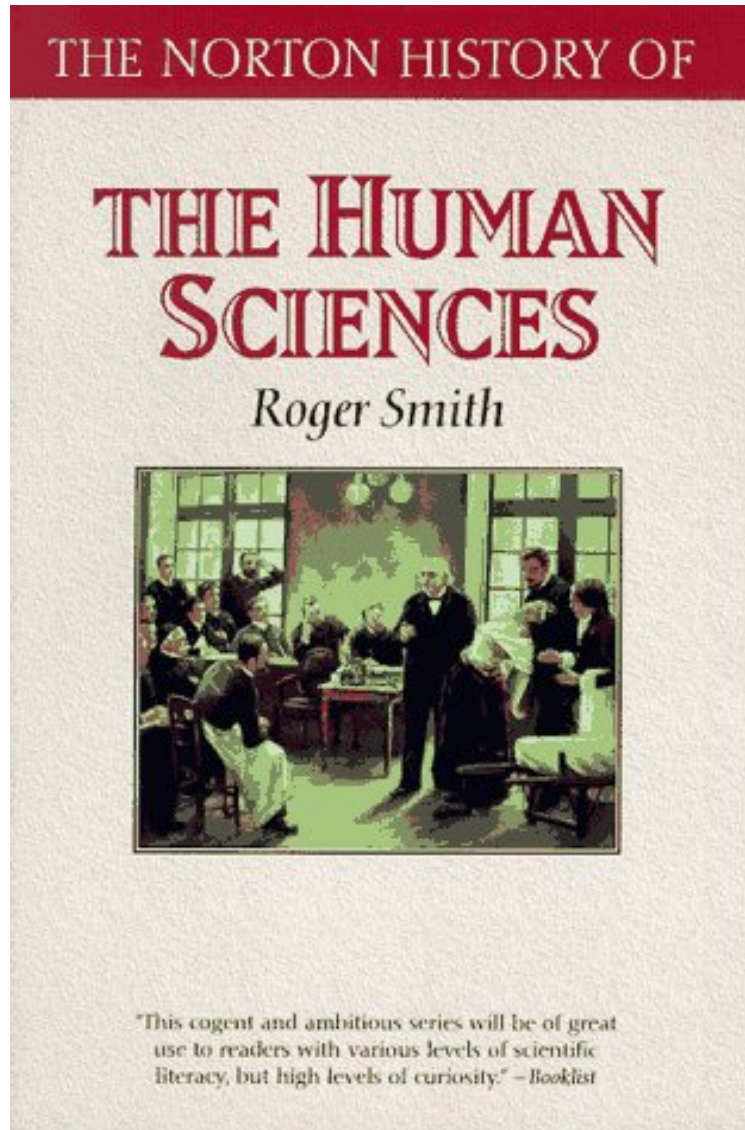


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## The Norton History of the Human Sciences (The Norton History of Science)

*Roger Smith*

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**Roger Smith : The Norton History of the Human Sciences (The Norton History of Science)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Norton History of the Human Sciences (The Norton History of Science):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ambitious, comprehensive well-writtenBy JerryWetlauferGive the man his due - this is a great book! Enormously ambitious, well-conceived, comprehensive and entirely successful. If it

doesn't read like Malcolm Gladwell, that's just part of the deal - because it's a billion times more informative. Available in the used book market. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An Impressive Accomplishment By Jeffrey Wolf Contrary to another reviewer, I didn't find the prose boring, even if one expects little from a reference work like this. Indeed, it could have been dry as hay. But Smith crafts a convincing narrative out of his materials, no small feat in a work of this length. In its scope and balance, this work is too impressive to be given just two stars. Instead, I think the following conclusion from a review in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* is more on target: "Yet, in spite of the daunting nature of his task, Smith must be judged overall to have written a successful synthetic treatment of his many-faceted subject. The writing is compelling and often sparkling. The thinking is always informed. This is a book that serves many functions: It should be a standard reference, a work that one dips into for the sheer pleasure of reading bits and pieces, and an essential study of the problems underlying a history of the human sciences." 6 of 15 people found the following review helpful. the most boring book in creation! By Caraculiambro This is a big, thick, very boring book from a man who nevertheless knows his subject well. It's basically a history of how the "human sciences" (sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc.) got started and developed over the years. There are no graphs or pictures; it's all narrative. Alas! This is an aggravatingly stuffy slog, although, as I say, you can't complain about its thoroughness. The problem, in my view, is neither the subject matter nor the approach: it's Smith's writing style. If you don't actually have the book in front of you, it's possible to convince yourself that it might be worth your time. No. So dry and lifeless is the writing that the book's other merits (e.g., the versatility and erudition with which the different disciplines are interwoven) never have a chance to see the light of day. True, I was expecting a lot from it: the development of the social sciences is a very fecund subject; I guess I was hoping it would be as engaging, as riveting, and as thought-provoking as, for example, one of Boorstin's outings. And what a shame, too, since this could have been written so much better. In a way, I'm hoping hope that somebody here will rush to this book's defense, since the author obviously put a ton of work into it. But even so, that wouldn't make it a better read. In short: a fertile subject, but one that, sadly, still awaits a magisterial treatment.

A comprehensive history of the human sciences—psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science—from their precursors in early human culture to the present. This erudite yet accessible volume in Norton's highly praised *History of Science* series tracks the long and circuitous path by which human beings came to see themselves and their societies as scientific subjects like any other. Beginning with the Renaissance's rediscovery of Greek psychology, political philosophy, and ethics, Roger Smith recounts how the human sciences gradually organized themselves around a scientific conception of psychology, and how this trend has continued to the present day in a circle of interactions between science and ordinary life, in which the human sciences have influenced and been influenced by popular culture.

About the Author Roger Smith has written for television and films since the early sixties; his screenplays include *Up the Junction*. He has worked with Ken Loach as a script consultant for the past fifteen years and is also a theater director. He is the author of *Tycoonery* and *Inhibition: History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain*.