



ANTH2024

Mad, Bad, Sad: Anthropological Perspectives

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

School of Communication, Society and Culture

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Jaap Timmer

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

(ANTH150 or ANTH1050) or 40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

How do cultures in different parts of the world determine and understand who is mad, bad or sad? Madness, deviance and other forms of social difference are cultural constructs that vary considerably across both historical period and cultural context. Moreover, these ideas have profound moral implications that become dramatically entwined with people's lived experience, as well as broader socio-political structures. We examine the cultural and social construction of normality, with a focus on what happens when people find themselves outside these bounds. We will explore comparative perspectives on social structures and individual experiences and meaning, examining themes such as 'sanity', mental illness and culture, melancholy and depression, emotions, sexuality, gender norms, and their transgressions. Throughout, we will focus on the social processes of labeling, representation, medicalisation, and stigmatisation associated with these experiences. Ultimately, students will come to understand how difference is constructed and embodied, and become aware of how deviance is surveilled, managed, and constrained in a variety of cultural contexts.

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: Demonstrate command of anthropological knowledge and theories related to normality, abnormality, and how social difference is constructed and managed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.

ULO2: Analyse comparative ethnographic perspectives on themes related to culture and madness, disorder, deviance, addictions, and mental health.

ULO3: Identify and analyse the social and cultural factors that make madness a powerful metaphor and site of surveillance within societies.

ULO4: Apply critical analytic skills to discover how desire and deviance transcend individual bodies and are incited, monitored and regulated within the social body and the body politic.

ULO5: Demonstrate an ability to analyse and interpret the significance and impact of medicalisation, labelling and stigmatisation.

ULO6: Analyse and interpret assumptions about other cultures and cultural differences and what is considered 'natural' or 'normal' human experience.

ULO7: Demonstrate an ability to analyse the cultural construction of abnormality and difference within public representations of culture, madness and deviance.

General Assessment Information

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-time 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
Midterm Quiz (online)	20%	No	2025-04-11
Take-home exam	40%	No	2025-05-30
Ethnographic essay	40%	No	02/05/2025

Midterm Quiz (online)

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **2025-04-11**

Weighting: **20%**

A quiz (multiple choice and/or short answer) that will be completed online.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate command of anthropological knowledge and theories related to normality, abnormality, and how social difference is constructed and managed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.
- Identify and analyse the social and cultural factors that make madness a powerful metaphor and site of surveillance within societies.
- Apply critical analytic skills to discover how desire and deviance transcend individual bodies and are incited, monitored and regulated within the social body and the body politic.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and interpret the significance and impact of medicalisation, labelling and stigmatisation.

Take-home exam

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **2025-05-30**

Weighting: **40%**

Take-home written exam

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate command of anthropological knowledge and theories related to normality, abnormality, and how social difference is constructed and managed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.
- Identify and analyse the social and cultural factors that make madness a powerful metaphor and site of surveillance within societies.
- Apply critical analytic skills to discover how desire and deviance transcend individual bodies and are incited, monitored and regulated within the social body and the body politic.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and interpret the significance and impact of medicalisation, labelling and stigmatisation.
- Analyse and interpret assumptions about other cultures and cultural differences and what is considered 'natural' or 'normal' human experience.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse the cultural construction of abnormality and difference within public representations of culture, madness and deviance.

Ethnographic essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **02/05/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

Ethnographic essay on a topic related to the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate command of anthropological knowledge and theories related to normality, abnormality, and how social difference is constructed and managed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.
- Analyse comparative ethnographic perspectives on themes related to culture and madness, disorder, deviance, addictions, and mental health.
- Identify and analyse the social and cultural factors that make madness a powerful metaphor and site of surveillance within societies.
- Apply critical analytic skills to discover how desire and deviance transcend individual bodies and are incited, monitored and regulated within the social body and the body politic.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and interpret the significance and impact of medicalisation, labelling and stigmatisation.
- Analyse and interpret assumptions about other cultures and cultural differences and what is considered 'natural' or 'normal' human experience.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse the cultural construction of abnormality and difference within public representations of culture, madness and deviance.

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

In this online unit, you will explore deviance and other phenomena seen as "out of place" through an anthropological perspective. Our main focus will be on understanding how forms of deviance are shaped by cultural constructions, often tied to norms, values, and identities.

We will critically examine why deviations from the norm intrigue so many of us. While popular media often draws us to true stories of deviance, anthropologists work to situate these behaviors within broader societal and cultural frameworks. By engaging with cross-cultural perspectives on deviance, this course will enhance your understanding of what it truly means to deviate from social expectations.

This unit will be delivered through a combination of online lectures, in-person tutorials, and a discussion forum. Online students will have access to recorded lectures, while on-campus students will participate in interactive lectures. In the face-to-face tutorials, on-campus students will continue discussions in smaller groups, focusing on specific questions, with group presentations facilitating ongoing reflection and conversation. Online students will contribute to these discussions by sharing their insights and thoughts through the chat forum.

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/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) 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 2025.02 of the [Handbook](#)