



ANTH2008

Cults, Saints, Shamans: Religion and Society

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of Communication, Society and Culture

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Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Banu Senay

banu.senay@mq.edu.au

Jaap Timmer

jaap.timmer@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

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

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Religion is a vital subject for anthropologists. On the one hand, religion is a human universal — all groups of people develop complexes of symbols, myths, rituals, and beliefs that allow them to connect with the sacred. On the other hand, they do this in a fascinating variety of different ways. This unit explores how these different forms of religious practices, meanings and expressions come to be, how they change, and what they mean for both human experience and socio-political order. In addition to critically discussing the very concept of 'religion', the unit explores different theoretical positions and concepts that have informed anthropological conversations about religion. Special attention will be paid to how anthropologists conduct research on religious worlds and lives, including the ethical, empirical and philosophical dimensions of their research-based knowledge.

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 knowledge of key themes in the anthropology of religion.

ULO2: Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.

ULO3: Examine ethnographic texts on religious experiences, practices, and lives.

ULO4: Evaluate methodological dimensions of ethnographic research and data collection.

ULO5: Communicate effectively about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.

ULO6: Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about others' practices.

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 non-timed written assessments (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc) is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams/quizzes, 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	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
<u>Observational task</u>	30%	No	13/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Ethnographic Essay</u>	40%	No	11/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Reflection task</u>	30%	No	01/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Observational task

Assessment Type ¹: Experiential task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 17 hours

Due: **13/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students conduct observational activity to collect data for their ethnographic essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Evaluate methodological dimensions of ethnographic research and data collection.

- Communicate effectively about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.

Ethnographic Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **11/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students write an essay (1,600 words) based on their primary data from the observational task

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Examine ethnographic texts on religious experiences, practices, and lives.
- Evaluate methodological dimensions of ethnographic research and data collection.
- Communicate effectively about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about others' practices.

Reflection task

Assessment Type ¹: Reflection task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **01/11/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students produce a multimodal reflection (for example a podcast, photo essay, or mini-video) that applies anthropological concepts from the unit to an aspect of sacred and/or secular life

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Communicate effectively about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about others' practices.

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
- [Academic Success](#) 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.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

All lectures in this unit are delivered in person for the current cohort of ANTH2008 students and are also made available via the ECHO platform. Externally enrolled students are advised to participate in the iLearn discussion groups in lieu of in-class attendance and participation. The links for the groups will be accessible via each week's iLearn section.

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.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [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 <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

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 2026.06 of the [Handbook](#)