

PHIL 7007 PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND POLITICS

Credit Points 10

Legacy Code 102582

Coordinator Jennifer Mensch ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Jennifer Mensch/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Jennifer%20Mensch/))

Description What is History? What justifies the State? These questions have been an object of inquiry as much for philosophers as for historians and political theorists. Large socio-political forces were at work during the Enlightenment and philosophers like Rousseau and Kant sought to understand these movements philosophically. For Rousseau, the lens was genealogical as he worked to produce a "natural history" of politics and society; for Kant, the historical lens was teleological as he narrated instead a philosophical history full of notions of progress and improvement. In the 19th century, philosophers like Hegel and Marx were concerned to think about history and politics as a dialectical movement, while Nietzsche applied Darwin's new theory of evolution to his understanding of history and morals alike. The great shockwaves wrought by the two World Wars of the 20th century brought new philosophical writers to the problems of history and politics, though now with an eye back toward the seemingly failed vision of inevitable progress so successfully peddled by the Enlightenment. This philosophical tradition and its changing approaches to history and politics will be the focus of this unit.

School Humanities & Comm Arts

Discipline Philosophy

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 4 10cp

Level Postgraduate Coursework Level 7 subject

Restrictions

Students must be enrolled in a postgraduate program.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Identify major philosophical approaches to history and politics
2. Analyse primary texts from the philosophy of history and politics
3. Apply basic philosophical analyses to socio-political and historical events and issues

Subject Content

Unit content will draw on the following topics in the philosophy of history:

- Universal history
- claims regarding The moral advancement of humankind
- hermeneutical Issues with respect to interpreting The Past
- Philosophical approaches to politics
- philosophy of The state

Prescribed Texts

- The following texts can be considered foundational texts for understanding philosophies of history and politics. While key readings may be taken from any of these in the creation of a reader, the library will hold copies of each of these texts as **essential learning resources** for the students to consult while taking the subject.

- Marx, *The Portable Karl Marx* (NY: Penguin, 1983)
- Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (NY: OUP, 1994)
- Foucault, *The Order of Things* (NYC: Vintage, 1994)
- Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (NYC: Vintage, 1982)
- Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972)
- Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois So*

Teaching Periods