

Stage 5 Application for a  
**Big History School Developed  
Board Endorsed Course**

To commence in

---

**1 Course Name**

Please select the Learning Area relevant to your course

**HSIE**

Please enter the name of your course

**Big History**

---

**2 Endorsement Sought** – a 100 hour endorsement is automatically granted to 200 endorsements

100 hours Year 9 and/or Year 10

200 hours Year 9 and/or Year 10

---

**3 School Details**

School Name Macquarie University  
School Number 99817  
Postal Address Level 4, Building W6A, Room 436, North Ryde, 2109  
Phone 9850 7015

---

**4 Contact Person**

Name Tracy Sullivan  
Email tracy.sullivan@mq.edu.au

---

**5 Faculty Head's Declaration**

I am satisfied that the university has appropriate staff and teaching resources to implement this course and that appropriate levels of safety/supervision will be met for any practical and work placement components which are part of the course.

Name Andrew McKenna  
Email Andrew.mckenna@mq.edu.au  
Date 24 November 2014

---

## **RATIONALE AND AIM**

### **Rationale**

---

Underpinning this course is a joint effort between teachers, scholars and scientists. This course is designed for students curious about seeking answers to big questions about the history of our Universe and the origin of our species. The course will build upon the learning across the curriculum content and the general capabilities priorities from the NSW Board Of Studies syllabus documents for the Australian Curriculum that encompass the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors to assist students to live and work successfully in the 21st century. Students will investigate deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications.

This course will also address a need for students to have access to learning experiences that enable them to connect knowledge across different discipline areas to solve problems and develop critical and visible thinking skills to assess the validity of claims of knowledge in the problem solving process.

---

### **Aim**

---

Students undertaking the proposed course will achieve a deepening of their understanding and knowledge of the numerous philosophical, scientific and historical approaches to investigating their relationship to the universe and understanding their place within it. They will also have the opportunity to develop a critical approach to investigating claims of knowledge and sources of information.

---

## COURSE STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

### CORE Modules

Module Title	Hours
1 What do we know and how do we know it?	20
2 Where do we come from?	20
3 What makes us human?	20
4 How have humans changed things?	20
5 Where are we now and where are we heading?	20
<b>Total CORE hours</b>	<b>100</b>

## OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

### KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS (KS) objectives and related outcomes

KS Objectives	Outcomes
Students will develop:	A student:
1 knowledge and understanding of philosophical concepts	1.1 identifies and describes philosophical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
	1.2 uses philosophical concepts to analyse a range of differing philosophical viewpoints and perspectives
	1.3 evaluates the usefulness of philosophical concepts to support and /or refute a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
2 knowledge and understanding of how evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe are used to frame problems and conduct investigations addressing essential philosophical questions	2.1 identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
	2.2 explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
3 skills to apply philosophical concepts to questions, cases or problems for the purposes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation of ideas	3.1 identifies and describes appropriate philosophical concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
	3.2 constructs philosophical questions and /or problems using appropriate philosophical concepts
	3.3 analyses differing philosophical viewpoints, perspectives and claims of knowledge using evidence and relevant sources of information from a variety of different texts
4 skills to design, conduct and evaluate investigations, communicating responses to essential philosophical	4.1 locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines and formats

questions	<b>4.2</b> evaluates the usefulness of relevant sources of information and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential philosophical questions and assess claims of knowledge
	<b>4.3</b> selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively to different audiences

**VALUES and ATTITUDES (VA) objective and related outcomes** – note that these outcomes are not intended to be assessed as part of the formal assessment process.

<b>VA Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Students will develop:	A student:
<b>1</b> an appreciation of the role philosophical thought has played in understanding human origins and existence across time	<b>1.1</b> values the role and contribution of philosophical thought to human existence
	<b>2.2</b> appreciates the nature of competing claims of evidence in sources of information

## COURSE CONTENT – CORE MODULE #1

**TITLE:** What do we know and how do we know it?

**HOURS:** 20

**DESCRIPTION:** Briefly describe the focus of the learning that students will experience in this module.

In this module students will be exposed to ideas, and develop an understanding of concepts related to the study of epistemology. Students will be challenged to think about the different types of knowledge they encounter exploring processes of reasoning employed to decide whether to 'trust' claims of knowledge they encounter. Students will examine ways of knowing across a range of disciplines such as history, science and philosophy, as well as exploring how different groups of people across time represent differing claims of knowledge.

**OUTCOMES:** Identify the outcomes that will be addressed in THIS MODULE. These should be taken from the course outcomes that you listed on pages 3–4.

Number	Outcome
KS1.1	identifies and describes philosophical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
KS1.3	evaluates the usefulness of philosophical concepts to support and /or refute a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
KS2.1	identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS2.2	explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS4.2	evaluate the usefulness of relevant sources of information and evidence across a range of disciplines to response to essential philosophical questions and assess claims of knowledge

### MODULE CONTENT:

Students learn about:	Students learn to:
meaning and nature of the study of epistemology	identify 3 key features of the study of epistemology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is knowledge? (What do we know?)</li><li>• How is knowledge acquired? (How we know it?)</li><li>• How do we know what we know? (Why do we 'believe' it?)</li></ul>
	identify claims of knowledge from different disciplines based on key features of the study of epistemology
	identify and apply key features of the study of epistemology to claims of knowledge about students own lives

how different groups of people have represented knowledge throughout time	<p>identify and give examples of different ways varying groups of peoples/cultures have conveyed claims of knowledge throughout time, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing (modern ‘developed’ societies)</li> <li>• pictures / drawings (Egyptian hieroglyphs)</li> <li>• aural (indigenous Australian cultures).</li> </ul>
<p>role and effectiveness of ‘claim testers’ to assess the nature of varying claims of differing claims of knowledge including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• authority</li> <li>• evidence</li> <li>• logic</li> <li>• intuition.</li> </ul>	identify and describe the 4 tests (‘claim testers’) used to assess the nature of differing claims of knowledge
	apply each of the 4 ‘claim testers’ to claims of knowledge from different disciplines
	apply each of the 4 ‘claim testers’ to claims of knowledge about students own lives
	identify differing claims of knowledge from different disciplines and evaluate against the 4 ‘claim testers’
meaning and characteristics of ‘origin stories’	<p>outline and describe key questions an ‘origin story’ attempts to answer including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do we come from?</li> <li>• How as ‘our’ world created?</li> <li>• How did ‘we’ come to be where ‘we’ are now?</li> </ul>
	create own personal ‘origin story’

*Space for additional content.*

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

## COURSE CONTENT – CORE MODULE #2

**TITLE:** Where do we come from?

**HOURS:** 20

**DESCRIPTION:** Briefly describe the focus of the learning that students will experience in this module.

In this module students will explore responses to the fundamental question, 'where do we come from?' within our universe. Students will explore the role of origin stories from a range of cultures in searching for answers to this enduring question. Students will be introduced to the concept of the universe and explore their place within that universe, investigating claims made, and the use of evidence to support those claims across a range of disciplines, including history, examining how we came to be in this current time and place.

**OUTCOMES:** Identify the outcomes that will be addressed in THIS MODULE. These should be taken from the course outcomes that you listed on pages 3–4.

Number	Outcome
KS1.2	uses philosophical concepts to analyse a range of differing philosophical viewpoints and perspectives
KS3.1	identifies and describes appropriate philosophical concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
KS3.3	analyses differing philosophical viewpoints, perspectives and claims of knowledge using evidence and relevant sources of information from a variety of different texts
KS4.1	locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines and formats
KS4.3	selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively for different audiences

### MODULE CONTENT:

Students learn about:	Students learn to:
features and characteristics of 'origin stories' from different peoples / cultures across time	identify and describe key features of 'origin stories' from different peoples / cultures across time
science as a modern day 'origin story'	identify and describe scientific claims of knowledge that attempt to answer key questions of an 'origin story' including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where do 'we' come from?</li><li>• How was 'our' world created?</li><li>• How did 'we' come to be where 'we' are now?</li></ul>
	evaluate scientific claims of knowledge attempting to answer key questions of an 'origin story' using 'claim testers' (authority, evidence, logic, intuition)

<p>current and past models of 'our' universe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ptolemy (Earth as centre of the universe)</li> <li>• Newton (universe as infinite and eternal)</li> <li>• Hubble (expanding universe)</li> </ul>	<p>outline development of our modern day scientific model of the universe, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ptolemy (Earth as centre of the universe)</li> <li>• Newton (universe as infinite and eternal)</li> <li>• Hubble (expanding universe)</li> </ul>
	<p>sequence, chronologically, the development of the current modern day scientific model of the universe to show changes in thinking over time</p>
<p>attempts, past and present, to answer the question, 'where did our universe come from?'</p>	<p>identify and describe key features of attempts, past and present, to answer the question, 'where did our universe come from?'</p>
	<p>create personal hypotheses that attempt to answer the question, 'where did our universe come from?'</p>
	<p>identify and evaluate, using 'claim testers', claims of knowledge made in their personal hypotheses attempting to answer the question, 'where did our universe come from?'</p>
<p>types of evidence supporting the attempts to answer the question, 'where did our universe come from?', as part of the modern day scientific 'origin story' such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parallax</li> <li>• spectroscope</li> <li>• red shift</li> <li>• cosmic background radiation</li> </ul>	<p>outline key features and significance of evidence underpinning our current understanding of the universe as part of the modern day scientific 'origin story' such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parallax</li> <li>• spectroscope</li> <li>• red Shift</li> <li>• cosmic background radiation</li> </ul>
<p>key features of our current understanding of the universe as part of the modern day scientific 'origin story' and the place of human beings within that universe</p>	<p>identify and sequence key features of our current model of the universe, including the place of humans, as part of the modern day scientific 'origin story':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stars</li> <li>• chemical elements</li> <li>• planets</li> <li>• earth</li> <li>• Life</li> <li>• humans</li> <li>• modern 'society'</li> </ul>

*Space for additional content.*

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

## COURSE CONTENT – CORE MODULE #3

**TITLE:** What makes us human?

**HOURS:** 20

**DESCRIPTION:** Briefly describe the focus of the learning that students will experience in this module.

In this module students will explore a range of ideas, claims of knowledge and types of evidence that address the question 'What makes us human'? Students will investigate existing claims of knowledge and create their own hypotheses to this question, to understand and appreciate the complex nature of this essential philosophical question.

**OUTCOMES:** Identify the outcomes that will be addressed in THIS MODULE. These should be taken from the course outcomes that you listed on page 3–4.

Number	Outcome
KS1.3	evaluates the usefulness of philosophical concepts to support and/or refute a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
KS2.2	explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS3.1	identifies and describes appropriate philosophical concepts to address relevant questions, cases, problems and claims of knowledge
KS4.1	locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines and formats
KS4.2	evaluates the usefulness of relevant sources of information and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential philosophical questions and assess claims of knowledge

### MODULE CONTENT:

Students learn about:	Students learn to:
what makes humans different from other forms of life, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the ability to develop 'new' technologies to extract energy and resources from the environment facilitating accelerated adaptation</li><li>collective learning facilitating the emergence of differing 'cultures' and 'histories'</li></ul>	create personal hypotheses to answer the question, 'what makes us human?'
	identify and evaluate claims of knowledge made as part of personal hypotheses answering the question 'What makes us human?' using claim testers (authority, evidence, logic, intuition)
	outline, using specific examples, how the ability to develop 'new' technologies to extract energy and resources from the environment makes human beings different from other forms of life

	outline, using specific examples, how the capacity for collective learning makes human beings different from other forms of life
<p>effects of collective learning significant in answering the question ‘what makes us human?’ such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consciousness</li> <li>• communication</li> <li>• culture</li> <li>• history</li> </ul>	identify and describe, using specific examples, how collective learning has functioned through time as a tool for the development of characteristics of ‘what makes us human’
<p>differing claims of knowledge explaining how human beings came to be the most dominant entity on our planet as part of the modern day scientific ‘origin story’, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extinction events (e.g. asteroid wiping out dinosaurs)</li> <li>• evolution</li> <li>• expansions and migrations (such as: ‘out of Africa’ and ‘multi-regional)</li> </ul>	outline key features of claims of knowledge explaining how human beings came to be the most dominant entity of the planet as part of the modern day scientific ‘origin story’
	assess claims of knowledge explaining how human beings came to be the most dominant entity of the planet as part of the modern day scientific ‘origin story’ using ‘claim testers’ (such as: authority, evidence, logic, intuition)

*Space for additional content.*

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

**COURSE CONTENT – CORE MODULE #4****TITLE: How have humans changed things?****HOURS: 20****DESCRIPTION:** Briefly describe the focus of the learning that students will experience in this module.

In this module students will investigate claims of knowledge and philosophical questions relating to how the nature of our existence on this planet has changed the way we live and the environment we inhabit. Students will be asked to think actively and critically about how the relationship of human beings to each other and the world they live in has changed over time. Students will explore how the growing interconnections between peoples with differing world views and belief systems has shaped responses to enduring philosophical questions, and how this relates to issues students face today.

**OUTCOMES:** Identify the outcomes that will be addressed in THIS MODULE. These should be taken from the course outcomes that you listed on page 3–4.

Number	Outcome
KS1.1	identifies and describes philosophical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts
KS1.3	evaluates the usefulness of philosophical concepts to support and / or refute a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
KS2.1	identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS3.3	analyses differing philosophical viewpoints, perspectives and claims of knowledge using evidence and relevant sources of information from a variety of different texts
KS4.1	locates and selects relevant sources of information and evidence from across a range of disciplines and formats

**MODULE CONTENT:**

Students learn about:	Students learn to:
significant developments in the shaping of the current relationship between human beings and the planet, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agriculture</li> <li>• emergence of cities and states</li> <li>• cross-continent exploration</li> <li>• industrialisation</li> <li>• globalisation</li> </ul>	identify and describe, using specific examples, key developments through time significant in shaping the current relationship between human beings and the planet
	sequence, chronologically, key developments through time significant in shaping the current relationship between human beings and the planet

<p>features and consequences of growing interconnection between human beings throughout time</p>	<p>outline, using specific examples, types of interconnections between human being on the planet through time including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trade</li> <li>• migration</li> <li>• exploration</li> </ul>
	<p>explain, using specific examples from across time, how growing interconnections between human beings contributed to the emergence and growth of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• world religions</li> <li>• accelerated innovation and emerging technologies</li> <li>• the study of 'human history'</li> </ul>
<p>philosophical questions raised by the effects of increasing globalisation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the future of the human race?</li> <li>• What is 'equality' and is it achievable?</li> <li>• What is the role of the individual in a globalised world?</li> </ul>	<p>discuss relevance of philosophical questions raised by the effects of increasing globalisation, using specific examples.</p>
	<p>create personal hypotheses in response to philosophical questions raised by the effects of increasing globalisation</p>
	<p>identify and assess claims of knowledge made in personal hypotheses responding to philosophical questions raised by the increasing effects of globalisation using 'claim testers' (such as: authority, evidence, logic, intuition)</p>

*Space for additional content.*

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

## COURSE CONTENT – CORE MODULE #5

**TITLE:** Where are we now and where are we heading?

**HOURS:** 20

**DESCRIPTION:** Briefly describe the focus of the learning that students will experience in this module.

In this module students will reflect on claims of knowledge, evidence and hypotheses made throughout the preceding four modules of this course to critically assess contemporary and future relationships of human beings with each other, their environment and the universe. Students will revisit key philosophical questions explored in this course and apply them to the context of the world in which they currently live. Students will develop informed hypotheses about the future of human beings in the universe and pose their own philosophical questions relevant to their experiences now and in the future.

**OUTCOMES:** Identify the outcomes that will be addressed in THIS MODULE. These should be taken from the course outcomes that you listed on page 3–4.

Number	Outcome
KS1.3	evaluates the usefulness of philosophical concepts to support and / or refute a range of differing claims of knowledge and perspectives
KS2.1	identifies types of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS2.2	explains and assesses the role of evidence and discipline-based claims of knowledge of the universe used in addressing essential philosophical questions
KS3.2	constructs philosophical questions and / or problems using appropriate philosophical concepts
KS4.2	evaluates the usefulness of relevant sources of information and evidence across a range of disciplines to respond to essential philosophical questions and assess claims of knowledge
KS4.3	selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively for different audiences

### MODULE CONTENT:

Students learn about:	Students learn to:
key features of our 'modern world' including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• growth (economic &amp; population)</li><li>• global conflict</li><li>• accelerating globalisation</li><li>• impacts on the biosphere (such as: deforestation, global warming, climate change, exhaustion of fossil fuels)</li></ul>	identify and describe key features of our 'modern world'
	explain, through examples how key features of our 'modern world' effect how differing groups experience today's world

	discuss, using specific examples, how key features of our 'modern world' effect students' daily personal experience of today's world
characteristics of differing 'present-day' approaches to answering the question 'Where are we heading?'	identify and describe differing 'present-day' approaches to answering the question 'where are we heading?' including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>religious</li> <li>political</li> <li>scientific</li> </ul>
	identify and assess differing claims of knowledge from 'present-day' approaches of answering the question 'where are we heading?' using 'claim testers' (such as: authority, evidence, logic, intuition)
role of key philosophical questions in how individuals develop and understanding of their world, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where do we all come from?</li> <li>What makes us human?</li> <li>Where are we heading?</li> </ul>	create personal hypotheses in response to philosophical questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where do we all come from?</li> <li>What makes us human?</li> <li>Where are we heading?</li> </ul>
	identify and assess claims of knowledge made in personal hypotheses in response to philosophical questions using 'claim testers' (such as: authority, evidence, logic, intuition)
	explain how personal hypotheses created in response to philosophical questions assist them in making sense of the world they live in

*Space for additional content.*

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

## ASSESSMENT PLAN

### Reporting of Assessment

For awarding grades in a Stage 5 School Developed Board Endorsed Course, the following general performance descriptors are to be used.

<b>A</b>	The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.
<b>B</b>	The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.
<b>C</b>	The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of the content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.
<b>D</b>	The student has a basic knowledge and understanding in a few areas of the content and has very limited competence in the processes and skills.
<b>E</b>	The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in a few areas of the content and has very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.

### Assessment Task Outline

<b>Task Description</b>	<b>% Weighting</b>
Unit quizzes	<b>10%</b>
Oral task / debate	<b>25%</b>
Exam/s	<b>25%</b>
Written research report &/or presentation	<b>40%</b>

Additional assessment information.

[www.bighistoryproject.com](http://www.bighistoryproject.com)

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Provide a brief description on how you propose to evaluate the course.

---

Students will complete a survey at the commencement of the course for their perceptions of what the course will teach them and what they are hoping to gain from completing the course. They will also be asked to complete an evaluation of each module. A survey will also be conducted at the end of the course. They reflective journals will also provide information that can be gathered for evaluation of the course. Teachers will also evaluate the course, its content and the time spent on each section.

Teachers will also be asked to undertake the same survey evaluation process in relation to their experiences of teaching the course and their observations of student learning as a result of undertaking the course.

---