



FOAR703

Living in the Anthropocene

S1 Day 2018

Department of Geography and Planning

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Andrew McGregor

andrew.mcgregor@mq.edu.au

Contact via email

W3A412

by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Geologists are investigating whether we have entered a new geological epoch known as the Anthropocene in which humanity is a driving force of global environmental change. With human activities increasingly connected to processes of planetary degradation there is an urgent need for multidisciplinary research that overcomes traditional divides between physical scientists, social scientists and environmental humanities researchers. This unit offers an interdisciplinary and critical introduction to Anthropocene studies, an important area for current and future research. The unit focuses upon how we should live in the Anthropocene and respond to the knowledge that current socioecological practices are not sustainable. Some key themes include: histories of the Anthropocene; human-nature relations; social and environmental justice; Indigenous knowledges; non-human agency; environmental governance; activism and impacts. The unit is team taught involving leading thinkers from across the university. It is designed to be accessible to students from a wide range of backgrounds and incorporates considerable flexibility to steer assessments towards your research interests.

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:

Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene

Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries

Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests

Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene

Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Living the Anthropocene blog</u>	20%	No	From weeks 2-10
<u>Weekly reflective summaries</u>	25%	No	weekly
<u>Anthropocene field project</u>	35%	No	4 April and 5 June
<u>Anthropocene presentation</u>	10%	No	31 May (week 12)
<u>Participation in class</u>	10%	No	all semester

Living the Anthropocene blog

Due: **From weeks 2-10**

Weighting: **20%**

‘Living in the Anthropocene’ blog (25%) – Each student will be responsible for writing one blog post linked to the weekly theme (to be assigned in Week 1). The blog should draw from the readings from that week and link to a 'real world' example. This can be a current or past issue or something more personal - related to your own life. It should be written in a topical and engaging style but engage intellectually and competently in its exploration of concepts and ideas related to that week's theme. The aim of the blog is to generate a discussion space where we share ideas about what it means to live in the Anthropocene.

The blog must be posted by midnight on the Tuesday of the relevant week to allow other students to review the blog and make comments before class. The blog entry should be around 1500 words and no longer than 2000 words. References should be kept to a minimum

and use the Harvard referencing system (e.g. Crutzen, 2012, p. 23 and a full list of references). Blog writing resources are available on iLearn. Any student receiving an HD for their blogpost will be invited to have it republished on the Department of Geography and Planning's Groundwork blog.

The student who created the blogpost will be expected to lead a discussion on it in the corresponding class.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Weekly reflective summaries

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **25%**

Weekly reflective summaries. An important component of the unit is keeping up with the weekly readings. Each week you are expected to write a brief (1-2 page) reflective summary of the required readings for that week and bring this to class to discuss. Your reflective summary should consider what new insights you gained from the readings, what you found most interesting, and any points that you disagreed with. *Five of these summaries must be submitted via ilearn for assessment and feedback by 12 noon on the day of the seminar (Wednesday).* You are welcome to choose which five weeks you will focus upon.

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Anthropocene field project

Due: **4 April and 5 June**

Weighting: **35%**

Anthropocene field project.

Students must develop and conduct a small field research project that is informed by some of the ideas, theories and debates associated with the Anthropocene. You are encouraged to develop a project that links to your broader MRes research interests and / or discipline, however this is not essential.

The field research project is flexibly defined – it might involve working out how 'nonhumans', 'nature' or 'climate change' are considered in books, media or film or involve some observational site visits to places such as zoos, community gardens, wetlands, parks, arts galleries, laboratories, or museums. The Anthropocene field project has three elements:

- a. *Developing your research* - You must submit a brief **research project outline** that identifies the topic, aims, approach / methods, resources, and key ideas to be discussed in the essay. This is due 10pm Tuesday 4 April (Week 6) through Turnitin and should be no longer than 4 pages. You will receive feedback prior to the semester break
- b. *Conducting the research* - data gathering and analysis out of class time.
- c. *Writing up your research* - You must submit a **project essay** (3000 words) through Turnitin by 10pm on Tuesday 5 June (week 13).

Class time will be devoted to project development. In addition you are welcome to discuss any stage of your research project with the unit convenor - please email to make an appointment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
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- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Anthropocene presentation

Due: **31 May (week 12)**

Weighting: **10%**

In this task students are required to make an **Anthropocene Presentation** based on their field project essay to class. The presentation should describe what research they undertook for Assessment Task 3 and how this, and the unit in general, has influenced their thinking about their MRes year 2 research project.

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- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests

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- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Participation in class

Due: **all semester**

Weighting: **10%**

This unit is based on weekly discussion sessions to which all students are expected to contribute. Each week students will receive a mark for attendance and for engagement - reflecting how well they engaged with discussion that week. Marks are not allocated for dominating discussions but for respectful, informed and original engagement with the themes identified in class and through weekly readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Delivery and Resources

FOAR703 will be taught through a series of two-hour discussion-based workshops hosted by researchers from across the University. Students will be set required readings before the workshop and these readings will form the basis for in-depth workshop discussions. The unit is supported by an iLearn website – where readings and assessment instructions and criteria will be made available. Please note that this unit requires compulsory attendance at the workshops. Recordings of workshops are not available on iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer	Activities
1	28 Feb	Introducing the Anthropocene: possibilities and problems	Andrew McGregor	Introduction to assessment items
2	7 March	The Anthropocene is a very big deal! A big history introduction	David Christian	Blog: a Big History of the Anthropocene Reflective summary 1
3	14 March	Encountering the Anthropocene: recalcitrant natures	Donna Houston	Blog: recalcitrant natures RS 2
4	21 March	Governing the Anthropocene: the age of us	Jon Symons	Blog: the Age of Us RS 3
5	28 March	Living well with others: food in the Anthropocene	Alison Leitch / Andrew McGregor	Blog: Food in the Anthropocene RS 4

6	4 April	Anthropocene biopolitics	Claudio Minca	Blog: Biopolitics and the Anthropocene RS 5
7	11 April	Indigenous engagement with the Anthropocene	Andrew McGregor	Blog: Indigenous Anthropocene RS 6
8	2 May	The urban Anthropocene: planet of cities	Greg Downey	Blog: Urban planet RS 7
9	9 May	Urban responsibilities in the Anthropocene	Sara Fuller	Blog: Urban responsibilities RS 8
10	16 May	Digital information and the existential crisis facing humanity	Michael Gillings	Blog: Artificial intelligence in the Anthropocene RS 9
11	23 May	Activating the Anthropocene	Jessica McLean	Blog: Activism in the Anthropocene RS10
12	30 May	Research the Anthropocene: student projects	Andrew McGregor	Student Anthropocene presentations
13	6 June	Reflections and summary	Andrew McGregor	Anthropocene field project essay due

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). 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](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, 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 ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

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.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Anthropocene field project

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Weekly reflective summaries

- Anthropocene field project
- Anthropocene presentation

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop advanced multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene
- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene
- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Develop and apply research design and practice skills that engage with emergent themes of the Anthropocene

Assessment tasks

- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Improve skills in written, verbal and conversational forms of research communication

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Weekly reflective summaries
- Anthropocene field project
- Anthropocene presentation
- Participation in class

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and reflect on novel areas of research and engagement across human and non-human boundaries
- Conceptualise links between Anthropocene issues and personal research interests

Assessment tasks

- Living the Anthropocene blog
- Anthropocene field project
- Anthropocene presentation
- Participation in class

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
22/02/2018	The unit schedule has been updated.