



ANTX2002

Health, Illness and Healing

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of Communication, Society and Culture

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Anna-Karina Hermkens

anna.hermkens@mq.edu.au

Tutor

Jesse Negro

jesse.negro@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit focuses on the human experience of what it is to be ill and to be healed. Being ill or being healed isn't just something that happens inside a biological body, it happens at the intersection between a person and the world around them. Students will analyse the biological, ecological, economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions of health, illness, and healing around the world, revealing the various systems and structures that have shaped the relationship between people's bodies and their health. Through case studies of particular illnesses and healing traditions around the world, students will learn how health and illness are shaped, experienced, and understood in the context of cultural, historical, and political forces, and how biomedical traditions are shaped by human cultural systems and vice versa. The unit draws upon various philosophical theories as well as social, cultural, biological, and linguistic anthropology to better understand those factors which influence health and illness. Students will research and write their own "illness narrative" as an exercise in holistically understanding the experience of illness or healing as simultaneously a subjective embodied and a sociocultural experience. Overall, students will gain both practical research skills as well as a greater understanding of how people experience public health systems.

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 anthropological knowledge and theory to medical anthropology and the broader study of illness and healing practices in their social and cultural contexts.

ULO2: Identify the processes through which biology, culture, politics, and ecology interact to shape illness and health, health systems, and patterns.

ULO3: Research, analyse, and represent the illness experience of a person or community, emphasising the integrative factors influencing the condition.

ULO4: Identify and apply the theories and concepts of medical anthropology to critically evaluate one's own culture and determinants of illness and health.

ULO5: Analyse how illness and health (and normality) are constructed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.

ULO6: Evaluate how inequality, social hierarchy, and structural violence generate unequal and often unique health determinants in the global and transnational context.

General Assessment Information

Important 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	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Short ethnographic essay	50%	No	02/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Take home exam	50%	No	08/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Short ethnographic essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 34 hours

Due: **02/10/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Short ethnographic essay. 800 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply anthropological knowledge and theory to medical anthropology and the broader study of illness and healing practices in their social and cultural contexts.
- Identify the processes through which biology, culture, politics, and ecology interact to shape illness and health, health systems, and patterns.
- Research, analyse, and represent the illness experience of a person or community, emphasising the integrative factors influencing the condition.
- Identify and apply the theories and concepts of medical anthropology to critically evaluate one's own culture and determinants of illness and health.
- Analyse how illness and health (and normality) are constructed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.
- Evaluate how inequality, social hierarchy, and structural violence generate unequal and often unique health determinants in the global and transnational context.

Take home exam

Assessment Type ¹: Practice-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Take home exam based on the lectures and readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply anthropological knowledge and theory to medical anthropology and the broader study of illness and healing practices in their social and cultural contexts.
- Identify the processes through which biology, culture, politics, and ecology interact to shape illness and health, health systems, and patterns.
- Analyse how illness and health (and normality) are constructed within particular social, cultural, political, and environmental contexts.
- Evaluate how inequality, social hierarchy, and structural violence generate unequal and often unique health determinants in the global and transnational context.

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

13 Lectures and weekly tutorials and online discussion groups, which start in week 2. Resources are available via LEGANTO.

Lecture attendance, or watching the Echo-live stream or recording, is strongly advised. The lecture content will provide information that we will discuss during the tutorials and in the assignments.

External students are expected to: **1. watch the live lecture recordings which are available via ECHO on Ilearn 2. do the weekly readings, and 3. actively and meaningfully participate in online discussion forums, demonstrating you have watched the lectures and did the readings.**

By the end of week 1 you will be placed in your discussion groups -- there will be approx. 30 students in each group. It will be obvious which group you are in, because it will be the only forum you can access, it won't be possible to see any forums besides the group forum you've been placed in. Beginning in Week 2, a discussion forum will open which can be found under each weekly tab.

a. Questions relating to the weekly **lecture (every Tuesday between 11-1pm) and reading** content will be posted on Ilearn (please respond to these questions *meaningfully* with at least 200 words, by initiating your own discussion post. You don't have to answer each question specifically, feel free to take in the general framing of the question as the basis for your response. You also have the option of picking one or two questions and addressing them specifically. **You have 6 days to post on the forum (until Sunday)**, after that we start with a new topic.

b. You will then take another 200 or so words to respond to someone else, replying directly to their post by taking in their perspective, commenting perhaps on the points where you agree or disagree, pushing further into the implications of their response; basically trying to initiate a discussion.

The assessments are the same as internal students. See the assessments tab.

External Tutor:

Anna-Karina Hermkens anna.hermkens@mq.edu.au

NOTE: If you have enrolled as external/online student after the first week of semester and you cannot see a discussion group, I will have to add you in manually. Please email me ASAP so you do not miss out on being able to participate in online forums.

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 2026.04 of the **Handbook**