



PBHS1102

Museums and Museology: Curating Culture, Questioning Power

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of Humanities

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convener

Julia Hamilton

julia.hamilton@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

25 Wally's Walk, B168 or via Zoom

4pm-5pm on Tuesdays during teaching weeks

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Step behind the glass case and discover how museums shape the stories we tell about ourselves. From ancient cabinets of curiosities to cutting-edge digital galleries, these institutions wield extraordinary power to construct narratives about history and culture. But whose voices get heard, and whose stay silent? This unit explores how museums evolved from elite collections to public institutions, examining how "new museology" has challenged traditional approaches to displaying the past. You'll put theory into practice by developing your own exhibition proposal with peers, crafting curatorial statements and making the difficult choices that museum professionals face daily. You'll discover how every display decision carries profound implications for how we understand history and culture. By the end, you'll view museums as dynamic spaces where culture, politics, and power intersect—not neutral repositories of facts or objects. Whether pursuing a heritage career or simply becoming a more critical museum visitor, this unit will transform how you experience these complex cultural institutions.

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: Describe the historical development and sociopolitical role of museums.

ULO2: Evaluate curatorial practices through the lens of power, voice, and representation.

ULO3: Collaborate on the proposed development of a public history display of an exhibition.

ULO4: Communicate curatorial vision and decision-making that takes into account the real-world responsibilities of museum professionals.

General Assessment Information

Guide to assessment items

Guidelines for preparing the assessment tasks as well as assessment criteria are available on iLearn. The assessment tasks are compulsory in this unit. Each assessment task has a due date listed in the Unit Guide and on the iLearn site and students are expected to submit their work on time.

Special Consideration

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – 5 marks out of 100 credit will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted seven days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. 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-timed 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. The link to locate relevant information and to request Special Consideration can be found via this link [Special Consideration - Eligibility | MQ Sydney](#).

Word Limit Penalty

A penalty of 5% will be applied to written submissions that are under or over the stated word count length by more than 10%.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Skills Log Book	30%	No	06/ 09/ 2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Critical Exhibition Review	40%	No	11/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Group Proposal for Museum Display	30%	No	01/11/2026	Individual and Group	No	Open

Skills Log Book

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **06/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Keep a detailed log of your developing research, analytical and communication skills.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Describe the historical development and sociopolitical role of museums.
- Evaluate curatorial practices through the lens of power, voice, and representation.

Critical Exhibition Review

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 will virtually or physically visit a museum and write a short critical review of an exhibition and/or collection display.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Describe the historical development and sociopolitical role of museums.
- Evaluate curatorial practices through the lens of power, voice, and representation.
- Communicate curatorial vision and decision-making that takes into account the real-world responsibilities of museum professionals.

Group Proposal for Museum Display

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **01/11/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual and Group

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

Working in a group, you will produce a pitch for a display of 3 objects for a museum. Your pitch will cover: title and concept, display of the objects, intended audience, and suggested educational materials to accompany the display. You will also provide a 500 word individual reflection on your team work and process.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Collaborate on the proposed development of a public history display of an exhibition.
- Communicate curatorial vision and decision-making that takes into account the real-world responsibilities of museum professionals.

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

Unit Requirements and Expectations

For in-person tutorial times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes. For any variations on this information, please consult the PBHS/PBHIX1102 iLearn website (which is accessible at the commencement of teaching session).

1. **Lectures:** There is a pre-recorded 1-hour lecture each week for 12 weeks of the session released via Echo360. There is also a short, pre-recorded Industry Expert In

Conversation each week, along with readings to complete via Leganto. It is expected that all students will review these learning materials. You are expected to reflect this commitment to learning this content in your assessments.

2. **Tutorials and Discussion Forum:** There are 2-hour tutorials (for Internal students) and a Discussion Forum (for External Students) for 12 weeks of the session. It is expected that all students will participate actively. A unit like this, drawing on such a broad range of material and different perspectives, works best when everyone brings their thoughts to the table. Participation in tutorials and in the Discussion Forum is considered a vital and rewarding part of the unit.

Technology Used and Required

The unit has an iLearn page which can be accessed via your iLearn login. A personal computer and internet access are therefore required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement. You should also familiarise yourself with [Adobe Express](#) for your assessments, which is free and available to all students. Technical issues will not be accepted as a ground for Special Consideration applications. If your device is not compatible with Adobe Express, you can use other open source software.

Unit Schedule

Available on iLearn one week before tutorials commence in Session 1.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#) (<https://policies.s.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>). 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>) 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.

Changes from Previous Offering

This unit is new and running for the first time in 2026.

Accessibility Statement

This unit is intended for all students, including those with disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that tends to negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the session, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact the unit convener.

For students with accessibility requirements, you are encouraged to contact [Accessibility Services](#) to ensure that we, as an institution, are supporting your learning. By making a plan through Accessibility Services, you can ensure accommodation without disclosing any information to your course convenors.

There are also a range of resources on campus that serve to support and improve student learning and wellbeing, including the [Learning Skills Unit](#), [Peer Support](#) programs, resources for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students](#), [English Language support](#), and [Student Wellbeing](#) support and resources. Please reach out to these programs or contact the unit convener directly for further information.

Unit information based on version 2026.06 of the [Handbook](#)