BME 399 and 499 Guidelines for Students
Last update: September 7, 2017

BME 399 vs BME 499: BME 399 Projects are only graded P/N (pass/no-pass). A student’s first research experience in a new lab should be taken as a BME 399. Subsequent research in the same lab may be taken as a BME 499. BME 499 will be grade-bearing with more rigorous requirements. The department will not allow BME 399 to be used as technical elective.

1. Project Scope. Have a conversation with your potential research advisor to determine whether she thinks the work you will be doing is sufficient for research credit. Something like washing glassware for a molecular biology lab, or doing very repetitive biomechanical measurements that don't require any thinking, cannot count as research credit. The work should involve some thought and creativity.

2. Time Expectations. You should expect to commit 12-15 hours per week to your research. Expectations should be discussed with your advisor.

3. Grading Criteria. If your proposed research advisor agrees that the work should qualify as research credit, then you and she together should come up with grading criteria, so that she can easily give you a grade at the end of the term. Come up with a list something like:
   a. If (your name) finishes goals X, Y, and Z, she gets a grade of an A.
   b. If (your name) finishes goals X, Y, and part of Z, she gets a grade of an A minus
   c. If (your name) finishes goals X, Y, she gets a grade of a B, etc...

4. Report Required. Students must submit a written report (or, if the project is programming, a big piece of commented code) at the end of the project. The format and length should be discussed with your research advisor.

5. Logistics. To sign up for a BME 399 or BME 499, email Nakendra Jackson in the BME department office (E310). In your email, you will request a permission number for BME 399 or 499; you must copy your research advisor on that message. If your proposed research advisor is a BME faculty member, Nakendra will give you a permission number to sign up for a BME 399/499 with that faculty member. If your proposed research advisor is not a BME faculty member, you have two options*: 1) sign up for 399/499 credit within the research advisor’s department or 2) sign up for a BME 399/499 under Prof. Gloria Kim. If you follow path 2, see the additional info below.
*If you plan to do research for BME Honors, you should sign up for a BME 399/499, even if your research is with a faculty member who is not within the BME Department.

BME 399/499 under the research supervision of a non-BME faculty member.
Before undertaking this, you should do the following:
   1. Let your academic advisor know that you will be doing BME 399/499 research with your proposed research advisor.
   2. Request a permission number for BME 399/499 under Prof. Kim from the departmental program assistant (Nakendra Jackson). On this message to
Nakendra, you need to copy your research advisor, your academic advisor, and Prof. Kim.

3. Connect your research advisor and Prof. Kim via an email message. Include something to the effect of: I will be doing such-and-such research under Prof X (Prof X = your research advisor) in the Fall of 2015. Since Prof X is outside the BME department (ex: in the Feinberg School of Medicine), I have signed up for a BME 399/499 under Prof. Kim. I understand that Prof. Kim will be communicating with Prof X about my progress and about my grade, so I just wanted to connect the two of you by email.

4. Make sure that your research advisor sends your academic advisor your grade sometime during finals week. This is your responsibility. Don’t make your academic advisor chase down your grade.