ANTH3005
Anthropology and Indigenous Australia
Session 1, Weekday attendance, North Ryde 2020
Department of Anthropology

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## General Information

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### Unit description

This unit introduces and explores the relationship between anthropology and Indigenous Australia. Anthropology's longstanding interest in Indigenous cultural practices is critically examined, with attention to the settler colonial context surrounding the documentation of Indigenous traditions. Specific topics to be covered include: pre-colonial food procurement strategies and the 'hunter gatherer' label; the land-people connection (the Dreaming, totemic landscapes and territorial organisation); first contacts; and the impact of colonisation. A key theme of the unit is that neither Indigenous nor settler Australian societies can be understood without a recognition of their profound historical interrelation. Lectures explore how anthropology has informed or contested Australian settler colonial and governmental practices that have impacted Indigenous Australia in some unexpected ways, and also how Indigenous perspectives and forms of active social engagement continue to shape broader Australian cultural concerns. This unit attends anthropologically to many issues facing contemporary Indigenous Australia, such as incarceration, and state recognition.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates](https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates)
Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Identify the value of reading a range of Indigenous texts alongside more conventional anthropological contributions.
ULO2: Demonstrate sound understanding of the complexity of Indigenous cosmologies, relations to land, and kinship systems.
ULO4: Integrate anthropological theory with contemporary debates over a range of issues affecting Indigenous Australians.
ULO5: Engage with a contemporary Sydney site to reveal its cultural and historical significance to Indigenous Australia.

Assessment Tasks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
Students should consult iLearn for revised unit information.

Find out more about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and potential impacts on staff and students

Delivery and Resources

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19.
Please check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

The required and extended readings for each week are available through Leganto (see the top of your iLearn site).

Unit Schedule

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
The unit schedule/topics and any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please consult iLearn for latest details, and check here for
Week 1. Beginnings

Tuesday February 25

This unit deals critically with the relationship between anthropology and Indigenous Australians. Where should our explorations begin? We will soon learn of the deep history of the human presence on this continent, but for now we will begin by reading debates about the anthropological enterprise and its legacy. I’ve set a powerful poem called ‘ologist’ by Gomeroi scholar and poet Alison Whittaker as the required reading for our first week. Whittaker captures a First Nations’ critique of the social scientist gaze, and drive to ‘discover’ indigeneity. I’ve also included a long list of background reading, from which I’d like you to select two readings to do in your own time. Aboriginal thinkers Ian Anderson and Michael Dodson reflect on anthropology as a colonial way of knowing Aboriginality, while Yin Paradies examines his own decisions about identification and the broader structures shaping it. Gillian Cowlishaw and Diane Barwick are two anthropologists whose work both vigorously defends the anthropological drive to know and understand cultural others, but who also closely engage with Aboriginal people’s determination to define and describe life on their own terms. Historian Laura Rademaker explores the connection between anthropologist Jane Goodale and her Tiwi island interlocutors. Dick Kimber’s chapter in *First Australians* provides an informally written introduction to the Horn Scientific Expedition, which included Baldwin Spencer. Spencer, together with Frank Gillen went on to publish *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* in 1899, among the first works of anthropology detailing Aboriginal ceremonial life. We will learn more about nineteenth century and early twentieth century Australianist anthropology in lectures.

This first lecture will also provide an introduction to the unit, its scope and aim, and an explanation of requirements and student assessment. There are no tutorials in Week 1. Again, you are not expected to read all of the work listed below! Select at least two as background reading.

**Required reading:**


**Background reading:**

- Yin Paradies. 2006 Beyond Black and White: Essentialism, Hybridity and
• Gillian Cowlishaw. 2015 Friend or foe? Anthropology’s encounter with Aborigines. Inside Story.

Week 2. A human-created continent

Tuesday March 3

We turn out attention to another kind of beginning this week, in discussion of the over 65,000 years long human inhabitation of this continent. Read Billy Griffiths’ essay for an account of these beginnings, a story partially told in ‘stones and bones, sediment and pollan’. Aboriginal peoples’ varied ways of living on this continent will next be examined. Anthropologists have long charactised Indigenous Australians as ‘hunter gatherers’—but we use Bunurong and Yuin writer Bruce Pascoe’s work to expand our understanding of the ways in which Indigenous people hunted, collected, farmed and cultivated, ultimately shaping a human-created landscape. Further, we probe the limitations involved in the very practice of classifying, which draws on outdated social evolutionary models that shaped anthropology’s beginnings. We will also consider what it means for some Indigenous people to eat ‘bush foods’ today.

We will watch parts of the documentary series, First Footprints in the lecture.

Required reading:

• Extracts from Sue Coleman Haseldine and Marcina Coleman Richards. 2012 Nguly Gy Yadoo Mai (Our Good Food). To be distributed and read in class.

Extended reading:

• Elizabeth Povinelli. 1994 ‘Today We Struggle’: Contemporary Hunting, Fishing, and
Week 3. Dreamings, ceremony and Country

We have been learning about the past and present of intimate people-land relations. This week, we inquire into anthropological accounts of Aboriginal worldviews or cosmologies, and their embodiment and objectification in ceremonies and social relations. As Aboriginal people strongly assert and anthropologists have long identified, the living land and waters created by ancestral beings, or Country, is the cornerstone of traditional Aboriginal life. The terms ‘Dreaming’ and/or ‘Dreamtime’ are now commonly used in Australia. We will learn of their entry into the broader lexicon from Spencer and Gillen’s recordings. We will ask what exactly is meant by terms such as ‘totemism,’ ‘Country’ and ‘Dreaming”? How do these concepts help us to understand different understandings of the earth, emplacement, belonging, and social relations?

Required reading:

- Catherine Berndt. 1979 Land of the Rainbow Snake. Sydney: William Collins (selections will be read in class)

Extended reading:


• Nancy Munn. 1971 The Transformation of Subjects into Objects in Walbiri and Pitjantjatjara Myth. In Ronald M Berndt (ed.) Australian Aboriginal Anthropology, University of Western Australian Press, Nedlands.


• Alan Rumsey. 1994 The Dreaming, Human Agency and Inscriptive Practice, Oceania, 65, 2, 116-130.

**Week 4. Relatedness, kin, family**

Tuesday March 17

This week we shift the focus from people-land relations to people’s relationships to each other. The study of the intricacies and complexities of First Nations’ kinship systems was an early preoccupation of the anthropological endeavor in Australia, and remains important to the discipline. Aboriginal writing and scholarship also centres the question of family and relatedness, in very different ways. Reading Fred Myers and the extended reading by Dianne Austin-Broos, we learn that social relations can be better understood when we consider people’s rights and relationships to material objects. Drawing on Sally Babidge’s research in a Queensland country town, we will also explore the way kinship concepts are activated in urban and regional settings today, using the concept of ‘performative kinship’.

**Required reading:**

• Jack Latimore. 2018 Far enough to be on my way back home. In Anita Heiss (ed), Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia, Melbourne: Black Inc.

• Fred Myers. 1989 Burning the Truck and Holding the Country: Pintupi Forms of Property and Identity. In E. Wilmsen (ed), We are here: politics of Aboriginal land tenure, Berkeley: University of California Press, 15-43.


**Extended reading:**
Week 5. From civil rights to the Bark Petition

Tuesday March 24

Throughout the unit so far, we have been emphasising the need to understand Aboriginal culture forms within colonial history. This week our attention shifts even more explicitly to historical events. We go to the twentieth century, and particularly to changing Indigenous political and cultural aspirations in the post-war period. Our focus over the next two weeks is on how Indigenous-land relations we have been learning about articulate with the broader settler colonial society and state. We track the emergence of a cultural politics at this time, and consider how ‘traditional’ meanings and messages are conveyed to new audiences. A generation of anthropologists became involved in both the establishment of outstations and in land claims in this new era with complex consequences, as we will discuss over the next two weeks.

Required reading:


Extended reading:

- Howard Morphy. 1983 ‘Now you understand’: An analysis of the way Yolngu have used sacred knowledge to retain their autonomy. In Nicolas Peterson and Marcia Langton (eds), Aborigines, Land, and Land Rights, Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies,110-133.
Week 6. Land and the politics of recognition

Tuesday March 31

As we have seen, from the early 1970s until the early 1990s, Aboriginal efforts to secure recognition of their prior occupation and status as land owners made strides at state, territory, and national levels, most prominently in light of the Commonwealth Land Rights Act, NT (1976). This week we also discuss the Mabo ruling that led to the 1993 Native Title Act. The lecture and readings introduce critical perspectives on the politics of recognition, the notion of cultural difference, and what it has come to stand for. Why are land rights and sacred sites legislation so important to Aboriginal people? Do you think that Mabo fostered European understanding of Aboriginal land tenure? Does native title offer a way for European and Aboriginal reconciliation? What are some ways we might think of the unintended consequences of native title legislation for Indigenous identities and senses of belonging? What role has anthropology played in all of this?

Required reading:

- Uluru Statement from the Heart (Available in iLearn)

Extended reading:

- Eve Vincent. 2017 ‘We know who we are’: the impact of native title on local identities. In ‘Against Native Title’: Conflict and Creativity in Outback Australia, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 89-108.

Week 7. Work, welfare and Indigenous Australians

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/122076/unit_guide/print
Indigenous people have long been a part of the settler colonial economy, as the reading by Maria Nugent makes clear. This fact is often overlooked in the public debate about Indigenous Australians’ relationship with the welfare state. Over the past two decades in Australia public attention has been especially focused on the high rates of Aboriginal unemployment in remote regions. Prominent Indigenous public intellectual Noel Pearson has long argued that in the pre-colonial period Aboriginal people partook of a ‘real economy’, where the labour of hunting and food collecting was crucial to the reproduction of Indigenous society. After the decline, beginning in the 1960s-1970s, of rural economies and industries such as pastoralism, which relied on exploited seasonal Indigenous labour, welfare payments came to replace what Pearson calls ‘real work’. The oral history of Myles Lalor tells us something of this earlier period, as do Ruby Ginibi Langford’s recollections.

Required reading:

- Diane Austin Broos. 2003 Places, practices, and things: The articulation of Arrernte kinship with welfare and work, American Ethnologist, Vol. 30(1), 118-135 (Group B: READ THIS IF YOUR SURNAME BEGINS WITH N-Z)

Extended reading:

Mid-session recess Monday April 13 – Friday April 24.

**Week 8. Doing good in Indigenous Australia?**

Tuesday April 28

Guest lecturer Drew Anderson will focus the anthropological gaze on non-Indigenous people this week, discussing various helping practices. Drew’s lecture will deal with questions of help, harm, segregation and solidarity.

**Required readings / viewing:**

- Please also watch the two clips of Gary Foley speaking, which are available in iLearn

**Extended reading:**


**Week 9. Reading ethnography**

Tuesday May 5

**There is no lecture this week.** We will discuss our chosen ethnography in your tutorial.

**Required readings:**

Arrive at your tutorial having read the introduction and at least one chapter of an ethnography / extended work from the books collected in the ‘Book List’ at the top of your Leganto library. These items have all been place on reserve. I strongly suggest you select a work that is relevant to your research essay, which is due at the end of Week 9.

The short essay question for this week involves a book review of your chosen ethnography. You may wish to consider this ahead of time—if you’re really getting into the text you have selected, and decide to read the whole thing, then selecting this week to submit a short essay will allow...
you to explore the significance of your chosen ethnography.

**Week 10. Self-determination, interventionist policies and the Uluru statement: anthropology and the state**

**Tuesday May 12**

We have been circling around the question of the state’s role in Indigenous lives, a question brought into focus with the 2007 Northern Territory National Emergency Response (‘the Intervention’). The debates surrounding the Intervention involved an accusation levelled at anthropologists: that their fixation with land-based cultural difference had blinded anthropologists to the suffering of remote-living First Nations people. This week, we focus our attention firmly on the state from an anthropological perspective. We ask: What might an anthropology of the state, ‘state effects’ and state practices look like? Where and what is ‘the state’? How does the state constitute and govern contemporary Aboriginal subjects? How do Aboriginal people meet the state?

We will return at this point to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, as canvassed in an earlier discussion of state recognition.

**Required reading:**


**Extended reading:**


**Week 11: Entanglements with Settler law**
Tuesday May 19

From the police shooting of Kumanjayi Walker in late 2019, to the 2016 Don Dale scandal to the 2019 coronial inquest into David Dungay’s death in custody, we often hear media stories that tell of Indigenous people’s entanglements with the Settler legal system. In Western Australia, the rate of incarceration for Indigenous Australians is 20 times higher than for non-Indigenous people; rates of Indigenous incarceration have in fact continued to rise markedly since the new millennium. How might anthropological analyses help us make sense of this sobering statistical picture? What historical, political and cultural frames shed light on the relationship between Indigenous people, Settler law and correctional institutions?

Required reading:

- WATCH: Allan Clarke’s Blood on the Tracks or listen to the podcast. See: http://www.abc.net.au/austory/blood-on-the-tracks---part-1/9795718

Extended reading:


Week 12. The significance of place

Tuesday May 26

Uncle Phil Duncan from Walanga Muru will join us this week to give vital background for your final assessment item, the Koori Sydney site visit.

Required reading:
Week 13. Conclusions
Tuesday June 2

In this concluding lecture, we will survey the major themes of the course.

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). 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.)*

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the 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)*.

**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](https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct)

**Results**

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](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 Enquiry Service**

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

**Equity 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.
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.