In what ways is medicine a science, and in what ways is it an art?

Medicine as a science:
- Chemotherapy
- How the body functions and responds
- Drugs
- Anesthesiologists.

As an art:
- Surgical techniques used by Gawande, other surgeons, and physicians.
- The improvisation of the rural Indian doctors who literally had nothing to work with. They were able to accomplish so much with so little
  - Communication
  - Willingness to change
  - Making the best of what they had; not complaining
- Surgeons on the front lines really had to improvise. They just stabilized the soldiers’ enough so that they could be moved to a safer location and a location with more supplies to complete the procedure.
  - Sent men with wounds covered in plastic to hospitals

As a business:
- Gawande mentioned one doctor who had made his surgical skills a business. He performed surgeries how he wanted to and when he wanted to because he cut out insurance.

War with insurance companies every step of the way.
- My aunt, a pediatrician, has about 6 staff positions for people who do strictly insurance work.

Chapter entitled *For Performance*

“New laboratory science is not the key to saving lives. The infant science of improving performance—of implementing existing know-how—is.”

- This quote is from a discussion that Gawande had with a resident who had cystic fibrosis about where money should be put. The resident said that money should still go to laboratory science even though it is not key to saving lives.
- This quote is very important in other ways. Doctors cannot just wait around for miracle treatments or cures. They have to implement every single bit of knowledge that they have in order to have the best chance of saving someone’s life.

The section on the physician involvement in the death penalty intrigued me, but there were a lot more ethical dilemmas in play than he let on.
From reading these two books I have come to realize that Biomedicine is a mess. There is not one right way to accomplish tasks or to think about things. Better and Checklists bring to light how messy medicine really is. Gawande suggests possible fixes to some of biomedicines biggest problems, but these solutions are not always translated into actions. The biomedicine as a whole deals with individuals who do not think alike, act alike, or wish to be alike.

So much information is constantly being obtained through the natural sciences, like biology and chemistry, that it is nearly impossible to implement all of this new information into practice. But yet, we expect that our medical professionals know everything about everything at all times. We expect them to be superhuman. Medical professionals meet this expectation about 9.5 times out of 10, but often time’s society deems that ratio unacceptable.