

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE EDUCATION

College of Health Sciences

West Whiteland Business Center
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Exton, PA 19341
Department of Physician Associate Education (<https://www.wcupa.edu/healthSciences/physicianAssistant/default.aspx>)
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Dr. Jimenez (cjimenez@wcupa.edu), *Interim Chairperson*
Dr. Baker (abaker@wcupa.edu), *Program Director*

Program of Study

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at West Chester University will educate physician assistants who can think critically and collaborate with others to address the needs of individual patients and the healthcare community with the highest levels of academic, clinical, and cultural competence. This is a full-time, 26-month graduate day program in a face-to-face format; however, the clinical phase will require nights and weekend hours as well.

Physician assistants practice in all fields of medicine. They work in offices, urgent care centers, emergency departments, and hospitals to perform history and physical examinations, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, educate and counsel patients, and perform surgical procedures. PAs provide excellent care to their patients. They practice in all 50 states and have an increasing presence in the healthcare systems of other countries.

The physician assistant program follows a medical model and is divided into a didactic phase and a clinical phase. The didactic phase of the program is 4 semesters of foundational sciences, clinically-oriented courses, small-group active learning sessions, hands-on labs, and healthcare observations. The clinical phase includes 40 weeks of clinical rotations in various clinical settings, including family medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, hospital medicine, behavioral health, reproductive health, pediatrics, and an elective. Clinical rotations are offered in the Philadelphia region as well as across the US. Courses are taught by full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, clinical preceptors, and guest lecturers who are experts in their field.

This program has been granted accreditation-provisional status by the ARC-PA.

Program highlights:

- Access to new facilities and simulation labs
- Clinically practicing faculty
- Early clinical exposure
- Access to Philadelphia-area clinical sites
- Partnerships with local community organizations

Programs

Master's Program

- M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/health-sciences/physician-associate-education/physician-assistant-studies-ms/>)

Admissions

All applicants to one of West Chester University's graduate programs will be held to the graduate admissions requirements (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/general-information/admissions-enrollment/graduate-admissions/>). When applicable, additional requirements for admission into specific department program(s) may be listed below.

Admission Requirements for the M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

Admission Requirements

Prospective students must do the following:

1. Apply through the Centralized Applications Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) prior to the published deadline
2. Complete required prerequisite courses as per the guidelines listed below
3. Have obtained a 3.0 cumulative and 3.0 science GPA at time of admission
4. Complete TOEFL as per institutional requirements for international graduate students
5. Complete an interview and be selected by the Admissions Committee
6. Complete a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university or equivalent on a NACES evaluation
7. Send official transcripts to the institution
8. Successfully complete a criminal background check, child abuse clearance, and urine drug screen
9. Complete a physical examination and show proof of immunity for vaccine-preventable disease as per the CDC Guidelines for Healthcare Providers
10. Attest to ability to meet technical standards (in development)

Prerequisite Course Stipulations

1. Courses must be taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education or be included on a NACES evaluation.
2. A minimum grade of C or better must be earned in prerequisite courses.
3. An applicant may have prerequisites in progress at the time of application; however, all outstanding prerequisites must be successfully completed prior to enrollment. In order to fairly evaluate a candidate, it is recommended that no more than two prerequisites be outstanding at the time of interview.
4. AP credit that was accepted by the student's undergraduate institution can satisfy prerequisites including general biology, general chemistry, psychology, statistics, and English composition courses.
5. Courses must be current, within 10 years, or a waiver granted for sustained work in the field or higher level study within the last 10 years.
6. No advanced placement in the program will be granted for prior coursework or healthcare experience.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Prerequisite Courses/Experiences		
	Ethics/Humanities	3
	English Composition or Writing Intensive Course	3
	Psychology (Developmental and Abnormal preferred)	6
	General Biology	6
	General Chemistry	6
	Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry	3
	Anatomy & Physiology 1 or Human Anatomy	4
	Anatomy & Physiology 2 or Human Physiology	4
	Microbiology	3
	Upper level Biology (Genetics preferred)	3
	Statistics	3
	Medical Terminology (May be certificate)	
	Healthcare experience (400 hours paid or volunteer)	
	PA Shadowing (4 hours)	
	GRE/MCAT (Recommended, not required)	

Graduation Requirements for the M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

Graduation Requirements

1. Students will have completed all coursework with no outstanding grades below a C-.
2. Students will have maintained a cumulative GPA above 3.0.
3. Students will have passed all summative assessments and successfully presented a Master's Project.¹
4. Students will have met all financial obligations to the institution.

Students will have applied and been approved for graduation by the institution.

¹ The Master's Project is a component of the three master's courses scheduled across the second year, PAS 611, PAS 621, and PAS 631, and will be student-developed, subject to program approval. Projects may include such activities as preparation of a written case report based on a case that students saw in clinical practice; preparing a clinical practice guideline for submission for publication; presenting a topic at a local or regional conference; developing a novel approach to teaching a topic to patients, families, or other healthcare students; developing and executing a community outreach program; preparing and participating in a medical mission trip; working in interprofessional groups to identify and propose solutions for a current health issue; or identifying and executing a tangible advocacy or outreach strategy. Regardless of project type, all students will participate in a formal presentation of their work at the conclusion of PAS 631.

The Master's Project will address the following Physician Assistant Studies program outcomes/ competencies. Program graduates will be able to competently:

1. Apply a core fund of medical knowledge, critical-thinking skills, and clinical skills needed to provide care to patients.
2. Utilize clinical reasoning skills to diagnose and treat patients of all ages.
3. Communicate with patients, families, other healthcare team members, and the public in a clear, empathetic, culturally-sensitive way.
4. Apply relevant medical literature to patient encounters to provide evidence-based care.
5. Assess, evaluate, and improve their patient-care practices.
6. Contribute to the advancement of the profession through leadership, advocacy, research, or education.

Evaluation will include proposal review; presentation; and self-reflections.

Academic Standing Policy for the M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

Good Academic Standing

Students will be in good academic standing if they meet all of the following academic criteria:

1. They pass all didactic and clinical courses with a grade of C- or better.
2. They earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.

Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation if they meet any of the following criteria:

1. They earn a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0.
2. They fail to pass a single clinical year course with a grade of C- or better or have failed a final preceptor evaluation.

Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from the program if they meet any of the following criteria:

1. They fail to elevate their cumulative GPA above 3.0 after a probationary semester.
2. They fail to meet criteria for good academic standing in 3 semesters (these semesters do not have to be consecutive).
3. They fail a single didactic course or more than one clinical year course.

Policies

All graduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/>) outlined in the graduate catalog. Students are encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department programs may be listed below.

Faculty

Professors

Amy E Baker (abaker@wcupa.edu) (2020)
B.S., M.S., Thomas Jefferson University

Paul D Bradford (pbradford@wcupa.edu) (2020)
B.A., Villanova University; M.Ed., University of Notre Dame; M.S., Arcadia University

Carolyn Consuelo Jimenez (cjimenez@wcupa.edu) (1994)
Interim Chairperson, Physician Associate Education
B.A., Colorado College; M.S., University of Arizona; Ph.D., Temple University

Associate Professor

Jennifer L Anderson (janderson4@wcupa.edu) (2020)
B.S., West Chester University; M.S., Philadelphia University

Assistant Professors

Patrick E Heagey (pheagey@wcupa.edu) (2021)
B.S., Lock Haven University; M.S., Kings College

Laura A Lonergan (llonergan@wcupa.edu) (2022)
B.S., Saint Joseph's University; M.H.S., Drexel University

Courses

PAS

PAS 502. Legal and Ethical Practice. 2 Credits.

This lecture and group discussion course will challenge physician assistant students to identify and apply principles of academic integrity, intellectual honesty, professional conduct, and legal and ethical practice. This course will use lecture, small group discussions, and cases to understand the implications of decision-making in academic settings and professional practice.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 502 requires a corequisite of PAS 503.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 503. Healthcare and the Evolving Role of the PA. 1 Credit.

This lecture and seminar course will introduce students to the past, present, and future professional issues and policies relevant to clinical practice as a physician assistant. Students will begin to understand the members of the healthcare team, healthcare delivery systems, health policy, and opportunities and challenges of working in current and potential future healthcare systems. Students will be introduced to factors related to providing care to patients of diverse populations and will assess the impact of healthcare disparities on individual and population health.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 510. Patient Communication and Assessment. 4 Credits.

This lecture and group discussion course allows physician assistant students to develop the knowledge, communication skills, and techniques required to obtain and record a patient's medical history and identify normal and abnormal history or physical examination findings. This course emphasizes the interpersonal and communication skills that promote the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and other health professionals.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 510 requires prerequisites of SMD 500 and SMD 501, and a corequisite of PAS 511.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 511. Physical Diagnosis Lab. 2 Credits.

This laboratory course allows physician assistant students to develop the skills necessary to use medical equipment with proper technique, to perform complete and problem-oriented physical examinations, to document patient encounters, and to deliver oral presentations through structured laboratory exercises, simulated patient experiences, and community experiences.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 511 requires prerequisites of SMD 500 and SMD 501, and a corequisite of PAS 510.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 512. Physiology and Pharmacology. 3 Credits.

This lecture course will reintroduce normal physiologic process by system and the genetic and molecular mechanisms of disease. Physician assistant students will also be introduced to pharmacotherapeutic agents' effects on biologic systems and the body's response to these agents. Students will begin to identify metabolic processes, drug classes, and mechanisms of action of commonly utilized over-the-counter, prescription, and illicit drugs.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 512 requires prerequisites of SMD 500 and SMD 501, and a corequisite of PAS 513.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 513. Medical Pathophysiology and Clinical Microbiology. 4 Credits.

This lecture and case-based course will allow physician assistant students to determine the impact of infectious, autoimmune, and pathologic etiologies on body function. Lectures and cases will focus on the pathogenesis and natural history of common diseases by system and will correlate pathophysiology with clinical presentation.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 513 requires prerequisites of SMD 500 and SMD 501, and a corequisite of PAS 512.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 514. Introduction to Diagnostics. 2 Credits.

This lecture, small group discussion, and laboratory course will allow physician assistant students to identify common diagnostic studies, interpret basic electrocardiograms, and evaluate basic medical imaging.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 514 requires prerequisites of SMD 500 and SMD 501, and a corequisite of PAS 512.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 515. Professional Issues and Healthcare Policy. 2 Credits.

This lecture and seminar course will introduce students to the professional issues and policies relevant to clinical practice as a physician assistant. Lectures on the healthcare system, the public health system, patient advocacy, health policy, medical reimbursement, documentation of care, coding, and billing will be supplemented with experiences with clinical providers in order for students to more fully understand the opportunities and challenges of working in current and potential future healthcare systems.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 515 requires a prerequisite of PAS 503.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 520. Clinical Medicine for the Lifespan I. 6 Credits.

This lecture and case-based course will allow physician assistant students to articulate a comprehensive understanding of pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and management of common acute and chronic diseases encountered in primary care settings for patients across the lifespan. Additionally, students will be able to identify differential diagnoses and appropriate workup for commonly encountered chief complaints in clinical practice. The course includes modules in otorhinolaryngology, pulmonology, cardiology, gastroenterology, rheumatology, musculoskeletal, and neurology.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 520 requires prerequisites of PAS 510, PAS 512, and PAS 513; and corequisites of PAS 521, PAS 522, and PAS 524.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 521. Pharmacotherapeutics. 4 Credits.

This lecture and case study seminar course will allow physician assistant students to apply the principles of pharmacology, including the absorption, bioavailability, distribution, metabolism, excretion, classification, and mechanism of action of commonly prescribed medications and illicit drugs. Additionally, this course will allow students to select common over-the-counter and prescription drugs for appropriate use in clinical practice, based on clinical indications, contraindications, dosing, side effects, and monitoring of commonly used medications.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 521 requires a prerequisite of PAS 512; and corequisites of PAS 520, PAS 522, and PAS 524.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 522. Emergent and Surgical Medicine. 4 Credits.

This lecture and case-based course will allow physician assistant students to articulate a comprehensive understanding of pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and management of common acute and emergent presentations of diseases for patients across the lifespan. Students will also identify surgical vs. nonsurgical presentation and management of diseases commonly encountered. Additionally, students will be able to identify differential diagnoses and appropriate workup for commonly encountered chief complaints in clinical practice.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 522 requires prerequisites of PAS 510, PAS 512, PAS 513, and PAS 514; and corequisites of PAS 520, PAS 521, and PAS 524.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 523. Clinical Reasoning and Evidence-Based Practice. 2 Credits.

This small group integrative seminar course will allow physician assistant students to develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Students will utilize clinical case studies, role-playing, and standardized patient encounters to guide, develop, and refine directed history and physical examination, clinical reasoning, case presentation, and patient counseling skills. Application of evidence-based medicine principles to clinical scenarios will be integral as part of patient management.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 523 requires prerequisites of PAS 510, PAS 512, and PAS 513; and corequisites of PAS 520, PAS 521, PAS 522, and PAS 524.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 524. Diagnostics Seminar. 2 Credits.

This lecture and case-based course will allow physician assistant students to select and interpret commonly ordered diagnostic studies. Students will also prescribe the most appropriate screening and diagnostic modalities for common disease processes.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 524 requires a prerequisite of PAS 514; and corequisites of PAS 520 and PAS 523.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 525. Interprofessional Practice Seminar. 2 Credits.

This integrative seminar course will allow students to synthesize history-taking and physical diagnosis skills with the medical, diagnostic, and pharmacologic knowledge gained throughout the didactic phase of the physician assistant program in order to apply it to simulated patient presentations. Working individually, in small peer groups, and in interprofessional teams, students will interact with patient simulators and standardized patients to manage patients or brainstorm solutions to current medical issues.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 525 requires prerequisites of PAS 502, PAS 503, PAS 510, and PAS 515; and corequisites of PAS 520 and PAS 523.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 530. Clinical Medicine for the Lifespan II. 6 Credits.

This lecture course will allow physician assistant students to articulate a comprehensive understanding of pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and management of common acute and chronic diseases encountered in primary care settings for patients across the lifespan. Additionally, given a chief complaint, the students will be able to identify the differential diagnosis and appropriate workup in clinical practice. The course includes modules in ophthalmology, oral health, dermatology, infectious disease, hematology/oncology, endocrinology, nephrology, genitourinary, and reproduction.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 530 requires a prerequisite of PAS 520.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 531. Health Promotion and Patient Safety. 2 Credits.

This lecture and group discussion course will allow physician assistant students to gain a fundamental understanding of the social determinants of health, inclusivity, patient advocacy, patient safety, quality improvement, and the impact of each on clinical practice. Through lecture, group discussion, directed assignments, and simulated patient encounters, this course will provide students with practical approaches to provide basic counseling and patient education skills that are patient centered, culturally sensitive, and focused on helping patients and families mitigate modifiable risk factors for disease and maintain patient safety.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 531 requires a prerequisite of PAS 515.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 532. Applied Behavioral Health. 2 Credits.

This lecture course will allow physician assistant students to articulate a comprehensive understanding of pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and management of acute and chronic behavioral health and psychiatric issues encountered for patients across the lifespan. This course will also focus on end-of-life issues, human sexuality, normal and abnormal development across the lifespan, patient response to stress, illness and injury, substance use disorders, violence identification and prevention, and provider wellness. This course will provide students with practical approaches to provide basic counseling and patient education skills that are patient centered, culturally sensitive, and focused on helping patients and families.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 533. Clinical Skills Lab. 1 Credit.

This laboratory course will allow physician assistant students to practice common clinical skills and procedures based on current professional practice.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 540. Current and Emerging Issues in Healthcare. 2 Credits.

This small group discussion and research course will allow physician assistant students to identify current or future issues in healthcare or health education. Students will work individually or in groups to research the scope of the problem and propose potential solutions.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 540 requires prerequisites of SMD 505 and PAS 515.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 541. Clinical Practice Seminar. 3 Credits.

This seminar course will allow physician assistant students to reinforce the medical knowledge, clinical and technical skills, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors necessary to enter supervised clinical practice experiences.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 541 requires a prerequisite of PAS 530.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 610. Internal Medicine Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical education experience will allow physician assistant students to assess and medically manage adult patients in a hospital setting. Through supervised patient contact, students will gain experience in performing history and physical examinations, documenting patient encounters, and management of acute and chronic illnesses commonly encountered in hospitalized patients. Additionally, students will provide basic counseling and patient education skills that are patient centered, culturally sensitive, and focused on helping patients and families.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 610 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 611. Master's Experience: Develop. 1 Credit.

This course, which takes place throughout the entire clinical year, is the capstone experience for physician assistant students. Students will work individually or in small groups to develop a culminating project with the direction of a faculty advisor which will integrate the knowledge acquired throughout the curriculum. This course will focus on identifying a project and defining the scope of work. Additionally, students must participate in lecture and seminar experiences throughout the clinical year. Students must continue to progress towards obtaining and documenting acquisition of program competencies.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 611 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall.

PAS 620. Surgery Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to evaluate and manage patients presenting with conditions requiring surgical management. Students will participate in operating room procedures and techniques and will work collaboratively with the surgical team. Students are exposed to all aspects of the surgical process, including pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative patient care.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 620 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 621. Master's Experience: Refine. 1 Credit.

This course is the second part of the capstone experience for physician assistant students. Students will continue to work individually or in small groups on their culminating project with the direction of a faculty advisor. This course will focus on completion of the research necessary to formulate a first draft of a deliverable. Additionally, students must participate in lecture and seminar experiences throughout the clinical year. Students must continue to progress towards obtaining and documenting acquisition of program competencies.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 621 requires a prerequisite of PAS 611.

Typically offered in Spring.

PAS 630. Pediatrics Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to educate, assess, and manage pediatric patients. Students will be exposed to the healthcare needs of infants, children, and adolescents in an inpatient and/or outpatient setting. Students will interact with both the pediatric patient and caregiver to manage common acute and chronic pediatric problems and provide preventative care as related to normal growth and development, immunization requirements, nutritional requirements, and anticipatory guidance.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 630 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 631. Master's Experience: Execute. 2 Credits.

This course is the final part of the capstone experience for physician assistant students. Students will continue to work individually or in small groups on their culminating project with the direction of a faculty advisor. This course will focus on presentation of a deliverable as developed and refined throughout the clinical year. Students must continue documenting acquisition of program competencies. The course also includes a multi-faceted summative evaluation/assessment procedure consisting of: a comprehensive written examination that encompasses topics drawn from the entire PA program curriculum; a series of Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) using standardized patients where students must demonstrate the ability to elicit a medical history, perform a physical examination, order appropriate diagnostic studies, formulate a diagnosis, develop a management plan, render patient education and document the findings for acute, emergent, chronic, and preventative patient care.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 631 requires a prerequisite of PAS 621.

Typically offered in Summer.

PAS 640. Emergency Medicine Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to educate, assess, and manage patients presenting with urgent and emergent medical and surgical conditions. Students will function as part of an interdisciplinary team in the emergency department, working collaboratively with healthcare providers from all disciplines. Through supervised patient contact, the student will gain experience in performing directed history and physical examinations, documenting patient encounters, assessing and managing episodic illness, and performing common clinical skills.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 640 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 650. Women's Health and Prenatal Care Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to educate, assess, and manage patients presenting for gynecologic and pregnancy-related care for women throughout the reproductive lifespan. Through supervised patient contact in a hospital, clinic, and/or private practice setting, the student will gain experience in obtaining and documenting health history, performing the routine gynecologic examination, and common clinical skills. Students will interact with patients and partners to manage common acute and chronic gynecologic problems and provide preventative and prenatal care.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 650 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 660. Behavioral Health Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to educate, assess, and manage patients presenting for mental and behavioral health. Through supervised patient contact in an outpatient and/or inpatient behavioral health facility, the student will work collaboratively with the mental health team to evaluate and manage a range of chronic, acute, and emergent behavioral/mental health issues. The student will recognize the roles that socioeconomic, family health history, and social interactions play in the course of behavioral/mental health conditions; address barriers to treatment; and offer continued support through community resources.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 660 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 670. Family Medicine Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience will allow physician assistant students to educate, assess, and manage patients presenting for preventative, acute, emergent, and chronic conditions to an outpatient medicine setting. Through supervised patient contact, the student will gain experience in performing history and physical examinations, documenting patient encounters, managing the acute and chronic illnesses, and providing patient-centered health education.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 670 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.

PAS 680. Elective Clinical Experience. 4 Credits.

This supervised clinical experience affords the physician assistant student an opportunity to increase their medical knowledge, clinical and technical skills, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors in an area of clinical interest.

Pre / Co requisites: PAS 680 requires a prerequisite of PAS 541.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, Summer, Winter.