The practice of medicine is an art based on science
William Osler (1849–1919), Co-founder and Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Welcome to Imperial College’s innovative new BSc
This short booklet outlines what you can expect to be studying on this course, and gives you an indication of the assessments and structure. However, please note that this is indicative content and potentially subject to change. For detailed enquiries, please contact Giskin Day: giskin.day@imperial.ac.uk

What can you expect to learn?
This BSc ranges widely across disciplines and time periods. It offers you a comprehensive, critical framework in which to base, and better understand, your own medical knowledge and practice.

Studying humanities, philosophy and law is resolutely not about learning to be a more humane doctor (what vocation could be more humane than healing?), but rather is about honing and developing alternative and complementary modes of analytical thinking and bodies of knowledge.

The course is divided into three modules – ‘the Body’, ‘the Mind’, ‘Death and Dying’ – and each week is organised around a theme that is explored through a combination of seminars, workshops, and practical and arts-based activities. All students will have an opportunity to experiment with diverse methods, drawn from law, ethics, philosophy, history and the creative arts.

Illustration by Dr Neil Shah, GP Registrar and former Medical Humanities student. Other images used by permission of Wellcome Collection.
How is the course assessed?
Each of the three modules is likely to have three different assessments: a 2,500-word coursework essay; a problem-solving activity or structured response; and an examination.
You'll have the opportunity to complete an extended 8,000-word research project on a topic in which you are interested, and give a presentation on your project. There will be opportunities for formative assessment so that you can hone your writing and speaking skills. Each of the three modules is equally weighted (30% coursework, 70% exam).
Don't be daunted by the practical artistic components. You aren’t assessed on talent, but on creative and critical thinking. You don’t need to be an accomplished artist; you need only to adopt an open and imaginative approach to medicine and health.

Getting started: weeks 1 and 2
The first two weeks of the course will consist of a series of introductory workshops, games and field trips. We'll get to know each other, do some team-building exercises, visit the Wellcome Collection and Library, play a real-life game of Medical Monopoly across the city, and even do an acting workshop to help you develop your presentation skills. (Don't worry. Oscar-winning performances are not a mandatory requirement.)
We'll also run introductory sessions on the new disciplines and analytical methods you'll be exploring on the course, including film analysis, the law, narrative medicine, ethics, medical semiotics and the cultural history of medicine.
The two-week introduction culminates in a formative assessment, in which you'll choose a significant figure in medicine on which to give a creative presentation.
The Body: weeks 3–7

**Anatomy:** an examination of the science of anatomy, the development of the autopsy and the ethical status of the body, with a workshop with a professional sculptor and field trips to the Gordon Museum of Pathology and the V&A.

**Body in Law:** we’ll visit Westminster Coroner’s Court and have seminars on the role of the coroner, Thomas Wakley and the Human Tissue Act.

**Dualism:** we’ll engage with our first humanities texts – Bauby’s pathography *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* and the films *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Mary Reilly* – and take a guided walk with Wellcome historian Richard Barnett.

**Dissection:** we’ll learn about dissection in history and literature, debate legal cases on the refusal of life-sustaining treatments, and have a workshop with a forensic pathologist unpicking real-life cases of suspicious deaths (for the Sherlockians among you).

**The Medical Gaze:** investigating the relationship between medical imagery and the power relations within medicine, taking us to the National Gallery and the illness narratives of Virginia Woolf and Hilary Mantel, and the phenomenological philosophy of Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty.
The Mind: weeks 8–12

History of Psychiatry: a critical account from its birth out of neurology, through the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s and 1970s to contemporary music and art therapies, with a field trip to the (in)famous Bethlehem Hospital.

Mental Health and the Law: Mad or bad? A week debating and interrogating the legal statuses of ‘madness’.

Representing Mental Health: we’ve all seen psychosis, in literature, in newspapers and adverts, on the TV and in the cinema. We’ll be analysing and unpicking these depictions to understand the underlying assumptions, ideologies and mythologies.

Fallibility: we’ll be taking a look at what happens when doctors make mistakes, reading Henry Marsh’s *Do No Harm* and Atul Gawande’s *Complications*, as well as considering the cultural-embeddedness of diagnosis and disease conception.

Pain: we know it when we have it, but what exactly is it? We’ll explore the history of anaesthesia, literary representations of pain and have a workshop by artist Deborah Padfield.

Death and Dying: weeks 13–16

End of Life Issues 1: we’ll be thinking about assisted suicide and euthanasia, and the legal, social and political debates around this evermore-present issue.

Organ retention and donation: what are the moral and legal issues surrounding ownership of the body and how should this be managed in the future? We’ll consider the fallout from the Bristol and Alder Hay organ-retention scandals

Medicine and War: war has led to some of the greatest innovations in medicine which we’ll explore with historian Dr Emily Mayhew. We’ll have a visit from the Met Police on victim identification, examine prostheses and visit the Imperial War Museum (itself once the site of the Bethlehem Hospital).

End of Life Issues 2: we’ll consider death rituals, the literature of grief and pose the philosophical and ethical questions of brainstem death.

Project and presentation (12 weeks)

The project module allows you to carry out original research on a topic in which you are interested. Your supervisor will help you to focus the scope of your project and provide advice on methodologies. This is a chance to explore an aspect of medicine in depth to produce a meaningful, and potentially publishable, piece of work.

The project counts 30% of the final grade, and the presentation counts an additional 10%.