BSc in Medical Sciences with Humanities, Philosophy and Law

‘The practice of medicine is an art based on science.’

William Osler (1849–1919)

Welcome to Imperial College London’s innovative intercalated BSc in Humanities, Philosophy and Law.

This guide will give you an idea of what to expect if you are accepted for one of up to 30 places on this BSc. Please note, this is indicative content and potentially subject to change. Check the website for updates and details of entry requirements:

https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/study/undergraduate/intercalated-bsc-programme/humanities-philosophy-and-law/
What can you expect to learn?

This BSc ranges widely across disciplines and time periods. It offers you a critical framework in which to appraise medical knowledge and practice through the lens of the humanities paradigm. The course will develop and hone modes of analytical thinking and bodies of knowledge that complement your medical studies. All students will have the opportunity to experience diverse approaches to scholarship in the medical and health humanities, drawn from law, ethics, philosophy, history, and a wide variety of the creative arts.

Content is focused on three main areas of knowledge: the body, the mind, and death and dying. Within each area, topics are explored from interdisciplinary points of view. Topic areas are likely to include anatomy and the science of medicine, the medical gaze, mental health, fallibility, pain, medicine and war, and end of life issues. We emphasise creativity and you will have the opportunity to engage in a practical way with the arts though the guidance of expert practitioners. We take full advantage of our enviable location by including field trips to museums, galleries, and law courts across London.

The modes of teaching and learning are designed to suit the content with an appreciation of how context also affects learning. Therefore, there is an emphasis on active and experiential learning in settings in which you can make best use of face-to-face activities with teachers and your fellow students. Role modelling is an important aspect here: guest lectures and workshops facilitated by experts will inspire you and provide memorable learning experiences that facilitate reflective learning, and personal and professional development.

How is the course structured?

The course is divided into three modules based on a mode of study. Module 1 consists of face-to-face sessions in which you will be taught by a variety of experts across a range of disciplines working at the intersections of medicine and the humanities. Module 2 will be largely group-based self-directed learning supported by a series of workshops. In contrast with other intercalating BScs offered at
Imperial, for this course, Modules 1 and 2 are interleaved to allow you to progress your group work steadily over time rather than in a single, concentrated block. The final module will be project work, where you will choose a topic to develop for focused, high-level study, under the guidance of a project co-ordinator and supervisor.

How is the course assessed?

The assessments have yet to be finalised but are likely to take the following form.

**Module 1** (taught component) will be assessed by essays in philosophy and in law (each counting for 4.5%). You will also create a podcast that interprets a museum object for a lay audience (9%), and produce an assignment that tackles the representation of a pertinent issue (12%).

**Module 2** (self-directed learning) will be assessed through a group poster presentation (15%) exploring the representations in culture of a particular medical condition. For example, a group might choose to investigate the condition haemophilia, examining its history through investigating theories of madness in the royal families of Europe, the poetry of haemophiliac Walt Whitman, the film *The Madness of King George*, and responses to the contaminated blood scandal and subsequent public inquiry. There will also be a clinical case study (10%): you will interview a person about their illness experience and use this as a basis for analysing aspects of the patient’s story and explain impact on your future practice.

**Module 3** (project) involves planning and carrying out of supervised research resulting in a project write-up. It will also include a critical reflection on the research journey, including the making of an art object as part of your method. You will be required to submit a project report (35%) and give a presentation on your research (10%).

Meet the team

**Mr Greg Artus** teaches philosophy at Imperial College, covering areas such as epistemology, philosophy of mind, political philosophy, research ethics, and philosophy of medicine. His research interests also include machine ethics, and the works of both Wittgenstein and Heidegger.

**Ms Giskin Day** is a Principal Teaching Fellow at Imperial College. She is a National Teaching Fellow and a recipient of the Imperial President’s Medal for Outstanding Contribution to Teaching Excellence. Her specialism is creativity in medical education, and her research is on the role of gratitude in healthcare.

**Dr Wing May Kong** is a Consultant Endocrinologist and Honorary Senior Lecturer in Endocrinology and Ethics at Imperial College. She is also a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. Her areas of expertise include medical ethics and law, diabetes, and the diabetic foot.

**Miss Carly Line** is Programme Administrator for the BSc in Humanities, Philosophy and Law.

**Dr Mike Osborn** is a consultant Histopathologist based at St Marys Hospital in London. He is President of the Royal College of Pathologists and an honorary senior lecturer at Imperial College. His specialist areas are gastrointestinal pathology and non-forensic autopsy.

**Dr Jennifer Wallis** is a historian and Medical Humanities Teaching Fellow at Imperial College. She specialises in the history of psychiatry and the body, and is an active researcher and author in the history of science, technology, and medicine.

Questions?

To be put in touch with former students or if you have any queries about applying, please contact Miss Carly Line (c.line@imperial.ac.uk). For questions about course content and pedagogy, please contact the course lead, Ms Giskin Day (giskin.day@imperial.ac.uk).