

# HANDBOOK OF SAGE ADVICE FOR MSQ'S.

OFFICIAL MSQ BOOK OF SAGE-ICITY  
BESTOWED BY YOUR COLLEAGUES  
WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE.



## Official MS2 book of Sage-icity bestowed by your colleagues who have gone before

### Requisite inspirational quote:

“In the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was within me an invincible summer”  
–Albert Camus (carefully transcribed from MS3 antebrachial tattoo)

**\*\*Disclaimer\*\* We have included all opinions from our class, some of which are contradictory. Please choose whatever advice suits your fancy!**

### Circulation

#### General

- Take it seriously because it's relevant in the clinical world
- Bounce physiology understanding off each other...it's more process than memorization, and it helps to talk it out.
- Read the little books over and over, the course takes looking all the information over and over until it sinks in (and I don't think it all sank in for me....)
- Keep on top of things. It's easy to get behind.
- This course is hard, don't get discouraged. Try to gain understanding of the concepts and information presented. Second year material in particular will be tested again on the boards
- Pay attention! This is the course where you'll learn the majority of internal medicine
- Study hard, try and get things conceptually as well as just memorizing (though memorizing will allow you to do very well most likely)
- Read the books! Lilly is excellent as well as the renal path book.
- It's hard. Focus on concepts because they are critical now and in the future, even if the exams focus on minutia.
- It's a slog with tests every two weeks. Make sure you take advantage of your off-weekends and do something fun!
- This course was the hardest I thought all year.
- Have fun. This was a great course!

#### Syllabus

- great syllabus, use it
- Stick with the study guide
- Use the syllabus
- read the notes and use Robbins and Goljan as much as possible

#### Lectures

- Don't skip class. It's easier getting info for the test during lecture.
- Go to lecture and study the slides
- Study lectures
- Attend all the lectures.
- do the extra work for this course in particular; time better spent with reading than at non-pathology lectures
- Prioritize ppt slides, in-lecture presentations.

#### Exams

- Treat all material equally. The mundane and minutiae are tested as much as the core, important concepts.

- Focus on mastering lectures and practice problems to do well on the test. There are a lot of details, but to help keep the picture straight using a board review book such as BRS physiology and pathology was helpful
- It's very detail oriented. think csf and memorize the little stuff
- Know every detail if you want Honors, if you just want to pass, pay attention to the big picture.

#### Using First Aid

- Work hard from the beginning and do well in the first few exams, this class is tougher and racking up points in the beginning will help. Also, buy First Aid and start reading those sections or jot down brief notes ONLY to become familiar with the book, NOT to study for actual boards material.
- study syllabus hard, supplement with first aid, use other books for reference
- Buy First Aid for Step 1 early and use it through the year.
- Study first aid sections along with the course to maintain an appropriate big picture focus for the future
- Read First Aid while you're taking your classes.

<b>Circulation Books</b>		
Bought none/recommend none	40.00% of total respondents	19.05% of total respondents
	%of respondents who bought books, that bought this book	%of respondents who recommend books, that recommend this book
Lilly, Pathophysiology of Heart Disease (4th Ed.)	50.00	32.35
Principles of Pulmonary Medicine (Weinberger, 5th Ed.)	37.50	20.59
Robbins & Coltran Pathologic Basis Of Disease, (Kumar, 7th Ed)	25.00	23.53
Renal Pathophysiology (Rennke & Denker, 2nd Ed.)	45.83	20.59
Basic and Clinical Pharmacology, (Katzung, 10th Ed)	12.50	2.94
Respiratory Physiology (West, 8th Ed.)	29.17	29.41
renal phz/vander	8.33	11.76
BRS Phys	4.17	8.82
BRS Path	4.17	8.82
First Aid	8.33	11.76
other	4.17	20.59
Dubin's EKG	4.17	2.94
Other Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Board Review books</li> <li>•hand me downs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Harrison's</li> <li>•board review books</li> <li>•study guide, WebPath</li> <li>•Lange CV Phys</li> </ul>

## Metabolism

### General

- Use online texts when available (like Greenspan's)
- This is the part of med school where you are supposed to get a good basis in diabetes. It is easy to be fatigued at this point in the year but make sure to try to nail this subject since it's such a common disease that you will have to be able to know the ins and outs of for boards and clinical mgmt.
- The course pack was really bad. The tests are harder than they may seem, don't blow off the class
- like everything else, review information over and over until it sinks in
- Give lactulose for hepatic encephalopathy
- Seems easy, but stay on top of the material. Course leadership is very disconnected.
- This is a fun course, enjoy it!

### Syllabus

- Attend and be interactive during small groups, the yield depends on the group leader but they can be an effective way of studying if you are engaged. Focus on the syllabus and be prepared for having unbalanced distribution of material from lecture to lecture (aka some lectures will hold you responsible for *waaaay* more material than they could cover in 1 hr, but it is all covered in the syllabus)
- Use syllabus
- study syllabus
- The syllabus is all you need for the course.
- read the syllabus
- This course has the largest syllabus of any of our courses. Just stick to the syllabus and not any outside books and you should be fine.

### Lectures

- Definitely don't skip class. You can get Honors just by the syllabus and lecture.
- Go to lecture and study the slides
- consider skipping lecture and doing readings from library
- Attend all the lectures.
- Prioritize ppt slides and in-lecture presentations.
- Read the lecture notes and study Robbins and Goljan for reference

### Exams

- Emphasizes small details more so than circulation.
- Like other courses the syllabus is your best friend in this course, but you will probably also need to bond with Robbins for a while as well. Know your insulins. Some of the professors really like to talk a lot about studies, and they occasionally write test questions about them too.
- Just memorize
- Study hard, Honors is harder than it looks.
- The tests in this class were a lot easier than Circulation's.
- The GI questions are tough.

### Using First Aid

- Start using First Aid as an additional review source only (not for actual boards studying purposes).
- Find a way to stay organized in Endocrine...not great texts and confusing notes. Use First Aid as a bit of an organizer.
- follow with first aid

<b>Metabolism Books</b>		
Bought none/recommend none	81.58% of total respondents	61.76% of total respondents
	% of respondents who bought books, that bought this book	% of respondents who recommend books, that recommend this book
Robbins & Coltran Pathologic Basis Of Disease, (Kumar, 7th Ed)	57.14	46.15
Greenspan & Gardner, Basic and Clinical Endocrinology, 8th Ed., 2007.	17.65	23.08
Lange GI	9.38	23.08
Other	0.00	61.54
Other Suggestions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First Aid</li> <li>● BRS series</li> <li>● Kaplan's Med Essentials</li> <li>● study guide</li> <li>● Golan: Principles of Pharmacology</li> <li>● readings from library</li> </ul>

## Neuroscience and Behavior

### General

- Tough class. Some areas of the text are quite helpful to read, and others are not. I thought that the board review books were really helpful for finding pertinent important things in this course. MedEssentials and the Hi-yield book (careful, it has some errors) were helpful for me. Another suggestion is to make photocopies of the cartoon blank pages in the Haines atlas and just draw the pathways (DCML, etc) over and over until you get them. Also, GO TO CIMENT'S REVIEW. Make note of which images he shows on the slide and LEARN THEM. This is such a cop-out way of learning, but I think it's one of the only ways any of us passed the first 10 questions of any exam (if we did...)
- Do NOT get behind! Draw pathways for yourself. Attend the labs with a good group having actually read it ahead of time (nerdy, yes)
- This was the hardest class of the year for me. The neuroanatomy section of the course is similar to GIE.
- Before the class starts, check out an older edition of the neuroscience atlas and the text book from the library. It's not worth buying those because you probably won't use it ever again.
- note cards and go to the anatomy review sessions--they are really helpful
- Email Ciment for clarification of objectives or questions or whatever - very helpful.
- Ciment's lectures can be confusing, especially when discussing nerve pathways. Stick with the neuroanatomy books for this.
- The required texts are necessary for this course. You must read the Purves textbook, and you must study from the Haines atlas, in addition to the syllabus to do well in this course. The material is

covered in about the same depth as you will be tested on in the USMLE step 1--so try to remember it. On the bright side, you get Dr. Ciment

- He sums up his 3 hr lectures during the last hr lab demonstrations
- The labs aren't helpful, but lecture usually is as with all Ciment classes.
- Most people either love it or hate it. Pathways require memorization which isn't a lot of fun for most.
- You can either do really well in this course or really poorly. Make the choice! Labs are not the greatest, time is better spent with your nose in the books. Find a friend to drill the anatomy
- Study
- draw pathways
- Study because this is hard compared to all the other classes, don't let the easy ones this year make you lazy.
- Try to understand the pathways and be able to draw them out.
- Use Netter Neuro flashcards to help with the anatomy, especially the neuro pathways. Draw and re-draw, then draw them again!
- This course is a throwback to anatomy. Whatever study tricks worked for you in anatomy (i.e. colored pencils, drawing out big diagrams, etc.) - bring those back!
- Stay on top of the material, don't despair.
- Very hard course, lots of new vocabulary - keep up!
- There is a correlation with a positive attitude and performing well in the course. The converse is also true.

#### Syllabus

- Use syllabus
- study syllabus, supplement with text, focus on objectives as questions are relatively straight forward
- good syllabus, use it

#### Lectures

- Don't skip class. Follow along with high yield neuro and bring the atlas to class.
- Be able to draw out Ciment's pathways by hand including knowing the locations of the nuclei. Attending lectures is a near must in this class, especially to get a hint of what Ciment will ask and which images to know. Flip through the neuroanatomy atlas last thing before each test, and focus on images you were presented in class.
- Go to lecture and study the slides
- Go to lecture, tempting to learn on your own, but difficult to do.
- Attend all the lectures. Definitely use the neuroanatomy atlas to know where everything is located.
- DON'T SKIP CLASS!!! This is definitely not a class to get behind in...use the study guide to your advantage and make flow sheets if you're a visual person.
- Prioritize ppt slides, in-lecture presentations.
- Read the lecture notes and use Robbins and Goljan for things that aren't clear

#### Exams

- Put the time in to learn pathways early. You need to know them cold for the exams and be able to apply them to clinical/hypothesized scenarios.
- Use the textbook to clarify or review, not necessarily as a primary source of info (often emphasis differs from lecture). MEMORIZE the pathways outlined by Ciment in class- those WILL be on the exam, every little cell body, every neuron's beginning and end-- know it. Cold. Use First Aid to help out, don't minimize disease processes even though they are less prevalent in class. Despite students' complaints, these pathways do actually show up (although not frequently) on the boards as well as on the wards.

- I found it helpful to copy pages from the Netter neuroscience book, and color in the different areas in the cross sections of the brain and brain stem. That way it was easier to recall and identify on the visual identification exam.
- It's like anatomy all over again- Gary Ciment with lots of details. Make sure you know the details of the different hypothalamic/thalamic nuclei- it'll be tested!! Also, use the neuro atlas- its good to keep you oriented to where in the brainstem you are and where things are in relation to one another.
- Stick to the notes and know the images cold.

<b>Neuroscience and Behavior</b>		
Bought none/recommend none	42.31% of total respondents	11.43% of total respondents
	%of respondents who bought books, that bought this book	%of respondents who recommend books, that recommend this book
Neuroanatomy (Haines atlas)	59.46	90.32
Robbins & Coltran Pathologic Basis Of Disease, (Kumar, 7TH ED)	8.11	9.68
Neuroscience (Purves 4th Ed)	45.95	48.39
High Yield Neuroanatomy	5.41	9.68
Other	5.41	12.90
Other Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Embryology from the year before</li> <li>•Clinical Neuroanatomy made Ridiculously Simple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kaplan MedEssentials</li> <li>•First Aid Embryology</li> </ul>

## **Human Growth and Development**

### General

- Suck it up and get through it even when boards stress is high...reproductive stuff IS on the boards, and if you learn it well here, you don't have to re-learn much.
- Believe it or not this stuff is on the boards, so don't blow it off.
- Get plenty of rest and exercise
- Don't neglect the course
- Try and find the good things about the course and just ignore all the random stuff they try and teach you and test you on.
- OK course, potentially really helpful information. Hopefully it will be a lot more condensed for you. Use part of this course to study for boards.
- Grin and bear it.
- Stay focused! Don't totally write this class off to study for the boards. You'll have plenty of time to study for the boards during your three+ weeks after the course is over to study. Plus, if you know the

material in this class, it'll be easy reviewing it during your boards studying. that said, quite a few of the lectures are terrible and not worth your time, so just read about the subject matter elsewhere.

### Syllabus

- Try to find a good source of info in addition to the syllabus.
- The syllabus is all you need for the class and well written in most circumstances.
- Poor syllabus compared to other second year courses but it does the job.
- Use syllabus
- Study syllabus, supplement with first aid & Harrison's
- The syllabus is all you need.
- Read the lecture notes and use Robbins and Goljan for things that aren't clear
- Study from the syllabus. I did not attend lecture as it was the last class before the boards.
- Should be good with the syllabus

### Lectures

- Don't forget your colored pencils on the first days with Copenhaver. Attend Dr. Morgan's lectures, he goes through a lot of material in an hour and it takes way too long to do on your own, plus he's really funny!
- While many of us slacked off and didn't attend lecture, these tests were highly based on random statements made during lecture. Attending lecture will make Honoring much more do-able, although lectures are not necessarily high yield for practical content. Still, there are a variety of important concepts especially with reproductive health and bones that you need to learn for USMLE and later.
- People tend to give up on this class and skip lecture a lot. If you go to lecture, you spend less time studying for the course than kids that skipped lecture, thus making attending worth your time (even if it doesn't inherently fascinate you). Don't dismiss this class also to study for boards. That can hurt you as a lot of this material is actually relevant to the boards and will come up again.
- Go to lecture and study the slides
- Get in a group and split up lecture attendance. Lecture can sometimes be disorganized. If it looks like a lecture is a repeat of something you've had in another class or earlier in this one, it is. Read the syllabus.
- Attend all the lectures. Some were very exciting and may not have pertained to boards, but are questions I studied on later.
- Prioritize ppt slides and in-lecture presentations.

### Exams

- The first quiz is like a test, not a SPH quiz--study really hard for it and memorize the details from the slides as well as the lecture notes as both are tested although the material may not appear in both
- Study for the first quiz. Half our class failed it thinking it would be easier than it was. Get ready for "all of the above", "none of the above", or "a combo of the above".
- This course can be harder than it seems at first--it is about the same level and depth as circulation. Don't underestimate the quiz.
- Everyone is tired at this point in the year. The tests are fairly difficult due to the detail in the questions related to pathology of breast and placenta. Pay extra attention to specifics in Terry Morgan's notes. You will be forced to do horribly designed labs that set you up to know only one case very well. It is to your benefit to go through the other cases as if they are your own, but few people do this. Using online images is helpful for histopathology. The psych section feels like PCM but there will be some doozy test questions, like historical famous psychiatrists.
- This is a difficult course that comes at a difficult time in the year. Since the tests are more difficult than you'd expect, I'd worry less about your grade in this course and focus your attention more on what's really on your minds at that point in the year (boards). This is one of those classes that you can

work your butt off to get a NH or just coast through and get a S. Is that extra GPA point really worth the difference at this point in the year?

<b>Human Growth and Development Books</b>		
Bought none/recommend none	83.78% of total respondents	47.06% of total respondents
	%of respondents who bought books, that bought this book	%of respondents who recommend books, that recommend this book
Robbins & Coltran Pathologic Basis Of Disease, (Kumar, 7th Ed)	66.67	66.67
Basic and Clinical Pharmacology, (Katzung, 10th Ed)	50.00	13.64
The Developing Human (Moore).	66.67	9.68
Other	33.33	19.35
Other Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Goljan High Yield</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●First Aid for Step 1</li> <li>●High yield embryology</li> <li>●syllabus/study guide</li> </ul>

## Blood

### General

- Enjoy how easy and wonderfully put together this course is. It's the best of the year! Don't miss lectures by DeLoughery, he's hilarious.
- Don't worry easy course
- A welcome break after NSB. But don't slack off.
- Cherry pick objectives and read essential hematology for clarification
- Enjoy! This is a fun one. Also VERY helpful come the wards rotations when you're trying to work up anemias and thrombocytopenias. Learn them well for boards and beyond
- Enjoy! Easiest class since GIE!!
- This was my favorite class of 2nd year. This is what I thought med school would be like. Interesting, clinically relevant information and straightforward exams. Dr. DeLoughery rocks.
- Great course. Very high yield for the boards.
- Easy course lots of fun. Great for transition into boards studying, if you get it last. Don't work too hard on it but don't slack off.
- Either go on vacation for this class if you have a life ('cause you can read the notes and pass) or tuck away an easier Honors if you're a gunner.
- Study for the Boards during this course
- Fantastic course. Enjoy it.
- Don't blow it off.

## Syllabus

- Syllabus is great and straightforward. Know it, love it, memorize it and enjoy the course.
- Read the syllabus and you will get Honors.
- The syllabus is excellent, to the point that you don't really need other books. Small groups are super helpful. A lot of students who normally go to class don't find it necessary to go to class, and because the syllabus is so good and small groups are scheduled on their own days, you can get away with this and still do well. Enjoy the vacation.
- Great syllabus for studying
- Great course! Stick to the syllabus.
- The syllabus has pretty much everything you need. Read it and you'll be fine
- You only need the syllabus. Enjoy the break if you can and study up for boards since it's a little easier.
- Study the syllabus and you'll be fine. A very straightforward class and takes less study time than other classes.
- Know the syllabus and take it easy. A course like this only comes by once in every med student's life. Take advantage. Study for boards, go outside, do other things. This course is clinically relevant, well taught, and has the best syllabus of any course of the first two years.
- Read the lecture notes and use Robbins and Goljan for things that aren't clear

## Lectures

- Go to lecture and study the slides
- Great course! Enjoy it! Don't really need to go to class if you read the syllabus. Very straight forward exams.
- DeLoughery's lectures are priceless and educational
- Read the syllabus, go to class. This is a good one, well organized.
- It's a nice break and mostly a cakewalk. Lectures are good for the most part.
- Prioritize ppt slides, in-lecture presentations.

## Exams

- Dr DeLoughery is awesome. Study from the syllabus and the book. This course has a short answer section on every test. When Dr DeLoughery gives you a list of something in lecture, it would behoove you to remember said list. This course has been called easier by some--remember this is relative to things like CSF. You still need to study your butt off.
- This is an "easier" class- take advantage of that but don't blow it off completely, it is a great way to gain a little higher grade and boost that GPA before turning to the wards where every grade is subjective and a mystery. When things are repeated in lecture, small group, etc... they are repeated for a reason. They will be on the exam. Know them. Period.
- Enjoy and study hard for Test 2, it's the only real challenge

<b>Blood Books</b>		
	70.27% of total respondents	54.29% of total respondents
	% of respondents who bought books, that bought this book	% of respondents who recommend books, that recommend this book
Bought none/recommend none		
Essential Hematology (5th Edition, Hoffbrand)	100.00	75.00
Other	9.09	21.74

Other Suggestions

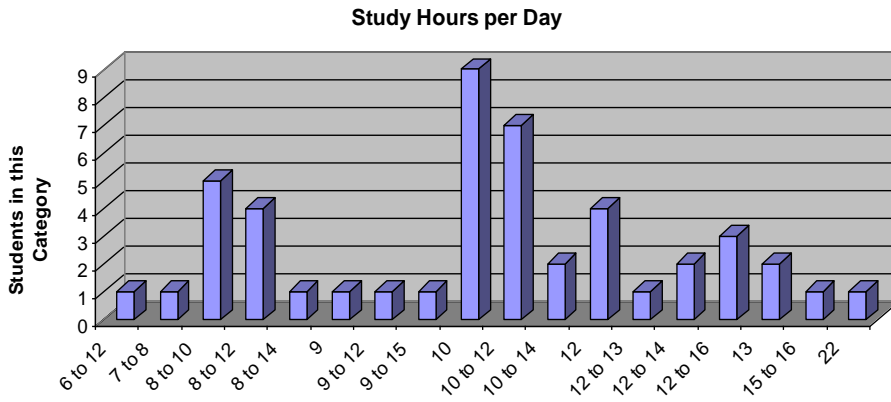
● Immunology

- First Aid for USMLE step 1
- Immunology
- Heme atlas
- study guide

## USMLE Step 1

### Hours per day to study:

- 34% of respondents to the question said that they either studied 10 or 10-12 hours per day, but there was a wide range



### Days per week to study:

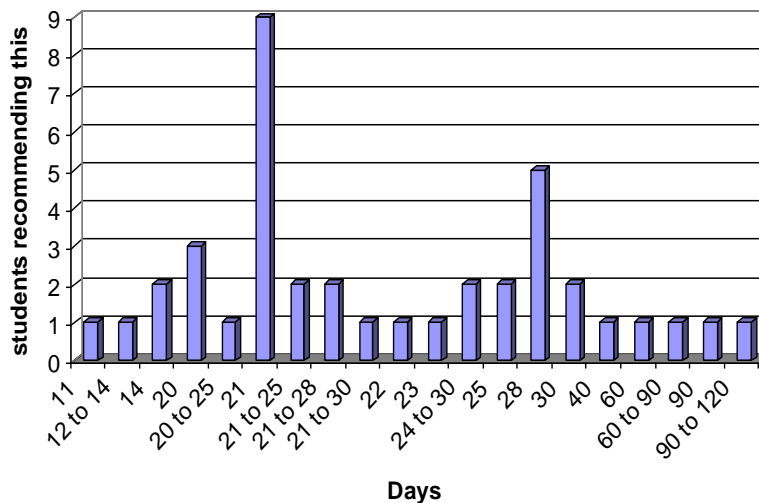
- 33% reported studying 6 days per week
- 13% reported studying 6 to 7 days per week

- 53% reported studying 7 days per week

### Total number of days to study:

- There was a very wide range of opinion of the best number of days, but overall it looks like there is a bimodal distribution. Some seem to prefer studying for lots of time and some people just want it over with.

### Recommended Number of Days to study



### Where to study:

Many people reported

- studying at multiple places. Common locations listed included: the library, the old library, classrooms at school, home, friend's

houses, parent's houses and coffee shops

**Mike Wilson's Lectures:** ([www.michaelwilsonmd.com](http://www.michaelwilsonmd.com))

- 70% reported going to Mikes Lectures, of these 76% report going to a majority of the lectures.
  - One added: F\*\*k yes. All of them. This was the ONLY reason I passed. (Make sure my "f\*\*k yes" doesn't get edited out, I want to show how important this was)
- 30% reported not going to Mikes Lectures

**Review books and Qbanks**

USMLE Step 1 books	Used	Didn't use	Recommend	# of Respondents
First Aid	100.0% (50)	0.0% (0)	78.0% (39)	50
First Aid Question Book	25.0% (11)	75.0% (33)	11.4% (5)	44
Lippincott's Biochemistry	34.8% (16)	67.4% (31)	23.9% (11)	46
Lippincott's Pharmacology	14.3% (6)	85.7% (36)	7.1% (3)	42
Micro Made Ridiculously Simple	73.9% (34)	23.9% (11)	56.5% (26)	46
Lange Micro and Immunology	23.3% (10)	74.4% (32)	16.3% (7)	43
BRS Pathology	56.5% (26)	41.3% (19)	41.3% (19)	46
Goljan Pathology	54.8% (23)	45.2% (19)	47.6% (20)	42
BRS Physiology	65.9% (29)	31.8% (14)	45.5% (20)	44
High Yield Anatomy	21.4% (9)	78.6% (33)	11.9% (5)	42
High Yield Embryology	34.1% (14)	65.9% (27)	26.8% (11)	41
High Yield Neuro-anatomy	40.5% (17)	59.5% (25)	21.4% (9)	42
High Yield Behavioral Science	26.8% (11)	73.2% (30)	22.0% (9)	41
High Yield Histology	4.9% (2)	95.1% (39)	2.4% (1)	41
Kaplan Review Course (Books)	15.4% (6)	84.6% (33)	10.3% (4)	39
Kaplan Q Bank	89.1% (41)	10.9% (5)	65.2% (30)	46
USMLE World	56.1% (23)	43.9% (18)	43.9% (18)	41
Other Q Bank	6.7% (2)	93.3% (28)	3.3% (1)	

**Other resources and comments:**

- I used both USMLE world and Kaplan Qbanks (yes, every question of both). USMLE world is MUCH more similar to the board exam you will actually experience on exam day. Kaplan Qbank is more similar to the past released exams, but the types of questions and level of difficulty (i.e. without all the zebras) is stylistically much more in sync with what the more recent exams are. Also, listening to Goljan lectures is a good way to mix up learning... but

don't stress over going over every little point of the 40 hours he speaks. Listen to it while driving, or working out, or something... but I honestly think I only added maybe 2 questions to my reservoir for test day, so it is not the end-all-be-all of prep material. Additionally, the exam writers know about this lecturer's series... so the hints he points out will rarely come up again as questions.

- Lange series USMLE Roadmap for Biochemistry. Very highly recommended!
- All high yield books were good. I also think that a set of pharmacology flashcards is really helpful.
- Stick with Q Bank + First Aid. Everything else is excessive.
- Goljan's audio lectures - twice
- Audio for Goljan. Listen more than once if you can. Even if you don't think you're paying enough attention, just hearing it will help.
- I did almost all of the Kaplan Q Bank and USMLE world Q Bank. I would recommend this to others, I thought that the styles were different and that I learned a lot from doing both.
- Kaplan's general review book is a good book to look at when you are sick and tired of looking at first aid and need a new perspective on things.
- Golan: Principles of Pharmacology. (this is the book required during our MS1 year, fantastic resource)
- De'ja Review
- Mike Wilson's review material for biochem and micro were incredible. I used that material exclusively and did really well on those sections. DO NOT try to use too many books. You will just get bogged down by the amount of material. Use first aid and I used Kaplan's review book for more detail.
- Michael Wilson's Review  
<http://www.wikitestprep.org/>
- Med Essentials, probably not worth it: decent for studying during second year but too much detail for the cramming before boards.
- Goljan lectures!
- Rapid Review Pathology by Edward Goljan (WAY better than First Aid)  
Pharmacology Review by Katsung and Trevor (not the big honkin' one required for 1st year)  
Robbins Pathology book and the accompanying Review book  
Go to: [www.flashcardexchange.com](http://www.flashcardexchange.com) and do flash cards already made up by medical students
- Kaplan QBook  
Goljan Audio Review
- Robbins pathology question book is by far the best practice questions for pathology over BRS

### **General Advice**

- Do more than what I did. It was not nearly enough to get the scores needed to get in to a competitive residency.
- Don't stress, this test is hardly the end of your life. It really won't matter at the end of your medical school career. Do other things you like to do while studying. Maintaining yourself as a whole individual will open many more doors in the long run than a 240 on Step 1. This only a standardized test - it says nothing about what you are actually capable. There may even be an inverse relationship between how you do on this test compared to how solid of a physician you turn out to be.

- Get through all of Qbank, but don't take the tests TIMED. Use this as a resource for learning, not for evaluating yourself. That way, you don't have to be bummed when you are missing a lot of questions. Read the answer explanation after you answer each question. Then, take the NBME online practice test as a way to evaluate yourself.
- Start earlier than the study period to review things you think you need extra help with. Thumb through clinical microbiology, watch Mike Wilson's lectures online, and listen to Goljan. Do these things before the study period starts if you can.
- Read the correlating sections in 1st Aid and Kaplan MedEssentials as you go through your courses this year.
- Go to the testing center beforehand so you know how to get there.
- Find a study partner. I rarely studied with a partner in med school, and I matched up with someone a week before the study period started. I studied by myself all day and then with another person for 2-3 hours each night, every night. This keeps you sane, gives you an extra boost at the end of the day, gives you something to look forward to (including a quit time), and provides some camaraderie.
- Get a study buddy for motivation and to keep you to your schedule. Seek help quickly if you find your stress level is unmanageable. If something isn't working for you, change and adapt.
- Don't waste your time studying super early. You will not remember anything and you will hurt yourself when you could be learning your class material extremely well. Start out with just Qbank questions (most of which you will get wrong), and do this slowly to get a sense for how exam questions appear, what depth of material they cover, etc. Closer to the exam (i.e. 4-6 weeks) you can pick up the pace, start skimming review books, etc. When you actually start studying, I found it best to just go strong from the beginning, and slow down when needed (this may not work for everyone's style). I took it on the early side, just over 3 weeks, which was more than enough given I was worn out after 2 1/2 weeks. Studying for 6 or 7 weeks hardcore, straight, is unfeasible, so be realistic. Enjoy yourself at the end of the day: watch mindless TV, listen to the radio, talk to a friend/spouse/significant other, anything. I found it extremely difficult to read for pleasure after staring at text all day, so maybe don't count on that. Do as many QBank questions as humanly possible. Towards the end of my study period I did at least 100 questions a day, often more like 150. However, I did not ONLY do questions, it is important to review the material as well via pathophys books, etc, as the questions are never exactly like what you will see on the real deal, they are just meant to test your knowledge, show your weakness, and get an idea of style, ie for clinical scenarios. Spend more time on your weaknesses, but don't ignore your strengths either. Remember to decompress each day and remember the ultimate goal of this exam-- you are becoming licensed!
- Start doing some question bank stuff in early April or so...maybe six hours a week. Then during the focused study period, go through sections of First Aid and then do lots of related questions. I don't think I gained anything after 12 days of studying based on the NBME practice exams and my real score...in fact, I may have lost some in the last week of studying...the ol' mind started to spin it's wheels. I'd take a couple of those practice exams along the way and plan for at least a week or two of break before 3rd year starts since that break is precious now in hindsight.
- Don't listen to other people's advice, just know the material.

- Follow Dr. Keenan's advice, 3wks of focused studying, be dedicated and don't ever think that you will feel like you have a grasp on all the material. Qbank is a real Debby downer, use it more to study than to evaluate your performance.
- Study
- Make a realistic plan (schedule) early, even if you change it later (you probably will) and get your books early. Then allot just a few hours per week to it about 2 months before. Do NOT start hard-core studying until classes are done. TAKE ONE DAY PER WEEK OFF DURING THE STUDY PERIOD!
- Leave the last week of your study period to review. Don't learn any new material during that week. Visit the testing center the 2 weeks before and do 1 or 2 practice exams there. Also, do as many practice questions as you can. Kaplan's Q Bank is not all that different from other Q Banks. Don't fall into Kaplan's loop and think that you will absolutely have to buy their products or you won't pass the exam.
- Use a Mike Wilson strategy of starting to study a couple months before the study period to bring yourself up to speed so that when you get to the study period you have reviewed almost everything and the challenge is memorization and locking in the details
- Try to do all the Kaplan Qbank questions at least once
- If you are happy with your scores on class tests, then study the same way as you do for classes. Same location, same time, same memorization/learning techniques. Don't stress out about what other people are studying, how long they are studying, or what their practice test scores are. Definitely buy USMLE World instead of Kaplan Q Bank, I used both of them and I feel that USMLE World questions were very similar to the real thing, and the Kaplan questions were not very helpful for learning material. The extra diagnostic tests you can buy with USMLE World are also very helpful, my actual score was the average of my diagnostic test scores.
- Not sure since I studied so hard, for a month, did 3000 questions, and still got a disappointing score.
- Do questions - this is primary study source. If possible do both q-bank and World
- Get a study partner - in order to study for that long and stay productive it must be interactive.
- Call Mike Wilson back from Mayo's to do another set of classes
- A frisbee a day keeps the examiners away
- Stick with Q Bank during the study period and during the week before. Use First Aid to review the pertinent materials. That's it!
- Watch Mike's lectures
- Review with someone else. Otherwise, unless you're a raging introvert, you will be more miserable than you need to be during this time. It's also really nice to have someone to bounce ideas off of.
- Start making arrangements with your family and friends to disappear for a month—there enough time to take a break from school, or do any family/friends events. You will need to step up your studying.

Make sure that you block out enough time to study each subject adequately. Given that you are already trying to cram everything for a month, don't make the mistake of neglecting "crammable subjects". Review the section of first aid that correlates what you are going to study each day for about an hour in the morning before you go to your review book. Use your Q-bank (I personally don't think it matters which one you use) to study--take the tests in tutor mode and take notes on both why the correct answer is correct and why the wrong answers are wrong. Use the tests available for purchase from the NBME to gauge your progress--note that the free test (which is the one that you can take at Prometrics for a fee) will often overestimate your score. My study partner and I studied in one of the rooms in the old library. We reviewed first aid from about 8am to 9am, read our review book for the day and took notes on the subject in the corresponding part of first aid, as well as made poster-sized "love sheets" on stuff that we needed to remember and hung them on the wall. We would take about a half hour lunch and kept going until about 5:30 pm. We then went home and did obscene numbers of questions (shot for about 150 per night in tutor mode) on the subject that we had studied that day.

- Pick a couple books and know them well. They all mostly contain the same information. Do lots and lots of questions. I completely finished Kaplan Qbank and did half of USMLE World. I think this was better for finding out what I know and don't know than staring at a book.
- In general, questions - even in tutor mode - are higher yield than other review. Start with questions from Kaplan or USMLE Word in Feb. These are very helpful for integration in class. Use both Kaplan and USMLE World- they are very different question styles, each are appropriate for exam.
- Listen to all Goljan's lectures twice. Get through first round before beginning official study period. Again, these are very helpful for blood course as well.
- Don't start till after class is out, except for listening to Goljan after the new year, and unless Mike comes back to lecture in which case go to those. Don't use too many resources. Do q-bank or something equivalent everyday. Do questions by subject areas and read all the explanations. Do a couple practice tests including a full length, but not at the testing site. Studying in a group worked great for me -- pimping each other was really helpful (as taught by Mike) -- but I realize it doesn't work for most people. Take a break (more than just a weekend) before starting rotations.
- I bought a first aid book before second year and took notes in it from classes. I also put any extra info from BRS path (most is redundant) into the first aid so I could just get almost all the info in one book. I used that plus did a quick review of first year info and used Kaplan Q-bank
- Stick with your own learning style. For most, alternating group and alone time is very effective.
- Do tons of questions, take NBME tests. I would recommend doing 3 of them. They are a good indicator of your progress.
- Don't kill yourself studying too early you will forget everything. Plenty of people studied only for four weeks (no extra pre studying) and got really high scores.
- Making a plan was very important to help direct my studying but, for some reason, very difficult to actually sit down and do. I asked several students in the class ahead for a copy of their study schedule and modeled mine after theirs. Make it a priority to get through all the q-bank questions because they are excellent study guides. I would suggest not using the Q-bank as a way to quiz yourself but instead as a way to study the material in depth.

- You need to make sure you do something active and not study-oriented every day. Go for a run at lunch or in the morning. I definitely recommend planning movie nights to give yourself something to look forward to and to give yourself a study deadline for the day.
- Pick a few good resources and stick with them. Repetition is your friend, not volume of different material. Go through First Aid in its entirety - once the speed of a novel, then in detail using your supporting materials to deepen your knowledge on the topic. Finally, its never too soon to start doing Qbank questions. Honestly, Kaplan and USMLE World help you accomplish the same things - 1) getting used to the format and 2) learning where your weaknesses are.
- I drew out diagrams and wrote all my notes on big sheets of paper by subject. For biochemistry I had all the pathways on one huge paper and all the written information on another huge paper. I used those two big sheets of paper to study all my biochemistry. I knew where the information was so I didn't have to keep flipping through papers and books to find it. All the information was on one sheet. I did this for every subject and it worked great for knowing where I could go to find information if I forgot it. Review the first three hours of each day studying to keep everything fresh and then learn new information the rest of the day.
- Do lots of practice questions. Read and understand the explanations.
- Study with someone if you normally do. Don't change your study habits. Do as many practice questions as you can do.
- Do lots of questions. Then do some more.
- Use the same study techniques that worked during the year. I studied in a group during the year and studied in a group during board prep and it worked well.
- Create a schedule early and stick to it.
- Take practice exam 1 week before (number 4 or 5) this score will correlate very well with your real score. If you don't pass it, reschedule the exam. Period. Do every single Q bank and every USMLE world question you can. Take time off, you will most likely pass anyway so try to have some fun. Take as much time off before 3rd year as you can (10 days is nice) because while it is better than 2nd year your next vacation is far away.
- Start studying before the study period. Maybe just by going through First-Aid. Make sure you get through First-Aid and feel like you have a pretty good handle on it. Obviously, use some form of Q-bank. Make sure that you are comfortable with the time limits of the test. Try to be as calm as possible. Make a schedule and force yourself to stick to it (unless it really deserves to be changed). Absolutely, definitely leave yourself at least 4-5 days of pure review time at the end. You will really regret it if you've skimped on review time. This is why I think that you should start studying earlier, even if you don't feel like your grasp of the knowledge is perfect. You can always pull it together during those review days if you've given yourself enough time.
- Don't stress out! Use your First Aid throughout second year to study for classes and then add notes to it as you go. Once you reach the last month of school before the study period I would start by watching Mike Wilson's reviews and filling out the papers, like 1-2 sessions per weekend. Set a study plan and place. Figure out a mix of study patterns...my group would meet in the morning at the library multi-media room where we watched Mike Wilson together and stopped and started it as we had questions that would take until lunch time. After lunch we would do one or two timed 45 question Qbank on the

subject we just watched. We would then discuss and quiz each other on things we individually got wrong on the Q bank. Then we went home and would eat dinner and spend the rest of the evening focusing on finishing Qbank for that section and re-addressing certain topics we individually were deficient in. Start over the next day. The first week we took one half day to do all Qbank to start preparing for the 8 hour exam. At week 2 we did 2 half days of tests and one weekend day of simulated exam. Week 3 one full day of simulated exam and more half day test. Always do your Qbank timed! Try to complete Qbank before test day and definitely make it through all of First Aid. Drive to your test site during the time you would be on test day. Remember you can't take any snacks OR drinks in to the exam so prepare taking a test without eating or drinking except during breaks. WATCH MIKE WILSON REVIEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Listen to Goljan 1-2 months prior to the study period when doing things like walking/jogging/riding the bus.

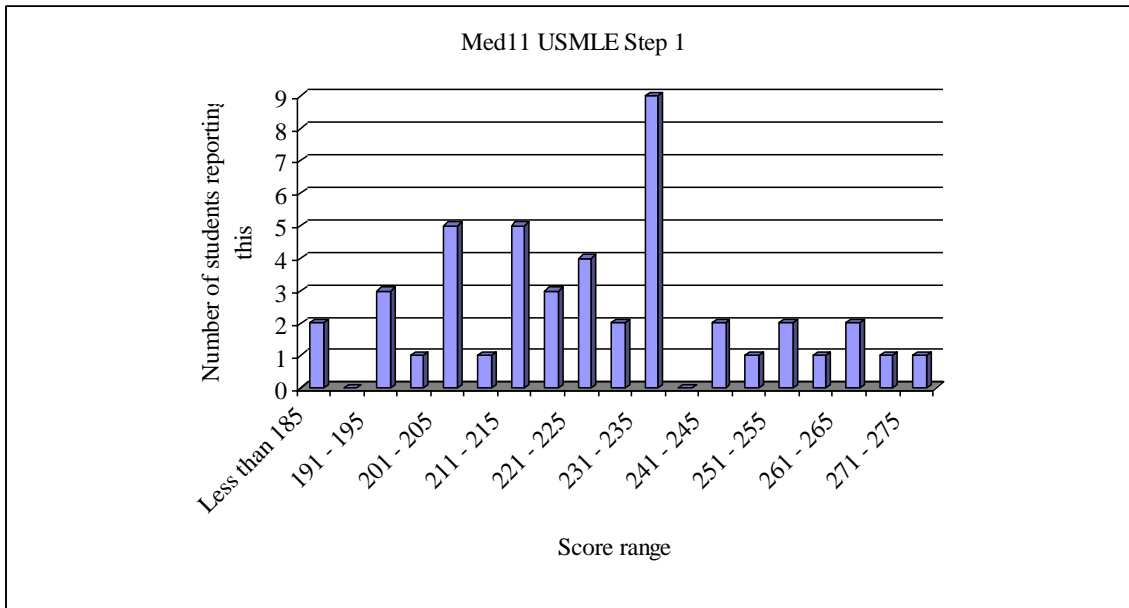
- Be methodical- do one topic per day (i.e., GI, Renal, Pulm, Behavioral Sci), read first aid and do Q-bank questions on that topic that day. Take two days for micro and two days for biochem. Study pharm and path throughout. Make sure you have a few days to review everything at the end (3-4 days of review).
- Study First Aid section by section all the way through and then hit the question banks hard on those topics that day. Make sure you have at least a week off between Step 1 and the start of transition to clerkships to freshen up since it is brutal to not have a good, solid break!
- You are told by some that 21 days is the perfect number of days that you should reserve for study. In reality, they have pulled this number completely out of a hat, and have no basis for suggesting that this is the right amount of time. I would say that 21 is the MINIMUM number of days that you should study for this test if all you are looking to do is pass. Everyone is different. Some people will need more time, some will need less.
- The best thing you can do is set out a schedule for yourself (starting whenever makes sense for you -- after spring break, during the study period, whatever) -- and stick to it. You will know by the end of second year what kind of studier you are (slow, fast, needs breaks, can go for 15 hours at time), and you will know what your weaknesses are.
- If you are feeling lost about how to approach boards, just go back to First Aid and your QBank. Remember that all other study materials are auxiliary. Don't get lost in buying too many sources and getting frustrated with not having time to use them all. First Aid, QBank, rinse and repeat.
- The most reassuring piece of advice I got from someone while I was studying for boards: the more you study, the more your score will improve. You will have times (weeks, even) where you feel like your score has plateaued, but if you keep doing questions and keep going back to First Aid your score will only go up and up.
- Listen to Goljan lectures while commuting, at least twice
- Make a plan and stick to it, but don't be afraid to change things as issues come up during your study period
- Take half-length practice tests (at least three)
- Utilize commuting time if you have it
- Don't start too early, it won't do you any good. Three to four weeks is enough.

- Make time for fun and relaxation during your study period. Three weeks of studying does you no good if you're too burnt out at the end to function.
- Don't study for 24-36 hours before the exam
- Do as many questions as possible, even the practice tests on NBME website.
- Get into groups and pick out different subjects you can present to each other. Make them funny, crazy, etc.
- When doing questions, cross off the wrong answer, don't look for the right answer. There are some questions on USMLE that have a correct answer that is not satisfying.
- When doing questions, answer the question they are asking, not the one you make up in your mind that would give a 'better' answer for the subject.
- Do LOTS of questions - go through ALL of BOTH Kaplan QBank and USMLE World. OHSU does not test in the style of Step 1 (i.e., case-based questions), so this is really new for most people.
- Pace yourself, and don't feel bad about taking time for yourself during the study period.
- Do some form of light studying throughout the school year, or at least after Jan 1 - Goljan tapes, etc.
- Review the sections of First Aid that correspond to the material you are studying in class so you get familiar with the material. Some also helps for the tests.
- **Don't listen to other people freak out and complain about the boards!!!!**

**And Finally, what you have all been waiting for ... how did trying all that work out or us?**

Score	Number of Students Reporting
Less than 185	2
185 - 190	0
191 - 195	3
196 - 200	1
201 - 205	5
206 - 210	1
211 - 215	5
216 - 220	3
221 - 225	4
226 - 230	2
231 - 235	9
236 - 240	0

241 - 245	2
246 - 250	1
251 - 255	2
256 - 260	1
261 - 265	2
266 - 270	1
271 - 275	1



**Washington Irving once wrote, “Great minds have purposes, others have wishes. Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortune, but great minds rise above them.”**

**May your minds continue to be great.**

**Class of 2011**

**Edited by: John Dupaix and Jessica Carlson**