



ANTH701

Core Issues in Anthropological Theory I

S1 Day 2016

Dept of Anthropology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Kalpana Ram

kalpana.ram@mq.edu.au

Contact via email

W6A 604

4-6 Monday

Administration

Payel Ray

payel.ray@mq.edu.au

Contact via 98508077

W6A 615

Payel Ray

payel.ray@mq.edu.au

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The core unit in the Master of Research specialisation in anthropology provides a grounding in theoretical, methodological and interpretive issues that are currently being debated by anthropologists. These issues will vary from year to year according to contemporary developments in anthropology and the interests of the course convenor. Others may be more enduring, such as the theoretical issues related to kinship, to politics and power and the relation between individual and society, the “writing culture” debate, “Orientalism” and the problem of the “other,” and cultural relativism.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Training in advanced theoretical frameworks and debates in anthropological theory
- A number of issues tracked through core theme of human agency
- Broad applications to debates over multiculturalism, women's agency in non-western societies, issues of colonialism and its aftermath in human sciences

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Preparation and participation	20%	continuous
Essay 1	25%	6 April, Week 6
Essay 2	25%	May 4
Essay 3	30%	June 13

Preparation and participation

Due: **continuous**

Weighting: **20%**

Reading, preparation of summary of main points and arguments, questions for further discussion to bring to class; followed by active discussion and participation

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Essay 1

Due: **6 April, Week 6**

Weighting: **25%**

1. This paper is designed to consolidate your readings for the first 4 weeks and apply them to an ethnographic context. So *use* our readings from the first 4 weeks

All of the readings below are accounts of Indian women in an extreme situation: where

they are seen as 'possessed' by spirits. All are feminist accounts, but they are written at different periods of anthropological writing. How would you see shifts in terms of (i) how they evaluate possession as a form of victimhood for women? (ii) the extent to which they provide even possessed women with some agency in their ethnography (ii) the extent to which they bring in wider issues of inequality, not only class, but colonial legacies, when describing women's agency, or lack of agency.

Readings:

2. Said's critique of anthropological representations; Mani and Abu-Lughod's critique of representations of women exclusively as victims..

Brown, P, M. Macintyre "A Daughter: A thing to be given away'. in *Women in Society: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Eds. Cambridge Womens Studies Collective, London: Virago Press. pp27-47

Isabele Deces-Clarkes. 2000, 'Of women and demons' and 'The decapitation of young brides' (chs. 5 and 6) in *Religion Against the Self. An ethnography of Tamil rituals*. Oxford University Press.

Kalpna Ram. 2012. 'How is afflictive possession 'learned'? Gender and motility in South India. *Ethnos, Journal of Anthropology*, 77 (2), pp 203-226.

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Essay 2

Due: **May 4**

Weighting: **25%**

This essay is designed to get you to discuss 'resistance' as a way of thinking about agency. What are the criticisms that have been levelled at too exclusive a reliance on resistance? What are the ethnographic strategies recommended by Ortner and Abu Lughod Essay as a way of re-locating and writing about resistance? (Remember all this when you come to writing your own ethnographies!!) How does the following ethnographies measure up to such recommendations? It is a wonderful ethnography and is available online at MQ library. It is a big book! Those who read the whole thing are blown away. I don't expect you will be able to. So - be sure to at least read ch.10, and ch 5 on nervosa as both a bodily symptom and a form of registering power relations. But browse widely to get a sense of the way she situates women's lives within very broad networks of power, class, poverty, client/patron relations.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes *Death without Weeping*.

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Essay 3

Due: **June 13**

Weighting: **30%**

1. **The last essay is designed to test you on the concepts we cover in weeks 7-12 and the ethnographic reading for the course, especially last weeks. Since the last week does not entail new reading, get started as soon as we have our week 12 class Use the general discussion in week 13 to air any ideas and questions that come up while writing it.**

The concepts we have covered in this segment are: agency as tactics, agency as imitation, improvisation, making-do, as self-fashioning in taking on disciplines as an ethical endeavour.

How do they help address the problems with liberal accounts of agency exclusively as individual freedom from external constraints imposed by culture, society, oppressive power? As exclusively a matter of formal consent?

How does each enrich our understanding of agency?

Of women's lives especially where liberal norms don't seem to be in evidence?

I don't want you to do any new reading as such, just use the ethnographic material we have covered: especially in last weeks, Mahmood on piety, Dalidowicz on dance pedagogy, Abu Lughod's account of the Bedouin woman. **Feel free to revisit ethnographies from earlier weeks as well.**

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Delivery and Resources

ILearn, Library, Seminar style discussion based on readings and developing cohesive core theme with some explanatory lecture input from convenor.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Training in advanced theoretical frameworks and debates in anthropological theory
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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Essay 3

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Training in advanced theoretical frameworks and debates in anthropological theory
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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Essay 3

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
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- Essay 3

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Essay 3

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Essay 3

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Training in advanced theoretical frameworks and debates in anthropological theory
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Assessment tasks

- Preparation and participation
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Essay 3

Changes from Previous Offering

Assessment has been broken up into shorter and more frequent assignment to enable students to get feedback and consolidate each segment of course as we go.