

HUMN 2074 ORIGINS OF THE SECULAR WEST

Credit Points 10

Coordinator David Burchell ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/David Burchell/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/David+Burchell/))

Description Early Modern European culture was underpinned by religious conceptions of nature, society and morality. The Modern West sees itself as having emancipated itself from these religious underpinnings, and as being grounded in human naturalistic and scientific values. This subject traces the transition from the first of these conceptions to the second, through politics, philosophy, culture and science.

School Humanities & Comm Arts

Discipline History

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees (https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/) page.

Level Undergraduate Level 2 subject

Restrictions

Successful completion of 40 credit points of study in currently enrolled program.

Learning Outcomes

1. Critically assess the thought of a variety of key thinkers in early modern European scientific, political and religious thought.
2. Interpret and analyse primary historical sources.
3. Evaluate some of the key historiographic debates around the history of European religious and political thought and the emergence of a secular state.
4. Discuss the origins and ancestry of the modern Western conceptions of secularism and secular society.
5. Discuss the relationship between modern Western science and the culture of secularism.

Subject Content

- Sacred and secular in the Western tradition
- The Reformation and secular authority
- Galileo and the Church
- Hobbes on Scripture and civil sovereignty
- Reason and experiment in natural philosophy
- Locke on civil society and human nature
- Newton and the mechanical universe
- Rousseau and popular sovereignty
- Romanticism, faith and the modern personality
- Darwin and the modern idea of science
- The idea of universal religion: the Ethnographers

Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Presentation	10 minutes	20	N	Individual	N
Critical Review	350 words	10	N	Individual	N
Essay	1,500 words	40	N	Individual	N
Final Exam	1,250 words	30	N	Individual	N

Prescribed Texts

None: readings uploaded to vUWS

Teaching Periods

Spring (2025) Penrith (Kingswood)

Hybrid

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View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=HUMN2074_25-SPR_KW_3#subjects)

Parramatta - Victoria Rd

Hybrid

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