Many people who are interested in going on to careers in medicine find philosophy classes truly rewarding, and there are good reasons why. Many of the skills and tendencies emphasized are similar - for instance:

- engaging in diagnosis (of situations, arguments, or positions)
- thinking clearly and with organization
- discerning and evaluating evidence
- creative thinking; the ability to imagine alternative scenarios
- logic, induction, deduction
- inference to the best explanation
- articulating thoughts concisely, precisely and without ambiguity
- being attuned to the importance of people, their rights and welfare.

### Philosophy Provides Necessary Skills

**Why I Should Major in Philosophy**

**Med School and Philosophy**

**Topics of Interest to Students Preparing for Medical School:**

- Is there a right to die? A right to be helped to die?
- When is it right to make a decision on someone else's behalf, "for that person's own good" or does that undermine autonomy?
- Is there a way to validate/justify the scientific method?
- Are beliefs based on empirical observation the only kind of beliefs that can be known/justified?
- How should doctors understand the human body and its relation to the mind?
- What do terms like "health" and "harm" mean?

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges:

"Entrance requirements at most medical schools include completion of course work in biology, mathematics, chemistry, physics, and English. But keep your undergraduate experience well rounded by also studying humanities and the social sciences. The ideal physician understands how society works and can communicate and write well.

“It should be strongly emphasized that a science major is not a prerequisite for medical school, and students should not major in science simply because they believe this will increase their chances for acceptance”
Philosophy courses tend to focus on fundamental questions about life, reality, and knowledge. In a philosophy course, students will read thought-provoking works. Students develop skills to interpret controversial points of view charitably, identify unstated assumptions, and distinguish relevant information from unimportant rhetorical flourishes. They are able to assess positions and their alternatives and identify underlying points of agreement and disagreement. Although there may be no single “right” answer, it is not true that any answer is just as good as another. Students are expected to provide reasons that make a clear case for accepting their point of view. Philosophy courses tend to be highly discussion-oriented and writing-intensive, improving clarity of presentation and argumentative rigor. Especially in courses numbered 300 and higher, enrollment is limited to facilitate discussion and provide students opportunities to engage with their peers and the professor. More than most other majors, philosophy encourages students to examine and develop their own points of view, rather than uncritically accept the current state of research. These skills of charitable interpretation and independence of critical thought enable philosophy majors to excel in a variety of career paths and lifelong activities.

Philosophy Courses of Interest to Students Preparing for Medical School:

In these courses, students learn about philosophical theories that underlie medical practice, research, and values. It is hard to think of many fields in which moral considerations come up as much as in medicine, and yet many in medicine lack the tools to deal confidently and thoughtfully with ethical situations. Similarly, many medical professionals lack a grounding in the views that ground medical policy: the respect for autonomy that leads us to allow refusal of treatment, or the sense of rights that keeps us from harvesting organs from unwilling live donors. Similarly, theoretical issues form the basis for our ideas about the scientific method, scientific progress, the knowledge we gain from medicine, and other issues explored in the Philosophy of Science.