



BHIS2001

Oral History and Memory: Voices Across Time

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines the role of oral tradition and collective memory in shaping historical understanding from antiquity to the present day. Students will explore how societies have preserved, transmitted, and contested historical knowledge through spoken narratives, investigating both the potentials and limitations of oral sources in historical reconstruction. The unit begins with the oral traditions of First Nations cultures before examining how oral traditions functioned in ancient societies from Mesopotamia and Egypt to Classical Greece and Rome. We trace the evolution of oral culture alongside written records in the medieval and early modern world, exploring the ways in which communities maintained historical consciousness through storytelling, folklore, religion and ritual. We address the emergence of modern oral history as a disciplinary method in the twentieth century, looking at pioneering work in documenting lived experiences of ordinary people, marginalised communities, and significant historical events. These histories from below allow us to reflect on social history across longer time periods and diverse geographical contexts. Contemporary themes include the digitisation of oral history archives, ethical considerations in conducting interviews, and the relationship between individual memory and collective historical narratives.

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: Critically evaluate the role of oral tradition in ancient and modern societies as a

form of historical knowledge transmission.

ULO2: Analyse the methodological challenges and opportunities presented by oral history sources.

ULO3: Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between individual memory, collective memory, and historical interpretation.

ULO4: Apply ethical frameworks for conducting and interpreting oral history research.

ULO5: Assess the significance of oral history in recovering marginalised voices and alternative historical narratives.

ULO6: Compare oral tradition practices across different cultures and historical periods.

General Assessment Information

This unit is worth 10 credit points which equates to 150 hours of work; therefore, you should expect to commit an average of 12 hours of your time per week to this unit including all scheduled and unscheduled activities as well as preparing and executing the assessment tasks.

Full details about the assessments will be provided on the unit iLearn site and in class.

Late submission penalty

The University's late submission policy is as follows: *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 written reports and recordings only. **Late submission of time sensitive tasks** (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs) **will be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application.** Special consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.*

As per the policy, assignments submitted more than 7 days after the deadline without approved Special Consideration will not be accepted. Students who submit assignments up to 7 days after the deadline without approved Special Consideration will receive a late penalty.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Report on an Archival Source	30%	No	30/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Oral History Interview Report	30%	No	11/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
<u>Research Report</u>	40%	No	08/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Report on an Archival Source

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **30/08/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

A report analysing and evaluating an archival source, considering the role and significance of oral traditions and practices.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the role of oral tradition in ancient and modern societies as a form of historical knowledge transmission.
- Analyse the methodological challenges and opportunities presented by oral history sources.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between individual memory, collective memory, and historical interpretation.
- Assess the significance of oral history in recovering marginalised voices and alternative historical narratives.
- Compare oral tradition practices across different cultures and historical periods.

Oral History Interview Report

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **11/10/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Conduct and transcribe an oral history interview, with accompanying documentation outlining the interview process and ethical considerations required for the interview (800 words + transcript + audio recording).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Analyse the methodological challenges and opportunities presented by oral history sources.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between individual memory, collective memory, and historical interpretation.
- Apply ethical frameworks for conducting and interpreting oral history research.

Research Report

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

A report on the findings of the oral history interview conducted in the second assessment task, placing this within its historical context through additional research (2,000 words).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Analyse the methodological challenges and opportunities presented by oral history sources.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between individual memory, collective memory, and historical interpretation.
- Apply ethical frameworks for conducting and interpreting oral history research.
- Assess the significance of oral history in recovering marginalised voices and alternative historical narratives.
- Compare oral tradition practices across different cultures and historical periods.

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

For internal students, classes take place every week in the format of 2-hour seminars in which readings are discussed and group activities are completed. All lecture content and readings are available online.

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 2026.05 of the [Handbook](#)