



AHIS355

A History of Magic: From the Magi to Merlin

S2 External 2018

Dept of Ancient History

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	4
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	7
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	10
<u>Changes from Previous Offering</u>	15

Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Malcolm Choat

malcolm.choat@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

By appointment

Tutor

Rachel Yuen-Collingridge

rachel.yuen@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

By appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 level or above or (6cp in AHIS or AHST units at 200 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit will survey magic in the ancient world, from the Ancient Near Eastern civilisations, through the Egyptian and Graeco-Roman worlds, to Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and early Medieval Europe. It will provide thorough coverage of the way magic has been defined, understood, and used in these civilisations, and the way it has been conceived and studied in the history of modern scholarship over the past two centuries. Students will focus closely on the material sources for ancient magic, especially handbooks of spells and amulets on papyrus. There will also be close consideration of the construction of magic as an antithesis to religion in the ancient and modern worlds. As a coda, the unit will look beyond the ancient world to the role, use, and understanding of magic in wider historical, literary, and scientific contexts. This will include not only consideration of magic (and things which might be considered 'magic') in the Renaissance and modern worlds, but aspects of cognitive psychology such as perceptual illusions and delusional beliefs.

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:

Identify evidence for the understanding and practice of magic from the ancient to early modern world.

Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.

Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.

Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.

Classify and interpret textual, documentary, and artifactual material

Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents, and extract relevant data from them.

Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;

Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.

Recognise the significance of the past to the present.

Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

General Assessment Information

Marking criteria and standards

Guidelines on the criteria and standards required for assessment tasks, as well as rubrics where appropriate, will be placed on the iLearn site. Marks given for individual items of assessment are indicative only; final marks will be determined after moderation.

Assignment Submission

ALL written assignments must be submitted via Turnitin within iLearn.

You are required to present yourself for examination at the time and place designated in the University Examination Timetable. The only exception to sitting an examination at the designated time is because of documented illness or unavoidable disruption. In these circumstances, please consult University Policy for the available procedure.

Extensions

ALL deadlines are firm unless an extension has been requested in writing one (1) week before the due date. All requests for extensions must be submitted via ask.mq.edu.au and be supported by appropriate documentation. A penalty for lateness (see below) will apply unless a medical certificate or other written substantiation is supplied. Assignments handed in early will not be marked and returned before the due date. Always retain a copy of work you submit in

case it is lost in the online system.

Late Submission Penalty

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. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

*"100" is to be understood as 100% of the marks *for that task*, not the entire unit.

Satisfactory Completion of Unit

In order to complete this unit satisfactorily students must gain a mark of 50% or more, and attempt all assessment tasks.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Academic Honesty Quiz	0%	Yes	Week 3 Friday 17/8
Essay Bibliography	10%	No	Friday Week 5 31/8
Essay	40%	No	Week 7 Friday 14/9
Magical Spell	15%	No	Week 13 Tutorial
Exam	35%	No	Exam period

Academic Honesty Quiz

Due: **Week 3 Friday 17/8**

Weighting: **0%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

Students will complete a short quiz that gives examples of academic dishonesty. Students must gain full marks in this quiz to pass the unit. Students may attempt the quiz as many times as they wish.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Essay Bibliography

Due: **Friday Week 5 31/8**

Weighting: **10%**

Students must submit a bibliography for their essay. It will be assessed on the relevance of the items to their question and the sources, and the formatting of the bibliography, which must be consistent, and follow a standard disciplinary practice. An 'Essay Presentation & Conventions: Style Guide' produced by the Department of Ancient History is available [online](#): one of the systems laid out there be followed, or students may use another system, but it *must be applied consistently*.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify evidence for the understanding and practice of magic from the ancient to early modern world.
- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents, and extract relevant data from them.
- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.

Essay

Due: **Week 7 Friday 14/9**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will submit a 2000 word essay: a choice of questions and further guidance may be found on the iLearn site. Note that the word count does *not* include footnotes and bibliography.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify evidence for the understanding and practice of magic from the ancient to early modern world.
- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Classify and interpret textual, documentary, and artifactual material
- Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents,

and extract relevant data from them.

- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
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- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Magical Spell

Due: **Week 13 Tutorial**

Weighting: **15%**

In small groups over weeks 11–13, students will construct a magical ritual, and perform it in tutorials in Week 13. Further details will be placed on the iLearn site. External Students will undertake a similar task individually and post the results in an iLearn discussion forum.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Classify and interpret textual, documentary, and artifactual material
- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.

Exam

Due: **Exam period**

Weighting: **35%**

There will be a two (2) hour examination during the exam period at the end of semester. Further guidance on the exam will be provided during the session.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Classify and interpret textual, documentary, and artifactual material
- Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents,

and extract relevant data from them.

- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Delivery and Resources

Required and Recommended Reading

The textbook for this unit is Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd edition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), available from the Co-Op bookshop.

Further readings required for each week's tutorial and for the essay will be placed on the iLearn site or be available electronically or in hard copy through the library.

Technology

The unit has an iLearn page which can be accessed at <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/index.php>. PC and internet access are therefore required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement. Content, readings, and discussions for this unit will be delivered via the unit iLearn page. The lectures for this unit will be recorded and the audio recordings and accompanying slides will be available on the Echo 360 system. Readings will be available via the library and iLearn; other digital resources will also be placed on the iLearn site.

Lectures

There will be two one-hour lectures per week, on Wednesday at 1-3 pm.

Tutorials and Online Discussions

Discussions in which we will focus on the historical interpretation of the sources for magic and assessment of the modern scholarship on it will take place in two formats: in face-to-face tutorials for internal students, and online discussions for external students.

Tutorials will be held on Wednesday at 3 and 4 pm. Note that there **are** tutorials in week 1.

Online discussions will be posted weekly on the iLearn page under the relevant week.

Unit Schedule

	Lecture I	Lecture II	Tutorial
1 (1/8)	Setting the scene Malcolm Choat	Conceptualising Magic Malcolm Choat	Introductions
2 (8/8)	Magic and religion: ancient views Malcolm Choat	Magic and religion: modern views Malcolm Choat	Definitions of magic

3 (15/8)	Magic in the Ancient Near East Javier Alvarez-Mon	Magic in Ancient Egypt Boyo Ockinga	Material, format, and classification
4 (22/8)	Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Herodotus. Rachel Yuen-Collingridge	Magic in Greece Rachel Yuen-Collingridge	The structure of rituals
5 (29/8)	Magic in Rome Malcolm Choat	Judeo-Christian Magic Malcolm Choat	The Construction of the magician
6 (5/9)	Magic in Graeco-Roman Egypt Malcolm Choat	Magic in Graeco-Roman Egypt Malcolm Choat	Language and Images
7 (12/9)	Magic in Late Antique Egypt Malcolm Choat	Magic in Late Antique Egypt Malcolm Choat	Healing
8 (3/10)	Merlin and the inheritance of magic in Medieval traditions Rachel Yuen-Collingridge	Merlin and the inheritance of magic in Medieval traditions Rachel Yuen-Collingridge	Love
9 (10/10)	Natural Magic in the Renaissance Nicholas Baker	Witchcraft Nicholas Baker	Curses
10 (17/10)	Receptions of Magic Louise D'Arcens	Magic in TV, Film, and Games Clare Monagle	Protection
11 (24/10)	Contemporary Magic Jay Johnston	Contemporary Magic Jay Johnston	Planning the spells
12 (31/10)	Magic, Delusion, and Psychology Amanda Barnier	Magic, Delusion, and Psychology Amanda Barnier	The writing of the spells
13 (7/11)	Conclusions Malcolm Choat	Conclusions Malcolm Choat	The casting of the spells

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

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.

- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Assessment tasks

- Academic Honesty Quiz
- Essay Bibliography
- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Assessment tasks

- Academic Honesty Quiz
- Essay
- Exam

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify evidence for the understanding and practice of magic from the ancient to early

modern world.

- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
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- Classify and interpret textual, documentary, and artifactual material
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- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.

Assessment tasks

- Essay Bibliography
- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents, and extract relevant data from them.
- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;

Assessment tasks

- Essay Bibliography
- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify evidence for the understanding and practice of magic from the ancient to early modern world.
- Recognise how the ways in which the labelling of magical and religious phenomena, communities, and events, affects our study of them.
- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
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- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;

Assessment tasks

- Essay Bibliography
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- Exam

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess,

write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify the technical or genre-based aspects of different types of texts and documents, and extract relevant data from them.
- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Assessment tasks

- Academic Honesty Quiz
- Essay Bibliography
- Essay
- Magical Spell
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Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Assess definitions of "magic" through the centuries, and the cultural processes via which they developed.
- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Assessment tasks

- Academic Honesty Quiz
- Essay Bibliography

- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Consider critically the impact of the modern academic discourse on the study of magic in history.
- Differentiate different types of discourses, and analyse their aims and functions;
- Utilise communication skills appropriate to academic written and oral presentations.
- Recognise the significance of the past to the present.
- Recognise and implement academic integrity in scholarly communication.

Assessment tasks

- Academic Honesty Quiz
- Essay Bibliography
- Essay
- Magical Spell
- Exam

Changes from Previous Offering

Since the last offering, some lecture and tutorial content, and the nature of some assessment tasks, has been updated.