



ANTH7000

Core Issues in Anthropological Theory I

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2023

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Chris Houston

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The seminars deal with a selected number of theoretical, methodological and interpretative issues that are currently being debated by anthropologists. These issues will vary from unit to unit according to contemporary developments in anthropology and the interests of the course convenor, and in terms of how current concerns in the discipline link to the theoretical issues addressed by students at undergraduate level. Others may be more enduring, such as the theoretical issues related to the 'writing culture' debate, 'orientalism' and the problem of the 'other', cultural relativism, politics and power, and the relation between individual and society.

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:

ULO1: apply core anthropological theories to both your own life as a member of society and to the social processes of the world around you

ULO2: demonstrate a mastery of emerging themes in the discipline of anthropology by writing an essay and participating in weekly seminar discussions

ULO3: conceptualize the ways that different writers have theorized the creation of culture by subjects as well as the creation of subjects by culture, or what might usefully be described as the mutual co-constitution by cultured subjects (ethnics) and society of each other.

ULO4: consider the issues of social reproduction and domination; the creation of subjectivity through intercultural and inter-subjective encounter; the self-institution of society; and the individual as creator of their world beyond their conditioning by pre-existing cultural frameworks.

General Assessment Information

ASSESSMENT

1. ESSAY (70%)

This essay is required to be approximately 4,000 words in length. The essay should relate, compare and critically assess the work of two or more of the authors to the major themes of the unit – cultural creativity, agency (agents), structures and world-making. In your essay, critically focus on where the authors identify sources of creativity or change, and how the texts articulate society and the individual – or in what terms. This essay is due on *June 4th, Week 13 (Sunday)*. One copy must be uploaded through TURNITIN on this date.

2. SEMINAR PARTICIPATION (20%)

ANTH 7000 class seminars will run from the first week of the second semester (February 20th) until the 2nd of June. The seminar will be devoted to a discussion of course readings, but we will consider essay and thesis research strategies as well. Students are expected to read the set readings and to participate in discussion.

Equally importantly, to facilitate tutorial discussion, non-presenting students are required to submit a one-page response to the readings each week, structured according to the three 'Is' – **Insight**, **Interest**, and **Incomprehension**. In the reading find what you thought was the author's main *insight*; discuss something of particular *interest* to you; and puzzle out why something seemed confusing or even *incomprehensible* that you would like to discuss in the class. Responses can only be submitted at the seminar in which the reading is to be discussed. The seminar mark will be awarded on the basis of the written work, as well as on seminar participation.

The seminar is designed to provide a supportive environment in which students can assist each other in discussing their ideas and interpretations of the readings, in conceptualising their essay and in clarifying their thesis topic.

3. SEMINAR PRESENTATION (10%)

Over the duration of the seminar, depending on student numbers, each student will give one or two brief introductions to the week's reading(s), drawing out its main themes and selecting a number of questions or puzzles for the seminar to discuss. These introductory remarks are intended merely to get the seminar rolling – students might wish to focus on something interesting, maddening or confusing about the reading for example.

Macquarie University Late Penalty Policy

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). **Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.**

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Seminar Presentation	10%	No	Selected Week
Seminar Participation	20%	No	Weekly
Major Essay	70%	No	4/06/2023

Seminar Presentation

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation

Indicative Time on Task ²: 4 hours

Due: **Selected Week**

Weighting: **10%**

Over the duration of the seminar, depending on student numbers, each student will give one brief introduction to the week's reading(s), drawing out its main themes and selecting a number of questions or puzzles for the seminar to discuss. These introductory remarks are intended merely to get the seminar rolling – students might wish to focus on something interesting, maddening or confusing about the reading for example.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- apply core anthropological theories to both your own life as a member of society and to the social processes of the world around you
- conceptualize the ways that different writers have theorized the creation of culture by subjects as well as the creation of subjects by culture, or what might usefully be

described as the mutual co-constitution by cultured subjects (ethnics) and society of each other.

- consider the issues of social reproduction and domination; the creation of subjectivity through intercultural and inter-subjective encounter; the self-institution of society; and the individual as creator of their world beyond their conditioning by pre-existing cultural frameworks.

Seminar Participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 60 hours

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **20%**

To facilitate seminar discussion, non-presenting students are required to submit a one page response to the readings each week, structured according to the three 'Is' – Insight, Interest, and Incomprehension. Find in the article what you thought was the author's main insight; something of particular interest to you; and something that seemed confusing or even incomprehensible that you would like to discuss in the class. The seminar mark will be awarded on the basis of the written work, as well as on seminar participation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate a mastery of emerging themes in the discipline of anthropology by writing an essay and participating in weekly seminar discussions
- conceptualize the ways that different writers have theorized the creation of culture by subjects as well as the creation of subjects by culture, or what might usefully be described as the mutual co-constitution by cultured subjects (ethnics) and society of each other.
- consider the issues of social reproduction and domination; the creation of subjectivity through intercultural and inter-subjective encounter; the self-institution of society; and the individual as creator of their world beyond their conditioning by pre-existing cultural frameworks.

Major Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 60 hours

Due: **4/06/2023**

Weighting: **70%**

The essay should relate, compare and critically assess the work of two or more of the authors to the major themes of the unit – cultural creativity, agency (agents), structures and world-making. In your essay, critically focus on where the authors identify sources of creativity or change, and how the texts articulate society and the individual – or in what terms.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- apply core anthropological theories to both your own life as a member of society and to the social processes of the world around you
- demonstrate a mastery of emerging themes in the discipline of anthropology by writing an essay and participating in weekly seminar discussions
- conceptualize the ways that different writers have theorized the creation of culture by subjects as well as the creation of subjects by culture, or what might usefully be described as the mutual co-constitution by cultured subjects (ethnics) and society of each other.
- consider the issues of social reproduction and domination; the creation of subjectivity through intercultural and inter-subjective encounter; the self-institution of society; and the individual as creator of their world beyond their conditioning by pre-existing cultural frameworks.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

To successfully complete ANTH 7000 students are expected to do the following:

1. Attend the Class Seminar.
2. Attend, where possible, the Anthropology Colloquium series.
3. Satisfactorily complete an essay; participate in the class seminar; and introduce a reading (see Assessment above).

OVERVIEW OF ANTH 7000 SEMINAR

The seminars deal with a selected number of theoretical, methodological and interpretative issues that are currently being debated by anthropologists. This year the ANTH 7000 seminar will examine the ways that different writers have conceptualized and theorized the creation of culture by subjects as well as the creation of subjects by culture, or what might usefully be described as the mutual co-constitution by cultured subjects (ethnics) and society of each other. The works of Bourdieu, Jackson, Castoriadis, and Rapport etc. focus on different aspects of this relationship: on social reproduction and domination; on the creation of subjectivity through intercultural and inter-subjective encounter; on the self-institution of society; and on the individual as creator of their world beyond their conditioning by pre-existing cultural frameworks. The seminar readings and discussion are designed so that your reading and reflection feeds into your fieldwork/thesis, both as aid to facilitate its completion, and as grit to problematize your thinking.

Although our seminar authors would not unanimously agree, it might be useful for students to think of anthropology as the study of the *production of meaning*, including of those meanings produced by anthropologists themselves. This includes ethnographies of course, but also social theories. Ultimately, the producers of meanings are people: however, people also create powerful institutions, practices, religions, places, social relations, histories (stories) and technologies that in their own domains are similarly manufacturers of meaning. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, we are not in control of our own makings, nor obviously of the creations of others: we wrestle with them and the new worlds these creations themselves produce; we seek to speak back to them even as they speak through us; we give our allegiance to their take on the world while insisting, petulantly, upon our own personal emphases. Imitation or mimicry may flatter, attesting to the power of cultural and symbolic systems. But flattery is also a strategy. The anthropologist's *gleaning of meaning* is necessarily a reflexive and political process: how does the ethnographer represent and position him or herself as the interpreter of other peoples' meanings, even as s/he is transformed through the very interpretive encounter?

The ANTH 7000 Convenor in 2023 is Christopher Houston. I am available on extension 8471 and my email address is chris.houston@mq.edu.au. Please contact me about problems of any nature that affects your studies this semester.

Unit Schedule

ANTH 7000: Core Issues in Anthropological Theory: Cultural Creativity, Agency, and Social Life

"Humans are gifted with the capacity and the will to take consciously a stand towards the world and to give it meaning" Max Weber

PROVISIONAL SEMINAR SCHEDULE & CONTENT

Session One: Creativity and Agency

Reading: 'Agent and Agency'; and 'Classification'; in N. Rapport and J. Overing (2000) *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*.

Session Two: **Structuring Society, Making Individuals**

Reading: Bourdieu, P. (1962) *The Algerians*; Part One (pp1-118).

Session Three: **Altering Society, Altering Self**

Bourdieu, P. (1962) *The Algerians*; Part Two (pp119-192).

Session Four: **Gendered Subjects**

Reading: Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Masculine Domination*; pp 1-54.

Session Five: **Structuring Dispositions: A Theory of Practice (as a Middle Way)**

Reading: Bourdieu, P. (1972) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, pp. 1-29; pp. 72-95.

Session Six: **Phenomenology in Anthropology.**

Reading: Desjarlais R. and Throop C.J. (2011) 'Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology', in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 87–102.

Houston, C. (2021) 'Why Social Scientists Still Need Phenomenology', in Thesis Eleven, DOI: 10.1177/07255136211064326, pp. 1-18.

Session Seven: **Phenomenology in Anthropology II.**

Reading: Case study of phenomenology in action, on the topic of student interest.

Term break

Session Eight: **Intersubjectivity in Anthropology**

Reading: Jackson, M. (1998) 'Preamble' (pp. 1-36) in *Minima Ethnographica: Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project*.

Session Nine: **Instituting Society**

Reading: Castoriadis, C. (1997) 'The Imaginary: Creation in the Social-Historical Domain', in *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis and the Imagination*.

Castoriadis, C. (1991) 'Power, Politics and Autonomy', in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*.

Session Ten: **Individuality**

Reading: Rapport, N. (1997) 'Manifesto' & Chapters One-Five, in *Transcendent Individual: Towards a Literary and Liberal Anthropology*.

Session Eleven: **Society and Subjects**

Reading: Rapport, N. (2001) 'Random Mind: Towards an Appreciation of Openness in Individual, Society and Anthropology',

Replies and Response by Friedman, Gray, Kapfarer, Samuel, Sokefeld, Toren, and Rapport, in *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 12: 2.

Session Twelve: **Events and Subjects**

Reading: Humphrey, Caroline. 2008. Reassembling Individual Subjects: Events and Decisions in Troubled Times. *Anthropological Theory* 8 (4):357–380.

Veena Das, 'On Singularity and the Event: Further Reflections on the Ordinary'

[<https://www.academia.edu/8237494/>

On_Singularity_and_the_Event_Further_Reflections_on_the_Ordinary.

Session Thirteen: **TBC.**

Further Readings:

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from **Policy Central** (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). 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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit **Student Policies** (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about

throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.