

Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

Spring 2022, IIIT Hyderabad

04 Feb, Friday (Lecture 1)

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Knowledge in the Pre-Modern World

The conception that the Ancient Greeks, Indians or Arabs had of “history” is very different from today’s. All creation, including knowledge, was considered as having come from the same divine source, and thus it could not be divided into disciplines.

This view of knowledge was followed by the idea that it could be obtained not by divine revelation, but by experimentation. This led to the upturning of many widely held archaic beliefs, like geocentrism. The heliocentric revolution caused the development of the sciences and knowledge, through the idea that physical laws are the same everywhere.

The human sciences had a similar revolution – that human action was more than an expression of divine will, and that history was more than a vehicle for morality.

History

History is about understanding and explaining past events, both the human and the natural causes. It is concerned with processes of change.

When we study history, there are some important questions we need to identify the answers to:

- who was involved
- what happened
- when did it happen
- where did it happen
- how did it happen
- why did it happen