



FOAR703

Living in the Anthropocene

S1 Day 2017

Department of Geography and Planning

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Andrew McGregor

andrew.mcgregor@mq.edu.au

Contact via email

W3A412

by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The Anthropocene has been proposed as a new geological epoch in which humanity is the driving force of global environmental change. Scientists are concerned that the planetary boundaries that have nurtured and sustained human and non-human life are at risk of being breached. In this unit we explore how social scientists and the humanities are responding to these concerns. Previous academic divisions of labour in which physical scientists working on natural processes and the social sciences and humanities focused on human societies are being dissolved. This unit focuses on those researchers working on the spaces in-between, connecting human and non-human worlds. Understanding these connections, or reconceptualising nature and society altogether, by incorporating concepts such as the Anthropocene, social-nature, coupled human and natural systems as well as Indigenous perspectives, has become increasingly important as we search for alternative futures. The unit provides a critical introduction to the theories and concepts that are becoming vital to understanding and living in the Anthropocene.

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:

Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene

Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries

Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and MRes research projects

Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene

Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

General Assessment Information

Five marks will be deducted from per day for late assessment tasks. If you require an extension for an assessment task please email Andrew with details regarding why an extension should be granted and accompanying documents (eg Doctor's Certificate).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Living the Anthropocene blog</u>	25%	No	From weeks 2-10
<u>Weekly reflective summaries</u>	25%	No	weekly
<u>Anthropocene field project</u>	35%	No	Weeks 5 and 13
<u>Anthropocene presentation</u>	15%	No	Week 12

Living the Anthropocene blog

Due: **From weeks 2-10**

Weighting: **25%**

'Living in the Anthropocene' blog (25%) – Each week one student will write a blog post linked to the weekly theme (to be assigned in Week 1). The blog should draw from the readings from that week and link to a 'real world' example. This can be a current or past issue or something more personal - related to your own life. It should be written in a topical and engaging style but engage intellectually and competently in its exploration of concepts and ideas related to that week's theme. The aim of the blog is to generate a discussion space where we share ideas about what it means to live in the Anthropocene.

The blog must be posted by midnight on the Tuesday of the relevant week to allow other students to review the blog and make comments before class. The blog entry should be around 1500 words and no longer than 2000 words. References should be kept to a minimum and use the Harvard referencing system (e.g. Crutzen, 2012, p. 23 and a full list of references).

Blog writing resources are available on iLearn. Any student receiving an HD for their blogpost will be invited to have it republished on the Department of Geography and Planning's

Groundwork blog.

The student who created the blogpost will be expected to lead a discussion on it in the corresponding class.

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Weekly reflective summaries

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **25%**

Weekly reflective summaries. An important component of the unit is keeping up with the weekly readings. Each week you are expected to write a brief (1-2 page) reflective summary of the required readings for that week and bring this to class to discuss. Your reflective summary should consider what new insights you gained from the readings, what you found most interesting, and any points that you disagreed with. *Five of these summaries must be submitted via ilearn for assessment and feedback by 12 noon on the day of the seminar (Wednesday).* You are welcome to choose which five weeks you will focus upon.

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Anthropocene field project

Due: **Weeks 5 and 13**

Weighting: **35%**

Anthropocene field project essay. In this field research assignment students must respond to the following question:

How can engaging with the ideas, theories and debates of the Anthropocene reframe or inform the conceptual development of your own research project? Explore these themes through a field

research project of your own design.

The field research project is flexibly defined – it might involve working out how 'nonhumans', 'nature' or 'climate change' are considered in books, media or film or involve some observational site visits to places such as zoos, community gardens, wetlands, parks, arts galleries or museums. The Anthropocene field project has two elements:

- a. Research project outline – identifying the topic, approach, resources, and key ideas to be discussed in the essay due to Turnitin in Week 6 – this will be handed back with feedback before the semester break
- b. The project essay (3000 words) due to Turnitin in Week 13.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Anthropocene presentation

Due: **Week 12**

Weighting: **15%**

In this task students are required to make an **Anthropocene Presentation** based on their field project essay to class. The presentation should describe what research they undertook for Assessment Task 3 and how this, and the unit in general, has influenced their thinking about their MRes year 2 research project.

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Delivery and Resources

FOAR703 will be taught through a series of two-hour discussion-based workshops hosted by researchers from across the University. Students will be set required readings before the workshop and these readings will form the basis for in-depth workshop discussions. The unit is

supported by an iLearn website – where readings and assessment instructions and criteria will be made available. Please note that this unit requires compulsory attendance at the workshops. Recordings of workshops are not available on iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer	Activities and Assessment items
Week 1	1 March	Introducing the Anthropocene – Possibilities and problems	Andrew McGregor	Introduction to assessment items
Week 2	8 March	The Anthropocene is a very big deal! A historical introduction to the Anthropocene	David Christian	Reflective summary 1 Blog post: 'The Anthropocene is a very big deal!'
Week 3	15 March	Governing the Anthropocene – 'the Age of Us'	Jon Symons	Reflective summary 2 Blog post: 'The Age of Us'
Week 4	22 March	Encountering the Anthropocene – recalcitrant natures	Emily O'Gorman	Reflective summary 3 Blog post: 'Recalcitrant Natures'
Week 5	29 March	Posthumanism is the Anthropocene	Nicole Anderson	Reflective summary 4 Blog post: Posthumanism and the Anthropocene
Week 6	5 April	Living well with others: Food in the Anthropocene	Alison Leitch / Andrew McGregor	Reflective summary 5 Blog post: 'Food in the Anthropocene' Field project outline due
Week 7	12 April	Indigenous engagements with the Anthropocene	Margaret Raven	Reflective summary 6 Blog post: 'Indigenous Anthropocene'
		Break		
Week 8	3 May	The urban Anthropocene: planet of cities	Greg Downey	Reflective summary 7 Blog post: 'Urban planet'

Week 9	10 May	The Subterranean Anthropocene	Maria de Lourdes Melo Zurita	Reflective summary 8 Blog post: 'The Subterranean Anthropocene'
Week 10	17 May	Does Digital Information Represent an Existential Crisis for Humanity?	Michael Gillings	Reflective summary 9 Blog post: 'A Digital Anthropocene'
Week 11	24 May	Activating the Anthropocene	Jessica McLean	Reflective summary 10 Blog post: 'Activism and the Anthropocene'
Week 12 (AM)	31 May	Researching the Anthropocene – student projects	Andrew McGregor	Students present their field projects
Week 13	7 June	Reflections and summary	Andrew McGregor	Anthropocene field project essay due

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

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and MRes research projects
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Anthropocene field project

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

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and MRes research projects
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project
- Anthropocene presentation

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:

Learning outcomes

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and MRes research projects
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project

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:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene

Assessment tasks

- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project

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 outcome

- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project
- Anthropocene presentation

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

- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and MRes research projects

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
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- Anthropocene presentation