



MHIS2001

Between Hope and Despair: A History of Human Rights

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Alison Holland

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above OR (10cp in HIST or MHIS or MHIX units)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

What are human rights? How have they evolved and what is the political and cultural investment in them? How and why does a concept defined by hope and aspiration, promising human rights and freedoms, remain elusive and problematic in theory and practice? We will explore this history through social movements and legal systems, as well as politics, philosophy and rights discourses. We consider the personal and collective stories of human rights and explore key moments in their development from Magna Carta to Indigenous self-determination and climate change. The unit deepens and complicates understandings of modernity developed in MHIS1001 and MHIS1002. In addition, it provides crucial historical background, context and terminology for students interested in careers in international law, foreign aid, global politics and humanitarian organisations.

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: Understand changing ideas of human rights over time and place.

ULO2: Understand critiques of human rights from feminist and postcolonial perspectives.

ULO3: Understand the appropriate legal and political structures within which human rights are articulated.

ULO4: Demonstrate advanced critical writing skills in making sustained and evidence-based arguments about the past.

General Assessment Information

Late Penalties

A late penalty will apply for the two written assessment tasks. What does this mean?

- A penalty of 5% of the total possible mark (of the task) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, until the 7th day. The 7 days includes weekends.
- After the 7th day, a grade of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the student submits the assessment. This is to allow for the release of assessment feedback to the remaining class.
- Submission time for written assessments is set at 11.59pm.
- 1 hour grace period is provided to students who have technical concerns.

Where a student has a [special consideration](#) application for an extension *approved*, then the rules are applied to the new approved due date for that student.

Example

An assessment task is submitted one day late. The task is marked out of 100. The 5% penalty equals 5 marks that will be deducted.

If the above assessment task is worth 40% of the unit then the 5% penalty equates to a 2% deduction.

If the above assessment task is worth 20% of the unit then the 5% penalty equates to a 1% deduction.

PLEASE NOTE:

The above policy does not mean that we don't understand that you are human and unforeseen things can hamper progress, etc. The main thing that the convenor encourages is that you communicate your issues in advance so as to avoid this penalty. If we don't know about your issues/concerns we can't do anything about them. If we know we can assess whether an extension can be given.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Weekly quizzes	20%	No	Each Tuesday, starting week 3
Article analysis	30%	No	Week 7 6th April, 2025 11.59 pm
Research Essay	50%	No	Week 13, 6th June, 2025 11.59 pm

Weekly quizzes

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 1 hours

Due: **Each Tuesday, starting week 3**

Weighting: **20%**

Each week students will be given an online quiz, based on the unit content. This task usually ensures adequate student preparation, kicks off good discussions, and enables us to identify any writing issues.

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Article analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Week 7 6th April, 2025 11.59 pm**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will locate a recent article (last 12 months) in the media about human rights somewhere in the world. They are then asked to offer a close readings of the article. They will need to identify and discuss the larger human-rights context and ideology behind the story. This assessment task helps students note their development in learning about human rights and prepare for the larger research essays to come in terms of critical analysis and writing. (1500 words).

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articulated.

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Research Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 45 hours

Due: **Week 13, 6th June, 2025 11.59 pm**

Weighting: **50%**

Students are expected to develop their own research essay question in consultation with teachers. Essays should include reference to at least four primary sources and ten secondary sources. The 'further reading' lists in the unit guide will be the best place to start research. The point of this task is to hone your research skills; hone your ability to make a sustained argument with evidence; and hone your ability to write persuasively. Refer to the history essay-writing guide on iLearn for information about argumentation and form. (3000 words).

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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

All lectures in this unit are delivered online and uploaded to the iLearn page in each week's dedicated slot. Each week there are 1.5 hours of lectures (usually as 3 x 20-30 minute lecturials), as well as an 1.5 hour tutorial or online discussion forum.

INTERNAL STUDENTS: must attend 1 face-to-face 1.5 hourly tutorial each week. These begin in week 1 of semester.

Please choose one class from below:

Thursday 11-12.30 OR

Thursday 12.30-2 pm

Where: Both classes are located at 8 Sir Christopher Ondaatje Drive, room 114.

EXTERNAL STUDENTS: must login and participate in the weekly online discussion forums which will have a dedicated tutor.

Please login to the iLearn site to familiarise yourselves with the unit, assessments and convenor instructions. Please watch the first lectures prior to coming to the first class and make sure you follow instructions on iLearn from week to week to keep up with lectures and assessment requirements where necessary.

Unit Schedule

Week	Tutorial Topic
1	Welcome and Introduction
2	The 1940s Moment
3	Human Rights Traditions
4	The Evolution of 'Rights'
5	The Holocaust and Human Rights
6	Cold War, Australia and the UN
7	The Colour of Rights - Decolonisation
8	Women's Rights as Human Rights
9	Climate Change and Human Rights
10	The Rights of the Child
11	LGBTIQ+ People and Human Rights
12	Where to from here?
13	Reading and Writing Week

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](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 \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](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.

Unit information based on version 2025.01R of the [Handbook](#)