



AHIX1210

Studying the Past: An Introduction to Ancient History in the 21st Century

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor and Tutor

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9-11 Tuesdays

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The study of the past is constantly evolving and this unit sets out to introduce students to the changing nature of the study of antiquity and the on-going significance of the past in the modern world. This unit also introduces students to the study of primary sources, or evidence from Greek and Roman world, and the evaluation of how history is written through an analysis of a specific historical area.

The first section of the unit is focused on the study of ancient sources - what is our evidence and how did authors millennia ago write about major world events - pandemics, war, politics, and so on that continue to be a focus for us today. This section of the unit will give you a thorough understanding of the issues around the use of evidence in Ancient History.

The second section of the unit focuses on the writing of ancient history in the modern world. You will study a developing area of recent research and critically evaluate how this research is created, its limitations and its strengths, and its significance for those living in the modern world.

The third section introduces students to recent research on the failure of the Roman Republic in the second century BCE with a view to better understanding how a political system can simply cease to function and to understand the relevance of this historical phenomenon for the 21st century.

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: Engage with contemporary cultural perspectives and practices to contextualise historical knowledge from antiquity

ULO2: Explain the principles and processes by which historical and/or archaeological evidence from ancient Greece, Rome and Late Antiquity is analysed, evaluated and interpreted.

ULO3: Examine and critically evaluate historical data with initiative and judgement by presenting evidence based exposition of knowledge and ideas about the study of antiquity.

General Assessment Information

Deadlines, Extensions and Late Penalties

Assessments are due in weeks 4, 8, and 13. You can apply for an extension to a deadline for an assessment - this is known at Macquarie University as Special Consideration - if you foresee an interruption to your studies at the time Assessment 1: Creative Work – Writing as an Ancient Historian cannot be

of submission of an assessment, you should make an application for an extension or Special Consideration.

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.

Use of Ai or Large Language Models (LLMs) for Assessments in this unit

Assessment 1: Creative Work – Writing as an Ancient Historian cannot be completed by an LLM and using an LLM will not help you complete it.

Assessment 2: Blog focused on strengths and weaknesses of 3-4 specified key academic articles/chapters on (available from the Leganto Reading list). LLMs cannot assess text for “strengths and weaknesses”; whereas humans can. However, instruction will be given on how to use an LLM to extend your study by making summaries of other academic publications on the Leganto Reading List.

Assessment 3: Blog focused on the significance of Ancient History with reference to the Roman Republic, specifically in the 2nd century BCE. You are required to use the Leganto Reading List to complete this assessment and are encouraged to use an LLM to summarise a range of articles from the Leganto Reading list and academic viewpoints.

PLEASE DO NOT use an LLM to simply write your assessment, it cannot do what your human brain does based on the Leganto Reading list. Equally, please do not substitute material from the Leganto Reading list with a Google Search or the Encyclopaedia Britannica – you need to base your University work on material held in the University Library and accessible to you via the Leganto Reading List.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Writing as an ancient author</u>	30%	No	21/03/2025
<u>Blog 1 Research Project</u>	30%	No	02/05/2025
<u>Blog 2: Ancient History - The Importance of Studying the Past</u>	40%	No	06/06/2025

Writing as an ancient author

Assessment Type ¹: Creative work

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **21/03/2025**

Weighting: **30%**

This assessment requires students to re-articulate a contemporary event utilising the literary techniques of an ancient author. The purpose of the exercise is to understand the construction of ancient sources and to engage with that format of writing to create a student's own narrative of a contemporary event.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the principles and processes by which historical and/or archaeological evidence from ancient Greece, Rome and Late Antiquity is analysed, evaluated and interpreted.
- Examine and critically evaluate historical data with initiative and judgement by presenting evidence based exposition of knowledge and ideas about the study of antiquity.

Blog 1 Research Project

Assessment Type ¹: Literature review

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **02/05/2025**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will write a blog (600 words) in week eight summarising the strengths and weaknesses of recent research relating to a topic in Ancient History

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Engage with contemporary cultural perspectives and practices to contextualise historical knowledge from antiquity
- Explain the principles and processes by which historical and/or archaeological evidence from ancient Greece, Rome and Late Antiquity is analysed, evaluated and interpreted.

Blog 2: Ancient History - The Importance of Studying the Past

Assessment Type ¹: Media presentation

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **06/06/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will research a topic in ancient history and set out the significance of studying this topic in the form of a blog (maximum 1200 words) that is targeted at the contemporary public.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Engage with contemporary cultural perspectives and practices to contextualise historical knowledge from antiquity
- Explain the principles and processes by which historical and/or archaeological evidence from ancient Greece, Rome and Late Antiquity is analysed, evaluated and interpreted.
- Examine and critically evaluate historical data with initiative and judgement by presenting evidence based exposition of knowledge and ideas about the study of antiquity.

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 undertake this unit, you need to use the following resources :-

- 1) **iLearn page** sets out weekly tasks to be undertaken and is linked to all resources below.
- 2) **Weekly on-line discussion forums** are held in weeks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 (i.e. there is not a tutorial in the weeks in which you need to submit an assessment 4, 8, and 13).
- 3) **Lectures** – these are recorded and provide you with key information, please watch or listen to them each week before your online forum comments that will discuss this material.
- 4) **In conversation** – most weeks feature the option of watching a short conversation between the convenor and an expert on the topic you study in that week.
- 5) **Readings for Online Forums** – each week there is a set of readings to be undertaken, please focus on these (rather than doing random Google searches for material!).
- 6) **Readings for Assessment** – each assessment will have required readings for its completion, you must read these analytically.
- 7) **Leganto Reading List** - this is a set of readings that facilitates your success in the unit. You cannot read everything but should consult key articles.
- 8) **Instruction on the use of AI or Large Language Models (LLMs)** Instruction will be given on how to use LLMs to make summaries of readings in the Leganto Reading List. This allows you to review a wider range of material than if you were just to focus on your own reading.

PLEASE NOTE YOUR HUMAN BRAIN IS VERY CLEVER AND ANALYTICAL, LLMS IN CONTRAST ARE NOT. The use of LLMs can only extend your ability to study Ancient History – it cannot replace it.

The following are NOT resources for study on this unit:-

- 1) Random Google searches for internet sites – these seldom have the quality or rigour for university-level work.
- 2) The Encyclopaedia Britannica – this is NOT a resource for university-level work in Ancient History.
- 3) Use Ai or a Large Language Model (LLM) to create your assessment – it will do at best a Random Internet search; whereas you need to consult the Leganto Reading list – held by the University Library (LLMs do not have access to this material).

Unit Schedule

There are three blocks of work that each lead to one of the assessments.

Block 1: Pandemics in Antiquity (weeks 1-4) Over four weeks, you will study how plagues or pandemics were described by authors, such as Thucydides – who survived the plague of Athens. Our focus here is on how ancient authors represent an event. We look at their style, their omissions and also consider what they don't mention that we would really like to know as historians, or might see as essential for a description of a pandemic. To assess your understanding of how these ancient authors wrote, you will need to write an account of Covid-19 as though you were an ancient author. This block of work develops your understanding of the use and limits of ancient sources or "primary sources".

Block 2: The History of Disability (weeks 5-8) Having looked at primary sources, we turn our attention to secondary sources or the writings of historians in the 21st century. Our focus will be on the challenge of how to write a history of disability. You will focus each week on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a number of chapters of books and articles – what is done well and what could be done better? We will look at both physical and mental impairment with reference to work on the Roman emperors Claudius and Caligula. For the assessment, you write a text of a blog setting out for a member of the public the strengths and weakness of the recent work in Ancient History on disability in antiquity, 4 specific readings will be set for this assessment, but you may include further readings from the Leganto Reading list (please do not use Google to search for websites on this topic and please do not use of the Encyclopaedia Britannica). This block of work contributes to your critical thinking.

Block 3: The Relevance of Ancient History in the 21st Century (weeks 9-13) Does Ancient History Matter? As you study the ancient world, you need to have an answer by the end of the session – so that through the rest of your degree, you can explain why it is important to study Ancient History. In this block, we will focus our reading and discussion in tutorials on a single author Appian, who wrote a History of Rome's Civil Wars in the second century CE – centuries after the events he presents to us. He sought to explain why the Roman Republic failed and ended in civil war leading to a monarchy. By looking at the start of his work, you will encounter the major themes that contributed to the failure of a republic: warfare, slavery, political violence and so on. Like Appian, today, you look back on the Roman Republic or another topic in Ancient History and seek to find its relevance. At the end of this block of work, you create a blog seeking to explain the importance of Ancient History, or why Ancient History matters today in the 21st century. A full reading list is supplied via Leganto that takes you to university level readings held by the University Library (please do not use Google to search for websites on this topic and please do not use the Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.smq.edu.au\)](https://policies.smq.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) (<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 connect.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 the [Service Connect Portal](#), 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.

Changes from Previous Offering

Student evaluations in 2024 praised the introduction of the In Conversations between the convenor and another academic. These have been extended to nearly all weeks of the unit.

Training in the ethical use of Large Language Models (LLM or Ai) has been included in the unit for the first time. Instruction will be given on the effective use of prompts to summarise an academic publication (chapter or journal article).

Assessments have a more focused set of readings as requested by some students in feedback in 2024 and, also to clarify the need to complete assessments with the use of these readings rather than misunderstanding the essential nature of reading material held by the University Library. This is to clarify that the use of an internet search for websites does NOT provide a student with content for assessments at 1000 level.

In 2024, students had access to a license from the University to use Adobe Portfolio to create the third assessment as a published blog. Licenses to Adobe products are no longer available to students. In 2025, students will complete the third assessment as an unpublished blog. The convenor will investigate possibilities for the publication of blogs, but this is no longer a requirement.

Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the [Handbook](#)