

HI3S6-30 Science, Technology, and Global Politics, 1900 to Present

26/27

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

James Poskett

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Science today is a big part of political life. From the COVID-19 pandemic through to the climate emergency, much of contemporary political debate concerns science and technology. This, however, is not a recent phenomenon. Scientists have long been involved in political debate, whether that was during the anticolonial campaigns of the 1930s or the environmental movements of the 1970s. If we want to understand the politics of science and technology today, we therefore need to look to the past. In this module, we do just that, exploring the political history of science, moving from the early twentieth century through to the present. Topics covered include the history of socialism, fascism, feminism, anti-racism, environmentalism, and anticolonialism. Throughout the course, there is an emphasis on exploring the history of science as part of global political history. The politics of science in Europe is studied alongside that in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

No scientific knowledge is required to take this module.

Module aims

- To introduce students to the history of the science from 1900 to Present.
- To explore the

relationship between science and major political movements and philosophies. • To contextualize the current situation regarding science and politics in policy • To focus on the history of science as it relates to key practical and political concerns, such as nuclear weapons, climate change, race, and food security. • To analyse how political philosophies were reflected in scientific content and practice • To assess the role of science in major political movements such as feminism, socialism, fascism, environmentalism, anticolonialism, and anti-racism. • To explore the global history of twentieth-century science, in regions including Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. • To analyse the role that non-European peoples played in the making and reworking of modern science

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

1. Thinking Politically About Science: Then and Now
2. Suffragettes in the Laboratory
3. Fascist Science
4. British Science and Socialism
5. Stalin and the Scientists
6. Reading Week
7. Science, Maoism, and the Cultural Revolution
8. Science and Swadeshi in Colonial India
9. Nehruvian Science in Postcolonial India
10. Decolonising Science in Sub-Saharan Africa

Term 2

1. Latin American Development
2. Middle Eastern Techno-Politics
3. Science, Technology, and the State of Israel
4. Nuclear Politics
5. Feeding the World
6. Reading Week
7. Science, Racism, and Anti-Racism
8. Feminist Science
9. Environmentalism
10. Climate Emergency

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the history of science and global politics from 1900 to Present

- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of primary sources relating to the history of science and global politics from 1900 to Present
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, relating to the history of science and global politics from 1900 to Present
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas relating to the history of science and global politics from 1900 to Present

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Tutorials	4 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	260 hours (87%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Seminar contribution	10%		No
Assessed by self-assessment see below			
Reassessment component			
1000 word reflective essay in lieu of Seminar Contribution			Yes (extension)
Reflective piece using mark scheme			
Assessment component			
1500 word essay	10%		Yes (extension)
Short essay exploring place of science in one major twentieth-century political philosophy: ie. feminism, socialism, fascism.			
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
3000 word applied task (policy document)	40%		Yes (extension)
The applied task will be to write a policy document in the style of the History & Policy website, linking historical detail to a particular area of public science and technology policy: for example, the climate emergency, food security, nuclear power, feminism, racism, or any other aspect of the course)			
Examples that I will point students to as a model in terms of structure:			
http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/censorship-and-national-security-information-control			
http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/the-internet-and-democracy-an-historical-			

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
perspective http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/clearing-the-air-can-the-1956-clean-air-act-inform-new-legislation			

(Convenor will give a list of possible topics, or students can pick their own in consultation with convenor (in writing).)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

3000 word essay	40%	Yes (extension)
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Essay based on both primary and secondary material exploring history of science and politics. Focus on either a particular science across different regions, or a particular country but multiple sciences, or a particular political philosophy across multiple regions. A list of essay titles will be supplied (or students can come up with their own if agreed in writing with convenor).

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 4 of UENA-VQ33 Undergraduate English and History (with Intercalated year)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V104 Undergraduate History (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V9 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
- UHIA-V1V8 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)

- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL17 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Intercalated Year)
- UHIA-VL16 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of VL16 History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of VL16 History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM15 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)