

Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

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The Need for the Humanities

The humanities tell us what it means to be a human in the modern world. It is about the ways a modern citizen-subject, who is autonomous, free, free-willed and possessed of inalienable rights, interacts with society and the world.

The modern human being is a political subject (as opposed to, say, a religious subject). We exist as individuals and social bodies. The humanities are a continuous accrual of the entirety of this experience.

Literature allows us to put ourselves in the shoes of other beings, to imagine being somebody or something else.

What Is Culture?

We might tentatively call culture the relationship between human experience, everyday life, social relations and power. Particular cultural practices include literary, visual and aural production, art and artisanal practices, pop culture and ephemera.

We can distinguish three levels of culture:

- the lived culture of a particular time and place
- recorded culture, of every kind (culture of a period)
- the culture of the selective tradition – the factor connecting the above