

## Release of new HSC Senior Syllabuses – February 2017

The new syllabuses are available at: <http://syllabus.bostes.nsw.edu.au/hsie/>

The syllabus webpages also have a number of other documents including:

- Support Material
- School Based Assessment Material
- *The Modern History Stage 6 Draft Syllabus Consultation Report*, which outlines how consultation was dealt with.

### Modern History

The new Modern History syllabus may generate a mixed response from teachers because of the phasing out of some favoured topics and the introduction of new ones. While the structure and priorities of the course appear similar to the existing one, there will be an initial challenge for teachers in programming pathways through an array of new topics and requirements. The new syllabus does offer two significant opportunities. Firstly, the Year 11 course looks fresh and interesting. It gives plenty of scope for teachers to offer their students an exciting introduction to Modern History. Secondly, the Year 12 course may encourage a less Eurocentric approach to the selection of Modern History topics, something that will require adjustment but which is forward looking.

### Ancient History

The new Ancient History syllabus will be welcomed by the majority of teachers. The syllabus has not undergone any significant change although the removal of some niche topics will disappoint those teachers who have developed expertise and resources in these over the years. However, it is encouraging to see the inclusion of an Asian focus which can be studied in both the year 11 and now the Year 12 course for the first time. The Year 11 course has been refreshed with some additional new topics and case studies that will appeal to teachers and students, particularly those which focus on the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the ancient world.

### History Extension

The new History Extension syllabus involves little more than a fine-tuning of the existing syllabus. And this is very welcome. The new History Extension syllabus consolidates the best features of a blue ribbon senior course that challenges our most able students to explore the nature and purpose of history and conduct their own research.

### HSC Assessment – Exam Specifications

A negative, across all courses, is NESA's failure to incorporate any detail about the specifications for the HSC examination in the published syllabuses. This is especially disappointing given the lack of transparency about assessment planning throughout the syllabus development process. It will certainly make it more difficult for teachers to program and resource the new syllabuses. On the other hand, there is now the opportunity for NESA to pause and invite discipline specific input on external assessment.