Master of Research in Geography & Planning 2018

BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Master of Research is a two-year program and is the main pathway to Macquarie's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programs.

In Year 1 (BPhil) you will undertake advanced coursework units including the study of research frontiers in your area of study.

Year 2 (MRes) is a masters-level postgraduate research training program. You will specialise in research preparation and focus on a specific research topic, and will be required to submit a research thesis of 20,000 words.

2018 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory University Unit:</td>
<td>MRES700 Research Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Faculty Unit:</td>
<td>FOAR701 Research Paradigms</td>
<td>FOAR700 Research Frontiers 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Transdisciplinary Unit:</td>
<td>FOAR703 Living in the Anthropocene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus:</td>
<td>Two Disciplinary and/or Transdisciplinary Units</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOAR703 – LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Compulsory – Session 1, Day
A/Prof Andrew McGregor

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.

GEOP700 – UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Session 1, Evening – A/Prof Andrew McGregor

This unit explores the ways in which humans think about nature and environment and how these ideas are formed. Given the diversity of environmental challenges that have emerged from contemporary human-nature relations there is an urgent need to explore the role that human attitudes to nature have had in contributing to these crises, and how changes in attitudes may provide some solutions. To explore these issues this unit draws from social constructionism, environmental ethics and political ecology to explore how ideas about nature and environment are created and contested. The first section of the unit looks at contemporary approaches to nature, their history and complexity. The second section explores environmental ethics and the challenges they pose to these dominant understandings of humans and nature. The final section analyses environmental ethics in society – exploring their relevance to environmental politics and our everyday ways of life.

FOAR701 – RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Compulsory – Session 1, Day & External

This unit provides a broad overview of the research paradigms that characterise the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Through FOAR701:

- The Faculty of Arts seeks to provide students with a constructive framework to recognise the possible contribution of diverse theoretical and disciplinary approaches.
- Students will learn to better recognise the assumptions that underpin diverse approaches, their strengths, and their relations to each other, especially to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas.
- Students will have a strong grasp of the intellectual terrain across Arts disciplines, having become familiar with some of the core paradigms that have persisted in our fields, including through multiple variants over time.
GEOP710 – RESEARCH PROJECT IN GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

Session 1 & 2, Day & External – Dr Emily O’Gorman

This unit provides students with an opportunity to undertake a small supervised research project in a relevant field. Supervision is provided by department staff and the aim of the unit is to allow students to develop skills and capacity for independent research. Students must have reached an agreement with a supervisor regarding a research project before enrolling in the unit.

GEOP743 – UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION MAKING

Session 1, Evening – Dr Greg Walkerden

This unit teaches foundational skills for environmental decision makers. Students learn to triangulate technically, politically and managerially: looking for ways forward that are respectful of networks of cause and effect, make sense in the light of stakeholders’ diverse interests, and give reasonable assurance of outcomes. Principled negotiation, creative thinking and reflective practice are also emphasised. Students develop their skills in these areas via two research projects: triangulating on a case study of their choice, and using reflective practice to develop their decision making skills.

MRES700 – RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

Compulsory – Session 2, Day – Faculty Staff

This unit aims to enable students to:
- Communicate research effectively in different modes for different audiences;
- Understand what it means to conduct and report responsibly in their discipline;
- Participate in academic peer review practices; and
- Appreciate the uses and relative merits of traditional and contemporary research communication practices.

FOAR700 – RESEARCH FRONTIERS 1

Compulsory – Session 2, Day – GEOP Staff

This unit is delivered by departments and provides an opportunity for students to engage with leading-edge research in their discipline. Students will acquire advanced disciplinary knowledge, know about how research is carried out in a disciplinary area and will demonstrate competence in the application of research skills to the disciplinary area.

GEOP702 – UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATION

Session 2, Day & External – Dr Fiona Miller

Social impact assessment is a key tool in managing development in multicultural environments where stakeholders have different views of the world. Social impact assessment is a form of applied social science research. Using case studies of resource projects, major infrastructure developments, native title, post-disaster recovery and climate change adaptation this unit develops conceptual, methodological and practical skills relevant to government, community and private sectors. Students will examine several major social impact studies and native title negotiations.

GEOP703 – UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE URBAN REGIONS

Session 2, Day & External – Dr Miriam Williams

This unit examines the social, economic and environmental challenges associated with developing sustainable cities and urban regions internationally. Opportunities and barriers to implementing more sustainable urban management and planning practices are explored. Students undertake their own case study; critically assessing response strategies and developing their own sustainability plans.

GEOP705 – UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES, MANAGEMENT AND ADAPTATION

Session 2, Evening – A/Prof Andrew McGregor

Global climate change is one of the important issues facing humanity in the 21st century. The ability to mitigate or adapt to projected climate change depends on developing an integrated perspective on the physical, biological, biogeochemical, socio-economic and cultural factors that influence the climate system. This unit focuses on the legal and socio-economic frameworks for understanding mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and covers (a) the legal and regulatory frameworks for climate change, (b) technological and economic strategies for climate mitigation, (c) risk management, (d) the ethical context of climate change specifically with respect to sustainability and cultural diversity and (e) climate-change governance. It also examines human adaptation to climate change from a diversity of perspectives. It will provide students with the background to critically evaluate the complex interactions that influence human responses to climate change and our ability to change future climate trajectories through political, economic and legislative means. The course is taught by a team of internationally renowned experts drawn from the University’s Concentration of Research Excellence (CORE) in Climate Futures.

GEOP709 – UNDERSTANDING GLOBALISATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Session 2, Evening – Dr Sara Fuller

Debates around globalisation and sustainable development tend to focus on the need for humanity – both individuals and societies – to make choices between economic growth on the one hand and the wellbeing of the planet on the other. This unit critically explores this problematic. It examines tensions and synergies between discourses of globalisation and sustainable development alongside opportunities to achieve economic prosperity alongside care for the environment in practice. The unit first considers conceptual debates that situate globalisation and sustainable development as ‘problems’ that society must deal with. Next it explores how scholars and activists are rethinking globalisation and sustainable development and opening up new possibilities for action. Finally, it examines how individuals, communities, non-governmental organisations and governments are responding to the challenges of globalisation and are engaged in efforts to create social and environmental sustainability at the local scale. The emphasis throughout the unit is on case studies from around the world which enable conceptual debates to be grounded in real life examples.

CONTACTS

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