Radiation Therapy Program (RT)

College of Science and Health
Department of Health Professions
Program Director: Melissa Weege
4031 Health Science Center, 608.785.8470
Email: rtprogram@uwlaus.edu

www.uwlax.edu/health-professions/undergraduate-majors/minors/radiation-therapy

Radiation therapists are health care professionals skilled in the art and science of medical radiation treatment delivery. The majority of patients receiving radiation therapy have cancer. Along with surgery and chemotherapy, radiation therapy offers these patients the best chance to succeed in the fight against their disease. The major focus areas of the profession are the care and assessment of patients, simulation, planning and delivery of treatments utilizing linear accelerator produced radiation and radio-isotopes. Aims of care include cure, relief of symptoms, and improvement of patients' quality of life. High technology equipment and innovative treatment methods are utilized to maximize treatment effectiveness. Radiation therapists must have excellent technical skills, but must also be empathetic and effective communicators. Much satisfaction is gained from close patient interaction and the specialty's team approach with radiation oncologists, physicists, nurses and other medical specialists. Radiation therapy is "technology with a human touch."

The major in radiation therapy provides students with an educational foundation in the sciences and humanities as well as clinical experience in a radiation therapy department. The curriculum requires six semesters on campus in pre-professional and professional core courses prior to the senior clinical internship. The clinical internship begins in July of the senior year, extends for 13 months, and is spent at an affiliated clinical internship site. When students have met all requirements of the major and the university, they are eligible for graduation and to apply to take the national certification exam.

UWL, in cooperation with its clinical internship sites, currently provides the only training and baccalaureate degree program in radiation therapy in the State of Wisconsin. The radiation therapy program at UWL is designed to offer a high quality radiation therapy curriculum rich in academic and clinical experiences. During the clinical internship, students will work directly with registered radiation therapists in direct patient care in busy and highly regarded radiation oncology departments. The program also seeks to foster, in its students, the professional development, problem solving and leadership skills needed for current and future health care environments.

Program mission

The mission of the radiation therapy program at UWL is to educate and train radiation therapists who are knowledgeable, technically competent and dedicated to their profession and their patients, while meeting the educational and personal needs of its students by emphasizing excellence in education and offering a broad based curriculum in liberal studies, professional courses and clinical internship. This program additionally seeks to promote research and provide a base for further professional development of graduates.

General education writing emphasis

This department incorporates a significant amount of writing through the required courses instead of identifying particular courses as writing emphasis courses. Students who complete a major in this department will fulfill the general education writing emphasis requirement (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/generaleducation/#generaleducationrequirementstext).

Major

- Radiation therapy major - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/radiationtherapy/radiationtherapybs)

Courses

HP/RT 310 Cr.3
Pathophysiology
This course focuses on the pathophysiologic disorders that affect healthy systems across the life span. Theories of disease causation are introduced. Areas of emphasis include cellular and systemic responses, clinical manifestations and the response of tissue to radiation damage. Acquired, immune, infectious, carcinogenic and genetic alterations in body systems are included. Prerequisite: BIO 312, BIO 313; admission to RT, NMT, or the UW School of Nursing. Health professions students' admission to NMT or UW nursing program, overrides are understood. (Cross-listed with HP/RT may only earn credit from one department.) Offered Fall.

RT 325 Cr.3
Radiation Therapy Readings, Writing, and Research
This course introduces radiation therapy students to the language of radiation therapy and professional issues in the field by the use of selected readings. The Radiation Therapy Writing in the Major program will be introduced along with the types of writing practiced in the field. Students will learn basic research techniques and begin to apply them to their professional education. This course is designed to be taken concurrently with RT 310. Prerequisite: ENG 110 or ENG 112; STAT 145; concurrent enrollment in RT 310; admission to Radiation Therapy Program. Offered Fall.

RT 330 Cr.2
Professional Issues in Radiation Therapy
This course will provide students with knowledge related to the professional issues pertinent to the field of radiation therapy. Course topics will include: professional development, career advancement/ options, radiation therapist scope of practice and practice standards, certification and licensure, radiation therapy professional organizations, legislative issues in radiation therapy, as well as ethics and introductory law in radiation therapy. Prerequisite: admission to Radiation Therapy Program. Offered Fall.

RT 350 Cr.3
Patient Care Issues
This course will prepare students to work directly with patients in a health care setting. It will cover such topics as: communication and patient education, assessment, examination and monitoring of patients, body mechanics and patient handling skills, infection control, management of medical emergencies and CPR, nutritional counseling. Prerequisite: admission to Radiation Therapy Program. Offered Spring.
RT 370 Cr.2
Health Care Systems and Human Resources in Radiation Therapy
This course will provide entry-level radiation therapists with the basic
health system and human resource knowledge. Course topics will
include characteristics of U.S. Health Care System, insurance, health
care access, reimbursement in radiation therapy, and applicable human
resource topics. Prerequisite: admission to Radiation Therapy Program.
Offered Spring.

RT 390 Cr.3
Medical Imaging
This course will provide radiation therapy students with theory and
information regarding medical imaging procedures. Radiation therapists
play a crucial role in imaging for treatment planning and treatment field
verification. The course will provide instruction on analog and digital
imaging, as well as various imaging modalities. Prerequisite: PHY 386;
admission to Radiation Therapy Program. Offered Spring.

RT 400 Cr.1
Clinical Internship Seminar
This course will prepare students for the clinical internship portion of
the program. Course topics will include: professional development,
team building skills, radiation therapy terminology, basic clinical
concepts, immobilization device construction, CPR, and radiation
therapy equipment basics. Prerequisite: admission to Radiation Therapy
Program. Offered Spring.

RT 401 Cr.3
Introduction to Radiation Therapy
This course, the first in the clinical internship, will provide the student
with an overview of the profession of radiation therapy and its role in
health care delivery and cancer management. Students will be oriented
to the academic and administrative format of the internship site as well
as safety practices of the hospital and radiation therapy department.
The radiation therapy process will be identified and discussed along
with critical steps in treatment procedures. Students will be prepared for
working with patients by learning about charting and documentation as
well as appropriate patient/therapist interactions. Prerequisite: RT 310,
RT 350; admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to a
clinical internship site. Offered Summer.

RT 411 Cr.4
Principles and Practice of Radiation Therapy I
This course, taught during the clinical internship year, addresses the
concepts of cancer treatment, focusing primarily on radiation therapy.
Methods of improving therapeutic advantage are investigated. Students
learn safe and effective use of equipment and accessories along with the
rationale for their clinical application. Technical aspects of treatment
simulation and delivery are developed. Treatment related side effects
and their management and special patient situations are addressed.
Prerequisite: RT 310, RT 350, RT 401, RT 471; admission to Radiation
Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Fall.

RT 412 Cr.4
Principles and Practice of Radiation Therapy II
This course, taught during the clinical internship, advances the student’s
knowledge of neoplastic disease management. Cancers and some
benign conditions of various body sites are discussed in relation to
natural history, treatment and prognosis. Technical aspects related to
radiation planning and delivery are closely investigated as well as
pertinent anatomical considerations, combination therapy, treatment
results and the therapist’s role in disease management. Lect. 3, Lab 2.
Prerequisite: RT 411, RT 421, RT 472; admission to Radiation Therapy
Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Spring.

RT 421 Cr.3
Cross Sectional, Topographic and Radiographic Anatomy
This course, taught during the clinical internship, revisits anatomy
specifically from an imaging perspective. Students will learn to identify
structures and pathology on x-rays, CT and MRI scans and locate
topographic landmarks on diagnostic and simulation films. Prerequisite:
BIO 313, RT 390, RT 401; admission to Radiation Therapy Program;
assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Fall.

RT 431 Cr.3
Radiation Therapy Physics
This course, taught during the clinical internship, expands the student’s
understanding of physics related to radiation therapy. Topics include the
components and operation of linear accelerators and other treatment
machines, brachytherapy, specification and modification of beam quality
and characteristics, measurement of absorbed dose, treatment machine
calibration, beam geometry and treatment with particles. Prerequisite:
PHY 386, RT 401; admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment
to clinical internship site. Offered Fall.

RT 435 Cr.3
Dosimetry and Treatment Planning
This course, taught during the clinical internship, focuses on the
characteristics, measurement and manipulation of radiation dose
delivery in treatment. This involves advanced concepts of methods of
altering dose to optimize the effectiveness of the radiation treatment.
Treatment planning for a variety of tumor sites and situations is
discussed. Prerequisite: RT 411, RT 421, RT 431; admission to Radiation
Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Spring.

RT 437 Cr.2
Quality Management in Radiation Therapy
This course, taught during the clinical internship, focuses on the
purpose and techniques of quality management in a radiation oncology
program. The importance of documentation, consistent application of
specified protocols and assessment of outcomes are addressed. The
responsibilities of the radiation therapist within the radiation oncology
team for quality functions are highlighted. Prerequisite: RT 411, RT 431;
admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Spring.

RT 471 Cr.3
Clinical Practicum I
This course, offered the first summer session of the clinical internship,
will orient students to the clinical operation of the internship site.
Students will observe staff operations in the radiation therapy
clinic, simulation, treatment planning, and treatment delivery areas.
Prerequisite: RT 310, RT 350, RT 390; admission to Radiation Therapy
Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Summer.

RT 472 Cr.6
Clinical Practicum II
This course, offered fall semester of the clinical internship, will progress
students’ clinical skills from observation in simulation, treatment
planning and treatment delivery to the point of participation and
development of basic competencies. Prerequisite: RT 401, RT 471;
admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Fall.
RT 473 Cr.6  
**Clinical Practicum III**  
This course, offered spring semester of the clinical internship, will offer students the opportunity to continue the process of developing competence and confidence in the areas of simulation, treatment planning and treatment delivery. They will demonstrate competence in intermediate and some advanced procedures. Students will also be given opportunity to work in dosimetry. Prerequisite: RT 411, RT 421, RT 431, RT 472; admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Spring.

RT 474 Cr.4  
**Clinical Practicum IV**  
This course, offered during the final summer session of the clinical internship, will complete the students' clinical education experience. By the end of this course, students will have developed proficiency and confidence in areas of simulation, treatment planning and treatment delivery. They will complete all required competencies. Opportunities to broaden the experience and work with different equipment, techniques and advanced procedures will be offered. Prerequisite: RT 412, RT 435, RT 437, RT 473; admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Summer.

RT 481 Cr.3  
**Seminar in Radiation Therapy**  
The course, offered during the clinical internship, is a capstone course in which students present patient case information, discuss application of radiation science theory, review and critique journal articles and prepare for the national certification exam. Prerequisite: RT 412, RT 435, RT 437; admission to Radiation Therapy Program; assignment to clinical internship site. Offered Summer.

RT 499 Cr.1-3  
**Independent Study in Radiation Therapy**  
Independent study in radiation therapy may include individual readings and writing, projects, or research under the direction of a radiation therapy instructor. Repeatable for credit – maximum six. Prerequisite: admission by consent of the instructor and the radiation therapy program director. Consent of department. Offered Occasionally.