The aims of this course are to provide understandings of the broader social, cultural and political contexts in which debates around medical science and practice occur, and to explore the use of qualitative and interdisciplinary methods to conduct research in these areas. Readings will draw upon perspectives from the medical social sciences & science and technology studies to analyze dilemmas in medicine as well as to critically examine the field of bioethics. The course will cover topics in biomedical science and technology as well as clinical and public health, and may emphasize one or the other depending on the interests of enrolled students. It is designed for the needs of graduate students in the social sciences and humanities, population health sciences, health policy, law, medicine, and health professions. Basic knowledge of social theory is recommended.

Topics may include: clinical trials (especially international trials and first-in-human research), biosecurity, concepts of risk (esp pandemics & disasters), neuroscience and society, and biological citizenship, among others.