



MECO340

Natures-Cultures

S1 Day 2018

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer & tutor

Ian Collinson

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Contact via email

Y3A 191G

Please arrange a consultation via email

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

ENGL332 or GEOP340 or ANTH304 or POL397 or SOC350 or SOC302 or GEOP380 or (3cp in CUL or ICOM or MAS or MECO or MMCS or MUS units at 300 level)

Co-badged status

Unit description

While we often think of culture as something that distinguishes humans from the natural world, today the lines between nature and culture, biology and technology, humans and other species are increasingly difficult to draw. Bringing together perspectives from the environmental humanities, media and cultural studies, feminist philosophy and the creative arts, this unit gives students a vocabulary to reflect on their entanglements with a more-than-human world. How are other species, environments and planetary processes such as climate change represented by different cultures, the media and before the law? Is culture a uniquely human phenomenon, or are there non-human modes of agency, community, language, technology and artistic expression? How might these nature-culture entanglements come to matter - ethically, imaginatively and ecologically?

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:

Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.

Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.

Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.

Identify and reflect on different ways of relating to, conceptualising, narrating and imagining nature-culture entanglements.

Critically reflect on ethical issues in human-environment relations and articulate a position on environmental justice.

General Assessment Information

Important: Be sure to keep a copy of all your work submitted. Keep these copies until the unit is over and you have received your final grade from the University.

Late Assessment Penalty

Unless a special consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply -- two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date -- and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (including weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submission will be accepted for timed assessments -- e.g. quizzes, online tests etc.

Assessment Standards

All work submitted for this unit will be graded according to standards outlined in the following table.

GRADE	RANGE	STATUS	DESCRIPTION
HD	85-100	Pass	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality, insight or creativity in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the program.
D	75-84	Pass	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality or creativity in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the program and the audience.
CR	65-74	Pass	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the program.

P	50-64	Pass	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the program; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the program. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.
F	0-49	Fail	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the program.

Remark Policy

The Department of Media, Music, Communication & Cultural Studies has an assignment remark policy. Please find the relevant information/application form here: <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstati c/public/download/?id=167914>

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Active Participation</u>	20%	No	Ongoing
<u>Nature-Culture Entanglements</u>	30%	No	23:59 Tues 10 April (wk7)
<u>Ecological Companions</u>	50%	No	23:59 Fri 8 June (wk13)

Active Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Active Participation

You will be assessed on your active and ongoing contribution to class discussions and activities. This includes: engaging with the weekly readings and lectures, listening to your peers and collaborating with them, and undertaking class activities designed to help you prepare for your other two assignments.

A full account of this assignment will be provided in the Assignment Folder in ilearn. Active Participation will be assessed according to criteria including:

Marking Criteria

1. The quality of your ongoing engagement with the weekly readings and lectures during class discussions.
2. Listening to your peers and collaborating with them during class activities and discussions.
3. Active contribution to class activities.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.
- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
- Identify and reflect on different ways of relating to, conceptualising, narrating and imagining nature-culture entanglements.
- Critically reflect on ethical issues in human-environment relations and articulate a position on environmental justice.

Nature-Culture Entanglements

Due: **23:59 Tues 10 April (wk7)**

Weighting: **30%**

Short Essay: (1, 500 words)

In this essay, you will be asked to identify a particular entanglement between nature and culture which matters to you. Why is this entanglement important, and what new ways of thinking, acting and imagining ecologically are needed in response?

A full account of the Short Essay will be provided in the Assignment Folder in ilearn. The Short Essay will be assessed according to criteria including:

Marking Criteria

1. Your understanding of general concepts and theories explored in the course, in the context of your chosen topic.
2. Your demonstration of reflective, analytic and evaluative skills.
3. Your fluency on the nature-culture entanglement on which you have chosen to write.
4. The structure of your essay: a clear statement of its aims (in the introduction); clear organization (in a logical order and with a clearly flowing discussion); distinctive and clear argument, and a well-stated conclusion.
5. The use of appropriate theory and evidence to support your analysis and arguments, drawn from the unit's required and recommended readings and media and relevant independent research.
6. Use of scholarly referencing and bibliography, as well as the clear presentation of your paper in terms of format, spelling, syntax, grammar and expression.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
- Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.
- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
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Ecological Companions

Due: **23:59 Fri 8 June (wk13)**

Weighting: **50%**

Reflective Task (2, 500 words)

In this assignment you will be asked to find an ecological companion to think with, it may be living or non-living – a plant, a water way, an insect, a microbe, a machine, a mountain, a weather event, a physical phenomenon such as electricity, a geologic process, a familiar walk way, a new technology, or an urban environment. Throughout the semester, you will keep a journal, where you research your ecological companion, and experiment to find ways to think and write in their company.

In your final submission you should:

- Introduce your companion.
- Select two accounts of your companion: one drawn from scientific literature, one from the arts or the media and critically reflect on them, in light of key arguments and approaches from the readings and lectures.
- Provide creative documentation of two (or more) encounters with your ecological companion drawn from your Journal. For example, this could take the form of numbered observations, a first person reflection, a story, a menu, annotated photographs etc.
- Write a scholarly reflection on what living and thinking in the company of your ecological companion can teach us.

A full account of the assignment will be provided in the Assignments Folder on ilearn. The Reflective Task will be assessed according to criteria including:

Marking Criteria

1. All parts of the task are addressed in a well-structured way.
2. Your understanding of key concepts, approaches and theories from the unit, in the context of your chosen topic.
3. The analysis of two well selected accounts of your ecological companion (chosen from scientific literature, the arts or the media), which you connect to relevant concepts and arguments from the course.
4. Attention to the relationship between form and meaning. Choice of a style of writing and that is appropriate to documenting encounters with your companion, and the quality of your written accounts of your companion.
5. Your ability to communicate complex ideas about the relationship between yourself and your ecological companion clearly and to evaluate different ways of conceptualising, narrating and/or imagining encounters with non-human others.
6. The use of relevant concepts, evidence and arguments in support of your scholarly reflection, drawn from the required and recommended readings and media, and from independent research.
7. Use of scholarly referencing and bibliography, as well as the clear presentation of your assignment in terms of format, spelling, syntax, grammar and expression.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
- Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.
- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
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Delivery and Resources

Unit Delivery

The unit will run as a weekly one-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial. **Lectures begin in week 1; tutorials start in week 2.**

Both the lecture and the tutorials will be held on Fridays, please see the timetable for room allocations. Remember to check on the day of the first class to make sure that there are no last minute room changes to the lecture venue! Tutorials can also be subject to change - so please check your email or iLearn in Week One to ensure that you are on top of any unanticipated

changes.

Class Attendance

Listening to different perspectives and actively discussing important and provocative issues and ideas is an essential component of MECO340. It is something we value highly and we think you will get a lot out of it too. For this reason, regular ongoing face-to-face attendance of weekly lectures and tutorials is essential if you are going to get the most from the unit.

Keep in mind, that in 'Active Participation' (assignment 1), you will be assessed on the quality of your ongoing contributions to class discussion and activities. So attending regularly throughout the semester, will give you the opportunity to undertake this assignment task. Students who miss more than 2 tutorials without proper documentation (see 'Special Consideration' policy in the 'Policies and Procedures' section below) will most likely be significantly disadvantaged in the completion of their Active Participation assignment task.

Required and Recommended Readings

It is essential that all enrolled students come to class prepared (by having done the readings) and ready to participate in class activities and discussions.

A list of Required and Recommended Readings will be provided on the ilearn site.

The readings are chosen to be engaging and challenging. If you find some sections tricky, when you first do the reading don't worry, there will be lots of opportunity in the lectures and tutorials to unpack things further. Often it is helpful to reread pieces you find particularly interesting, difficult or provocative after the weekly tutorial and lecture, to gain a deeper understanding.

Accessing Readings and Resources

All students should purchase a printed Unit Reader and bring it with them to class each week. The Unit Reader contains the Required Readings.

Unit Schedule

The schedule of lectures will be made available via ilearn. However, here are some of the topics that are likely to be addressed in lectures: thinking beyond the culture/nature binary; nature before and after Romanticism; the Anthropocene; thinking about climate change; animal rights and worlds; Indigenous perspective; ecomedia, etc.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)

- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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

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

- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
- Identify and reflect on different ways of relating to, conceptualising, narrating and imagining nature-culture entanglements.

Assessment tasks

- Active Participation
- Ecological Companions

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 outcomes

- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
- Critically reflect on ethical issues in human-environment relations and articulate a

position on environmental justice.

Assessment tasks

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Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
- Identify and reflect on different ways of relating to, conceptualising, narrating and imagining nature-culture entanglements.

Assessment tasks

- Active Participation
- Ecological Companions

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
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- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
- Identify and reflect on different ways of relating to, conceptualising, narrating and imagining nature-culture entanglements.
- Critically reflect on ethical issues in human-environment relations and articulate a position on environmental justice.

Assessment tasks

- Active Participation
- Nature-Culture Entanglements
- Ecological Companions

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
- Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.
- Express and discuss complex ideas about the relationship between themselves and the non-human world around them clearly.
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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

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
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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 outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
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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 outcomes

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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 outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of environmental humanities and cultural studies to their programs of study, and their wider lives.
- Apply key concepts, methods and arguments from the environmental humanities to contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues and debates.
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