

General Studies Request Form

Please see the [General Studies Request Overview and FAQ](#) for information and quick answers.

New permanent numbered courses must be submitted to the workflow in [Kuali CM](#) before a General Studies request is submitted here. The General Studies Council will not review requests ahead of a new course proposal being reviewed by the Senate.

Proposal Contact Information

Submitter Name	Submitter Email	Submitter Phone Number
Peter Kung	peter.kung@asu.edu	909-455-5655

College/School	Department/School
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLA)	School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious Studies (CHSTCRIT)

Submission Information

Type of submission:

Mandatory Review (Course or topic currently holds this designation and is undergoing 5-year review)

What is Mandatory Review?

Courses and topics previously approved for General Studies must be reviewed every five years by the General Studies Council to verify requirements are still met.

ASU Request

Is this request for a permanent course or a topic?

Permanent Course

Subject Code	Course Number	Units/Credit Hours
PHI	329	3

Course Information

Courses approved for General Studies require mandatory review every five years.

Course Title

History of Modern Philosophy

Course Catalog Description

History of Western philosophy from the Renaissance through Kant.

Is this a crosslisted course?

No

Is this course offered by another academic unit?

No

General Studies

Requested Designation

H - Historical Awareness

H: Historical Awareness

Rationale and Objectives

Recent trends in higher education have called for the creation and development of historical consciousness in undergraduates now and in the future. History studies the growth and development of human society from a number of perspectives such as—political, social, economic and/or cultural. From one perspective, historical awareness is a valuable aid in the analysis of present-day problems because historical forces and traditions have created modern life and lie just beneath its surface. From a second perspective, the historical past is an indispensable source of identity and of values, which facilitate social harmony and cooperative effort. Along with this observation, it should be noted that historical study can produce intercultural understanding by tracing cultural differences to their origins in the past. A third perspective on the need for historical awareness is that knowledge of history helps us to learn from the past to make better, more well-informed decisions in the present and the future.

The requirement of a course that is historical in method and content presumes that "history" designates a sequence of past events or a narrative whose intent or effect is to represent both the relationship between events and change over time. The requirement also presumes that these are human events and that history includes all that has been felt, thought, imagined, said, and done by human beings. The opportunities for nurturing historical consciousness are nearly unlimited. History is present in the languages, art, music, literatures, philosophy, religion, and the natural sciences, as well as in the social science traditionally called History.

The justifications for how the course fits each of the criteria need to be clear both in the application tables and the course materials. The Historical Awareness designation requires consistent analysis of the broader historical context of past events and persons, of cause and effect, and of change over time. Providing intermittent, anecdotal historical context of people and events usually will not suffice to meet the Historical Awareness criteria. A Historical Awareness course will instead embed systematic historical analysis in the core of the syllabus, including readings and assignments. For courses focusing on the history of a field of study, the applicant needs to show both how the field of study is affected by political, social, economic, and/or cultural conditions **and** how political, social, economic, and/or cultural conditions are affected by the field of study.

[Revised October 2015]

Note: The following are **not** acceptable submissions for the "H" designation:

1. Courses that are merely organized chronologically.
2. Courses which are exclusively the history of a field of study or of a field of artistic or professional endeavor.
3. Courses whose subject areas merely occurred in the past.

"H" Criteria 1

History is a major focus of the course.

Identify the submitted documentation that provides evidence.

syllabus, required textbook table of contents

How does this course meet the spirit of this criteria?

As the title of the course suggests, this course covers the historical development of philosophical thought in the modern period of the western philosophical tradition, focusing on such historically prominent figures as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. As the syllabus states, "Modern philosophy spans roughly two centuries—from the publication of Descartes's *Meditations* in 1641 through Kant's philosophical works published toward the end of the 1700s. The modern period was, in some ways, the most fertile and influential period in the history of philosophy. This period produced the two major ethical theories in use today (utilitarianism and Kantianism), social contract theories of state power that continue to influence political theorizing today, and accounts of and solutions to the problem of personal identity over time that philosophers of mind continue to wrestle with." Importantly, many of the philosophers in this period were concerned to defend (or in Berkeley's case, to reject) the rise of "mechanical" science and produced metaphysical and epistemological theories that were compatible with the new science that saw the world a bits of matter in motion, governed by universal causal laws.

Please provide detailed evidence of how this course meets this criteria (i.e. where in the syllabus or other course materials).

Syllabus, introduction, p. 1. Syllabus, learning objectives, p. 1. Required textbook table of contents. Syllabus, schedule of readings, pp. 3-7 cover each of the six figures and their philosophical theories in detail.

"H" Criteria 2

The course examines and explains human development as a sequence of events influenced by a variety of factors.

Identify the submitted documentation that provides evidence.

Syllabus, required textbook table of contents

How does this course meet the spirit of this criteria?

The philosophers in this section are introduced in chronological order, each presented in intellectual historical context as dissatisfied with and hence grappling problems that previous thinkers addressed. Descartes is introduced as reacting to a scholastic tradition that places heavy weight on authority of scripture and Aristotle; the puzzle there is how to reconcile the emerging methods of science with deference to authority. Spinoza reacts to Descartes's distinction between an immaterial mind and a material body and Descartes's supposition that God has free will (including freedom to will the laws of nature). The empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume react to the rationalists (Descartes and Spinoza) assumption that some knowledge is non-empirical and argue that all concepts and knowledge is ultimately derived from experience. Unfortunately, a strict empiricist view, as Hume shows us, cannot support a basic assumption of science—that all events are governed by causal laws. At the end of this period, Kant responds to the debate between rationalists and empiricists with a special eye to defending assumptions that are basic to the conduct of science.

Please provide detailed evidence of how this course meets this criteria (i.e. where in the syllabus or other course materials).

Syllabus, learning objectives, p. 1. Syllabus, thesis day contributions assignment, p. 2. Syllabus, schedule of readings study questions, pp. 3-7.

"H" Criteria 3

There is a disciplined systematic examination of human institutions as they change over time.

Identify the submitted documentation that provides evidence.

Syllabus, required textbook table of contents

How does this course meet the spirit of this criteria?

As the syllabus states, "the modern period was a time of intense work on the foundations of knowledge. Emerging alongside the emergence of modern science, modern philosophy attempted to determine the scope, limits, and basis of human knowledge. The epistemological and metaphysical theories produced in the modern period deeply affected, and continue to affect, the course of philosophical thinking about knowledge and about reality."

Please provide detailed evidence of how this course meets this criteria (i.e. where in the syllabus or other course materials).

Syllabus introduction, p. 1. Syllabus, learning objectives, p. 1. Syllabus, thesis day contributions assignment, p. 2. Syllabus, schedule of readings study questions, pp. 3-7.

"H" Criteria 4

The course examines the relationship among events, ideas, and artifacts and the broad social, political and economic context.

Identify the submitted documentation that provides evidence.

Syllabus, required textbook table of contents

How does this course meet the spirit of this criteria?

The relationship between philosophy and the social and political context is most notable at the beginning of the period. Both Descartes and Spinoza were accused of heresy for their views, and Descartes's work was put on the Index of prohibited books. Throughout the period, however, new discoveries in science played a role in how philosophers thought about the physical world. As the syllabus states, "the modern period was a time of intense work on the foundations of knowledge. Emerging alongside the emergence of modern science, modern philosophy attempted to determine the scope, limits, and basis of human knowledge. The epistemological and metaphysical theories produced in the modern period deeply affected, and continue to affect, the course of philosophical thinking about knowledge and about reality."

Please provide detailed evidence of how this course meets this criteria (i.e. where in the syllabus or other course materials).

Syllabus introduction, p. 1. Syllabus, learning objectives, p. 1. Syllabus, thesis day contributions assignment, p. 2. Syllabus, schedule of readings study questions, pp. 3-7.

Attach a sample syllabus for this course or topic, including the list of any required readings.

[329SyllabusS23 compliance.pdf](#)

Attach the table of contents from any required textbook(s).

[Philosophic Classics, Volume III_ Modern Philosophy - 6th Edition - Fo.pdf](#)

Attach any other materials that would be relevant or helpful in the review of this request.

No Response

Form Submission - Proposer

Submitted for Approval | Proposer

Peter Kung - February 28, 2023 at 1:34 PM (America/Phoenix)

Department Approval

Approved

Richard Amesbury - February 28, 2023 at 2:14 PM (America/Phoenix)

Provost's Office Review

Approved

April Randall

Joni Lochtefeld - March 3, 2023 at 2:52 PM (America/Phoenix)

Historical Awareness Mandatory Review

Acknowledgement Requested

David Corlett

Matt Simonton - March 27, 2023 at 6:01 PM (America/Phoenix)

The answers to the criteria questions are far from perfunctory, but we're still having difficulty seeing how the course tests students' historical awareness. The philosophers in question are presented in chronological order, but that seems to be about it. The course objectives do not mention understanding these authors in their historical context. The study questions for the individual readings are also purely intellectual; students are not being tested on the historical or social conditions that might have contributed to the philosophers' questions, or how the ideas of these philosophers affected history. The students appear to be tested solely on their comprehension of the ideas and arguments found in the texts. Revise and Resubmit.

Evan Berry

General Studies Council Meeting

Waiting for Approval

April Randall

Joni Lochtefeld

Proposer Notification

Notification

Peter Kung
