factors can lead to their development in the postpartum period?

24. Discuss diastasis recti and how it is assessed.

25. Discuss the levels of severity that may occur with diastasis recti and what the ramifications of each are for maternal well-being postpartum.

26. Discuss the hematological changes that occur postpartum. What are the factors that affect these changes?

27. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is assessed for leukocytes. What are the parameters of normal and how is puerperal infection ruled out?

28. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is evaluated for anemia. How is anemia ruled out and what are the implications if she is anemic?

29. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is evaluated for postpartum blues. What are the psychological and physiologic bases for this?

30. Discuss how a grieving postpartum mother is evaluated. What stages is she expected to go through and what is the expected timing of these?

31. What differences in grieving are expected between the death of a child and the birth of an impaired child? How are these addressed?