Master of Research
Transdisciplinary Units

2016 – Year 1
Bachelor of Philosophy / Master of Research (BPhil/MRes)

SESSION 1

FOAR703 Living in the Anthropocene
The Anthropocene has been identified as a new geological epoch in which humanity is the driving force of global environmental change. Scientists are concerned that the planetary boundaries that have nurtured and sustained human and non-human life are at risk of being breached. In this unit we explore how social scientists and the humanities are responding to these concerns. Previous academic divisions of labour in which physical scientists working on natural processes and the social sciences and humanities focused on human societies are being dissolved. This unit focuses on those researchers working on the spaces in-between, connecting human and non-human worlds. Understanding these connections, or reconceptualising nature and society altogether, by incorporating concepts such as the Anthropocene, social-nature, coupled human and natural systems as well as Indigenous perspectives, has become increasingly important as we search for alternative futures. The unit provides a critical introduction to the theories and concepts that are becoming vital to understanding and living in the Anthropocene. Session 1 – Day
A/Prof Andrew McGregor
W3A–412
andrew.mcgregor@mq.edu.au

FOAR705 Digital Humanities
This unit explores cross-disciplinary approaches to research that fall under the rubric of ‘digital humanities’, the aim of which is to use technological tools to solve domain problems. We will begin by asking what forms digital humanities research takes, specifically how digital humanities approaches can help answer particular research questions. Since the digital humanities include such a wide range of approaches, students will learn how to frame questions, find appropriate tools and solutions, acquire the knowledge required to deploy those solutions, and present results in an accessible way. Session 1 – Day
A/Prof Shawn Ross
W6A–510
shawn.ross@mq.edu.au

SESSION 2

FOAR702 Posthumanism
This unit will introduce students to posthumanism, a critical discourse that seeks to question the exclusionary politics that has historically positioned human beings as the dominant life form. It will explore posthumanism’s multi-faceted relationship to mythological fable, cybernetics theory, disability studies, animal studies and ecocriticism, and provide a transdisciplinary perspective of how posthumanism demands a radical re-evaluation of human identity and society. Session 2 – Day
Dr Victoria Flanagan, W6A–627 victoria.flanagan@mq.edu.au
Dr Paul Sheehan, W6A–622 paul.sheehan@mq.edu.au

FOAR704 Religion, Secularism and Society
FOAR704 will provide both a historical and contemporary comparative look at the ways that different societies deal with religion in the public sphere, freedom of religion, and the concept of “the secular”. An important aspect that the course considers is that there is no single way of being “secular” or religious within human societies but, rather, varieties of complex systems. A close study of such difference provides a unique and valuable line of sight into comparative studies of how different traditions have developed their social political structure. In recent years, debates have arisen out of questions about freedom of religion, its limits, and the relationship between religion and the state. Drawing on case studies and through the review and discussion of scholarship within the field of social sciences, this seminar will provide and introduction to such complex debates. Session 2 – Evening.
Dr Gabriele Marranci, W6A–617 gabriele.marranci@mq.edu.au

FOAR706 Feminism, Queer Theory and the Problem of Identity
This unit examines the ways in which various contestations (over postmodernism, poststructuralism and queer theory) challenged the foundational categories of feminist theory in the 1980s and 1990s. The unit will ponder whether the call for a contingent feminist theory and practice undermined or, in fact, invigorated feminist critical thought and practice. Through an engagement with the various critical frameworks that emerged in the wake of these contestations, the unit will then examine the reformulations and reframing that feminist scholars have produced in the decades since these interventions. What do these new critical frameworks seek to explain? Do they represent a return or a critical rupture? Are we living in a post-feminist moment? This unit will be framed as a cross-disciplinary unit, students are encouraged to bring their diverse disciplinary perspectives to the discussion and assessment. Session 2 – Day.
Dr Leigh Boucher, W6A–405, Leigh.Boucher@mq.edu.au