



MHIS115

An Introduction to Big History

S3 External 2016

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

David Baker

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Contact via email

W6A 436

by email, as you require

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Macquarie is the international home of big history, and this is its flagship unit. While most history units look in detail at a particular country, theme or period, this unit surveys history on the biggest possible scale. It begins with the origins of the Universe and goes on to tell a series of linked stories about the origins of the stars and planets; the earth and its inhabitants; human beings; various types of human societies; and global interactions to the present day. Students in the unit explore the changing interactions between people, and people and the environment. In so doing, they are encouraged to think about the kinds of evidence available to historians and the role that history can play in understanding the local and global communities that people belong to today. In the final week we will ask what this large story may have to tell us about the future. Finally, the unit invites students to think about what they regard as the central themes of world histories and big history. No prior knowledge of science or history is required

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:

Analyse and express your judgment about a range of historical phenomena.

Understand the relationship between different scholarly disciplines and their application

to various historical phenomena.

Engage in dialogue with staff and other students regarding diverse ideas and perspectives.

Critically reflect upon your own work and other students' work, with respect to key criteria.

Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
Analyse and apply a range of pre-selected and self-located evidence to major historical phenomena.

Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.

Demonstrate independent and creative analysis of key ideas.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Participation</u>	15%	Weekly
<u>Quiz</u>	5%	Weekly
<u>Research Task</u>	25%	6/1/17
<u>Short Answer Portfolio</u>	25%	3/2/17
<u>Synoptic Paper</u>	30%	3/2/17

Participation

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **15%**

This task requires students to participate regularly in online discussion forums. Weekly readings will inform the topics discussed online, with students offering their own answers to set questions, responding to other students' posts, and continuing a dialogue about key issues and themes. This task required regular, informed, and critical participation for each of the 6 teaching weeks in Session 3.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Analyse and express your judgment about a range of historical phenomena.
- Engage in dialogue with staff and other students regarding diverse ideas and perspectives.

Quiz

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **5%**

After each lecture students will attempt a short quiz that reviews key information presented in the lecture. Students must complete all quizzes throughout Session 3.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Analyse and express your judgment about a range of historical phenomena.
- Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.

Research Task

Due: **6/1/17**

Weighting: **25%**

This task will require students to undertake research on their choice of topic from the first part of the unit. Students will complete a short research essay that assesses their ability to gather and evaluate evidence, present information clearly, develop an argument, communicate ideas, and reference appropriately. Students must also complete a small self-assessment task concurrently with this essay.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically reflect upon your own work and other students' work, with respect to key criteria.
- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
- Analyse and apply a range of pre-selected and self-located evidence to major historical phenomena.

Short Answer Portfolio

Due: **3/2/17**

Weighting: **25%**

This task requires students to submit weekly short answers on set questions. The short pieces of writing incorporate a review of key ideas and information from the week's lecture content and readings. Students are also required to do a small amount of research in preparation for each short answer. Weekly short answers are uploaded to the 'Workshop' tool in iLearn and are peer-reviewed. Each student will review one short answer per submission. At the end of semester, students submit their two best short answer pieces in a portfolio, based on feedback from the peer-review process. Students must also complete a small self-assessment task concurrently with this assessment task.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically reflect upon your own work and other students' work, with respect to key criteria.

- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
- Analyse and apply a range of pre-selected and self-located evidence to major historical phenomena.
- Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.

Synoptic Paper

Due: **3/2/17**

Weighting: **30%**

This essay asks students to argue their case for the key theme of MHIS115. It will incorporate a look at a wide range of topics covered throughout the unit. Students will be assessed on their ability to present information clearly, develop an argument, communicate ideas, and reference appropriately. Students are also required to complete a small self-assessment task concurrently with this essay.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between different scholarly disciplines and their application to various historical phenomena.
- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
- Demonstrate independent and creative analysis of key ideas.

Delivery and Resources

This unit will run fully online through [iLearn](#).

Students will require regular access to broadband internet and a computer.

This unit has been compressed for Session 3 offering.

Unit Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the unit; the Big Bang; the origins of stars, galaxies and chemical elements

Week 2: The origins of the solar system and the earth; the origins of life; the evolution of life on earth

Week 3: The evolution of hominines; early *homo sapiens*; humans in the Paleolithic era

Week 4: Early agricultural societies; agrarian civilisations; cities, states, and power

Week 5: The agrarian era around the world; early global exchange networks; global interaction and development to 1700 CE.

Week 6: The Industrial Revolution; the 20th century; the future.

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.

Students are required to comply with Macquarie University's [Academic Honesty policy](#).

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

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
- Demonstrate independent and creative analysis of key ideas.

Assessment task

- Synoptic Paper

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Critically reflect upon your own work and other students' work, with respect to key

criteria.

Assessment tasks

- Quiz
- Short Answer Portfolio

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and express your judgment about a range of historical phenomena.
- Understand the relationship between different scholarly disciplines and their application to various historical phenomena.
- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history

Assessment tasks

- Quiz
- Research Task
- Short Answer Portfolio
- Synoptic Paper

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and express your judgment about a range of historical phenomena.
- Understand the relationship between different scholarly disciplines and their application to various historical phenomena.

- Critically reflect upon your own work and other students' work, with respect to key criteria.
- Understand and construct arguments related to key theories and themes in world history
- Analyse and apply a range of pre-selected and self-located evidence to major historical phenomena.
- Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.
- Demonstrate independent and creative analysis of key ideas.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Research Task
- Short Answer Portfolio
- Synoptic Paper

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand the relationship between different scholarly disciplines and their application to various historical phenomena.
- Analyse and apply a range of pre-selected and self-located evidence to major historical phenomena.
- Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.

Assessment tasks

- Research Task
- Short Answer Portfolio
- Synoptic Paper

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication

technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Engage in dialogue with staff and other students regarding diverse ideas and perspectives.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Research Task
- Short Answer Portfolio
- Synoptic Paper

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Engage in dialogue with staff and other students regarding diverse ideas and perspectives.

Assessment task

- Participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Apply key ideas to critically evaluate historical change.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
21/11/2016	Minor adjustment of course details.