



AHIS3203

Slavery in the Ancient World

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

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Ray Laurence

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

120cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit tackles one of the crucial aspects of ancient history – how enslaved people built the economies that powered ancient cultures. You'll discover how successful wars didn't just bring glory and territory, but also captives who became the backbone of entire economic systems. Explore how slavery looked different across various ancient cultures. Examine the complex realities of enslaved people's daily lives – how they fit into families and households, and how ancient legal systems treated humans as property that could be bought and sold. But this isn't just a story of oppression. We'll also look at how slaves gained their freedom and what happened to them afterwards, plus how the growth of slavery affected free citizens too. You'll learn that enslaved people weren't passive victims. We'll discuss the many ways they showed resistance – from small acts of defiance to major revolts that shook entire empires. You'll come away understanding that in the most oppressive systems, people found ways to maintain their humanity and fight for their dignity. This unit will challenge you to think critically about power, economics, and human rights in the ancient world.

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: Evaluate how modern scholars have interpreted the ancient evidence for slave systems in ancient societies.

ULO2: Identify theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study of ancient slavery.

ULO3: Analyse a set of ancient sources relevant to the interpretation of slave societies in antiquity.

ULO4: Formulate interpretations of ancient slavery for an academic audience.

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-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.

Please check the Special Consideration page for details <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>), which will also give you information about how to apply for Short Extensions.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Literature Review	30%	No	23/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Case study/analysis	40%	No	06/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Qualitative Analysis	30%	No	08/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Literature Review

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **23/08/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

1000 word literature review of a key topic for the study of slavery in the ancient world.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study of ancient slavery.

Case study/analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **06/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

1200 word evaluation of the limitations of our current understanding of ancient slavery

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate how modern scholars have interpreted the ancient evidence for slave systems in ancient societies.
- Identify theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study of ancient slavery.
- Formulate interpretations of ancient slavery for an academic audience.

Qualitative Analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

800 word analysis of five textual sources to explain their significance for the study of slavery

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study of ancient slavery.
- Analyse a set of ancient sources relevant to the interpretation of slave societies in antiquity.
- Formulate interpretations of ancient slavery for an academic audience.

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

Lectures - each week, there is a total of c. 1 hour of lecture content recorded that is embedded in the iLearn page. Mostly, this content is recorded in 30 minute chunks - powerpoint slides are also provided for you to use as a resource for your assessments.

Each week readings are set (see iLearn page) that need to be read and understood. These readings form the basis for the completion of your assessments.

There is a weekly tutorial in which you can set out your thoughts on the readings and also listen to points made by other students on these readings.

Policies and Procedures

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

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