The Faculty of
The Humanities

Annual Report 2025



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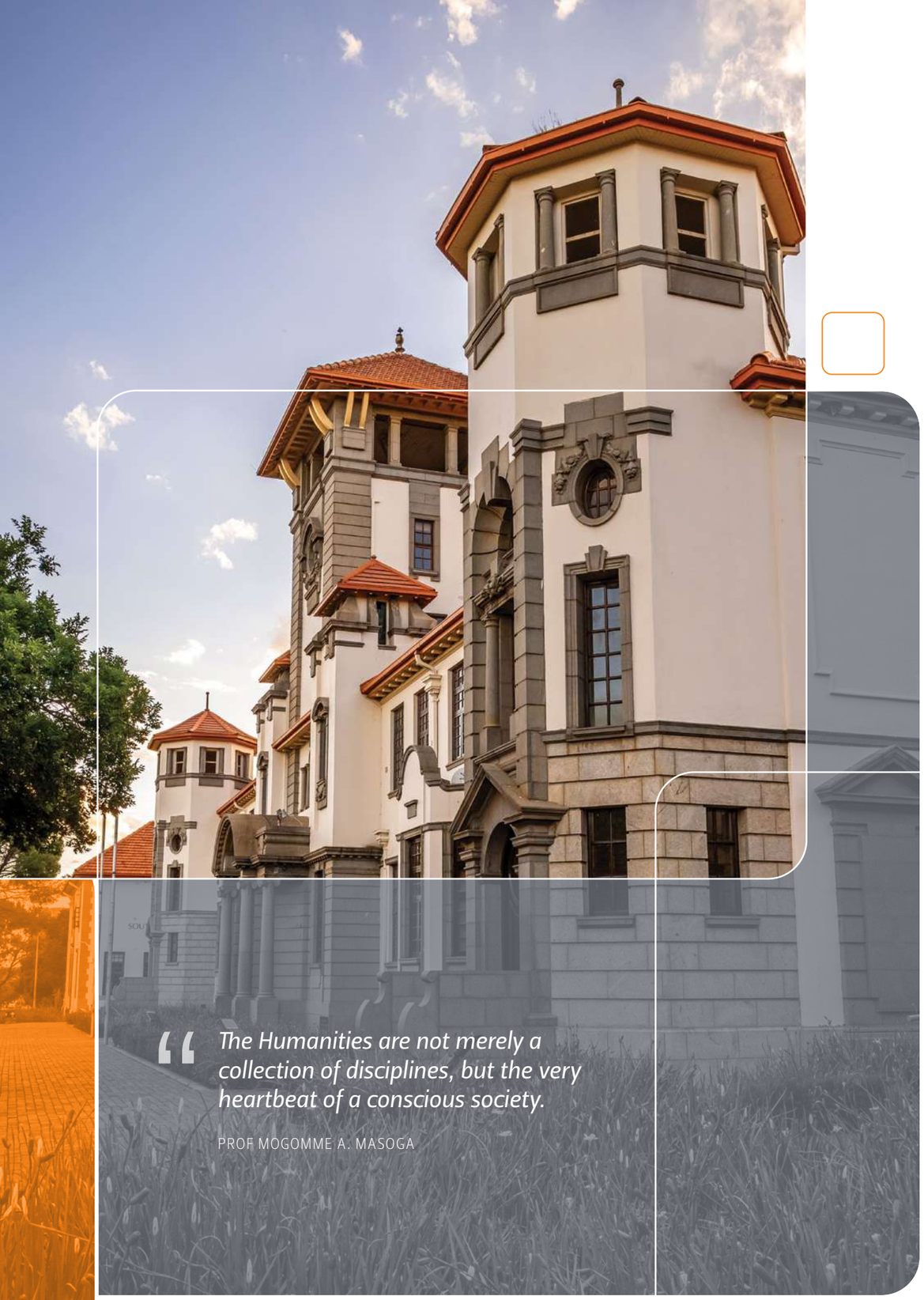




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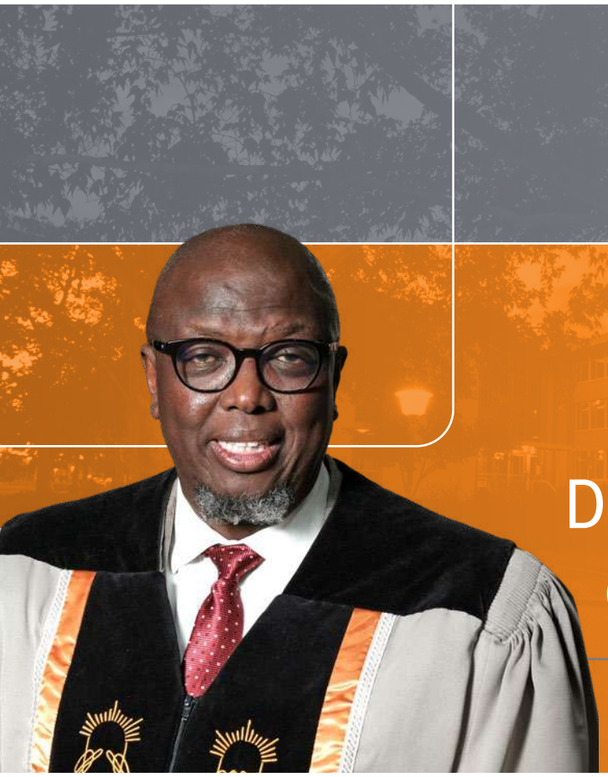


The Humanities are not merely a collection of disciplines, but the very heartbeat of a conscious society.

PROF MOGOMME A. MASOGA

Contents

Message from the Dean of the Faculty of The Humanities	4
Message from the Assistant Dean (Qwaqwa Campus)	7
Faculty deliverables 2025	9
Highlights from the Dean's Office	16
Department of African Languages	21
Department of Afrikaans and Dutch, German and French	33
Department of Anthropology	45
Department of Art History and Image Studies	51
Centre for Gender and Africa Studies	61
Centre for Health Systems Research & Development	95
Department of Communication Science	103
Department of Criminology	109
Department of Drama and Theatre Arts	123
Department of English	137
Department of Fine Arts	145
Department of Hebrew	163
Department of History	181
International Studies Group	191
Department of Linguistics and Language Practice	211
Odeion School of Music	219
Department of Philosophy & Classics	235
Department of Political Studies and Governance	251
Governance and Political Transformation	267
Department of Psychology	271
Department of Social Work	289
Department of Sociology	295
Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies	303
Unit for the Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS)	327



Reflections from the Dean of the Faculty of The Humanities

Prof Mogomme A. Masoga

We find ourselves in a new reporting season. Yet, we remain grateful to be able to report on the Faculty's achievements and contributions to the university as a whole. This report reflects active endeavours by engaged scholars to address the global challenges society faces and to be involved in research and community activities that contribute to the sustainability and advancement of the Humanities.

However, one is mindful of the dynamic changes taking place within higher education, a space that is rapidly evolving and undergoing tremendous change. And as a Faculty, we find ourselves in that particular space, with a range of intersecting encounters for our students and staff being shaped by what is currently happening in the space where higher education finds itself. The contextual realities of higher education (politically, socially, and economically) reflect broader societal challenges.

As a result, we have noticed a global rise in student health concerns, anxiety, depression, and burnout, to name a few. Undeniably, these are the very students we engage with on a daily basis. It is these students who also continue to endure financial stress, which remains a formidable barrier for many, underscoring persistent social and economic inequalities in tuition, accommodation, and basic needs. We might think the aftermath of #FeesMustFall has gone and left us, but unfortunately, it continues to shape higher education expectations and the institutional responses required.

There is also a deepening shift towards digital environments. And one is excited that our university has prepared itself for this in terms of connectivity and engagement, but we cannot run away from the fact that there are disparities in some corners of the digital world that could lead to student vulnerabilities. As the higher education environment evolves, the Faculty has proactively addressed the impact of technology, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). Ethical and responsible incorporation of AI into teaching and learning, and research remains a priority, alongside our continued focus on social justice, inclusivity, and diversity.

As a Faculty, we have continued to rethink our practices, seriously debating and discussing the decolonial business of teaching and learning, and research. We have done this in ways that are historically conscious and epistemically inclusive. More importantly, programmes have been developed to support student needs and to ensure that all voices are heard and valued.

It has thus been an ongoing process of reconceptualising our position, which aligns with the university's broader objectives. I'm excited that our Faculty has had the opportunity to rethink its positioning within the university's current business, taking into consideration our PQM viability, the competence of our teaching staff, access to competent students, and collaborations and future friendships to be established within the Faculty, locally and abroad. The conversations at Amanzi Lodge are still very relevant, even now. These conversations provided the space to be brutally honest about where we stand as a Faculty, where we would like to take the Faculty, and how we locate ourselves in the university, ensuring that our growth is both purposeful and reflective.

In this regard, there are three critical and inseparable pillars that we, as a Faculty, should continue to address: shaping the patterns of inequality, ensuring student access, and fostering student success. Notably, the Faculty has been gearing up to explore possible pathways to address this and to offer alternative lenses for dealing with these three critical challenges.

This year's annual report serves as a celebration of the endless efforts and contributions of our staff members, Heads of Departments (HODs), and administrators. I am pleased that we have men and women who have dedicated themselves to building this Faculty and to making a contribution to it and to the university. This has never been an easy task; it takes great effort to ensure we, the Humanities, remain alive and relevant. I take singular honour as the Dean of the Faculty to thank colleagues for their contributions in ensuring that our Faculty remains at the top.

I'm also pleased with the fact that the past year has marked a period of remarkable growth in the number of research outputs (books, book chapters, and publications), the growing recognition of our researchers, the number of NRF-rated researchers, and the excellent work done by WoRiTH. This stands as a testament to the Faculty's commitment to exploring relevant and contemporary topics facing humanity today. There is no doubt that this Faculty makes a significant, tangible impact on scholarship and research in society. I salute these contributions with the highest honour and appreciation.

Notably, WoRiTH has played a significant role in this regard. Key focus areas centre on women's career development (academic growth, leadership and research development), institutional collaboration (partnering with like-minded scholars from other South African universities and organisations with similar views and goals), and engaging in discourse and dialogue on topics relevant in higher education, specifically challenges female academics face and matters relating to gender.

It is commendable to see that WoRiTH, following the 2024 conference of the Women Researchers in Humanities and Social Sciences (WoRiHSS) at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), continues to explore avenues to address the lack of representation of women. In this regard, I am excited about their upcoming conference in September 2026, which will aptly focus on 'lifting as we climb'.

Equally commendable is the number of Faculty members who have invested in their professional growth, collaborated with like-minded scholars, and sought innovative ways to ensure that our teaching and learning, and research remain both current and socially responsive.

In this regard, the Faculy has shown commitment to well-pronounced engaged scholarship. There have been many efforts by our colleagues to introduce topics and themes that reflect the deep socioeconomic inequalities rooted in the legacy of apartheid. We've seen how some of these projects have exposed disparities in income, schooling quality, access and the success of our students. This has become a challenge we cannot wish away. A university has become a friend to the communities around it, actively engaging with local realities. I am truly excited about the many programmes reported that showcase this friendship.

Our collective success is measured by the progress of every student and scholar.

Interdisciplinary collaboration has also flourished, with partnerships extending across local and international institutions. Students and staff alike have embraced opportunities to work across traditional disciplinary boundaries, ensuring that the Faculty remains at the forefront of addressing global challenges through multifaceted intellectual inquiry. These initiatives highlight our ability to rethink conventional approaches and to engage with pressing issues in innovative ways.

The Faculty has thus tried to mitigate student alienation by addressing curricula, institutional cultures, and languages of instruction that do not reflect our students' identities and lived realities. To address this disconnect, we've made this a point of concern and consideration to ensure the academic environment reflects the lived realities and identities of our entire student population.

Adding to this, a clear and undeniable sense of achievement resonates across all departments, each contributing meaningfully to the advancement of Humanities scholarship both locally and internationally. This success is a direct outcome of the unwavering commitment, creativity, and innovation demonstrated by our academic and support staff, who continue to ensure that the Faculty thrives as a vibrant hub of intellectual exploration and growth.

The spirit of collegiality among staff has been a cornerstone of this progress. Their shared dedication to excellence has cultivated an inclusive academic environment that fosters belonging among colleagues and students alike. This sense of community has been harnessed to uphold intellectual integrity and to prioritise student success and well-being. Departments have consistently supported our diverse student body, and this commitment is reflected in the impressive pass rates at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. We are proud of the number of Honours, master's and doctoral students in our Faculty. It showcases that academic staff are dedicated and committed to sustaining teaching and learning while navigating the complexities of modern educational transitions with diligence and adaptability.

The Faculty also prides itself on its active engagement with society, fostering reciprocal relationships between the university and the broader community. Given the Faculty's concern about the employability of our students, their efforts in this regard are evident in their academic work, which focuses on bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. By providing students with practical skills embedded in the curriculum and equipping them with industry-specific knowledge and skills, we are producing graduates who are not only highly employable but also socially conscious and prepared to lead in a complex world.

Reflecting on the milestones of the past year, it is evident that the Faculty is prepared to continue rethinking, reshaping, and reimagining its practices. With a steadfast commitment to innovation, transformation, engaged scholarship, and research excellence, the Faculty is well-positioned to reach new heights in the years ahead.

Therefore, it gives me immense pleasure to present this report to you and the entire university community. I want to thank the UFS management for their valuable support. It enabled the Faculty to achieve all the milestones set out in this report, and may we continue to build on this. As we move forward, let us remember that the Humanities are not merely a collection of disciplines, but the very heartbeat of a conscious society. Our collective success is measured by the progress of every student and scholar, so let's remain committed to a future that is as intellectually rigorous as it is socially just, continuously seeking new opportunities for academic success and research excellence.



Reflections from the

Assistant Dean: Qwaqwa Campus

Prof Jared McDonald

The year 2025 was one of continued progress and consolidation for the Faculty of the Humanities at the Qwaqwa Campus. Guided by the University's commitment to being a student-centred, regionally engaged university focused on responsible societal futures, the Faculty strengthened its contributions across teaching and learning, research, and engaged scholarship. These achievements were the result of the dedication of both academic and support staff.

Teaching and learning remain at the core of the Faculty's activities. Departments across the Faculty demonstrated a strong commitment to student success and curriculum development. The Department of History introduced new undergraduate modules exploring themes in South African and African history, broadening students' engagement with historical debates and regional contexts. The Department of Sociology celebrated significant postgraduate successes, including the graduation of one doctoral and two Master's students, while the Department of African Languages saw several Honours and Master's students complete their studies. These achievements highlight the Faculty's growing postgraduate footprint at the Qwaqwa Campus and its commitment to nurturing emerging scholars.

The Faculty also celebrated important staff achievements that continue to contribute to teaching and research excellence. Mthobisi Busane in the Department of African Languages and Peter Moopi in the Department of English graduated with their PhDs, while Robson Nkosi in the Department of Communication Science obtained his Master's degree. Several academic staff members received promotions during the year, including Oliver Nyambi, promoted in the Department of English to full professor, and Jared McDonald, promoted in the Department of History to associate professor.

Research productivity across the Faculty remained strong in 2025, with staff publishing in accredited journals, producing books and chapters, and presenting papers at national and international conferences. Scholars from the Departments of English, Sociology, African Languages, Political Studies and Governance, and History made notable contributions to debates on literature, migration, climate change, African politics, and language development.

The Faculty's research profile was further enhanced by interdisciplinary initiatives such as IDEaS (Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research), which included participation by the Department of Communication Science's Prof Diana Breshears. During 2025, the hub conducted a participatory research project titled *"Places and Spaces: A Photovoice Study on Identity, Belonging, and Well-being among Students at a South African University"*. The project engaged 21 student co-researchers from the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses who documented spaces connected to their identities and experiences through photography and reflective interviews. The project culminated in a public exhibition that showcased the students' voices and experiences, highlighting the importance of inclusive campus spaces and student well-being.

The Department of English maintained a strong publication record in high-quality journals and edited volumes, while the Department of Sociology contributed important research on migration, climate change, and digital activism. The Department of African Languages produced both scholarly and creative outputs that support the development and promotion of the Sesotho language and literature. In History, Prof Jared McDonald received an NRF C2 rating, and Dr Victor Gwande received an NRF Y1 rating. Dr Gwande also participated in the University of Michigan's African Presidential Scholars Programme, further strengthening the department's international profile.

Research collaboration and mobility were also prominent. Staff participated in conferences and workshops across Africa, Europe, and North America, while international collaborations continued to grow. These activities contribute to the Faculty's commitment to producing impactful research that speaks to regional and global challenges.

Engaged scholarship remains a defining feature of the Humanities on the Qwaqwa Campus. Faculty members contributed to public debate, professional networks, and community initiatives. The Centre for Gender and Africa Studies (CGAS) continued to play a significant role in advancing socially relevant scholarship and dialogue on the campus and beyond. During 2025, staff from the Centre participated in a wide range of national and international conferences and policy-focused engagements. A highlight of the year was the Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture hosted on the Qwaqwa Campus in August, delivered by Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at the University of the Free State. The lecture provided an important platform for critical reflection on gender and social justice within the broader African context. Furthermore, in October, CGAS hosted the inaugural National Community Development Conference at the Golden Gate Highlands Hotel, which attracted over 200 delegates, including prominent representatives of provincial and municipal government in the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.

Community partnerships and outreach initiatives also continued to grow. The Department of African Languages collaborated with community organisations to promote Sesotho language development and cultural heritage, including participation in Basotho cultural events and the establishment of a student cultural association. Scholars across the Faculty contributed opinion pieces, peer reviews, and advisory roles in academic and public institutions and forums.

The achievements of 2025 reflect the collective commitment of the Faculty's academic and support staff to excellence, transformation, and impact. The Faculty of the Humanities at the Qwaqwa Campus remains committed to advancing the University of the Free State's strategic vision through dedicated teaching, impactful research, and meaningful engagement with society.

> *"Advancing through dedicated teaching, impactful research, and meaningful engagement with society.*

Faculty deliverables 2025

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
Goal 1. To improve our academic excellence, reputation, and impact.				
1.1 Placing increased emphasis on research that advances societal and knowledge impact.	1.1.1 Share of total income that is directed to research.	Implement a new modality for resourcing the research enterprise.	Evaluate effective utilisation of allocated research resources.	The Faculty Research Remit was approved at the Faculty Board. An expenditure report was compiled as at December 2025, showing an underspend of over R1 million. There are, however, research projects planned for 2026 where these funds will be effectively utilised.
	1.1.2 Three- year citation rate in selected SDGs.	Implement a new modality for resourcing the research enterprise.	Implement strategies to improve publications on SDGs within the faculty's disciplines.	To ensure alignment of performance indicators with research output, impact, and resource utilisation, research-related calls and opportunities from the Offices of the DVC: Research and Internationalisation, NRF, and CGS are regularly shared with the faculty. This facilitates the implementation of the developed and communicated performance indicators. The session, held on 5 November 2025, was designed to inform faculty members and research fellows about the procedures for submitting outputs and to facilitate a dialogue on the alignment of faculty and DRD objectives with the SDGs.
	1.1.3 UFS research reputation among published academics worldwide.	Implement and monitor the research strategies and agenda, and revise accordingly.	Initiate activities to promote awareness of improving publications in SDGs associated with the disciplines of the faculty.	The Faculty of the Humanities collaborated with the Library and Information Services, through the African Languages Press, to publish and launch the Sesotho Sa Leboa dictionary on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses on 29 and 30 May 2025, supported by the Academy for Multilingualism. The dictionary was verified and authenticated by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). Considering the recent emphasis on interdisciplinary work, the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice held an informal discussion on interdisciplinary collaboration with other departments in the faculty (including the Odeion School of Music and Department of Philosophy and Classics) as well as members from other faculties (including the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science, and the Faculty of Theology and Religion). The discussion was framed around the publication of Dr Xany Jansen van Vuuren's recent monograph, "Interpreting, Communication and Animal Welfare: An Ecosemiotic Analysis of Interspecies Translation" (published with De Gruyter), which brings together elements of theoretical biology, semiotics and translation to explore how interspecies translation would work. The meeting was approached by all attendees in good faith and with eagerness to participate in future collaborative projects.
1.2 Ensuring the quantity, quality, and diversity of academic staff with a renowned global reputation.	1.2.1 International research leaders as a share of permanent academic staff.	Continue implementation, monitor programme outputs and impact, and revise accordingly.	Implement activities to support young emerging & C-rated academics in achieving or improving their NRF rating.	On 8 October 2025, a workshop on NRF rating was held, with two participants from the faculty in attendance. Eight successful NRF outcomes (C and Y levels) for this period, three of which are new ratings.

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
	1.2.2 Number of academic staff who authored an accredited publication output as a share of permanent academic staff.	Continue monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the policy and its impact on research reputation and societal impact.	Implement initiatives to strengthen the internationalisation focus through partnerships with overseas universities.	An Internationalisation progress report has been completed. The faculty takes internationalisation seriously, as evidenced, for example, by a collaboration with the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen in the Netherlands, where a MoU was finalised for a staff member to pursue a joint PhD degree. The following departments have been involved in internationalisation projects: Psychology-Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Fine Arts-Joint PhD with the University of Groningen. Linguistics and Language Practice. Collaborative research with the University of Geneva on "South-North flows of information through translation in the global news agency AFP".
	1.2.3 Co-publication: Scholarly output with international collaborators as a share of total scholarly output.	Monitor output and impact on graduate desirability, and continue to nurture existing and establish new partnerships.	Promote activities focused on the specific niche research areas identified by the faculty. Promote activities that support research collaboration by faculty staff.	From 8-10 October, a SoTL writing retreat was held, with 8 participants in attendance. On 26 November 2025, the faculty successfully hosted its second annual Engaged Scholarship Workshop with various stakeholders from the Soutpan project in attendance. On 2 December 2025, the faculty hosted a collaborative WoRiTH workshop with the Humanities in UNIZULU and the National University of Lesotho. Five members attended from Lesotho. UNIZULU, unfortunately, could not join.
1.3 Ensure that our academic offerings and practices produce.	1.3.1 External stakeholder perceptions of the desirability of UFS graduates.	Evaluate the number and impact of industry collaborations/ partnerships and linkages, and amend modes of engagement accordingly.	Initiate mechanisms to evaluate academic advisory boards and create opportunities (in faculty meetings) to discuss their impact on the faculty.	Academic Advisory Board meetings were held for the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, Social Work, UNIBS, and Joint Arts.
	1.3.2 Postgraduate enrolments as a share of total enrolments.	Measure the uptake of advanced teaching methodologies, and monitor content renewal and relevance.	Evaluate faculty opportunities to increase postgraduate students and implement activities aimed at improving the employability of graduates.	On 31 July 2025, a Career Extravaganza was held on South Campus for the Humanities students. On 8 August 2025, the Criminology Student Association hosted a successful career exhibition, with various stakeholders in attendance, including SAPS, Protection Services, and NICRO. Dr Sebolao also promoted graduate attributes at this event. Psychology Honours students' presentation on entrepreneurship on 25 September 2025. On 25 October 2025, Boleng Integration, a student-registered NPO, was launched at the Albert Wessels Auditorium.

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
		Review the postgraduate environment and revise the strategies accordingly.	Implement faculty-specific initiatives to improve students' transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study.	A total of 37 Humanities postgraduate students (at honours, master's, and PhD levels) participated in the Postgraduate Conference on 6 and 7 November. Presentation on engaged scholarship to student associations at the South Campus. On 27 August 2025, the faculty hosted an Enterprising Hour for students on the Bloemfontein Campus, where academics shared how they could enterprise their qualifications. While very few students attended, the following departments presented: Psychology, Criminology, English, History, Communications Science, South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies. Members of the outgoing FSC and the incoming FSC also attended. This will be planned again on a bigger scale. However, this event was not well attended by students. On 28 August 2025, Dr Sebolao contributed to the panel discussion at the launch of the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP) chapter at the UFS. This is a programme of the Entrepreneurial Development in Higher Education (EDHE) aimed at inculcating entrepreneurship at universities, among academics and students.
Goal 2. To promote an environment of agility, flexibility and responsiveness based on trust and accountability.				
2.1. Ensure the policies, systems, processes, and practices are appropriate, effective, and efficient.	2.1.1 Staff experience of the effectiveness of policies, systems, processes and practices.	Determine the efficiency gains and improvements in responsiveness, as well as their impact on the environment.	Review faculty policies and processes to identify opportunities to automate and digitise. Implement initiatives in that regard.	Reinstatement of the Faculty Promotions Committee to evaluate applications before submitting to APEC. Post-registration evaluation meetings held with faculty representatives and with SAS on 27 March 2025. Dr C. Van Wyk hosted an online AI workshop on 9 October 2025 to demonstrate various AI tools. A consolidated report on digitisation was presented at the ETLSC on 4 February 2025, and a progress report was compiled in November 2025. Active participation by staff members on the development of AI as part of the digitalisation skills project for students by CTL (29 May 2025. AI colloquium on Qwaqwa campus: 14 May 2025.
		Monitor the responsiveness of the critical processes.	Identify the policies that guide critical processes of socialisation in the faculty.	The Black female academics mentorship programme was launched on 25 June 2025, with Dr Naomi Lumutenga, the Director of HERS-East Africa, as the keynote speaker. The recipients of HUM Excellence awards were asked about the contribution of the awards to their career progression (survey responses were captured). Overall, the recipients acknowledged the recognition and, to a certain extent, its positive impact, especially among colleagues at the early stages of their careers. What came out strongly was the need for a structured mentorship or support programme to sustain the career development initiatives.

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
2.2. Ensure appropriate academic structures as well as management and leadership capacity.	2.2.1 Share of academic department heads who are associate or full professors.	Implement new faculty structures.	Increase the number of academic department heads who are associate or full professors.	An Associate Professor was appointed as the head of the Psychology Department in September 2025. Two of the three eligible AHDs will be supported in 2026.
	2.2.2 Share of academic departments with less than 10 permanent academic staff members.	Implement new faculty structures.	Monitor the implementation of faculty-specific guidelines for establishing academic departments.	On 29 August 2025, training was conducted on RIMS and GHREC for AHDS and staff members as part of capacity-building. A strategic planning meeting was held with AHDs on 3 and 4 November 2025, during which resource optimisation was discussed.
2.3. Leverage the use of digital technologies, business intelligence, and analytics to enable evidence-based decision-making.	2.3.1 Share the UFS management staff who access business intelligence platforms.	Maintain BI systems, monitor user experience, and revise accordingly.	Promote the use of BI platforms (e.g., Power BI) across the faculty.	Training sessions on online registration were held for Programme Directors and staff members involved in student registration. For the high-priority modules identified by CTL, affected departmental and subject heads were shown how to access the data on the Power Heda Dashboard. DIRAP also provided sophisticated data from the Power HEDA system for internal faculty use.
Goal 3. To advance a transformational institutional culture that demonstrates the values of the UFS.				
3.1 Creating a vibrant space for, and acceptance of, constructive and critical engagement.	3.1.1 Staff experience of engagement.	Continue monitoring staff climate and refine training programme(s) accordingly.	Organise engagements with stakeholders (CTL, DIRAP, etc.) to present the research done in the institution to the faculty.	HR survey for support staff members to assess job satisfaction and to determine support needs. The faculty report on graduate attributes action plans was released and shared by CTL.
	3.1.2 Under-graduate student experience of advanced student-lecturer engagement.	Monitor the effectiveness of new committee structures and their impact.	Implement activities to monitor the effectiveness of faculty committee structures and their impact.	A total of 902 students from the Humanities took part in CTL's SASSE survey. The quantitative questions revealed more than 80% positive responses on most aspects of inclusiveness (which is higher than the average). https://app.powerbi.com/reportEmbed?reportId=3945a1ef-2a56-4774-b203-7d9fa421fbd1&autoAuth=true&ctid=8efc1bb9-b90f-4a48-bf6c-ba0686193b80 Class reps and FSC training held on 24 and 28 March 2025 on leadership and graduate attributes. Active participation of FSC in faculty structures and during the registration period. Gender Talks were successfully hosted throughout the year. FYSP Facilitator training session held for Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses on 3 and 20 February 2025, respectively. Active participation in A-Step Tutorial training hosted by CTL from 3-7 February 2025. Facilitator training for Social Science modules held on 6 February 2025.

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
		Promote and monitor future-centric dialogue.	Organise faculty engagements to improve the faculty environment and support academic debates.	Brown Bag Lunch at Odeon School of Music with a group of colleagues for personal reflections on the protest. From 11-15 August 2025, the faculty participated in a colloquium led by the Academy for Multilingualism to establish and engage in multidisciplinary discourses on how languages are conceptualised and used to create sustainable futures in a changing world. From 12-14 November 2025, CGAS (Community Development) hosted a conference in collaboration with UJ, UWC, and UKZN on "Grounding the Future: Community voices and practice pathways for inclusive development" at Golden Gate, with approximately 220 participants.
3.2 Become an institution of choice for exceptional students, academics, and support staff.	3.2.1 External and internal stakeholder perceptions of the UFS reputation as an institution of choice.	Monitor the UFS reputation through the UFS Brand and Reputation Survey.	Evaluate and improve the faculty marketing and communication approach to position the faculty in line with Vision 130 – UFS.	Successful first-year orientation on 8 February 2025. The prize-giving ceremony for undergraduate top achievers by department was held on 8 April 2025. The Faculty Open Day for Grade 12s was held on 10 May at the Bloemfontein Campus and on 17 May at the Qwaqwa Campus. "UFS experts in the media" reports from June showed a high visibility from staff members in the Humanities.
	3.2.2 Share of permanent academic staff with PhD.	Employ and promote a diverse and talented academic staff complement, prioritising staff with doctorates.	Improve support for academics to complete their studies in time.	Workshops were hosted for different stages of the PhD journey, namely early, intermediate, and advanced, as identified during the face-to-face workshop. Each session focused on stage-specific topics as follows: Early-Stage group: Monday, 4 August 2025, 10:00-11:00 Intermediate group: Monday 4 August 2025, 12:00-13:00 Advanced group: Tuesday 5 August 2025, 12:00-13:00 Two QDPs completed their PhDs. One nGAP participant is still in progress.
	3.2.3 Share of transfer master's and doctoral enrolments who transferred from top South African universities.	Recruit and retain a professional support staff complement that supports the academic project and promotes an inclusive and vibrant work ethos.	Implement initiatives aimed at improving offer management and admissions processes for master's and doctoral students.	The Faculty Admin team had a training meeting in the second quarter for departmental administrators.
	3.2.4 Share of first-time entering under-graduate students with an admission point score (APS) of 35 and above.	Review and obtain feedback through the Student Experience Survey.	Apply UFS guidelines in the allocation of point merit bursaries.	The merit bursaries are automatically awarded to students. For the PG, we had a SoP to assign PG bursaries.

Strategic Objective	Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Institutional Activity	Faculty Activity	Progress
3.3 Become a home for staff and students from diverse backgrounds.	3.3.1 Student satisfaction with being on campus.	Review and monitor the student experience for continuous uptake.	Invite researchers across the institution to present their research findings on students and staff.	The Gateway programme conducted a survey; the report was shared with the faculty. IDEaS Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research presented a PhotoVoice Exhibition: "Places and Spaces – Well-being, Identity, and Inclusivity among Students on University Campuses.
	3.3.2 Share of new academic staff members leaving the UFS within the first three years of appointment.	Monitor the number and characteristics/ profiling of staff leaving the University within the first three years of appointment.	Collaborate with HR to implement faculty staff retention initiatives.	Faculty of the Humanities Excellence Awards were held on 8 May 2025, and six recipients were encouraged to apply for institutional awards. A meeting was held with academic staff at the lecturer level on 3 October 2025. Some of the focus areas included promotion criteria, SoTL and engaged scholarship. Two newly appointed lecturers who joined the faculty in 2024 resigned within a year (Linguistic and Language Practice and Psychology).
3.4 Improvement in the equity profile of academic leadership.	3.4.1 Share of professoriate who are female.	Monitor the experiences of new staff members, particularly those from designated groups.	Faculty-specific approach.	Proposal for mentorship completed and shared with the Dean, who approved it for the WoRiTH programme. Menor-mentee agreements were developed and signed with those who requested mentorship.
	3.4.2 Share of professoriate who are Black.	Monitor the experiences of new staff members, particularly those from designated groups.	Faculty-specific approach to create additional opportunities to promote academic staff from designated groups, particularly women.	WoRiTH awareness session held on 25 March 2025, and celebrated the newly graduated PhD female academics. Approximately eight academics from designated groups are participating in the following developmental programmes: WISE, Professoriate programme, ESAP, and SoTL fellowship.
Goal 4. To promote stewardship and the prioritisation of institutional resources for strategic intent.				
4.1 Ensure the efficiency of the non- academic support structures and systems.	4.1.1 Staff experience of efficiency of administrative support structures and systems.	Initiate an institution-wide redesign of non-academic support structures.	Implement initiatives to improve the digitalisation of processes in the faculty.	The Faculty Manager and Teaching and Learning Manager attended an AI Workshop on 30 October 2025 as part of the Professional Forum members' development.
	4.1.2 Share of key administrative processes that are digitalised.	Initiate an institution-wide redesign of non-academic support structures.	Implement initiatives to improve the digitalisation of processes in the faculty.	The digital screen in the Flippie Groenewoud Building (FGG Block C), which funded the Strategic Fund, began operating in the second quarter. Preparatory discussions were held during the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting and through the Faculty Manager and her registration team. The faculty reflected on the online registration process, which was conducted entirely online for the first time. Requests for propensity letters were submitted electronically via the newly developed workflow in the Financial Aid office. In the past, it was done manually (letters were drafted and then sent via email to students).
4.2 Ensure the principles of investment to enable academic excellence with particular emphasis on research and postgraduate activity.	4.2.1 Postgraduate student satisfaction with services and support provided by the UFS.	Continue implementing investments in infrastructure and relevant technologies.	Outline the faculty research and postgraduate study infrastructure needs, and initiate activities with relevant stakeholders to address these needs.	The faculty hosted a Postgraduate Information Session at the Qwaqwa Campus on 26 September 2025, called PG Tips. The event provided prospective postgraduate students with information on applications, funding, and career pathways. It was held in partnership with the Centre for Graduate Support and the Centre for Global Change. The workshop for staff pursuing their PhDs was one of the initiatives implemented to address research and infrastructure needs, following a needs analysis (towards the end of 2024) that identified workshops as a key requirement for staff working on their PhDs. (Refer to a document on staff pursuing PhD needs analysis.)
4.3 Increase our research and innovation competitive-ness.	4.3.1 Research income as a share of total income.	Identify potential research centres of excellence and continue establishing research chairs.	Initiate faculty engagements and activities designed to improve faculty research income.	From 17-19 November 2025, a writing retreat was held at Palm Lodge, and five participants attended the full three days to work on their respective articles/book chapters. Although all participants made good progress, the pitfalls of academic writing and publishing were evident throughout their publication journeys. Since establishing a partnership with the FHS, we have held fortnightly meetings to work on a research protocol and to monitor plans and progress for the Soutpan project. The team visited Soutpan to introduce the Faculty of Health Sciences. Six participants from both the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses attended the grant proposal writing training on 31 March and 1 April 2025.
4.4 Ensure the efficiency of academic programmes, offerings, and academic support.	4.4.1 Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM)Viability.	Continue streamlining the PQM in accordance with the agreed indicators, as reflected in the PQM Viability Index.	Monitor faculty PQM for opportunities and challenges.	Discussions initiated with two departments for potential new programmes (Anthropology and Political Studies). CHE Workshop attended on the mode of delivery and themed review on 21 February 2025.
	4.4.2 Student satisfaction with academic support services.	Reduce modules below the threshold to allow for the introduction of other critical modules.	Monitor module viability across the faculty (opportunities and challenges).	Thirteen departments participated in the DIRAP-led student module evaluation drive, while other departments utilised departmental module evaluation tailored to their modules or programmes.
		Monitor staff experience in relation to workload.	Contribute to the reconceptualisation of UFS academic resource and workload model engagements in the context of the faculty.	Mawoyo held meetings with departments to discuss their role for the 2026 academic year.

Dean's Office Achievements

First-year Orientation

The Kopanong Auditorium on the Bloemfontein Campus was abuzz with energy, as more than 900 first-year students from the Bloemfontein and South campuses gathered in anticipation of the Faculty of the Humanities First-Year Welcoming programme. Before the proceedings of the day, students were entertained by fellow student Andile Xhakaza, a third-year Nursing student, who mesmerised all with his angelic voice as he rendered classical Rhythm and Blues, with the crowd singing along. By the time the formal proceedings began, the energy in the Kopanong Auditorium was tangible.

Riding on this energy, Israel Mawoyo, the Programme Director of the First-Year Success Programme, demonstrated his playfulness by using the lingo of the class of 2024 students as he called upon and introduced Prof Zondi, Vice Dean: Research and Internalisation in the Faculty of the Humanities. Prof Zondi, who was standing in for Prof Masoga, Dean of the Faculty of the Humanities, shared a powerful and inspirational message as she welcomed first-year students into the Faculty. In her closing remarks, she encouraged students to take advantage of all the free resources available to them to succeed in their studies and future careers. The crowd's round of applause was a strong indicator that her message was well received.

This set the tone for Prof Rabe, Vice Dean: Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of the Humanities, who facilitated three insightful panel discussions focused on sharing crucial subject-specific information. During this session, students were challenged to think critically about their subject choices and how they relate to the prospective careers that they envisioned. This session allowed students to interact with staff by asking key questions about specific subjects. The staff also collaborated with various divisions to share crucial information about the many free services available to all registered students, thereby concluding the day's programme on a high note.

Student Leadership Training

One of the critical aspects of being student-centred is to ensure that students are engaged in areas that concern them. In this regard, the Faculty facilitated leadership training on 24 and 28 March 2025 for members of the Faculty Student Council and class reps, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to guide and support students in class and across the Faculty. This was a virtual training session, with students actively participating in the conversation. Following this, students have been represented in faculty governance structures, such as the Faculty Board and the Faculty Appeals Committee.

Writing retreat for SoTL members

The Faculty SoTL group attended a writing retreat from 8 to 10 October 2025 at Tuscan Rose. This retreat was made possible by the Dean of the Faculty, Prof Masoga, and the Centre for Graduate Support. Eight members participated in this writing retreat.



From Left to Right: Front row: Millicent Mavimbela, Dr Florence Tadi, Dr Rosaline Sebolao, Avela Ntsongelwa and Gcina Mtengwane. Back row: Israel Mawoyo, Dr Ndhivhuwo Ndou and Dr Absalum Nkosi.

Second Writing Retreat: 17–19 November 2025

Five staff members, namely, Prof Marlize Rabe, Dr Nombulelo Shange, Dr Nontombi Velelo, Dr Melene Esau and Dr Ina Gouws, from **The Faculty of the Humanities** attended the three-day writing retreat to work on their respective articles/book chapters. Although all participants made good progress, the pitfalls of academic writing and publishing were evident throughout their publication journeys.

Engaged Scholarship Highlights

The Faculty, in collaboration with the Library and Information Science, launched a monolingual dictionary, called Sesotho sa Leboa, by Maserole Solomon Motlokwane on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses on 29 and 30 May 2025, respectively. This was supported by the Academy for Multilingualism and demonstrated the Faculty's contribution towards African languages development. The programmes for both launches were directed by Dr Nyefolo Malete and Dr Mabohlokoa Khanyetsi, both from the African Languages Department.





Dr Nyefolo Malete (left), HOD: African Languages, and Dr Mabohlokoa Khanyetsi (right), Subject Head for African Languages (Qwaqwa Campus); they directed the programmes launched on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses, respectively.





Maserole Motlokwane addressing the audience that came to experience the launch of the Sesotho sa Leboa dictionary.





Attendees of the events hosted on the Bloemfontein (left) and Qwaqwa (right) campuses.




The Dean, Prof Mogomme Masoga (left), and the Assistant Dean, Prof Jared McDonald (right), were part of the success of this launch.

On 26 November 2025, the Faculty successfully hosted its second annual Engaged Scholarship Workshop. The workshop sought to highlight the Faculty's growing commitment to engaged scholarship through teaching and learning, research, and citizenship, as envisioned in the University of the Free State's Engaged Scholarship Strategy.

Kingsley Alagbaoso (below), a final-year Anthropology student, chairperson of the Faculty Student Council, and a member of Boleng Integration Non-Profit Organisation, shared with participants his knowledge of engaged scholarship and his involvement with his colleagues and partners.





Participants of the workshop, including stakeholders in Soutpan.

New Collaboration with the National University of Lesotho (NUL)

On 15 May 2025, Dr Sebolao initiated a collaboration with the Faculty of the Humanities at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). The Dean, Prof Mogomme Masoga, Dr Nyefolo Malete, Academic Head of Department for African Languages, and Dr Florence Tadi, a senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology, accompanied her. Initially, the intention was to focus on the Black Female Academics Mentorship programme. However, after Dr Sebolao's presentation on programmes implemented in the Faculty, it was decided to collaborate on the following areas:

- Women Researchers in the Humanities (WoRiTH), which includes the Black Female Academics Mentorship programme.
- Engaged Scholarship.
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Furthermore, common areas in curriculum development and languages were identified, and the two faculties agreed to collaborate on these issues as and when needs are identified. Guest lecturing was also suggested as a way to interact and enhance our services.



Faculty of The Humanities of UFS and NUL

WoRiTH Workshop

The Faculty hosted a workshop on Women Researchers in the Humanities (WoRiTH) on 2 December 2025 on the Bloemfontein Campus. The purpose of the workshop was to empower and advance women researchers, particularly Black women, in the Faculty of the Humanities. Celebrating women's achievements, such as PhD's and academic publications, the workshop endeavoured to foster professional development and networking opportunities, and to address institutional challenges related to equity. Through these workshops, including conferences and other awareness sessions, WoRiTH aims to build inclusive research cultures that highlight and advance women's contributions to research in the Humanities. The workshop was attended by academics from different departments, partners from the Library and Information Science and our new collaborators from Humanities at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). At this workshop, Dr Sebolao provided background on how the Black Female Academics Mentorship programme was established and its purpose. She indicated that the project was incorporated into WoRiTH and requested that mentors volunteer their support for Black female academics. The workshop successfully created a reflective, collaborative, and empowering space that celebrated women's academic contributions while reinforcing the commitment to advancing equity and supporting women researchers in the Humanities.

The picture below shows all the attendees of this workshop, who will also be working together to organise the second WoRiTH-WoRiHSS conference in 2026.



Artificial Intelligence Colloquium

The Faculty of the Humanities held its first colloquium on artificial intelligence (AI) at the Qwaqwa Campus on 14 May 2025. The tone of the day was set by Prof Jared McDonald, the Assistant Dean of the Humanities on the Qwaqwa Campus, with an eloquent invitation and welcome to the approximately 65 people in person and 16 online (the numbers fluctuated during the day), including the Campus Vice-Principal: Academic and Research on the UFS Qwaqwa Campus, Dr Cias Tsotetsi.

Dr Frelét de Villiers, from the Odeion School of Music, challenged the audience to distinguish between a jingle composed by Anton Esterhuyse and one composed by AI, the latter with specific prompts. Most of the delegates got it wrong! Despite this outcome, Dr De Villiers optimistically indicated that AI can never replace the nuanced elements of composition or the emotional attachment to music. She argued that the AI-generated jingle still required human input and, therefore, is at best mimicking available information.

The chair of the next session, Motsusi Nare, a UFS PhD candidate, rewarded audience members with sweet treats if they correctly identified the type of chatbot UFS uses and answered other "challenging" AI-related questions. The audience struggled with the answers, and treats were only won through lenient assessment.

Prof Kobus Marais, from the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice, invited the audience to reflect on: *What does it mean to think – and can computers do it?* He argued that, instead of taking either an overly pessimistic (even fatalistic) or an overly optimistic approach to AI, a realist approach is required. From his discipline, this would entail a semiotic approach in which questions such as the nature of thinking are taken seriously, and the interactions between, for example, language and the specific social environment are taken into consideration. He concluded that AI does not exhibit intelligence at present but merely mimics it. His colleague, Dr Marie van Heukelum, responded to this explanation by highlighting the difference between AI and children's language development.

After a tea break, the panel discussion on *Students' best and worst experiences of AI in a learning environment* was led by Motshedi Sitole from the Centre of Teaching and Learning. Her probing questions to the five panellist students revealed that some use ChatGPT to translate English academic texts into their home language. Even though the translations are far from perfect, they are still deemed helpful for better understanding. Many students feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading expected of them and turn to AI for help. It can help identify keywords for research, explain, summarise, boost creativity, and generate pictures and posters. Surprisingly, some students regard AI as their friend (someone they greet in the morning, consult, and even "the only friend I trust"); thus, the references to AI as a "buddy" or "tjommie". However, there are also privacy concerns, so certain things are kept from AI. Some students are also not able to use AI effectively because they do not know how to write effective prompts to find the desired information, and some are simply "too lazy". Overall, students request that lecturers guide them in the responsible use of AI as they navigate the pitfalls and moments of clarity.

Elani Boshoff, from the English Department, chaired the session, during which Dr Ayanda Khanye, Refiloe Mapane, and Karen de Villiers from the Department of Psychology provided practical examples of how they guide students through AI. Where the first two speakers provided an overview of how to align theory with practice in the context of assessments, Karen gave a detailed demonstration of how to use specific AI software to improve students' understanding and learning.

In the last session, Dr Nonki Motahane chaired a session in which presenters from outside the UFS showed how AI is being used in the world of work. Nozipho Duma, from FNB, gave a general overview of AI tools used across various aspects of work. Michelle Rabie, a freelance translator, provided in-depth demonstrations of how AI can assist and hinder translation work. An experienced translator can easily identify how AI can "hallucinate" at times, underscoring that AI can only be successful if a human engages with it skilfully.

At the second colloquium held on 7 August 2025 on the Bloemfontein Campus, the postgraduate students made important contributions from their research; the interview with the OFM representative, namely Elzette Boucher, was also insightful. Dr Barkhuizen opened the eyes of participants to AI in French and sensitised them to the multilingual aspects of AI.



Overview of 2025

The 2025 academic year was a productive period for the Department of African Languages, marked by sustained performance in teaching and learning, steady growth in research activity, strengthened international collaboration, and meaningful community engagement. Undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments remained satisfactory across campuses, reflecting continued demand for the Department's academic offerings. Staff participation in academic conferences increased, thereby enhancing scholarly engagement and curriculum development.

Research performance showed consistent growth, with research fellows continuing to play a leading role in scholarly outputs. The Department strengthened its international research profile through visits by three international research fellows, contributing to the consolidation of strategic global partnerships and academic networks.

Significant progress was also made in student development and community engagement through the establishment of the Student Academic Association for African Languages and the Student Cultural Association. These structures supported cultural programming, interdisciplinary collaboration, and heritage-focused activities, reinforcing the Department's societal and cultural impact. Staff development remained a priority, with two staff members successfully completing postgraduate qualifications during the reporting period. These achievements reflect the Department's commitment to academic capacity building, research development, and institutional sustainability.

Overall, the Department demonstrated stability, growth, and strategic alignment with institutional priorities in teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and staff development, positioning it positively for continued development in subsequent academic years.

Achievements

This year, only two doctoral students graduated on 11 December 2025 on the Bloemfontein Campus. In the April graduations of the Qwaqwa Campus, seven BA Honours students graduated, the highest ever at this campus since its incorporation in 2004.

Staff Achievements

Doctoral Degree Obtained: Supervisor: Dr H Ndebele



In 2025, Dr Mthobisi Busane, lecturer in isiZulu at the Qwaqwa Campus of the University of the Free State, made significant progress in his academic career by completing his doctoral qualification. His thesis, "Managing isiZulu and Sesotho as Languages of the Academy at the University of the Free State: A Language Management Approach," offers valuable insights into language policy and planning. Dr Busane's research explored strategies for embedding African languages within academic disciplinary epistemologies and discourses, examining the socio-political dynamics involved in developing isiZulu and Sesotho as languages of teaching, learning, and research at the University of the Free State. His study demonstrated that Language Management Theory (LMT) provides a critical framework for understanding how people use and interact with language, as well as for analysing the ideologies and inequalities that shape language policy and planning.

MA Degree: Supervisor: Dr H Ndebele

Makhele, M. 2025. *Motivation and attitude in learning the Sesotho conversational courses at the University of the Free State: Strides towards multilingualism and multiculturalism.* Master of Arts Dissertation. Department of African Languages, University of the Free State.

Staff Members' Awards: Rethabile Makamne

On behalf of the African Languages Department, we congratulate Rethabile Makamane-Mbhele on receiving the Exceptional Academic Achievement Award in November 2025. Her journey exemplifies dedication and excellence. Following her MA graduation in December 2024, she has already progressed to doctoral studies, with her proposal successfully approved by GHREC. This achievement reflects not only her personal triumph but also the strength and promise within our Department.

Student Achievements

Doctoral Students: Supervisor. Dr E.N. Malete

Dr MC Monyakane, academic staff member at the Faculty of Education, Northwest University, graduated on 11 December 2025 at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein Campus. Her thesis, "The Application of Appraisal Theory in Selected Sesotho Novels: An Analysis of Sesotho Text Plot", provides a thematic analysis within African Languages Literary Studies. The study demonstrates how attitudinal elements (affect, judgment, and appreciation) shape the plot structures of Sesotho novels. By applying Appraisal Theory, Dr Monyakane offers a powerful framework for interpreting literary texts, enhances understanding of Sesotho literature, and contributes to broader discussions of evaluative language in African literary analysis.

The following students completed their BA Honours degree and will be graduating in April 2026:

BA Honours Students (Bloemfontein Campus)

Moleғe, P. 2025. *Interjectives in Selected Songs of Tau ya Matshekga Accordion Music. Honours Dissertation*. Department of African Languages. University of the Free State.

Mase, D.S. 2025. *An Ideational Meta-function Analysis of Sesotho Interjectives in Matshekga's Accordion Music. Honours Dissertation.* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Dr H Ndebele.

Leisa Tiisetso. 2025. *Ideational Analysis and Interpretation of the Sesotho Psalm 23. Honours Research Report.* Department of African Languages. UFS. Supervisor: Dr EN Malete.

Lemphane Thato. *2025. An Analysis and Interpretation of the Basia Clan Praise Poems: An Ideational Metafunctional Approach.* Supervisor: Dr EN Malete.

Makhele Motshedisi. 2025. *Tshekatsheko ya Tshebediso ya Puo Palekgutshweng: "Monna ha se Banka".* Honours Research Report. Department of African Languages. UFS. Supervisor: Dr EN Malete.

BA Honours Students (Qwaqwa Campus)

Mbongo, T. 2025. *Functionalist Analysis of the Basotho Proverbs in Teleki's Haeso Mafotholeng (2006).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State.

Motaung, K. 2025. *The Analysis of Dysfunctional Institutions in Sefatsa's Pakiso (1979).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State.

Mokoena, N.B. 2025. *The Impact of Modernity on Traditional Basotho Parenting Style in the Basotho Folktale 'Tselane'*. Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.

Motsoeneng, T.J. 2025. *A Critical Analysis of Mistreatment in the Workplace: A Study of Letshaba's Drama Text 'Lejwe la Kgopiso (2015)'*. Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.

Nthinya, T.C. 2025. *The Effects of Gender Dynamics and Societal Pressure in Lekgapetla la Panana (2015).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.

Nakeli, M. 2025. *Tragedy Reflections in KPD Maphalla's Text: Botsang Lebitla (1993).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.

Mokoena, K. 2025. *The Influence of Sesotho Male-oriented Proverbs in Maphalla's Tshiu Tseo (1982).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.

Motaung, K. 2025. *The Analysis of Dysfunctional Institutions in Sefatsa's Pakiso (1979).* Department of African Languages. University of the Free State. Supervisor: Mensele SM.



Mbongo, T.



Mokoena, N.B.



Motsoeneng, T.J.



Nthinya, T.C.



Nakeli, M.



Mokoena, K.



Motaung, K.

Research Fellows

The Department of African Languages hosted three research fellows from African Universities, who delivered research lectures and seminars to local students and the university community.

Prof Bewaji

Prof John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji, Emeritus Professor at the PJ Patterson Institute, University of the West Indies, has had a distinguished career in African Philosophy and African Cultures. His scholarship is complemented by extensive engagements across numerous African countries through research, academic exchanges, and cultural initiatives. Prof Bewaji visited the Department of African Languages to cultivate a sustained scholarly partnership with faculty members and other Humanities units. The collaboration aimed to advance joint research initiatives focused on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, cultural practices, and African languages. This engagement has strengthened interdisciplinary inquiry and contributed to the development of African-centred scholarship within the Department.

Dr Simiyu (Kibabii University, Kenya)

The Department of African Languages was pleased to host Dr Fred Wanjala Simiyu as a visiting researcher at the University of the Free State (UFS) from 18 to 29 August 2025. This visit was undertaken under the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Kibabii University and UFS. During his stay, Dr Simiyu engaged in research activities and participated in academic lectures, contributing to knowledge exchange and capacity building. This academic collaboration strengthens the partnership between the two institutions. It also supports the shared objectives of internationalisation as outlined in the strategic frameworks of both UFS and Kibabii University.

Dr Temba Rugwiji (Zimbabwe)

The Department of African Languages hosted Dr Temba Rugwiji as a visiting researcher at the University of the Free State (UFS) from 2 to 15 November 2025. His visit aimed to foster academic collaboration with colleagues within the Department and across other Humanities units. The partnership focused on research and study related to Indigenous Knowledge Systems, African cultures, and languages, providing a platform for engagement with current and emerging African scholars. This collaboration supported the production and dissemination of scholarly outputs, including journal articles, monographs, and other publications arising from the academic exchange.

Keynote Address

Dr Elias Nyefolo Malete, from the Department of African Languages, Faculty of the Humanities, was invited as a keynote speaker at the Dr T.K. Mopeli Indigenous Knowledge Systems Memorial Lecture and Symposium, held at the Qwaqwa Campus on 19 September 2025. His keynote address, "An Ideational Analysis and Integration of African Folktale in Science, Technology, and Education: Hou Duim Vas", explored how African oral traditions can be integrated into scientific and educational frameworks to enhance relevance, inclusivity, and decolonisation efforts.

The symposium provided a platform for critical dialogue and collaborative reflection on the value of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in contemporary education and research. By emphasising the intellectual contributions embedded in oral narratives, spiritual worldviews, ecological stewardship, and community-centred ways of knowing, Dr Malete's presentation highlighted the enduring significance of African epistemologies in informing sustainable development, culturally responsive pedagogy, and knowledge production. This engagement exemplifies the Department's commitment to advancing research with tangible societal impact and fostering meaningful community partnerships.

Research Projects

The Department of African languages embarked on a research project in 2025 to produce two books written in Sesotho. This initiative is funded by the Department of Higher Education, within a programme called 'CONSOLIDATING AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION'. It is being carried out by a consortium of seven universities, including the University of the Free State, which has received R500 000 through the African Languages Department.

The first phase will prioritise the writing and publication of the Sesotho linguistic book. The book intends to examine and explore the general characteristics of a particular linguistic period to determine the extent to which the linguistic status and the development of Sesotho lexical and syntactic categories align with the local linguistic periods and the extent to which these categories have changed over time. The historical analysis will confine itself to Kosch's (1993) three developmental periods of Northern Sotho linguistics: The Pre-Dokean period (1826), the Dokean period (1927), and the Modern period (1975). The analysis of Sesotho lexical and syntactic categories at different developmental stages will take into account linguistic theories, patterned and classified according to the prominent characteristics of a particular global linguistic period.

The second envisaged book will be an interdisciplinary project in collaboration with the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics. The book will consider two options: a curriculum-based book that can support student learning, and a book targeted at consumers that details evidence-based information in Sesotho. Though the book would be written in Sesotho, its use would not be limited to the University of the Free State, as Sesotho-speaking students could use it wherever they choose. As an academic department, we saw this as an opportunity to address another challenge: a basic nutrition textbook that incorporates the African context. Currently, the nutrition profession relies on American textbooks; however, the call for a more African-based resource continues to grow.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Khanyetsi, M. 2026. *Promotion and preservation of indigenous knowledge in the age of globalisation: The case of puo ya hlompho among the Basotho*. SAJAL.

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. *"I hear you cry, but I don't see tears": Indirectness in bribery negotiations*. African Journal of Inter/ Multidisciplinary Studies.

Khanyetsi, M. 2025.*The positive depiction of Basotho women in Basotho accordion music: Sannere's perspective in Lerato*. Inkanyiso Journal.

Sibisi, M.M. & Ndebele, H. 2025. *transformation and inclusivity in translanguaging through transliteration: Perspectives of isiZulu home-language students on discipline-specific terminology in isiZulu*. Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC), 14(2): 124-140.

Ndebele, H & Zulu, N.S. 2025. *Insights on language management in the health sector: Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa.* South African Journal of African Languages, 45(1): 1-7.

Maphumulo, L.S. & Hlengwa, M.E. 2025. *Ubuciko bokwethiwa kwamagama abalingiswa emanovelini abhalwa ngemuva konyaka wezi-2000: Kubhekwa ukwethiwa kwabalingiswa ukuthi kuyafana nokwetha jikelele.* SAJAL.

Hlengwa, M.E. 2025. *An exploration of spiritual desert and influence of African Indigenous Knowledge: A personal history self-study of a born-and-bred South African scholar.* Theology Journal.

Chapters in edited volumes

Ndlovu, E. 2025a. An Appraisal of the Provisions of the Zimbabwean Competency-Based Curriculum's Languages Learning Area, in Motinyane, M. Mletshe, L. & Tshongolo, X. (eds.).

African Languages in Classrooms and Academia: Intellectualisation and Empowerment through Formal Education. Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 1 – 19.

Ndlovu, E. & Pfunzo, L. M. 2025b. Access to Justice for the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired in South Africa: A Policy Perspective, in Ralarala, M.K., Kaschula, R.H., Docrat, Z. & Satia, E. (eds.). *Documenting Forensic Linguistics in the African Context: Perspectives in Language and Legal Practice.* Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 227 – 243.

Svongoro, P & Ndlovu, E. 2025c. Access to Justice by Unrepresented Litigants in Zimbabwe's Courtrooms, in Kondowe, W. & Svongoro, P. (eds.). *Discrimination and Access to Justice in Africa: Language and Vulnerability and Social Inclusion in Southern and Eastern Africa.* Routledge: New York. 236 – 253.

Ndlovu, E. & Mashiri, P. 2025d. Sign Language in the Zimbabwean Media: A Proposal for Multilingual Broadcasting, in Kondowe, W, Kamanga, C.M.M. & Madula, P. (eds.). *Multilingualism in Southern Africa: Issues and Perspectives.* Routledge: New York. 163 – 180.

Ndlovu, E. 2024. Language Planning and Policy in Zimbabwe: Past and Present, in Lisanza, E. & Muaka, L. (eds.). Palgrave Handbook of Language Policies in Africa. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. 595 – 623.

Mensele, S.M. 2025. Matsoho ho dutla a Sebetsang: Bohlokwa ba ho hlahloba diphoso Mehloding ya *Thutapuo ya Sesotho.* NIHSS UCT Sesotho Book Project, University of Cape Town.

Mensele, S.M. 2025. *Ho Kgohlela ha Mantswe a Puo ya Sesotho Thutong ya Akhaonthing: bohlokwa ba ho Phethola Lekote.* Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) Press, The University of Pretoria. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. *Bopa bonna.* Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) Press, The University of Pretoria. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. Mohope wa metsi. Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) Press, The University of Pretoria. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. Borokgong ba Maseru. African Languages Press. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. Khanutsha lebone la hao. African Languages Press. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Khanyetsi, M. 2025. Ke tla ithapalatsa.African Languages Press. (Under Academy for Multilingualism, UFS).

Books

Creative Outputs

Mensele, M.S. 2025. *Ho se Tsebe ke Lebote.* Academy for Multilingualism, UFS.

Mensele, M.S. 2025. Ho ha leihlo. Academy for Multilingualism, UFS.

Mensele, M.S. 2025. Bomang? Academy for Multilingualism, UFS.

Conference Papers

Dr H Ndebele

Ndebele, H. 2025. Indifference or commitment: The case of multilingual journal language policies in South Africa. Paper presented at the International Conference of the African Languages Association of Southern Africa, 8-11 July 2025.

Madikane, L. & Ndebele, H. 2025. Guaranteeing the future of African languages through social media: The case of an isiXhosa Wikipedia. Paper presented at the International Conference of the African Languages Association of Southern Africa, 8-11 July 2025.

Dr EN Malete

Malete, E.N. 2025: DHASA International Conference: The Role of Humanities in Digital Humanities and Artificial Intelligence at CSIR International Convention Centre. Pretoria. 10-14 November 2025. Paper: *An Ideational Analysis and Integration of African Folktale in Science, Technology, and Education*.

Mensele MS

Mensele, M.S. 2025. Humanities Research Day/Seminar, Qwaqwa Campus, 10 November 2025. Topic: *Matsoho ho dutla a sebetsang: Bohlokwa ba ho hlahloba diphoso mehloding ya thutapuo ya Sesotho.*

Mensele, S.M. 2025. 26th International African Languages Association of Southern Africa (ALASA) Conference, University of Limpopo, 8-11 July 2025. Topic: *Kgokahano ya ditshomo tsa Basotho le Bophelo ba kajeno: "Dinanabolele".*

Mensele, S.M. 2025. 26th International African Languages Association of Southern Africa (ALASA) Conference, University of Limpopo, 8-11 July 2025. "*Bomenomasweu ditshomong tsa Basotho: "Tshwenyane le Kwena".*

Mensele, S.M. 2025. Attended as a contributor, Kgaolo ya 8 and Kgaolo ya 13: Sesotho book launch and symposium. Theme: Promoting Sesotho as a language of science and technology, research, teaching and learning. Book title: Boithuto, Ntlafatso, Polokelo le Ntshetsopele ya Puo ya Sesotho: Editors: Rethabile Possa & 'Matumo C. Ramafikeng, Publisher: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), ISBN: 978-1-920447-08-3, Date: 5 September 2025, CUT.

M Hlengwa

Maphumulo, L.S. & Hlengwa, M.E. 2025. Ubuciko bokwethiwa kwamagama abalingiswa emanovelini abhalwa ngemuva konyaka wezi-2000: Kubhekwa ukwethiwa kwabalingiswa ukuthi kuyafana nokwetha jikelele. SAJAL.

Hlengwa, M.E. 2025. An exploration of spiritual desert and influence of African Indigenous Knowledge: A personal history self-study of a born-and-bred South African scholar. Theology Journal.

Conference Proceedings

Dr H Ndebele

Ndebele, H. 2025. Coloniality and decoloniality in knowledge production: The case of multilingual journal language policies in South Africa. Paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Languages, Multilingualism, and Decolonisation Practices in Higher Education, 25-27 November 2025. University of the Free State.

Ndebele, H. 2025. Locating research on African languages in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Paper presented at the UFS Learning and Teaching Conference, 16-17 September 2025. University of the Free State.

Ndebele, H. 2025. Embracing liberation and transformation through the teaching and learning of an African language at the University of the Free State. Paper presented at the UFS Learning and Teaching Conference, 16-17 September 2025. University of the Free State.

Dr EN Malete

Malete, E.N. 2025. DHASA International Conference: The Role of Humanities in Digital Humanities and Artificial Intelligence at CSIR International Convention Centre. Pretoria. 10-14 November 2025. Paper: *An Ideational Analysis and Integration of African Folktale in Science, Technology, and Education.*

Engaged Scholarship

External Examiner

Dr Khanyetsi, M.

Lipuo Motene. PhD. *The linguistic construction of sexualities through lexical choices and discourse strategies: A comparative analysis of female and male famo.* University of KwaZulu-Natal (2025).

Mateboho Poea. MA Studies. *AI as a form of deconstruction of the Basotho folktale Moshanyana sankatana.* National University of Lesotho (2025).

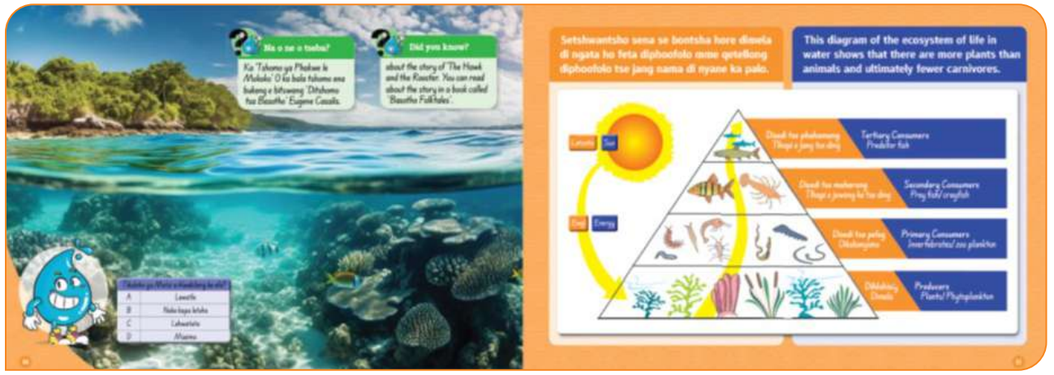
Mabakuena Elizabeth Mofoka.T. MA Studies. *The Influence of Sesotho Syntactic Features on English Sentence Structures among Primary School Students: A Case of Mejametalana A.C.L. Primary School.* National University of Lesotho (2025).

Lilochane Manketsi. MA Studies. *The significance of literature in English in the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education: Promoting the history and culture of the Basotho.* National University of Lesotho (2025).

Non-accredited publications

Dr EN Malete

Malete, E.N. 2025. *Botle le Dimaka tsa bophelo Tikoloho ya metsing,* Roomtoread publication. This booklet is intended for learners in lower grades to read and use. Learners can also learn and deepen their understanding of the wonders, beauty, and importance of living together among the world's creatures across various aquatic environments. Water, as an important liquid, is found in different forms, such as rivers (river ecosystems), lakes (pond ecosystems), wetlands (wetland ecosystems), and the ocean (ocean ecosystems).



Other Activities

The Department of African Languages, together with the African Languages Student Association and the UFS Library Service, hosted several cultural and academic events on the Bloemfontein campus. These included the launch of the African Languages Student Association, the reading club, ancestral celebrations, and heritage celebrations in September.



Representatives of African languages.



All African languages represented are assigned designated language representatives.

The African Languages Student Association was officially launched on 26 April 2025. Students from different language groups and cultural backgrounds attended the event. Staff members from the African Languages Department were also present, including Dr H Ndebele, who is part of the Association as academic staff, Makamane-Mbhele, the Association's advisor, and Dr EN Malete, the Head of the Department. Dr MA Mahanke, a UFS alumnus and author of books on African languages, delivered an outstanding keynote address aimed at inspiring students to become leaders in language preservation. The Association also invited a young student author who writes in isiZulu to speak about the importance of writing in African languages. Diverse cultural associations within the Association presented traditional dances from the Basotho, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, and Xhosa cultures. The event marked the official opening and introduction of the Association to the wider UFS student community.

Creative Writing Workshop



The African Languages Reading Club held a creative writing workshop on 17 May 2025, aimed at training aspiring authors on various writing genres. The workshop featured guest speakers, including Dr EN Malete, Dr H Ndebele and Dr MA Mahanke, who shared their knowledge and insights. The workshop was a success, with students expressing themselves in their home languages, fostering understanding and a step towards a multilingual society.

Ancestors' Day Conference







The Faculty of Theology and Religion held a two-day Ancestors' Day conference in collaboration with the Department of African Languages. The event celebrated leadership, democracy, and African heritage through research presentations and cultural celebrations. The event featured presentations by African historians and scholars, as well as a comparative discussion on Afrocentric and Eurocentric leadership.
The event emphasised diversity, inclusion, and collaboration, allowing students to engage with leaders they often see on TV and in lecture halls.

SADiLaR and the ESCALATOR Workshop

The two days of the "First Steps to Annotation" workshop marked a significant milestone in advancing digital humanities and language technology within the University of the Free State's African Languages Department. The event, conducted in partnership with the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) and the ESCALATOR Programme, attracted an impressive number of students and lecturers eager to explore the transformative potential of data annotation and digital research tools. Facilitators guided participants through the conceptual and practical aspects of data annotation, illustrating its relevance to Humanities research. Participants gained practical experience using the CATMA tool, enabling them to apply their new skills directly to real annotation tasks.

Heritage Day Celebration



The African Languages Sesotho Student Association at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein Campus, hosted a lively Heritage Day Celebration to honour the rich cultural heritage of the Basotho. The event featured distinguished guests, including Dr Malete, Head of the Department of African Languages, who delivered an insightful lecture on the history of the Basotho nation. Dr Hoffman from the Universitas Hospital, who inspired the audience with powerful poetry and Makamane-Mbhele, a lecturer who offered guidance and support. Students participated enthusiastically, showcasing their talents through traditional dances, songs, and poetry, creating a colourful and vibrant atmosphere that celebrated Basotho identity and unity. The event successfully promoted cultural awareness, pride, and community spirit among students and staff. The celebration was a resounding success, reaffirming the Department's commitment to preserving and promoting African languages and culture within the academic community.

Staff (2025)

Bloemfontein Campus

JCH Du Toit	Senior Administrative Assistant
M Hlengwa	Contract – Junior Lecturer
Dr BD Letlala	Lecturer
RJ Makamane	Contract – Junior Lecturer
MF Makhele	Junior Lecturer
Dr EN Malete	Senior Lecturer - AHD
Dr H Ndebele	Senior Lecturer
Dr MA Nhlapo	Contract – Lecturer

Qwaqwa Campus

Dr MS Busane	Lecturer
Dr MMT Khanyetsi	Senior Lecturer
SM Mensele	Lecturer
NV Moloi	Senior Administrative Assistant
MT Motloung	Contract – Junior Lecturer
P Moyane	Contract – Junior Lecturer
Dr S Ndebele	Lecturer





Department of

Afrikaans and Dutch, German and French

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Qwaqwa Campus
Dr Marian Human-Nel
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Overview of 2025

The year will mainly be remembered for two occasions: the Department's celebration of the centenary of Afrikaans as an official language and the hosting of the biennial congress of the Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging (ALV), the flagship academic congregation of the Afrikaans literary world.

During the reporting period, the Department of Afrikaans and Dutch, German and French also demonstrated sustained excellence across teaching, research, community engagement, and international collaboration. Academic distinction was evident through numerous staff achievements, including inaugural and keynote lectures, national and international awards, and recognition for excellence in teaching, research, supervision, and scholarly leadership. These accomplishments underscore the Department's strong intellectual profile and its contribution to linguistic, literary, and cultural scholarship.

The Department maintained a robust research culture, supported by structured writing retreats and active participation in national and international conferences. Research outputs included accredited journal articles, book chapters, authored monographs, and creative works spanning linguistics, literature, translation studies, digital humanities, and cultural analysis. The work of research fellows further strengthened scholarly productivity and disciplinary diversity. Engagement with contemporary methodologies, including computational analysis and artificial intelligence in language education, reflects the Department's responsiveness to emerging academic paradigms.

Teaching and learning initiatives remained central to the Department's mission. Innovative curriculum practices, experiential learning projects, and short learning programmes, such as *Gesellig Afrikaans* and beginner-level Dutch and French offerings, advanced multilingualism, inclusivity, and intercultural competence. Student success was reflected in academic awards, international scholarships, language proficiency certifications, and participation in prestigious exchange programmes across Europe. Postgraduate training, particularly in creative writing, continued to flourish, with notable recognition for students across a broad age spectrum.

Engaged scholarship and outreach activities reinforced the Department's societal impact. Public lectures, film screenings, workshops, and participation in arts festivals facilitated knowledge dissemination beyond the university. The development of the open-access French textbook *Décollage* exemplifies the Department's commitment to accessible, contextually relevant educational resources. Hosting major academic events, including the 2025 ALV congress and commemorative lectures marking 100 years of Afrikaans as an official language, further positioned the Department as a national and international hub for scholarly dialogue.

Collectively, these activities affirm the Department's strategic alignment with academic excellence, transformation, and global engagement.

Achievements



Prof Angelique van Niekerk.

Prof Angelique van Niekerk delivered her inaugural lecture, titled "'n Kulturele en psigolinguistiese perspektief op hoe 'n wêreldbeskouing beïnvloed word aan die hand van advertensiekommunikasie: 1995-2025 / A cultural and psycholinguistic perspective on how a worldview is influenced based on advertising communication: 1995-2025" on 5 August 2025 in the Equitas Auditorium on the Bloemfontein Campus.

Prof Henning Pieterse delivered a keynote address, titled "'n Lewe in die huis van wees", reflecting on his four-decade-long academic and literary career at the ALV congress hosted by the Afrikaans and Dutch division in September.

Prof Naòmi Morgan was honoured with a kykNET Fiesta award on 27 February for the best translation of Samuel Beckett's *En attendant Godot*, which he translated into English as *Waiting for Godot*. Morgan translated it into Afrikaans as *Ons Wag vir Godot*. Prof Morgan was also awarded the 2025 UJ Prize for Translation for *Ons wag vir Godot* on 29 August 2025.



Dr Alison Stander (left) and Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation (right).

Dr Alison Stander was recognised and honoured as one of the top performers of the UFS in learning and teaching, research, supervision, innovation, and scholarly leadership at the 2025 Exceptional Academic Achievers Awards, held at the UFS on 5 December 2025.

Dr Carla Ellis received the award for the best second-year student in South African Sign Language (SASL) in 2025, following her recognition as the best first-year student in the previous year. Her efforts support the Faculty and the University's focus on diversification, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary engagement.

Dr Trudie Strauss received a scholarship to attend the International German Teachers' Conference in Lübeck in July. There were approximately 2,500 German teachers from all over the world.

Lize Botha (student and staff member) and **Marita Oosthuizen** (student) from the German division are two of eight students in South Africa who have won DAAD scholarships to complete a six-week language course at the universities of Göttingen and Freiburg, Germany, in January and February.

Eight student candidates from the Department Afrikaans and Dutch, German and French were successful in the international exam for Dutch (A2, B1, B2) in 2025. Dutch language acquisition is offered as part of the undergraduate module AFNK 2724 (and occasional studies) and as a short learning programme within the Department.



Successful CNaVT candidates in 2025: Back, from left to right: Jana Smith, Dr Francios Smith and Rita Marianne Oosthuizen Front, from left to right: Tanya Kruger, Emma-Lancia Faro, Elizna Henderson and Prof Angelique van Niekerk (Absent: Melissa Mitchell).

Elizna Henderson, a third-year student in the Department, participated in the CNaVT (international Dutch exam) in Bloemfontein in 2025. This prepared her excellently for the experience of being part of the *Jongerenprojek* in the Netherlands. This project is a cultural and academic exchange programme for students; they visited the Netherlands and Belgium from 23 June to 11 July.



Students of the Jongerenprojek at Schipol in June 2025.



Tanya Kruger (student)

Tanya Kruger, a student in the Department, had the privilege to attend the 2025 *Zomercursus* in Ghent, Belgium (3-16 August) after completing her second CNaVT exam in May 2025. The *Zomercursus* is a two-week course presented by the Dutch Language Union (Nederlandse Taalunie) and Ghent University. The course broadens students' academic knowledge and Dutch language skills. In addition, students are exposed to the culture of Flanders and the Netherlands.

Marita Oosthuizen, a student in the Department, was one of the finalists from around the world who travelled from 7-12 October to the Netherlands and Belgium to participate in the International Public Speaking Competition for students of Dutch Studies, held by the Dutch Language Union (Nederlandse Taalunie) and the International Association for Dutch Studies, in collaboration with Leiden University. Marita also received the Jan Felix Lategan Prize for the best student who had Afrikaans and Dutch as major subjects.



Marita Oosthuizen (student); front row, fourth from the left.

French Honours students **Sipho Mokhethi** and **Kaitlin Els** were endorsed by the French Embassy, with support from the French division, to visit France for six months from October 2025 to May 2026. During this exchange, the students act as English language teaching assistants.

Marné Clase (final-year student) was honoured with the Faculty of Humanities' Dean's Medal for the best final-year student at the April graduation ceremony, and at the Faculty of Humanities Awards, she received accolades for the highest marks in three languages: Afrikaans, German and English.

Teaching

Dr Trudie Strauss from the German division led a project with third-year students, who taught German to apprentices at Motheo TVET College who were planning to do internships in Germany.

Gesellig Afrikaans 1 and *2:* The two *Gesellig Afrikaans* (Afrikaans language acquisition for foreign language speakers) short learning programmes (basic and advanced) presented by the Department are offered every semester, allowing students to acquire basic Afrikaans skills in 14 weeks and learn more about South African culture. At the certificate ceremony after each semester, each student must deliver a short speech. This event showcases how well the students can converse in Afrikaans after only 14 weeks of class.



Gesellig Afrikaans 1 and 2 students after the first semester. From left to right: Menzi Sekwane, Chie Yamamoto, Thandi Mahlangu, Tsholofelo Mpitsi, Ana Ebrecht, Corné Richter (facilitator GA 1), Asindisiwe Jobela, and Dr Alison Stander (facilitator GA 2).



Gesellig Afrikaans 1 and 2 students after the second semester. From left to right: Dr Alison Stander (facilitator GA 2), Omololu Aluko, Thandi Mahlangu, Lucy Lehula, Ouma Ngoepe, Rabia Tepe (from Germany), Corné Richter (facilitator GA 1), Rahel Staerk, and Rasmus Klamka (both from Germany).

Research Projects

The Department's research endeavours continued to be fostered by writing retreats. This year, the retreat was held in November at A Little Guesthouse and attended by Profs Henning Pieterse, Angelique van Niekerk, and Cilliers van den Berg, and Drs Francois Smith, Trudie Strauss, Carla Ellis, Johanna Steyn, Albertus Barkhuizen, and Alison Stander, as well as Corné Richter.

Research Outputs (accredited)

In addition to the research outputs of academic colleagues, the Department is also proud of its research fellows and their outputs. In 2025, the fellows were: Profs HP van Coller, Jerzy Koch, Karen Ferreira-Meyers (French), and Stuart Taberner (German); Drs Annette de Wet, Joanita Erasmus-Alt, and Burgert Senekal; Messrs Anton Roodt and Charl-Pierre Naudé; and Mmes Marietjie Lambrechts and Corrie Geldenhuys.

Articles

Prof Hennie van Coller

UFS-054072: Journal article: Patronaatskap, herskrywing en sensuur.

Prof Angelique van Niekerk

UFS-054556: Journal article: An applied linguistic analysis of social transformation: The *Bult* magazine (1987–2022).

UFS-054557: Journal article: 'n Historiese oorsig van kontinue taalontwikkeling in Afrikaans sedert 1916 in *Huisgenoot*.

UFS-054770: Journal article: 'n Raamwerk vir vreemdetaalverwerwing in 'n laetegnologie-omgewing / A framework for language acquisition within a low-tech environment.

Dr Burgert Senekal

UFS-054631: Journal article: Die siening van die Wes-Europese bevolking as afstammelinge van die tien verlore stamme van Israel as sameswerings teorie.

UFS-054744: Journal article: Names of weekdays and runic writing as indications of commonality amongst the Germanic tribes.

UFS-054746: Journal article: The contemporary use of the runes on social media: A network analysis of #nordicrunes on Instagram.

Prof Cilliers van den Berg

UFS-055447: Journal article: Patterns of meaning and the claims of history: S.J. Naudé's *The Third Reel*.

Dr Alison Stander

UFS-054770: Journal article: 'n Raamwerk vir vreemdetaalverwerwing in 'n laetegnologie-omgewing / A framework for language acquisition within a low-tech environment.

Dr Mathilda Smit

UFS-055666: Journal article: "Dis mooi man, Jan van Riebeeck rap nou saam die Khoisan" – Rap as transnasionale podium-fenomeen? 'n Ondersoek na die wisselwerking tussen Suid-Afrika en die Lae Lande, deur te kyk na die gevallestudie van Jack Parow en De Kraaien.

Marietjie Lambrechts

UFS-054582: Journal article: Vervreemding tot verlies: Die roete van selfvervreemding na selfvernietiging in *Van vaders en vlugtelinge* deur S.J. Naudé.

Chapters in edited volumes

Prof Angelique van Niekerk

UFS-054559: Pragmatiek. Chapter in book: *Kontemporêre Afrikaanse Taalkunde*.

Prof Cilliers van den Berg

UFS-055820: Minor literatures and the politics of difficult pasts. Chapter in book: *Politics and minor literature: Transcultural interventions in Deleuze and Guattari's account of minor literature*.

Books

Prof Stuart Taberner

UFS-054074: Authored book: *The new German Jewish literature*.

Conference Papers/Posters

Prof Cilliers van den Berg

"Keinem bleibt seine Gestalt": Differenz und Wiederholung in Christoph Ransmayrs *Die letzte Welt*. Thirtieth International Conference of the SAGV (Association for German Studies in Southern Africa), Windhoek, 13-16 April.

To navigate difficult pasts through cosmopolitanism? XXIV Congress of ICLA (International Comparative Literature Association), Seoul, South Korea, 28 July to 1 August.

Prof Henning Pieterse

'n Lewe in die huis van wees. Keynote address. ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Prof Angelique van Niekerk

Sosiolinguistiese en psigolinguistiese aspekte van verandering in die Afrikaanse (media)mark: 1916-2024. (Afrikaans Literature Association) conference. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Prof Jerzy Koch

Utile dulci miscere oftewel die verliteratuurdheid van kennis. ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Dr Francois Smith

Hoe begin 'n storie? ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Dr Marian Human-Nel

"Ek ken my plek": Patriargie in die prosawerk van Henriette Grové. ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Dr Carla Ellis

Die aanleer van Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal as T2 deur eerstejaarstudente aan die UV / The acquisition of South African Sign Language as L2 by first year students at the UFS with Afrikaans, English or Sesotho as L1 (with S Lombaard). ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Afrikaans en Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal: 'n Verkennende vergelykende studie / Afrikaans and South African Sign Language: An experimental and comparative study (with Prof T du Plessis and A le Roux). ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Dr Trudie Strauss

Woordfrekwensie in die poësie: Insigte verkry deur 'n kwantitatiewe masjien-ontleding van *Groot Verseboek* en die vorming van die Afrikaanse literêre kanon (with Dr M Smit). ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Word frequency in poetry: Computational insights into Groot Verseboek and the formation of the Afrikaans literary canon (with Dr T Strauss). Digital Humanities Conference. Portugal, 14-18 July.

Dr Mathilda Smit

Word frequency in poetry: Computational insights into *Groot Verseboek* and the formation of the Afrikaans literary canon (with Dr T Strauss). Digital Humanities Conference. Portugal, 14-18 July.

Woordfrekwensie in die poësie: Insigte verkry deur 'n kwantitatiewe masjien-ontleding van *Groot Verseboek* en die vorming van die Afrikaanse literêre kanon (with Dr T Strauss). ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Decoding reflection: Scaffolded writing, translanguaging, and pedagogical care in a first-year Afrikaans literature module. UFS Teaching and Learning conference. Bloemfontein, 16-19 September.

Dr Burgert Senekal

Anderkant die kantlyn: Afrikaanse swartmetaal. ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Dr Alison Stander

Van lesplan tot publikasie: Die parallelle tussen module-ontwikkeling en akademiese skryfwerk. ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

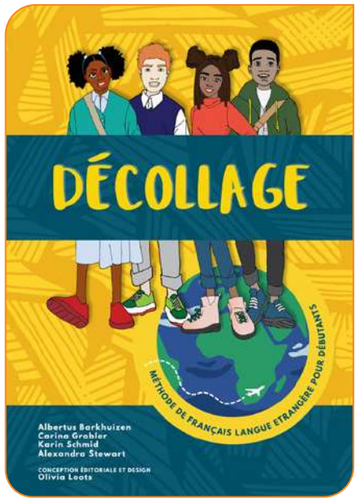
Elizabeth van Rensburg

(M)Engels in die Afrikaanse literêre kanon(?). ALV congress. Bloemfontein, 10-12 September.

Constructing critical thinking in a first-year additional language Afrikaans literature class. UFS Teaching and Learning conference. Bloemfontein, 16-19 September.

Engaged Scholarship

Under the leadership of Dr Albertus Barkhuizen, a group of South African French-language lecturers published a textbook for beginners in French in February 2025. The book is currently being used in five South African universities and a selection of local and international high schools. A South African team of lecturers developed the *Décollage* project in response to the need for their students to identify with the teaching resources used in the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classroom, not only with the characters that appear in these resources, but also with the places where these characters are found. For this reason, *Décollage* aims to highlight South African cultures by providing characters, situations and explanations that learners can relate to. The fictional trip described in this method allows learners to discover several African and European countries where French is spoken. This manual seeks to highlight various French-speaking cultures, as well as the cultures of origin of the learner. *Décollage* is an Open Educational Resource (OER). The attribution of choice for *Décollage* (manual and audio documents) is CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. This attribution allows the user to share the content of this resource free of charge in any format, clearly indicating its source by citation. In addition, the user has the right to remix, transform, and create new material from this resource, while citing the original version. In this way, the aim is to make a quality resource available free of charge to anyone, without discrimination of any kind, who wants to learn French.



Décollage: Textbook for beginners in French.

In 2025, six public lectures were presented in the Department's popular lecture series. These lectures included: Dr Katja Tereshko from Holland; Prof Jannie Pretorius on his volume of poetry, *Stil gesprek*; Prof Johann Rossouw, who delivered a retrospective lecture on Breyten Breytenbach; Natie Botes, who investigated opinions recorded about Anton Goosen ("A voice of *Wanderlust*"); the award-winning poet Dr Klara du Plessis from Canada, with a lecture titled "Act, Ek't, Ekke"; and the poet Dr Gilbert Gibson on his latest volume of poetry, *vloei/stof*. Students in the Department are always invited to attend these lectures, and, per semester, third-year students in the AFN modules are requested to submit written essays based on attendance.



An invitation to one of the popular lectures.

Film nights by the divisions Afrikaans and Dutch, German, and French, respectively, continue to be offered regularly and are open to students and the public. The following films were screened: *Django*, *Aus dem Nichts*, *Almost Cops*, *Supercondriaque, The Zone of Interest*, and *Ma mère, Dieu et Sylvie Vartan.*

Several colleagues of the Department, such as Profs Cilliers van den Berg and Henning Pieterse, Drs Francois Smith, Mathilda Smit and Marian Human-Nel, and Miss Elizabeth van Rensburg, participated in discussions at book clubs and arts festivals, such as the Free State Arts Festival in Bloemfontein. At the Clarens Arts Festival, Dr Marian Human-Nel interviewed the authors Marida Fitzpatrick and Elmarie Viljoen-Massyn in a programme titled "Rillers en Raaisels".

Prof Cilliers van den Berg and Dr Trudie Strauss conducted the Goethe exams at the end of the year. Eight students participated, mainly Grade 12 learners, but also two of the Department's students.

Drs Albertus Barkhuizen and Johanna Steyn acted as DELF examiners for the Alliance Française. The French Ministry of Education endorses Drs Barkhuizen and Steyn to examine these internationally accredited language proficiency exams.

Prof Cilliers van den Berg was elected as the treasurer of the Association of German Studies in Southern Africa (SAGV) in April.

Dr Albertus Barkhuizen presented at the Faculty HUM AI Colloquium on the use of AI in resource creation and adaptation.

Prof Henning Pieterse was convener of the Helgaard Steyn Prize and wrote and delivered the commendatio for this prize, awarded to poet Antjie Krog. He also interviewed Krog during a public discourse on her memoir *Binnerym van bloed*.

National and International Collaboration

The author, Leo Toma, presented a short workshop for the German students on the Bloemfontein Campus. He is an expert in German as a foreign language and spent an interesting morning with the students.

The French Embassy invited Dr Albertus Barkhuizen to teach two training workshops in May and December on language proficiency teaching and examination. The French Ministry of Education endorses Dr Barkhuizen to teach the workshops.

Francophonia Summer University in Nice (France) invited Dr Albertus Barkhuizen to teach two workshops in July. The workshops were aimed at training French language teachers in the use of AI for generating teaching resources and in audiovisual dubbing for creative output.

As president of AFSSA (Association for French and Francophone Studies in Southern Africa), Dr Albertus Barkhuizen organised a student conference at Stellenbosch University (18-20 September) where postgraduate students in French language and literature could showcase their work. AFSSA and the French Embassy sponsored the event.

Postgraduate Students

Under the guidance of Dr Francois Smith and Prof Henning Pieterse, four students completed their MA in Creative Writing. **Sunita Keyser** received her degree with distinction at the age of 76 years.

Another student in Creative Writing, **Johannes Hamman**, received the Jaap Steyn Bursary (sponsored by the Hiemstra Trust) at the age of 83 years for the best first-year student in Creative Writing. This bursary recognises outstanding writing and the contribution the candidate makes to the course's success.



Sunita Keyser (student in Creative Writing).



From left to right: Prof Henning Pieterse, Johannes Hamman and Dr Francois Smith.

The Marius Jooste Prize (Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns) was awarded to **Dr Phia van der Watt** (student in Creative Writing) for the best master's dissertation in Afrikaans with the title: "Skroewesoeker – die wording van 'n gemeenskapswerker".

Prof Rick de Villiers' (from the English Department) creative manuscript (novel), *Blot*, developed in the Creative Writing course, was accepted for publication by the British publisher Batis Books.

Other Activities

The French division completed its annual visit to Lesotho (4-7 September), during which students experience a weekend of linguistic immersion. Morija Guesthouses and Tours organise the weekend. Students speak French for the weekend while learning the history of the country, the town and the influence of French in the area. Drs Albertus Barkhuizen and Johanna Steyn accompanied students.

The Afrikaans and Dutch division hosted the 2025 **Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging (ALV) congress** at the EMS auditorium on the UFS Bloemfontein Campus from 10-12 September under the theme "Kanon en Kantlyn / Canon and Margin". The congress brought together literary scholars and linguists from Poland, Namibia, and universities across South Africa. It was the first time the congress brought together both literary scholars and linguists, and it marked the first time in more than 10 years that the UFS hosted this prestigious event. Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation at the UFS, delivered an opening address. The programme also featured a keynote address and two commemorative lectures. Prof Louise Viljoen, emeritus professor at Stellenbosch University, delivered the annual **Karel Schoeman Commemorative Lecture** titled "Thoughts on the role of the body in Schoeman's novel art with reference to *Another Country* and *Farewell and Departure*". Prof Elvis Saal from the University of South Africa (UNISA) presented a lecture titled "430 years of Gariep Afrikaans – The story of a death-defying variety" in honour of the late Prof Christo van Rensburg, previous Head of Department (1982-1988), and a historical linguist renowned for his pioneering research on the origins of Afrikaans. Additionally, Prof Henning Pieterse, professor from the Department, delivered a keynote address reflecting on his four-decade-long academic and literary career. Throughout the three-day congress, participants presented research papers on a range of topics. The idea is to develop these papers into full articles that can later be published in scholarly journals. Panel discussions, including those on the teaching of creative writing, further enriched the congress, fostering dialogue between established and emerging scholars.

In celebration of 100 years of Afrikaans as an official language in South Africa, the Afrikaans and Dutch division, together with the University of the Free State (UFS), hosted the **DF Malherbe Memorial Lecture** on 15 May 2025. This commemorative event featured acclaimed poet and novelist Prof Joan Hambidge as keynote speaker, with Prof Hein Willemse, former Head of Department of Afrikaans at the University of Pretoria (UP), delivering the rejoinder. Renowned musician Frazer Barry provided musical entertainment, contributing to an evening rich in cultural reflection and artistic expression. The evening opened with a theatrical performance of a ghost story by poet and writer CJ Langenhoven, presented by the UFS Department of Drama and Theatre Arts. The performance paid tribute to Langenhoven's instrumental role in establishing Afrikaans as an official language. Delivering the welcoming address, Prof Hester Klopper, UFS Vice-Chancellor and Principal, remarked: *"The staging of CJ Langenhoven's ghost story at the beginning of the programme is very appropriate, because it was Langenhoven who, as a senator in 1925, submitted the bill that led to Afrikaans being recognised as an official language alongside English on 8 May of that year."* In her keynote address, Prof Hambidge offered a critical exploration of Afrikaans, tracing its origins beyond its official recognition in 1925. She emphasised its evolution within the contact zones of Dutch settlers, enslaved Asians, Khoi-Khoi communities, and other indigenous people. In response, Prof Willemse offered a compelling rejoinder that spotlighted oral traditions often overlooked in earlier nationalist narratives. He emphasised that Afrikaans literature has long drawn on San, Khoi, and Sotho motifs, yet these contributions have rarely been acknowledged. As the evening drew to a close, Frazer Barry captivated the audience with performances of original songs such as "Kleinmond" and "Kind van Afrika", which celebrate community, identity, and the beauty of South Africa's people and landscapes. His performance was both engaging and interactive, with audience members singing along in a spirit of shared celebration. The programme concluded with a performance by the Odeion String Quartet, bringing the evening to a graceful and reflective close.



Afrikaans 100 as an official language in South Africa, is celebrated during the annual DF Malherbe Memorial Lecture. From left to right: Dr Francois Smith, Prof Vasu Reddy, Prof Hester Klopper, Prof Joan Hambidge, Prof Hein Willemse, Frazer Barry, Prof Anthea Rhoda, and Prof Mogomme Masoga.

Staff (2025)

Afrikaans and Dutch division

Dr Francois (FAH) Smith	Head of Department
Prof Angelique (A) van Niekerk	
Prof Henning (HJ) Pieterse	
Dr Mathilda (M) Smit	
Dr Alison (AG) Stander	
Dr Carla (C) Ellis	

French division

Dr Albertus (AdP) Barkhuizen
Dr Johanna Steyn

German division

Prof Cilliers (JPC) van den Berg
Dr Trudie (T) Strauss

Qwaqwa campus

Dr Marian (MJ) Human-Nel

Contract staff

Willem-Carel Brink	German beginner's course
Corné Richter	*Gesellig Afrikaans 1* facilitator and project assistant
Karen Combrinck	SLP co-ordinator for Afrikaans and Dutch

Support staff

Petronella Bango	
Lize Botha	German

Department of

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Overview of 2025

The year 2025 was marked by sustained scholarly activity alongside moments that highlighted the importance of community and care within the Anthropology Department at the University of the Free State. As is customary, the Department continues to contribute to national conversations on inequality, heritage, memory, and social change through research, teaching, and public engagement grounded in the regional context of the Free State, South Africa, and beyond.

During the year, the Department navigated an unexpected staffing transition following the resignation of Prof Theodore Petrus due to ill health. Prof Joy Owen assumed responsibility for ANTU3725 (a third-year module) focusing on *Power, Precarity and Possibility* to ensure intellectual and disciplinary continuity across the undergraduate curriculum. To support this transition, Dr Dimakatso Masenya took on further teaching weeks in the first-year teaching programme. Programme stability was further sustained by the Department's academic facilitators, whose tutorial support strengthened students' induction into Anthropology.

Despite these challenges, the Department maintained a strong research profile. Prof Christian Williams published a monograph and a peer-reviewed journal article, both of which contributed significantly to the Department's research profile. Motsaathebe Serekoane published a book chapter and contributed to public scholarship, while Dr Shirley du Plooy presented research at national and international conferences. Dr Masenya also presented conference research and supported experiential learning initiatives for final-year students. Prof Owen contributed to public scholarship through national media commentary, including a City Press opinion piece and radio interviews examining contemporary South African humour and social discourse.



Honours' Writing Retreat (photograph provided by Dr Masenya).

Student development remained central to the Department's intellectual work. The Honours cohort achieved a 100% pass rate. The Honours writing retreat, led by Prof Owen with assistance from Drs Masenya and du Plooy, was extended to include senior postgraduates and their supervisors. Their inclusion supports the Department's orientation towards the active transmission of scholarship. The Honours programme was further strengthened under the leadership of Dr Masenya as Honours Coordinator.

The Department received over 100 Honours applications from universities across South Africa, reflecting strong national demand for the programme and recognition of its rigorous training.

These developments reflect a Department characterised by **active scholarship, strong mentorship and sustained commitment** to socially responsive Anthropology in the province, the country and beyond.

Achievements

Prof Williams was invited to launch the monograph *Christian Faith and Namibian Liberation* during **Black History Month in Helsinki in September 2025**.

Student Achievements

Makgabo Setati, a third-year Anthropology student, received third prize (R2 000) at the 2025 Library and Information Services Honours and Undergraduate Research Conference (LISHURC) held on 23 May 2025 for an ANTA3725 assignment.

Several third-year Anthropology students were also accepted into Honours programmes at universities across South Africa, including the University of Cape Town.

Teaching

Following the resignation of Prof Petrus, Prof Owen assumed responsibility for the third-year module, ANTU3725, and refocused it to consider *Power, Precarity and Possibility*. The module was reworked to centre students' engagement with transdisciplinary material on the socio-political and economic 'world order' *in conversation* with each other and Prof Owen. Students' learning and their articulation thereof were centred through student-crafted presentations that disrupted normative forms of presenting knowledge, and led to further interrogation of the lived realities of globally disempowered peoples, including those living in South Africa.

To support this transition, Dr Masenya took on additional teaching responsibilities within the first-year programme. Dr Masenya also organised a field-based learning visit for third-year students, as part of her ANTE3716 module, to the War Museum of the Boer Republics. Here, students were inducted into ethnographic research methods, including participant observation and field note documentation.



War Museum of the Boer Republics (photograph by Dr Masenya)

Teaching support across the first year programme was strengthened through the work of academic facilitators:

- **Liezel Blomerus**, academic facilitator (South Campus), successfully completed the Anthropology teach-out programme at South Campus.
- **Mamokoena Mokoena** and **Ingrid Juries**, academic facilitators (Bloemfontein Campus), provided tutorial support and intellectually engaging interventions that helped anchor the first-year programme.

Research Outputs (accredited)

The Department also maintained an active research culture through a **research seminar programme convened by Prof Williams.** The seminars provided a regular forum for staff and postgraduate students to present and discuss ongoing work.

Articles

Williams, C.A. 2025. "Remember Mboroma? Narrating a Fragmented Exile Past via UNHCR and SWAPO Camps." *Memory Studies* 18(5): 1233-1251.

Chapters in edited volumes

Serekoane, M. and Twala, C. 2025. "It's not the same, but it will eventually feel like home: A response to Marais and Gbadegesin", in van Marle, K., Marais, L., and Brand, D. (eds.). *The Endurance of Inequality: Race, Property and Spatiality in Bloemfontein and Surrounds*. Pretoria University Law Press.

Books

Williams, C.A. 2025. *Christian Faith and Namibian Liberation: An Ethnographic Biography of Salatiel Ailonga*. James Currey and University of Namibia Press.

Conference Papers/Posters

Du Plooy, S. 2025. "The Ekuphumuleni pilgrimage to Hlohlolwane, South Africa." Sacred Journeys Global Conference, Australia.

Du Plooy, S. 2025. "Storying the heritage value of the Mohokare: Thinking with major moments." South African Mountain Conference.

Makhaye, P. and **Serekoane, M.** 2025. "Embracing a Functionalist Approach to Preserve African Cultural Heritage." UNESCO Chair in Culture and African Heritage Colloquium.

Masenya, D. 2025. "Rest in Dignity: Final Sendoff Ceremonies of Loved Ones." Death in Township Hybrid Conference, University of Johannesburg.

Engaged Scholarship

Serekoane, M. 2025. "Our houses are museums that embody living heritage." Opinion article published in national media platforms, including the *Cape Times*.

Owen, J. May 2025. "The Great Tsek of 2025: Unpacking a typical humorous South African response."

Published by:
- University of the Free State News Platform
- *City Press*

Media engagements by Prof Owen related to this article:
- **SAfm Radio Interview**, 28 May 2025
- **Radio Islam Interview**, 27 May 2025

National and International Collaboration

Owen, J. 2025. Panellist, **"Conversations in Anthropology – Teaching Practice in the Age of AI."** University of KwaZulu-Natal, 24 November 2025.

Postgraduate Students



Honours and Senior Postgraduate Students, Writing Retreat at Little Guesthouse, Bloemfontein (photograph provided by Dr Masenya).

The 2025 Honours Anthropology cohort **achieved a 100% pass rate.**

A three-day Honours writing retreat led by Prof Joy Owen, with assistance from Drs Masenya and Du Plooy, and participation from senior postgraduate students and Honours supervisors, provided structured academic support for students completing their research reports, and/or a thesis chapter.

The Honours programme, coordinated and led by Dr Masenya, guided students and staff successfully through the research process within a demanding academic timeframe.

Several Master's students secured ethical clearance for their research projects, marking an important milestone in the progression of postgraduate research.

The Department received over 100 Honours applications from universities across South Africa, including UCT, WITS, Rhodes and Sol Plaatje.

Other Activities

Following the passing of third-year student Ikaneng Molokoane, the Department assisted his peers and other students in attending his funeral and hosted a memorial service on campus, with the assistance of the Department of Psychology, which included his family.

Dr Shirley du Plooy participated as a WISE Fellow and completed the HERizon Africa Leadership Programme through SARUA.

Staff (2025)

Prof J Owen	Academic Head of Department, Associate Professor

Academic Staff

Dr S du Plooy	Senior Lecturer
DV Masenya	Qhubeka Lecturer
Prof T Petrus	Associate Professor (first semester)
MJ Serekoane	Lecturer (Programme Director, BSocSci)
Dr C Williams	Associate Professor
L Blomerus	Academic Facilitator
KI Juries	Academic Facilitator
M Mokoena	Academic Facilitator

Support Staff

GR Moticoe	Office Administrator

Affiliated Staff

Dr O Bialostocka	Research Fellow
Prof R Gordon	Research Fellow
Dr A Hartnack	Research Fellow
Prof R Kössler	Research Fellow
Dr J Kurzwelly	Research Fellow



Department of

Art History and Image Studies

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Overview of 2025

Three interrelated themes characterised the work of the Department of Art History and Image Studies in 2025: a marked increase in conference participation and scholarly visibility, the consolidation of research trajectories into sustained projects, and a strengthened culture of mentoring emerging young scholars.

Most visibly, 2025 saw a significant expansion in the Department's presence at national and international conferences. Staff members presented across a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary forums, spanning philosophy, film and media studies, image studies, and environmental humanities. This heightened visibility was not limited to established researchers, as the Department also made a concerted effort to support postgraduate students in presenting their work at national conferences.

At the same time, several longer-term research initiatives reached important moments of consolidation. Conference presentations developed into peer-reviewed publications, edited volumes, and special journal issues, while collaborative projects, both local and international, advanced from exploratory phases into more structured research programmes. This included research that bridged the humanities and the sciences, as well as work that connected theory, practice, and pedagogy.

Finally, the past year marked a strengthening of the Department's approach to mentoring emerging scholars. This was evident in the systematic inclusion of postgraduate students and early-career academics in conference participation, research presentation, and publication development, as well as in collaborative teaching and supervision practices. Targeted teaching interventions, most notably the expansion of learning-facilitator support in the fourth-year research curriculum, enabled young scholars to participate directly and on an ongoing basis in the Department's teaching and research work. These developments reflect a Department attentive to the long view of academic formation.

Achievements

Staff Achievements

Following a successful appeal process, Prof Martin Rossouw was formally awarded a South African National Research Foundation (NRF) Y1 rating, which recognises his ongoing research in image theory and film philosophy as placing him on a trajectory towards becoming a researcher of considerable international standing.

Louiza Combrinck, a contract lecturer in the Department, presented her Master of Fine Art (MAFA) solo exhibition, titled Picturing Event Horizons, at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery in Bloemfontein. The exhibition formed part of her postgraduate artistic research and was officially opened on 30 October 2025, with Prof Martin Rossouw serving as the invited opening speaker. *Picturing Event Horizons* explored the relationship between artistic imaging and astronomical modes of picturing, with particular attention to the horizon as a visual motif and mediating concept. Combrinck's astronomy-themed work draws directly on one of the Department's established niches, namely the study of image and imagination in scientific thought. It also demonstrates how artistic practice can yield new interdisciplinary insights between the visual arts and the sciences.



Prof Martin Rossouw (left) and Louiza Combrinck (right) at the opening of Combrinck's MAFA solo exhibition, Picturing Event Horizons, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, October 2025.

Student Achievements

In honour of her outstanding third-year academic achievements the year before, Lizka Fouché was the well-earned recipient of the Department's annual Jan Teurlinckx Prize for the best undergraduate student in Art History and Image Studies at the Faculty of the Humanities' annual academic prize-giving ceremony on 8 April 2025.

Teaching



Sebotse Selamulela, appointed as learning facilitator for the fourth-year research module HKGK4808 in 2025.

Based on the successful implementation of learning facilitators in the previous year, the Department expanded this initiative in 2025 by appointing an additional learning facilitator for the fourth-year curriculum. Sebotse Selamulela, an emerging young scholar with a strong theoretical focus, provided specialised academic support to students throughout the year. This support focused on seminar preparation, research development, the sourcing and analysis of visual material, and the refinement of students' conceptual arguments. This additional layer of support strengthened student engagement in the research-intensive module HKGK4808 and contributed to a marked improvement in the quality of seminar presentations and final research essays.

For first-year students, the Department continued to prioritise critical, experiential learning, even beyond the classroom. In May 2025, the Department again facilitated a class visit to the Oliewenhuis Art Museum, where students participated in a guided engagement led by Yolanda de Kock, Education Officer and specialist in Art Education. In line with the first-semester curriculum, the visit introduced students to the museum's history, collection, and broader museological discourses concerning public access, the privatisation of the art sector, and the democratisation of art spaces. This initiative continues to be met with growing enthusiasm and strengthens students' engagement with the museum as a key public institution.

Research Projects



Prof Martin Rossouw (left), Prof Suzanne Human (centre), and research fellow Dr Nikita Mathias (right) at the Second Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC2025).

This year, our Department spearheaded a strong contingent representing the Faculty of the Humanities at the Second Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC2025), hosted by the Afromontane Research Unit at the University of the Free State from 17-20 March 2025 under the patronage of UNESCO. Within the conference's special stream, *African Mountainscapes and the Anthropocene*, the Department convened a dedicated session focused on art history and image theory, with presentations by departmental representatives only. Prof Suzanne Human presented *Pictures as Epistemic Agents: Imagining with Mountains in Art and Science*, which examined how images function in both scientific and artistic engagements with mountainous environments. Dr Nikita Mathias, in *Geological Sublimity in Mountains and Monsters: From Landscape Painting to Blockbuster Cinema*, traced visual strategies of scale, sublimity, and geological imagination across art history and popular cinema. In addition, Prof Martin Rossouw contributed *Mountains as a Means: Media Philosophy on the Ridge*, which explored how mountains may be understood as an elemental form of media. These contributions showcased our Department's commitment to rich interdisciplinary thought alongside the natural sciences.



Josef van Wyk, author of "Double Vision: William Kentridge and the Stereoscope" (2025)

In 2025, Josef van Wyk authored the invited chapter, "Double Vision: William Kentridge and the Stereoscope," for the edited volume *Exposing the Film Apparatus: Global Laboratory Perspectives*, edited by Giovanna Fossati and Annie van den Oever (2025, Amsterdam University Press). The chapter situates Kentridge's use of stereoscopic devices and "double vision" within the fields of media archaeology and art history, and shows how image comparison can generate political, philosophical, and art-historical reflection. The contribution forms part of a longer-term collaborative project with Prof Annie van den Oever, Extraordinary Professor in the Department, on media-archaeological perspectives on Kentridge's oeuvre.

In 2025, Prof Suzanne Human advanced her ongoing research on Paul Ricoeur, image theory, and South African visual art with a new major peer-reviewed publication. Building on her presentation at the 18th Annual Society for Ricoeur Studies Conference in 2024, she authored the article *Imagination and "Recapitulation" in an "Ambiguous History": Ricoeurian Perspectives on Art Historiography and Artistic Diversity in South Africa*, forthcoming in 2026 in *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies*. The article consolidates a line of inquiry that has informed recent teaching and research in the Department and lays the groundwork for an invitation-only international symposium, *Paul Ricoeur: Image, Imagination, and the Visual Arts*, currently being organised by Prof Human in collaboration with Prof Martin Rossouw. Scheduled for January 2027 in the Eastern Free State, the symposium will serve as the basis for a planned special issue and/or edited volume.

Prof Martin Rossouw, with Dr Marike Stander (Department of Geography, UFS), presented a progress report of the SANAP-funded project *The Marion Island Hutbook Project (2024-2026)* at the 7th South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP) Research Symposium, held at Kwalata Game Reserve from 16-19 November 2025. The presentation showcased the handwritten hutbooks of Marion Island as a highly distinctive archival record of life in a sub-Antarctic research setting. It also highlighted the need and value of their long-term preservation for further interdisciplinary study.

A double special issue of the IBSS- and Scopus-accredited journal *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* (Vol. 39, Issues 1-2) was published under the theme *Transfers and Traversals: Translation and Interdisciplinarity in the Arts*. Prof Martin Rossouw served as guest editor of the issue, which capped a longer-term project that began with the international interdisciplinary conference *Transfers and Traversals*, hosted at the University of the Free State in December 2022. The initial conference was co-hosted by the Department of Art History and Image Studies and the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice.

At the 2025 European Network for Cinema and Media Studies (NECS) Conference, held at Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal, Prof Martin Rossouw co-organised and presented in an international workshop titled *The Short Route, or: "It's About Time!"—Why the Film Studies Classroom Needs Short Films* (21 June 2025). The workshop foregrounded the pedagogical value of short film and contributed a focused scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) perspective to the conference programme. (Also see "International Collaborations").

Research Outputs

Articles

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. "A Case for Embodied Cognitivism: The Cognitive Unconscious Basis of Cinematic Communication." *GRAMMA: Journal of Theory and Criticism* 30: 156-188.

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. "Art and Embodied Knowledge: The Bodily Basis of Aesthetic Cognitivism." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 83(3): 197-210.

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. "The Hidden Logic of Film Art." *Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts* 17(1): 176-188.

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. "The Predictive Embodied Mind: A Case-Based Encounter with Film Aesthetics." *Frontiers in Neuroscience* 19(1583107): 1-17.

Combrinck, L. 2025. "Picturing Black Holes: Event Horizons and Image Events." *South African Journal of Art History* 40(1): 29-42.

De Villiers-Human, S. & Von Maltitz, A. 2025. "Adelheid Frackiewicz: Landart, Mourning, and Translation." *Critical Arts* 39(1-2): 218-230.

Mathias, N. 2025. "Mediating the Sublime: Immersive Encounters with Goya and Munch." *Museum and Society* 23(2): 160-177.

Mathias, N. 2025. "Seashell Journeys: Image Migration in the Short Film *Arif* at MUNCH." *Short Film Studies* 25(2): 135-149.

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. "On Constraints: How 'Less Is More' (in [Teaching with] Short Films)." *Short Film Studies* 15(1): 7-15.

Weys, D. 2025. "'That Was So Slow!' Or: How Student Engagement with the Short Film Format Offers Moments of Personal Reflection in an Increasingly Visually Saturated World." *Short Film Studies* 15(1): 23-28.

Chapters in edited volumes

Van Wyk, J. 2025. "Double Vision: William Kentridge and the Stereoscope", in Fossati, G. & van den Oever, A. (eds.). *Exposing the Film Apparatus: Global Laboratory Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 187-197.

Editorials, Interviews, Video Essays

Coëgnarts, M. & Magliano, J.P. 2025. "Cognitivism in Film and Media Studies: A Reappraisal." *Projections* 19(1): 1-15. [Editorial]

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. "'Predictable Unpredictability': Dynamic Embodied Patterns in Miklós Jancsó's Film Style." *[in]Transition* 12(2): 1-7. https://intransition.openlibhums.org/article/id/17622/ [Video Essay]

Coëgnarts, M. 2025. *The Hidden Logic of Film Art*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFSJjN7K9FM [Video Essay]

Mathias, N. 2025. "An Interview with Chinese American Filmmaker and Visual Artist Andrew Thomas Huang and British Filmmaker Wukda." *Short Film Studies* 15(1): 151-154. [Interview]

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. "Transfers and Traversals: Translation, Interdisciplinarity, and the Arts." *Critical Arts* 39(1-2): 1-7. [Editorial]

Conference Papers

Combrinck, L. 2025. '*Event Horizons' and Art: Stellar and Landscape Imaging Techniques*. Paper presented at the 2025 Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium, North-West University School of Philosophy, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, 27-28 June 2025.

Combrinck, L. 2025. *Black Holes in Art: Picturing the Image Horizon*. Paper presented at the South African Journal of Art History Conference, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, 18-19 July 2025.

Human, S. 2025. *Paul Ricoeur's "Ambiguous History": On Decolonising Interpretations of South African Landscape Art*. Paper presented at the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA) Annual Conference, North-West University, Vredefort, South Africa, 22-24 January 2025.

Human, S. 2025. *Pictures as Epistemic Agents: Imagining with Mountains in Art and Science*. Paper presented at the 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference, hosted by the Afromontane Research Unit, University of the Free State, Champagne Castle, Drakensberg, South Africa, 17-20 March 2025.

Jordaan, B.M. 2025. *Feedback Loops of Attention between the Museum and Cinema*. Paper presented at the 2025 Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium, North-West University School of Philosophy, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, 27-28 June 2025.

Jordaan, B.M. 2025. *Attention to Art and the Art of Attention: Feedback Loops between the Museum and Cinema*. Paper presented at the South African Journal of Art History Conference, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, 18-19 July 2025.

Keyser, A. 2025. *Across the Threshold, Through the Doorway: Hospitality, Hostility and the Image-Viewer Encounter*. Paper presented at the South African Journal of Art History Conference, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, 18-19 July 2025.

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. *Wayfinding for a Foucauldian Film Ethics: Comparative Routes and Dialogues*. Paper presented at the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA) Annual Conference, North-West University, Parys, South Africa, 22-24 January 2025.

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. *Mountains as a Means: Media Philosophy of the Ridge*. Paper presented at the 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference, hosted by the Afromontane Research Unit, University of the Free State, Champagne Castle, Drakensberg, South Africa, 17-20 March 2025.

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. *On Constraints: How 'Less Is More' (in [Teaching With] Short Films)*. Paper presented as part of the workshop The Short Route, or: "It's About Time!"—Why the Film Studies Classroom Needs Short Films at the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies (NECS) Conference: Discovering / Uncovering, Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon, Portugal, 18-21 June 2025.

Rossouw, M.P. 2025. *Mystified Minds, Mystical Means: Transformational Ethics of Perplexity for the David Lynch Devotee*. Paper presented at the Film-Philosophy Annual Conference, University of Malta, Valetta, Malta, 23-25 June 2025.

Rossouw, M.P. & Stander, M.H. 2025. *The Marion Island Hutbook Project*. Presentation at the 7th South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP) Research Symposium, Kwalata Game Reserve, South Africa, 16-19 November 2025.

Selamulela, S. 2025. *Clothing the Stranger: Orality and Africa's Cultural Identity Through Migration*. Paper presented at the 2025 Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium, North-West University School of Philosophy, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, 27-28 June 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

Dian Weys, a research fellow of the Department of Art History and Image Studies, achieved major international recognition in 2025 when his latest short film, *Vultures* (2025), was selected for the Official Short Film Competition at the 78th Festival du Film de Cannes. The film went on to win the Unifrance Short Film Grand Prix, a landmark achievement for South African cinema. *Vultures* was selected as one of eleven short films in the main competition from a total of 4,781 submissions worldwide, making Weys only the *sixth* South African director ever to be selected for this competition. Based on this achievement, Weys was invited to join the 50th Residency of the Festival de Cannes, where, from 1 October 2025 to 15 February 2026, he will be based in Paris and receive mentorship and professional guidance in developing his first feature film.



Behind the scenes during the making of Vultures (2025), the Unifrance Short Film Grand Prix-winning short film written and directed by Dian Weys.

As part of the Department's still-growing collaboration with the Vrystaat Arts Festival, Prof Martin Rossouw contributed to the festival's film culture programming in July 2025. He served as discussion leader for *Skryf, Skiet, Speel* (Write, Shoot, Play), a public conversation on the craft of screenwriting at the festival's Literature Festival, in dialogue with screenwriters Desiré Gardner and Fraser du Toit (17 July 2025). In addition, he was invited to act as one of two adjudicators for the festival's inaugural Vryskitter Award for Best Short Film, a much-needed platform for local filmmakers in the Free State (15-19 July 2025).

The Department's engaged scholarship in 2025 also involved several advisory, evaluative, and editorial roles. Prof Suzanne Human continued her role as Chair of the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery advisory board in 2025. In this capacity, she provided academic oversight and strategic input into visual arts programming at the University of the Free State.

Josef van Wyk continued his membership of both the Oliewenhuis Art Museum advisory board and the Commission for the Visual Arts of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (SAAWK).

Prof Martin Rossouw served on research review panels at both national and institutional levels. He was an invited reviewer-panellist for the NRF SARChI Five-Year Evaluation Panel. He also served on the internal doctoral NRF Scholarship application review panel for the Faculty of the Humanities.

Editorial work likewise continued to feature prominently in the Department's engaged scholarship in 2025. Prof Martin Rossouw continued as series editor of Brill's *Contemporary Cinema*, an international academic book series focused on developments in screen culture since the turn of the millennium. He also retained his position as editorial board member of *Short Film Studies*, the only international journal dedicated exclusively to research on short films. Furthermore, Prof Rossouw served as guest editor of a double special issue of *Critical Arts* on translation, interdisciplinarity, and the arts, which was published in May 2025. The issue provided a platform for several colleagues within the Faculty of the Humanities to make research contributions.

National and International Collaboration

The Department was honoured to host its international research fellow, Dr Nikita Mathias, for an in-person visit and public academic engagement. Dr Mathias is a senior concept developer at MUNCH, the Oslo-based national museum dedicated to the life and work of Edvard Munch and one of Scandinavia's leading institutions for modern and contemporary art. During his visit, Dr Mathias delivered an open talk titled *Art Mediation in the Museum, or: How Can Art Museums Connect with a Wider Public?* on 13 March 2025. Drawing on his work in exhibition development, immersive experiences, and innovation projects at MUNCH, he reflected on contemporary strategies for broadening access to visual art and engaging diverse audiences. His visit constituted a valuable opportunity for staff and students to engage directly with a scholar-practitioner working at the forefront of international museum practice.



Dr Nikita Mathias (MUNCH, Oslo) in discussion with staff and students during his visit to the Department of Art History and Image Studies, March 2025.

Prof Martin Rossouw co-organised an international workshop session at the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies (NECS) Conference, held at Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal, on 21 June 2025. The workshop, titled *The Short Route, or: "It's About Time!"—Why the Film Studies Classroom Needs Short Films*, was developed in collaboration with departmental research fellow Dian Weys and Cynthia Felando (University of California, Santa Barbara), editor of *Short Film Studies*. The session, part of the NECS 2025 conference programme, Discovering / Uncovering, brought together a globally diverse set of perspectives on the practical value of short films in the film studies classroom. As part of the workshop, Prof Rossouw presented a paper titled *On Constraints: How "Less Is More" (in [Teaching with] Short Films)*, in which he reflected on how the inherent constraints associated with short films may engender new creative possibilities in teaching film studies.



Martin Rossouw (far left), Colleen Kennedy-Karpat (centre left), Cynthia Felando (centre right), and Dian Weys (far right) at the NECS 2025 workshop, The Short Route, Lisbon.

Over the past year, the Department's joint PhD collaborations with the University of Groningen continued to develop strongly. Josef van Wyk and Lyrene Kühn-Botma both progressed well in their respective joint doctoral programmes between the University of the Free State and the University of Groningen. Van Wyk advanced his research to a stage that positions him for submission in 2026. Kühn-Botma completed her first formal residential period at the University of Groningen in October 2025. In addition, Prof Martin Rossouw served as co-supervisor in a related joint PhD arrangement between Stellenbosch University and the University of Groningen for the PhD project of Dian Weys, which focuses on film philosophy and the concept of witnessing.

Postgraduate Students



Beate Jordaan (left), Ambrocia Keyser (centre), and Louiza Combrinck (right) presenting postgraduate research at the SAJAH Conference, Tshwane University of Technology, July 2025.

In 2025, the Department proudly supported four postgraduate students in presenting their research at two national academic events: Louiza Combrinck (MA Fine Arts), Beate Jordaan (MA Art History), Ambrocia Keyser (MA Art History), and Sebotse Selamulela (BA Honours Art History). All four students are emerging scholars within the Department, serving as learning facilitators or junior lecturers. A delegation of three postgraduate students attended each event.

The first event was the 3rd South African Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium, held from 27 to 28 June 2025 at North-West University. The symposium provided a national forum for postgraduate researchers to present work in philosophy and related fields, exchange ideas, and establish scholarly networks across institutions.

The second event was the SAJAH Conference, titled *Creative Intersections: Art and Architecture*, which took place on 18 and 19 July 2025 at the Tshwane University of Technology in collaboration with the *South African Journal of Art History*. The conference focused on interdisciplinary engagements between art history, architecture, spatial theory, and visual culture.

As a Department, we regard structured support for postgraduate research dissemination as a key priority. In both cases, students presented work with the explicit aim of developing their conference papers into accredited journal articles under the mentorship of our senior academic staff.

Staff (2025)

Prof Martin P Rossouw	Academic Head of Department

Academic Staff

Prof E Suzanne Human	Associate Professor
Josef van Wyk	Lecturer
Johanet Kriel-De Klerk	Lecturer (Units)
Louiza Combrinck	Junior Lecturer (Units)
Beate Jordaan	Learning Facilitator (Units)
Ambrocia Keyser	Learning Facilitator (Units)
Sebotse Selamulela	Learning Facilitator (Units)

Support Staff

Amanda de Gouveia	Senior Assistant Officer (5/8)

Affiliated Staff

Prof Annie van den Oever	Extraordinary Professor
Dr Maarten Coëgnarts	Research Fellow
Dr Nikita Mathias	Research Fellow
Dr Ari Purnama	Research Fellow
Dian Weys	Research Fellow

Centre for

Gender and Africa Studies



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Overview of 2025

For the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies (CGAS), 2025 was a year with many achievements and highlights, but also profound loss with the untimely passing of Dr Nadine Lake on 7 May 2025. Dr Lake was part of the UFS community for 21 years. At the time of her passing, she was a senior lecturer in the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies and served with dedication as the Programme Director of the Gender Studies programme for more than a decade, stepping down in 2022. A memorial event was held for the UFS community on 23 May 2025 to commemorate her life. Our PhD programme went from strength to strength with 40 enrolled students in 2025, while the Master of Philosophy with specialisation in Africa Studies, boasted 21 enrolled students. In 2025, the Bachelor in Community Development, with 210 new registered students, and the PGDip in Community Development, with 180 new registered students, became a flagship programme for the CGAS on the Qwaqwa Campus. The Africa Day Memorial Lecture was held on the Bloemfontein Campus to great acclaim, with speaker Prof Cyril Obi, Programme Director at the Social Science Research Council, New York, where he leads the African Peacebuilding Network. In 2025, the Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture was organised and hosted by the CGASQQ for the first time with Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation (UFS), as the speaker. This marks the second memorial lecture (after the Africa Day Memorial Lecture) that the CGAS has taken to the Qwaqwa Campus, showcasing how the multi-campus model can productively enhance both social cohesion across campuses and engaged scholarship. In addition, 2025 was a productive year for research publications, with a wide range of contributions from staff, research fellows, and extraordinary professors from both the CGASBfn and CGASQQ.



CGAS and other colleagues taken at the 2025 Africa Day Memorial Lecture.



In memoriam: Dr Nadine Lake (11 April 1982–7 May 2025)

Achievements

In partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Western Cape, the CGASQQ successfully organised and hosted the National Community Development Conference at the Golden Gate Hotel from 12-13 November, bringing together academics and practitioners from the public, private, and civic sectors. The conference contributed significantly to the ongoing professionalisation of community development in South Africa. With attendance exceeding 200 delegates, the event marked the revitalisation of the South African Association for Community Development and the formal launch of its student chapters.



Delegates at the Community Development Conference, 12–13 November.



Prof Hussein Solomon.

Prof Hussein Solomon has been ranked among the top 100 experts on terrorism by ScholarGPS. This ranking is a significant achievement and well-deserved recognition of his internationally respected work in the field of terrorism and extremism. He has also consulted widely in this area for various organisations such as the United Nations and the government of South Africa. Prof Solomon was invited as the keynote speaker at multiple events. On 4 March 2025, he presented a keynote paper titled 'Unpacking the Challenges of South Africa's G-20 Presidency' at the Symposium on South African Presidency of the G20 and its Challenges hosted by the Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. On 1 September 2025, he delivered a keynote address titled 'The South African Pathway to a Liberal Democracy' to the Conference on Peace Promotion and Democracy Building in Southern Africa and Europe, co-hosted by the Department of Social Science of Charles University, Czech Republic and the Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University. On 6 November, Prof Solomon delivered the 46th Hoernlé Memorial Lecture hosted by the Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg, titled 'Embracing Machiavelli to Achieve a Liberal Future'.



Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga.

Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga was promoted from senior lecturer to associate professor, effective from 1 January 2025. He was invited to give a public lecture in Caracas, Venezuela, by the Ambassador of Venezuela to South Africa, themed 'Colonialism, Neocolonialism and their Consequences'.

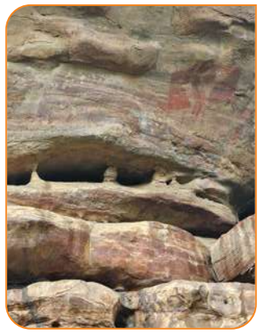
Prof Stephanie Cawood was invited to visit Miranda House at the University of Delhi from 17 to 30 August 2025 for a series of scholarly engagements. She delivered lectures at various institutions, including Miranda House and the Policy Centre & Gender Lab at the University of Delhi, the Department of African Studies at the University of Delhi, the Centre for African Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in collaboration with the African Studies Association of India, the Department of Political Science at Jamia Millia Islamia University and the School of Global Affairs at Dr B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi.

During her stay in India, she also made exploratory site visits with Prof Bashabi Gupta to ancient heritage and sacred sites such as the Buddhist monuments at Sanchi, Bhimbetka rock shelters and Udaigiri sacred caves to explore the potential for developing a comparative research project on sacred sites, heritage and memory between Southern Africa and India.



Prof Stephanie Cawood and her host, Prof Bashabi Gupta





India's sacred sites explored during Prof Cawood's visit.

Through his engagement with the Department of Social Development, Dr Grey Magaiza raised over R1 million in bursary funding for students in the PGDip in Community Development. In the true spirit of ubuntu, Dr Magaiza leveraged his longstanding academic partnership with the Centre for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University (Boone, North Carolina) to enable a significant donation of winter clothing by Prof Julie Shepherd-Powell, Graduate Programme Director of Appalachian Studies, on behalf of their institution from one mountain community to a local community in Qwaqwa in need, facilitated through *Kgotsatsana* Feeleng Mota, local community leader. He also collaborated with the University of Fraser Valley in Canada on a COIL course, served on a national task team to develop the Bachelor of Community Development Standard Document, and was appointed Vice Chairperson of the Institutional Forum. Dr Magaiza also completed his book project with Routledge, publishing the edited volume titled *Community Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Community Development Research and Practice*.



Dr Grey Magaiza at the opening of the Community Development Conference held from 12 to 13 November.

Prof Pamila Gupta launched the co-edited volume 'Regional Drift: Remapping Africa's Southern Oceans' in Johannesburg on 19 March and on 22 May 2025 at the UFS, and was invited to present a seminar at the City University of New York on 3 October 2025. The presentation was titled, 'Joburg's Pools in a Time of South African Infrastructure'.

Prof Heidi Hudson was invited to participate in the APN-Next Gen Fellows Panel on 'Navigating Reflexivity in Conducting Field-Based Research in Africa' hosted by the African Peacebuilding Network of the Social Science Research Council (New York) in Port Louis, Mauritius, on 10 July 2025.

Dr Moorosi Leshoele was invited to participate in an expert working group of international scholars (UK, USA, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Mauritius) at the University of Pretoria at a colloquium themed, 'Coups d'États and the Potential for Reconstruction and Renewal in Africa' hosted by SOAS, University of London.



Prof Pamila Gupta



Prof Heidi Hudson



Dr Moorosi Leshoele

Dr Juliet Kamwendo continued her involvement in the AFR100 project, in collaboration with AUDA/NEPAD, as a gender expert on gender mainstreaming.



Dr Juliet Kamwendo with BAHons (Gender Studies) students at the graduation.

Student Achievements

During the April graduation ceremonies, 36 students graduated with the Bachelor in Community Development, while 72 obtained the PGDip in Community Development on the Qwaqwa Campus. On the Bloemfontein Campus, 11 students graduated with the BAHons with specialisation in Gender Studies; two obtained the degree of BAHons with specialisation in Africa Studies; two graduated with the MPhil with specialisation in Africa Studies by dissertation; and four obtained their PhD with specialisation in Africa Studies.



CGAS staff and students celebrating the April graduation ceremony.

During the April graduation ceremonies on the Qwaqwa Campus, Arnold Mazibuko and Snenhlanhla Aphiwe Ndlovu obtained their Bachelor of Community Development degree with distinction.

At the annual academic prize-giving ceremony of the Faculty of the Humanities held on 8 April 2025, Dr Moorosi Leshoele (Africa Studies Programme Director) presented Lekiti Rantsane with the departmental prize awarded to the Best Student in the Bachelor of Arts Honours with Specialisation in Africa Studies.

Dr Juliet Kamwendo (Gender Studies Programme Director) presented Winkie Direko with the departmental prize awarded to the Best Student in the Bachelor of Arts Honours with Specialisation in Gender Studies.



Lekiti Rantsana, the BAHons (Africa Studies) prize winner, Dr Leshoele and Prof Cawood.



Winkie Direko, the BAHons (Gender Studies) prize winner, Dr Kamwendo and Prof Cawood.



CGAS staff attending the prizegiving ceremony in April.

Stephen Buchanan-Clarke obtained the MPhil with specialisation in Africa Studies (article option) with distinction during the December graduation ceremonies on the Bloemfontein Campus.

Teaching

Teaching modalities remained the same as preceding years, ranging from completely face-to-face (Bachelor in Community Development), to a blended approach (75% face-to-face) for the Africa Studies and Gender Studies Bachelor Honours degrees and the MA with specialisation in Gender Studies, to a fully online offering in the PGDip in Community Development every fortnight.

The flagship doctoral programme in the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies increased its enrolments from 30 registered students in 2024 to 40 in 2025. The topics are wide-ranging and interdisciplinary, and are predominantly supervised by CGAS staff across campuses (of these, 11 students are from the International Studies Group under the leadership of Prof Ian Phimister, and 29 are supervised within the CGAS). For the 2025 academic year, the CGAS recorded a total of 475 registered students across all qualifications and campuses:

- Bachelor in Community Development (Qwaqwa): 210
- PGDip in Community Development (Qwaqwa): 180
- BAHons with specialisation in Africa Studies (Bfn): 7
- BAHons with specialisation in Gender Studies (Bfn): 4
- Structured MA with specialisation in Gender Studies (Bfn): 13
- MPhil with specialisation in Africa Studies (dissertation/articles): 21
- PhD with specialisation in Africa Studies: 40

Short Learning Programmes

Campus Infrastructures for Peace (CI4P)

The ITP-derived project, entitled Campus Conflict Infrastructures for Peace (CI4P), was again offered to the Human Rights Ambassador programme of the Faculty of Law. This entailed conflict competency training for students, mostly in residences, aimed at strengthening conflict management capacity among students in residences specifically and on campus in general. Twenty students were trained on the Bloemfontein Campus. However, the training had to be cancelled due to the UFS Finance Directorate halting funding as part of a consolidation of funds available under the Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP) funding process.

After consultation with the Finance Directorate, a new funding proposal was drawn up in cooperation with the Directorate of Student Affairs for the continuation of the programme. We are awaiting feedback on this.

Conflict Competency (ASCC1502S)

The Conflict Competency course was scheduled to be offered to senior management staff at the Central University of Technology (CUT). However, it was cancelled due to changes in leadership and management within the applicable directorate. CGAS proposed new training dates, and we are currently awaiting feedback.

After consultation with the Centre for Business Dynamics (CBD) at the UFS Business School, the above course was adapted to offer a more "business-oriented" focus. This follows a poll conducted by CBD on conflict-resolution training skills among some of the business entities they were working with. The "new" course will be presented in cooperation with CBD and should be registered by the end of the first semester of 2026.

A request has been received from a political party to train party members involved in electoral processes in conflict management, with an eye on the local government elections scheduled for the latter part of 2026. This is currently being followed up on.

Decorum (PDSP1500S)

Although not the owner of the Decorum Short Learning programme, the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies assisted the programme on Governance and Political Transformation with the project management of the (Parliamentary) Decorum short learning programme (PDSP1500S).

In terms of the programme, 74 parliamentary officials from all 10 legislatures in South Africa were trained in parliamentary decorum. This course has now been completed, including the audit of the applicable entity, and CGAS has been remunerated for its contribution to the project management of the course.

New SLPs investigated

Discussions regarding a new Gender-related SLP are still ongoing, with staff members involved in the Gender programme at CGAS assisting in "populating" a course on this topic.

Dr Kamwendo of the Gender programme has identified topics that might be included in a possible SLP, and possible links have been established with the Human Rights Centre of the UFS Law Faculty. The registration and presentation of such an SLP will definitely benefit from the contact made at the Free State Provincial Treasury (FSPT), where CGAS staff members presented an information session on the social construction of gender on 7 August 2025. FSPT has indicated that they will be interested in related SLPs in future. The contact is being followed up on.

Ongoing consultation is taking place with CGAS on the Qwaqwa Campus regarding the development of SLPs related to community development and social entrepreneurship after the very successful Community Development conference hosted at Golden Gate in November 2025. Several actors participating in the conference have expressed interest in this regard. Although at a very early stage, discussions have begun to explore the feasibility of an SLP aimed at "peacebuilding" within communities – linked to skills in dialogue and development in sensitive environments. Dr Leshoele of the Africa Studies programme is assisting in this regard.



Willem Ellis and John Mathuhle co-presenting at the Community Development conference in November.

Research Projects

A number of our senior scholars were actively engaged in book research projects during 2025. Prof Heidi Hudson completed the bulk of her monograph titled, 'A posthuman feminist peace: Gender, relationality and the more-than-human in African peacebuilding and security' (Bristol University Press) by the end of 2025. Prof Hussein Solomon spearheaded three book projects as part of memoranda of understanding with various international institutions. These book projects include the following: i) 'Africa's External Engagement: Challenges and Opportunities' (Palgrave MacMillan) in collaboration with Prof Ajay Dubey from Jawaharlal Nehru University in India; ii) the second volume focuses on water scarcity and conflict in Africa and is a collaboration with the Africa Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Niger Delta University, with co-editors Prof Sergey Kostelyanets and Prof Jude Cocodia; iii) the third is a collaboration with Prof Bashabi Gupta from Miranda House, Delhi University titled, 'BRICS Geopolitics and Climate Change' (Palgrave). Prof Pamila Gupta continued to work on her monograph, Experiments in the Dark: Visualising Capital Art Studio, Zanzibar (University of Michigan Press, African Perspectives Series), with an expected publication date of March 2027.

Dr Grey Magaiza continued with his project on **the** Livelihood Transitions in the Former homelands of Qwaqwa and Transkei. The project is funded by the NRF Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers for three years, to the value of R850,000.00.

The Free State Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentation Centre (FS IKSDC), housed in the CGAS since 2013, continued in 2025 with new tranche funding (R750 000) received in July, bringing the total funding received to R7,25 million. Documentation continued in communities surrounding Clarens in the eastern Free State. The IKSDC forms part of a national project initiated and funded by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI). This is a community engagement project to document, protect and record indigenous knowledge related to medicinal plants and foodstuffs in a national recordal system called NIKMAS across all South African provinces for safekeeping under the 2019 IKS Act.

Dr Harlan Cloete, CGAS research fellow, with Dr Grey Magaiza as the internal project manager, completed a project funded by the LGSETA to the value of R1,299,500. The topic of this project relates to the role of workplace training systems in supporting the implementation of the municipal staff regulation to assess municipal readiness. Total LGSETA funding for contract research to date is valued at R3,898,500.00.


Dr Harlan Cloete, research fellow of the CGAS and principal investigator for the LGSETA projects.

Research Outputs (accredited)

(Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses combined)

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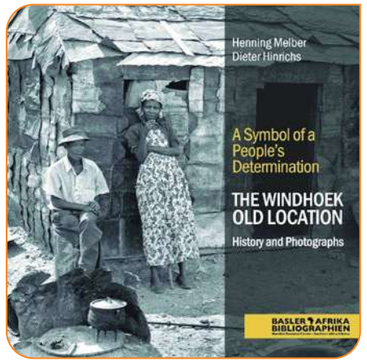
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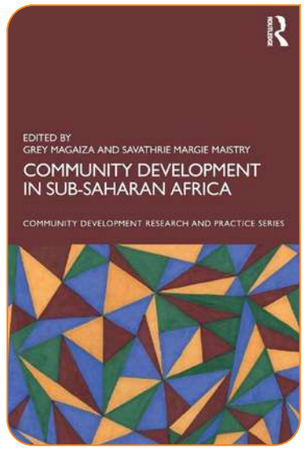
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Engaged Scholarship

In 2025, the CGAS was once again highly productive in engaged scholarship, including the organisation of commemorative events, webinar/seminar series, the organisation and hosting of academic conferences, book launches, and the engaged scholarship activities of individual members of staff in the service of the faculty, institution, and academia. Highlights include the following:

Africa Day Memorial Lecture

The 2025 Africa Day Memorial Lecture was hosted on the Bloemfontein Campus, organised by the CGASBfn (alternating with the CGASQQ).

Speaker	Prof Cyril Obi (Programme Director, Social Science Research Council, New York).
Title	Caught between de-democratisation and re-democratisation: Grappling with Africa's complex conjunctures through the lens of political dialectics.
Date	21 May 2025
Welcome	Prof Nompumelelo Zondi (Vice Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies)
Introduction of speaker	Prof Heidi Hudson (Professor: CGAS)
Vote of thanks	Prof Stephanie Cawood (Director: CGAS)



The Africa Day Memorial Lecture was hosted by the CGASBfn on 21 May 2025.



Prof Cyril Obi presented the annual Africa Day Memorial Lecture.



Members of the main procession from left to right: Prof Cawood, Prof Obi, Prof Zondi and Prof Hudson

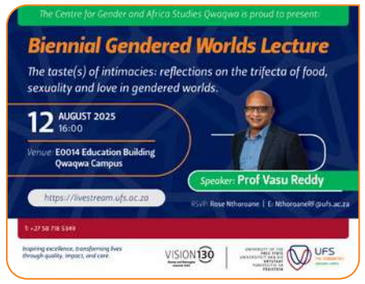


Prof Obi in the receiving line after the conclusion of the memorial lecture.

Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture

In 2025, the CGASQQ hosted this commemorative lecture for the very first time, making it only the second memorial lecture of the UFS to be held on the Qwaqwa Campus, besides the Africa Day Memorial Lecture.

Speaker	Prof Vasu Reddy (UFS Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation)
Title	The taste(s) of intimacies: Reflections on the trifecta of food, sexuality and love in gendered worlds.
Date	12 August
Welcome	Prof Cias Tsotetsi (Qwaqwa Campus Vice-Principal: Academic and Research)
Introduction of speaker	Prof Jared McDonald (Assistant Dean: Humanities)
Vote of thanks	Dr Grey Magaiza (Deputy Director: CGASQQ)



The Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture hosted by the CGASQQ on 12 August 2025.



Prof Vasu Reddy, local traditional leaders and the main procession for the Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture.



CGASQQ and CGASBfn staff attending the Biennial Gendered Worlds Lecture.

Community Development Conference (12–14 November 2025)

The CGASQQ successfully hosted a National Community Development Conference at the Golden Gate Hotel, bringing together academics and practitioners from the public, private, and civic sectors. The conference contributed significantly to the ongoing professionalisation of community development in South Africa. With attendance exceeding 200 delegates, the event marked the revitalisation of the South African Association for Community Development and the formal launch of its student chapters. The conference ended on a high note with a gala dinner on 13 November. Prof Jared McDonald (Assistant Dean: Faculty of the Humanities, Qwaqwa Campus) acted as the Programme Director, Prof Mogomme Masoga (Dean: Faculty of the Humanities) welcomed the guests, Prof Stephanie Cawood (CGAS Director) spoke on behalf of the CGAS, and Marlene Ogawa spoke on behalf of the conference sponsor, Synergos.



Dr Magaiza and his team at the Community Development Conference.



Prof Jared McDonald acted as Programme Director at the gala dinner.



Prof Mogomme Masoga welcomed delegates to the gala dinner.



Prof Stephanie Cawood delivered a short speech on behalf of the CGAS at the gala dinner.



Marlene Ogawa spoke on behalf of the conference sponsor, Synergos.









The Community Development Conference ended on a convivial note at the gala dinner.

Heritage Month (September)

Dr Moorosi Leshoele, Programme Director for the Africa Studies programme, delivered an online lecture on 29 September in celebration of Heritage Month, titled, 'Heritage as an indispensable ingredient for (endo) indigenous development for Africa: Lessons from Thomas Sankara.'



Heritage Day poster

Gender Talks Webinar/Seminar Series 2025

- 27 March: 'Factors Shaping the Well-Being of the Poor: A Qualitative Study in Three States with Higher Household Poverty in Peninsular Malaysia' presented by Dr Nor Ardyanti Ahmad (Malaysia).
- 29 May: 'Gendered Islamophobia: Exploring how Islamophobia intersects with gender in Muslim women' presented by Dr Chaimaa Boukharsa.
- 25 September: 'Beyond the glass ceiling: Addressing some of the barriers women face in higher education' presented by Prof Tameshnie Deane.
- 23 October: 'Navigating the intersections: An autoethnographic reflection on gender, violence and queerness in South African social work' presented by Luvo Kasa.

Africa Dialogue Series 2025

The Africa Dialogue Series is a seminar/webinar series aimed at spotlighting a diverse range of African dynamics, issues, and publications. Prof Hussein Solomon initiated and coordinates this vibrant webinar series.

- 30 January: 'US-Africa Relations in the Trump Era' (co-hosted with the University of North, Georgia). Speakers included Dr Tanna Krewson (Centre for Information Resilience, United Kingdom), Dr Asher Lubotzky (University of Houston), Dr Edward Mienie (University of North, Georgia), Col (rtd) Daniel Hampton (National Defence University, Washington, DC), and Prof Hussein Solomon (CGAS).
- 11 February: 'Mozambique in the aftermath of the contested election.' The speaker was Dr Albino Forquilha (President of the PODEMOS Party).
- 2 April: 'Russia-Africa Relations.' Speakers included Dr Envarbik Fazelyanov (former Russian Ambassador to Oman), Dr Alexander Zhambikov (Russian Academy of Sciences), Prof Hussein Solomon (CGAS) and Dr Sergey Kostelyanets (Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences).
- 12 May: 'Land Rights after the Expropriation Act' (co-hosted with the Institute of Race Relations). Speakers included Wandile Sihlobo (Agricultural Business Chamber), Makone Maja (Institute of Race Relations), and Christo van der Rheede (University of the Free State).
- 11 June: 'US-South African Relations.' The speaker was Joel Pollak, Senior Editor of Breitbart News.
- 14 July: 'Israel-Africa Relations.' Speakers included Dr Irit Back (Tel Aviv University), Shiri Fein-Grossman (Israel-Africa Relations Institute), and Eliyah Maharat (Ta Tarbut Faithlovitch).
- 3 September: 'The Challenge of Terrorism in Africa and Asia' (co-hosted with the Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi). Speakers included the Indian High Commissioner to South Africa, Dr Arvind Gupta (Vivekananda International Foundation), General Eben Barlow (Executive Outcomes) and Prof Hussein Solomon (CGAS).
- 11 September: 'Never forget your Ancestors: Finding Postcolonial Security Studies.' The speakers were Prof Peter Vale (CGAS) and Prof Igor Castellano da Silva (Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil).
- 24 September: 'Africa's Blue Gold: Water conflicts, climate resilience, and Transboundary cooperation' (co-hosted by the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, CGAS, University of the Free State, and Niger Delta University (Nigeria). Speakers hailed from West Africa and Southern Africa, the Russian Federation and India.
- 13 November: 'Future Research and Expertise in Science, Knowledge and Aspirations (FRESKA)', (co-hosted by the Independent University of Banja Luka, the Russian Academy of Sciences). Speakers hailed from across the Russian Federation, Eastern Europe and across Africa.

Methodology Webinar Series

Following the signing of an MoU with Miranda House, Delhi University, India, we launched a new webinar series titled "A View from the South: Indo-African Approaches to Research Methodologies." This highly successful webinar series was initiated and coordinated by Prof Hussein Solomon.

- 8 April: If research is the puzzle piece, philosophy of science is the picture. Speaker: Prof Stephanie Cawood (CGAS Director).
- 28 May: Feminist decoloniality: Is it needed? Prof Bijayalaxmi Nanda (Principal, Miranda House, Delhi University).
- 19 June: Decolonising research methodology: Rethinking and unthinking dominant ways of producing knowledge. Speaker: Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga (CGAS).
- 30 July: Knowledge, Attributes and Practices about Sexual Harassment at the Workplace: A Roadmap for Sustainable Workplaces. Speakers: Prof Upma Gautam and Prof Deeksha Tewari (Delhi University).
- 26 August: Rethinking Visual Methodologies: Across the Indian Ocean – Reflections from Zanzibar. Speaker: Prof Pamila Gupta (CGAS).
- 22 September: Application of Mixed Methods in the Health Sciences. Speaker: Prof Indranil (OP Jindal Global University, India).
- 4 November: Speaking through Silences: Understanding Qualitative Methodologies in Fieldwork – Contextualising Concealed Gender Violence. Speaker: Prof Bashabi Gupta (Miranda House, Delhi University).
- 27 November: Reflecting on Reflexivity: A feminist perspective. Speaker: Prof Heidi Hudson (CGAS).

Individual Staff Presentation/Participation

CGAS staff participated in a wide range of engaged scholarship activities, including workshops, guest lectures, and online and in-person presentations.

Prof Stephanie Cawood

- 'If research is the puzzle piece, philosophy of science is the picture.' First webinar in series jointly hosted by the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, UFS, and Miranda House, University of Delhi, in a webinar series titled, 'A View from the South: Indo-African Approaches to Research Methodologies,' 8 April 2025.
- 'Memorialising Struggle: Dynamics of Memory, Space and Power in Postliberation Africa.' Paper presented in the Anthropology Departmental Seminar Series at the UFS on 23 June 2025.
- 'Cultural and historical influences on gender norms.' Presented at the information session for the Free State Department of Treasury on 7 August 2025.
- 'Gendered (in)securities and the memorialisation of struggle in postliberation Africa.' Guest lecture presented at the Department of African Studies, University of Delhi, 21 August 2025.
- 'Gendered dynamics in African borderlands.' Guest lecture presented at Miranda House in collaboration with the Policy Centre & Gender Lab, University of Delhi, 22 August 2025.
- 'Memorialising struggle: Dynamics of memory, space and power in postliberation Africa.' Guest lecture presented at the Centre for African Studies in collaboration with the African Studies Association of India, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 26 August 2025.
- 'The 'Recalcitrant Other': The rhetorical struggle of Nelson Mandela.' Guest lecture presented at the Department of Political Science at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, 27 August 2025.



Prof Stephanie Cawood had academic engagements at various institutions during her visit to India in August Department of African Studies (University of Delhi); Policy Centre & Lab at Miranda House (University of Delhi); Centre for African Studies and Africa Studies Association of India (Jawaharlal Nehru University) and Jamia Millia Islamia University.

- Indigenous knowledge systems as epistemic emancipation.' Guest lecture presented at the School of Global Affairs, Dr B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, 28 August 2025.
- Chaired 'Session III: Diaspora and Indigenous Knowledge Circulation' at the International Conference on 'Recalibrating Foreign Policy Framework for Sharing Indigenous Knowledge among the Global South: A case of India and Africa', co-hosted by Miranda House, University of Delhi and the Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. 23 October 2025 (online).

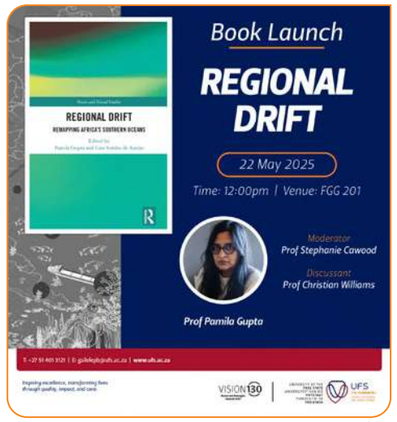
- 'The interface of cultural heritage and environmental science.' Guest lecture at the Centre for Environmental Management (UFS) in PGDip in Integrated Water Management module IWRM5846 (Water resources management and legislation) during a contact session on 31 October 2025.

Dr Jerit Dube

- Attended the DSD Workshop: Implementation Evaluation of the Training of CDPs on Community Development Practice and Methodologies, 26-28 August 2025.
- Attended the Science Diplomacy Summer School hosted by the *Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)*, Pretoria, South Africa, 15-25 October 2025.
- Attended the Engaged Research Conference hosted by the *Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)*, Pretoria, South Africa, 22-24 October 2025.
- Attended and presented at the Climate Change and Futures in Africa Conference organised by the *Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)* in Windhoek, Namibia, 29-31 October 2025.
- Attended and presented at the AAU 16th Quadrennial General Conference, Morocco, 21-25 July 2025.
- Attended and presented at the SASA 30th Annual Congress in Mpumalanga, South Africa, 23-26 June 2025.

Prof Pamila Gupta

- Joint book discussion with co-editor Caio de Araujo, *Regional Drift: Remapping Africa's Southern Oceans* (Routledge Series on Oceans and Island Studies Series, 2025). "Blue Heritage, Blue Economy" Conference, *French Institute in South Africa* (IFAS). Organised by Prof Sophie Chevalier (France). Johannesburg, South Africa. March 19, 2025.
- Book launch at CGAS of newly published co-edited volume, *Regional Drift: Remapping Africa's Southern Oceans* (Co-editors: Prof Pamila Gupta with Caio de Araujo, Routledge Series on Oceans and Island Studies Series, 2025). Moderated by Prof Cawood and in discussion with Prof Christian Williams (Anthropology, UFS), Bloemfontein, South Africa. May 22, 2025
- "Rethinking Visual Methodologies Across the Indian Ocean, Reflections from Zanzibar," Research Methodologies Seminar, South Africa/India Collaboration, hosted by Prof Hussein Solomon. UFS/ Delhi University (Online). August 26, 2025.
- Book launch and conversation with author Jordache Ellapen (Assistant Professor, Department of Black Studies, University of Rochester), *Indenture Aesthetics: Afro-Indian Femininities and the Queer Limits of South African Blackness* (Duke University Press, 2025). Rochester, NY. October 1, 2025.
- "Joburg's Pools in a Time of South African Infrastructure". Seminar presentation, City University of New York (CUNY), Department of Anthropology, hosted by Prof Jeff Maskovsky. New York City, New York. October 3, 2025.



Book launch of Regional Drift: Remapping Africa's Southern Oceans at the CGAS with Prof Pamila Gupta.

Prof Heidi Hudson

- 'Reflecting on reflexivity. A feminist perspective. Presentation in the webinar series, 'A View from the South: Indo-African Approaches to Research Methodologies', hosted by CGAS (UFS) and Miranda House, University of Delhi, 27 November 2025.

Dr Moorosi Leshoele

- Attended an expert working group with scholars from the UK, USA, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and Mauritius at the University of Pretoria with the theme 'Coups d'États and the Potentials for Reconstruction and Renewal in Africa Colloquium' hosted by SOAS, University of London. March 2025.
- 'Judicial Conduct Tribunal: E.C. Judge President Selby Mbenenge vs Andiswa Mengo.' Presented at the information session for the Free State Department of Treasury on 7 August 2025.



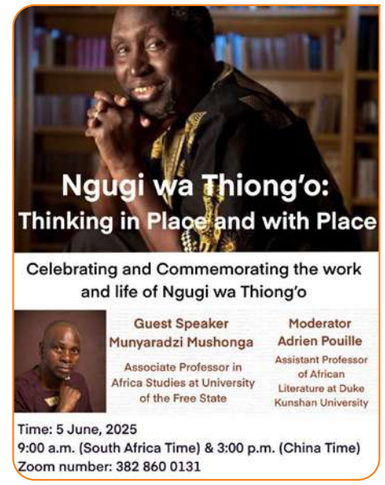
Dr Leshoele in action at the Community Development Conference in November.

Dr Grey Magaiza

- Magaiza, G. Engaged Scholarship: Some Pragmatic Pathways for Impactful Research. Presented at the EMS Engaged Scholarship Workshop on 16 May 2025.
- Magaiza, G. 2025. Invitation to the DSD 26-28 August 2025 Workshop: Implementation Evaluation of the Training of CDPs on Community Development Practice and Methodologies.
- Numerous Strategic Engagements with the Department of Social Development at both national and provincial levels.

Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga

- Presentation to the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State, South Africa and Miranda House, University of Delhi, India, under the theme, *A View from the South: Indo African Approaches to Research Methodologies*. Title of presentation: *Decolonising research (method(ology)): Rethinking and unthinking dominant ways of producing knowledge*, 19 June 2025.
- Online presentation at the Decolonising the Mind (DTM) Seminar Series, organised by the Decolonial International Network (DIN) Lesotho Chapter based at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). Title of presentation: *Colonialism, Mental Slavery & Colonisation of the Mind*, 3 September 2025.
- Invited to give a presentation by the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS), University of Johannesburg, to the in-person conference under the theme, 'The Fanon Century: The Centenary of the Birth of Frantz Fanon'. Title of presentation: *Fanon at 100: Living the final prayer, turning over a new leaf, working out new concepts, and setting afoot a new man*, JIAS, 20-22 July 2025.
- Invited to give an online talk by Duke Kunshan University, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, China, on the life and times of Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1938-2025). Title of talk: *The Decolonial Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Thinking in Place and with Place*, 5 June 2025.
- Invited to participate in the in-person UFS Economic and Management Sciences Faculty Debate under the title, *The Current Economic and Management Sciences Curricula, Pedagogical Approaches and Research Endeavours Perpetuate Colonial Legacies*, 3 June 2025.
- Facilitated an in-person training workshop at the Pre-Conference Workshop for OHASA's 22nd National Conference under the theme, *Oral History Projects: From Conception to Publication*. Title of presentation: *Conception and Reparation for Oral Historical Research (Project)*, University of Limpopo, Polokwane, 6-10 October 2025.



Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga commemorated Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

Prof Hussein Solomon



Prof Hussein Solomon delivered the 46th Hoernle Memorial Lecture hosted by the Institute of Race Relations at a gala evening in Johannesburg on 6 November.

- "Embracing Machiavelli to Achieve a Liberal Future". Paper presented as the 46th Hoernle Memorial Lecture hosted by the Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 6 November 2025. Chaired the session *Sustainability, Resilience, and Institutional Cooperation* at the International Conference on Recalibrating Foreign Policy Framework for Sharing Indigenous Knowledge among the Global South: A case of India and Africa, co-hosted by Miranda House, University of Delhi and the Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 23 October 2025.
- "Islamic State in Africa: Reasons for their Expansion". Paper presented at the webinar 'The Challenge of Terrorism in Africa and South Asia', co-hosted by the Vivekananda International Foundation, India and the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State, 3 September 2025.
- Provided training to the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission led by Dr Ephrem Ayalew. The training covered South Africa's political transition between 1990 and 1994, the Government of National Unity, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 6 August 2025.

Institutional service

CGAS staff provide institutional service to the following committees:

- Prof Stephanie Cawood (Humanities Faculty: Exams Board, Finance Committee, Faculty Management Committee, Faculty Board, Senate, CGAS Advisory Board, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Prof Heidi Hudson (Humanities Faculty: Research Committee, Member of Faculty Promotions Committee, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Dr Juliet Kamwendo (Humanities Faculty Management Committee, Faculty Board, UFS General Human Research Ethics Committee, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Dr Grey Magaiza (Humanities Faculty: Teaching and Learning Committee, Exams Board, Faculty Management Committee, Faculty Board, CGAS Advisory Board, Qwaqwa Management Committee, Vice Chairperson: Institutional Forum, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga (Humanities Faculty: Faculty Board, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Prof Hussein Solomon (Humanities Faculty: Research Committee until resignation, Scientific Committee until its dissolution, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel).
- Dr Moorosi Leshoele (Faculty Board, Faculty Management Committee, Management and Communications Committee, CGAS Departmental Scientific Review Panel Chair).
- Ankia Bradfield (UFS Occupational Health and Safety Committee).

Memberships and editorial responsibilities

CGAS staff are actively involved in academic associations and provide service to the broader academia through editorial boards of accredited journals and publishers:

- Prof Stephanie Cawood is a member of the International Member Studies Association, a member of the Memory and Nature Working Group of the Memory Studies Association, and an associate editor for the Q2 journal, Africa Review.
- Prof Pamila Gupta: Series Editor, University of Michigan Press. "African Perspectives" Book Series, with Kelly Askew (US) and Laura Fair (US), 2021-present); Series Editor, Routledge Press. "Oceans and Islands" Book Series, with May Joseph (US), Phil Hayward (Australia), and Adam Grydehoj (China), 2020-present; co-supervisor for Dr Lisandra Franco de Mendonca (based in Portugal), "A State Zero Hour: An Architectural Ethnography of Mozambique's Independence", postdoctoral application for ERC Horizon Europe Framework programme, August 2025.
- Prof Heidi Hudson is a book series co-editor for Bristol University Press and a member of the editorial board of Review of International Studies.
- Dr Moorosi Leshoele is a member of numerous professional academic associations: the South African Development Studies Association (SADSA), the South African Association of Political Science (SAAPS), the Pan-African Federalist Movement (PAFM), and Afrocentricity International (South African Chapter). In August 2023, Dr Leshoele was asked to write a blurb for a book by Kamga, G.E.K., Kamga, S.D., and Kwesiga, A. (2024) titled "Right to Development and Illicit Financial Flows from Africa: Dynamics, Perspectives, and Prospects" by Lexington Books. See the link here for more on the book, and for the blurb/review: https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/right-to-development-and-illicit-financial-flows-from-africa-9781666932317/.
- Prof Hussein Solomon is Deputy Chair of the Pugwash Conferences on Science in World Affairs (South African Chapter); member of the Security Council of the Gerhson Lehrman Group of Companies; member of the International Steering Committee of Global Action to Prevent War, research associate of the Centre for Defence Studies, University of Zimbabwe; and a research associate of the South African Institute for International Affairs. He is also a member of the International Advisory Council of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research in Hawaii. Furthermore, he is Vice-President of the African Studies Association (India) and a member of the International Advisory Boards of the Middle East Institute and the Research Institute for European and American Studies in Athens, Greece. Moreover, he is a member of the Editorial Board of Politeia; special advisor to the Editor of the journal Globalizations; former advisory editor to the Journal for Contemporary History; associate editor of the Southern African Peace and Security Studies journal; member of the International Editorial and Advisory Board of the London Security Policy Study and a member of the Editorial Boards of Springer's Gulf Studies Series, Africa Insight, Afro-Eurasian Journal, African Security, Minorities in World Politics, Contemporary Review of the Middle East, Alternatives, Journal of Administrative Sciences, Afro-Arab Social and Economic Review, Journal of African Union Studies, Politikon, African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Scientific Journals International, Critical Studies on Terrorism, SVAROG, Contemporary Security Studies, as well as editor of Insight on Africa. In 2025, he was also appointed to the Editorial Council of the journal Globalization Studies. He also sits on the Board of Trustees of All Africa Women for Peace. Prof Solomon holds the rank of a captain in the Reserve Force of the South African Air Force and is a research fellow of the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA), which is based at the South African Military Academy, Stellenbosch University, where he is responsible for the counter-terrorism dimension of the institute.

Service to academia/scholarship

CGAS academic staff routinely provide service to academia by acting as external examiners for student research reports and peer reviewers for book and article publications:

- Prof Stephanie Cawood was the external moderator for the module Gender in Context
- (GEN4802) in the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies, College of Human Sciences at UNISA. She reviewed articles for scholarly journals, inter alia, African Identities, African Affairs and the Journal of Higher Education (CODESRIA). She was
- also invited as the external assessor for the promotion application of a staff member at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Prof Pamila Gupta was invited to an oral defence (online) of a PhD candidate at Georgetown University, Department of History, on 13 May. She was an internal examiner for a PhD with specialisation in Africa Studies at the UFS, a mentor for *the* Anthropology Southern Africa Journal (ASNA) young scholars' article submissions, and the co-supervisor for Dr Lisandra Franco de Mendonca's postdoctoral application for the ERC Horizon Europe Framework Programme, August 2025. She conducted two proposal-writing workshops for Honours and Master's students at the CGAS in May 2025.
- Prof Heidi Hudson was invited to participate in a roundtable hosted by the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty on "Dealing with Article Rejection", University of the Free State, 18 June 2025.
- Dr Moorosi Leshoele has been an active reviewer for journals such as Africa Insight, Open Journal of Social Sciences, Journal of African Union Studies, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, and The African Review. He reviewed a book proposal and a draft manuscript edited by Albert G. Zeufack, Fulbert Tchana Tchana, and Aly Sanoh (2024) titled 'Making the African Continental Free Trade Agreement a Success: Pathways and a Call for Action.'
- Dr Grey Magaiza is a member of the National Task Team that developed the Bachelor of Community Development Standard Document.
- Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga served as the guest editor to the CODESRIA Journal of Higher Education in Africa (JHEA) Special Issue on Decolonising Knowledge Production in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts (HSSA), 2024-2026.

National and International Collaboration

The CGAS and its staff had productive national and international collaborations in 2025.

- The CGAS collaborated with Miranda House, University of Delhi, facilitated by Prof Hussein Solomon and Prof Bashabi Gupta, with the successful offering of the joint methodology webinar series titled, 'A View from the South: Indo-African Approaches to Research Methodologies' running from April to November.
- The successful National Community Development Conference (12-14 November 2025), hosted by the CGASQQ at the Golden Gate Hotel, was held in collaboration with the University of Kwazulu-Natal, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of the Western Cape, bringing together academics and practitioners from the public, private, and civil society sectors. The conference contributed significantly to the ongoing professionalisation of community development in South Africa. With attendance exceeding 200 delegates, the event marked the revitalisation of the South African Association for Community Development and the formal launch of its student chapters.
- Prof Cyril Obi, Programme Director at the Social Sciences Research Council (New York), where he leads the African Peacebuilding Network and the Next Generation Social Sciences in African programmes, and was recently appointed as Extraordinary Professor in the CGAS, visited the UFS in May to deliver the annual Africa Day Memorial Lecture, to engage with staff from the CGAS and to explore future collaborations.
- In August, Prof Julie Shepherd-Powell visited the CGASQQ from Appalachian State University to hand over warm winter clothing to the traditional leader of a local community as part of a longstanding mountain-to-mountain collaboration with Dr Grey Magaiza.

Individual CGAS staff demonstrated strong local and international links through their activities in 2025.

- Prof Stephanie Cawood spent two weeks in Delhi, hosted by Prof Bashabi Gupta at Miranda House, University of Delhi, and during her visit interacted with students at various levels of study, delivered five guest lectures at numerous institutions, and began exploring potential research opportunities between the UFS and Miranda House. As an active member of the International Memory Studies Association (MSA), she joined the Memory and Nature Working Group, a network of international scholars working in this area, during the 9th Annual Conference of the MSA held in Prague in July.
- Prof Heidi Hudson mentored academic fellows in the African Peacebuilding Network of the Social Science Research Council. She participated in proposal- and article-writing workshops. She was also invited to participate in the APN-Next Gen Fellows panel on "Navigating Reflexivity in Conducting Field-Based Research in Africa", 10 July 2025, Port Louis, Mauritius.
- Dr Moorosi Leshoele attended an expert working group with scholars from the UK, USA, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and Mauritius, hosted by SOAS, University of London, at the University of Pretoria. This invitation stemmed from his work on the resurgence of coups in Africa and on civil-military relations on the continent. A collaborative research project is underway in this regard.
- Dr Grey Magaiza collaborated on a COIL course with the University of Fraser Valley in Canada.
- Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga continued in his role as Global Academic Director of the Decolonial International Network (DIN). He was invited by the Venezuelan Ambassador to South Africa to give a public lecture in Caracas, Venezuela, from 2-3 October on the theme, 'Colonialism, Neocolonialism and their Consequences'.
- Prof Hussein Solomon is a senior associate for the Israeli-based think tank Research on Islam and Muslim in Africa, a visiting professor at the Osaka School of International Public Policy, he is also a research fellow of the Israel-Africa Relations Institute, a visiting professor at Nelson Mandela University, visiting professor at the Department of Political Science in the Faculty of Military Science at Stellenbosch University, an extraordinary professor at the School of Government, North-West University, a research fellow at Niger Delta University, a researcher at the Africa Research Institute at Hungary's Obuda University and a senior analyst for New York-based WikiStrat. As of 2025, he has also been appointed to serve on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Security, Peace and conflict Resolution at Nelson Mandela University.

The CGAS Advisory Board underwent reconstitution after the terms of all external members expired, with new members slated to be confirmed in early 2026.

Postgraduate Students

The CGAS had a total of 265 postgraduate students enrolled in their various postgraduate programmes (see 'Teaching' earlier in this report for more information).

The following students obtained the MPhil with specialisation in Africa Studies by dissertation/articles:

Buchanan-Clarke, S.G. (with distinction)

Title: Exploring the role of formal and informal institutions in conflict onset and mitigation in Tanzania and Mozambique (article option).

Supervisor: Prof H. Solomon

Graduation: December



Dolly Mthembu with her supervisor, Dr Leshoele, at the December graduation ceremony.

Mthembu, L.D.

Title: Student support mechanisms in supporting the adoption of educational technologies in open distance learning environments: A case of the University of the Free State.

Supervisor: Dr M. Leshoele

Graduation: December

The following students graduated with a PhD with specialisation in Africa Studies:



Dr Wa Matchabo Djesse and his supervisor, Prof Hudson.

Djesse, W.

Title: Small-scale cross-border trade and the gendered political economy of the everyday: Post-conflict reconstruction in North and South Kivu provinces, DRC.

Supervisor: Prof H. Hudson

Graduation: April



Dr Jerit Dube

Dube, J.

Title: Entrepreneurship resilience and vulnerability reduction in the Afromontane region: Analysing the livelihood strategies of female entrepreneurs in Qwaqwa.

Supervisor: Dr G. Magaiza

Graduation: April

Lechaba, L.T.

Title: Exploration of Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis in relation to African Renaissance as a decolonial project.

Supervisor: Dr M. Leshoele

Co-supervisor: Prof C. Twala

Graduation: April



Dr Adedeji Oso and his supervisors, Dr Chibwana and Prof Mushonga

Oso, A.O.

Title: Destination Europe: Migration governance along the Nigeria-Libya route.

Supervisor: Dr M.W.T. Chibwana

Co-supervisor: Prof M. Mushonga

Graduation: April

The following MPhil students submitted their dissertations for examination in November:

Corrigan, I.T.

Title: Exploring the dynamics, political culture and endurance of liberal democracy: The case of South Africa (article option).

Supervisor: Prof H. Solomon

Mandambwe, O.

Title: A decolonial reading of the BBC News framing of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

Supervisor: Prof M. Mushonga

Co-supervisor: Dr B. Sibanda

The following PhD students submitted their theses for examination in November:

Herbst, S.

Title: 'Greening' decolonisation: IK(S) and traditional cultural expressions in the South African bioeconomy.

Supervisor: Prof S. Cawood

Rampeta, B.J.

Title: Mapping exile networks in Lesotho: Exploring ANC-BNP and PAC-BCP relations, 1960-1990.

Supervisor: Prof S. Cawood

Co-supervisor: Prof M. Mushonga

Co-supervisor: Prof J.V.F. Fisher

Other Activities

As part of a marketing and recruitment drive, Dr Juliet Kamwendo, Programme Director for Gender Studies, and Dr Mooroso Leshoele, Programme Director for Africa Studies, participated in a postgraduate

In December, our very first PhD graduate from 2009, Dr Nomfundo Mlisa, visited the CGAS together with one of our most recent PhD graduates, Dr Wa Matchabo Djesse. information session at the Qwaqwa Campus in September.



Dr Leshoele and Dr Kamwendo engaging with prospective students at the Qwaqwa Campus postgraduation information session.



From left to right: Dr Djesse, Prof Cawood and Dr Mlisa.

Staff (2025)

Prof S Cawood	Director
Dr G Magaiza	Deputy Director CGASQQ

Staff of the CGASBfn

A Bradfield	Senior Assistant Officer
Prof S Cawood	Associate Professor
W Ellis	SLP Coordinator, lecturer (units)
P Gailele	Senior Assistant Officer
Prof P Gupta	Research Professor
Prof H Hudson	Professor
Dr JC Kamwendo	Lecturer
The late Dr NC Lake	Senior Lecturer
Dr M Leshoele	Lecturer
K Modise	LGSETA Intern (until June)
T Mofokeng	IK data recorder
R Mokhaso	IK data recorder
Prof M Mushonga	Associate Professor
M Nxumalo	IKSDC Coordinator
Prof H Solomon	Senior Research Professor

Staff of the CGASQQ

Dr G Magaiza	Senior Lecturer
N Dlamini	Lecturer
C Steenkamp	Lecturer
R Nthoroane	Senior Assistant Officer
A Khumalo	Junior contract lecturer (units)
J Dube	Contract lecturer (units)
D Klaas	Contract lecturer (units)
R Mabitsela	Junior Lecturer (units)
K Modise	Contract lecturer (units)
N Molefi	Contract lecturer (units)
T Mokoena	Junior contract lecturer (units)
G Mtengwane	Contract lecturer (units)
Dr S Mushonga	Contract lecturer (units)
K Ntshinga	Junior Lecturer (units)
N Sithole	Contract support: Assistant Officer

Institutional leadership affiliated with CGAS

Prof MA Masoga	Dean: Faculty of the Humanities
Prof M Rabe	Vice-Dean for Teaching and Learning: Faculty of the Humanities
Prof V Reddy	DVC: Research and Internationalisation

Affiliated scholars

Extraordinary Professors

Prof G Griffin	Centre for Gender Research (Uppsala University)
Prof H Melber (Emeritus)	The Nordic Africa Institute (Uppsala University)
Prof SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni	Chair of Epistemologies of the Global South (University of Bayreuth)
Prof C Obi	African Peacebuilding Network (Social Science Research Council, New York)
Prof P Vale (Emeritus)	University of Pretoria, Nelson Mandela University, Rhodes University, African Earth Observatory Network

Visiting Professor

Prof A Dubey	Centre for African Studies (Jawaharlal Nehru University) African Studies Association of India

Other

Dr M Alubafi	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (HSRC)
Dr O Amao	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Prof LL Atanga	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (PAUWES)
Prof N Bohler-Muller	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (HSRC)
Dr M Chibwana	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Save the Children AU)
Dr H Cloete	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Prof J Fisher	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (University of Birmingham)
Dr K Goddard	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Dr S Goddard	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Prof C Hungwe	Research Fellow CGAS QQ (Midlands State University)
Dr T Kamuti	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Dr S Kahyana	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Makerere University)
Prof O Kolawole	Research Fellow CGAS QQ (Okavango Research Institute)
Prof P Limb (Emeritus)	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Michigan State University)
Dr D Højlund Madsen	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Nordic Africa Institute)
Dr S Maliehe	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (National University of Lesotho)

Prof S Monro	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (University of Huddersfield)
Dr M Mulumeoderhwa	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (UFS)
Dr J Muzondidya	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Dr H Nyamnjoh	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (University of Cape Town)
Dr O Ogunnubi	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Carleton University)
Prof B Omodan	Research Fellow CGAS QQ (Walter Sisulu University)
Dr S Onwuegbuchulam	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (UKZN)
Dr K Padayachee	Research Fellow CGASQQ (Independent researcher)
Dr M Pherudi	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Dr B Sibanda	Ad hoc lecturer (University of Johannesburg)
Dr J Steyn-Kotzé	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (HSRC)
Prof M Thabane (Emeritus)	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (National University of Lesotho)
Prof RA Themnér	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Uppsala University)
Prof A Vallega	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (University of Oregon)
Dr R van der Merwe	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (University of Groningen)
Dr D van Reenen	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Independent researcher)
Dr R Williams	Research Fellow CGAS Bfn (Western Reserve Historical Society)

Centre for

Health Systems Research & Development



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Overview of 2025

The Centre for Health Systems Research & Development (CHSR&D) continued to demonstrate strong academic, research, and collaborative performance during the reporting period. Significant staff achievements included the promotion of both Prof Michelle Engelbrecht and Prof Christo Heunis to full professor, each delivering inaugural lectures showcasing their scholarly contributions. All three senior academics (Profs Engelbrecht, Heunis, and Gladys KigoziMale) received NRF ratings, reflecting the Centre's sustained research excellence. Administrative Officer Bridget Smit further advanced her professional skills by attaining the Certified Office Manager designation.

The Centre maintained a robust research portfolio addressing critical public health priorities in the Free State and beyond. Several projects focused on vulnerable populations, including older people living with HIV, psychiatric patients, and families of children with Down syndrome. A major externally funded project adapted the global Program P intervention to promote male partner involvement in maternal and neonatal health among Sesotho-speaking communities. Other studies examined mental health comorbidities among older adults, nursing students' preparedness for mental healthcare, and stakeholder perspectives on developmental support for children with Down syndrome. Funding for these initiatives exceeded R1.9 million from the NRF, UFS internal grants, and partner institutions.

Research dissemination remained a strength, with accredited publications across highimpact journals and numerous conference presentations at provincial, national, and international events. Staff participated in key national health research platforms, contributed to strategic planning processes, and engaged in collaborations with institutions such as the University of South Carolina (USA), Makerere University (Uganda), International Institute of Primary Health Care (Ethiopia), Central University of Technology, University of Pretoria, and the Health Systems Trust.

Postgraduate supervision yielded successful completions at PhD and Honours levels, highlighting the Centre's ongoing contribution to capacity development. Collectively, these achievements demonstrate the CHSR&D's growing impact on health systems strengthening, public health research, and evidenceinformed policy in South Africa.

Achievements

- Prof Michelle Engelbrecht was promoted to full professor.
- Prof Michelle Engelbrecht delivered an inaugural lecture, "*Male partner involvement in maternal health: A gender transformative lens on health equity and social change*", on 8 October.
- Prof Michelle Engelbrecht was awarded a C2 NRF rating.
- Prof Christo Heunis was promoted to full professor.
- Prof Christo Heunis delivered an inaugural lecture titled *"The Centre for Health Systems Research & Development: Legacy, Impact and Emerging Frontiers"* on 11 November.
- Prof Christo Heunis was awarded a C2 NRF rating.
- Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male was appointed to serve as a member of the Free State Provincial Health Protocol Review Committee.

Student Achievements

Palesa Leshaba graduated with a Master of Health Systems Studies degree, cum laude.

Research Projects

Adapting an evidence-based intervention for Sesotho-speaking couples to promote male engagement in maternal and neonatal health

Principal investigator: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D)

Co-investigators: Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D) and Dr Ngwi Mulu (CHSR&D)

Although male partner involvement (MPI) in maternal health is recognised as one of many strategies that can work towards the improvement of maternal morbidity and mortality outcomes, it remains limited in many regions worldwide, not least in South Africa. Given the absence of a gender- and culturally sensitive intervention specifically designed to encourage Sesotho-speaking men to become constructively involved in maternal and neonatal health, the project sought to adapt an existing evidence-based intervention (Program P) for MPI in this area. Program P aims to engage men in active fatherhood from prenatal care through their children's early years and has been implemented in at least 18 countries. Funding of R1 153 738, including R400 000 for a postdoc, was received from the NRF. An additional R70 000 has been secured from the Faculty of the Humanities at the UFS.

Older adults' experiences of HIV in the Free State Province: A biopsychosocial and health systems perspective

Principal investigator: Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D)

Co-principal investigator: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D)

Co-investigators: Prof Monique Brown (University of South Carolina, USA) and Dr Lerato Makhele (Department of Psychiatry, UFS)

The large-scale roll-out of antiretroviral treatment (ART) has led to early treatment initiation, improved life expectancy and reduced mortality rates among people living with HIV (PLHIV). Consistent use now allows PLHIV to live nearly as long as the general population, significantly reducing AIDS-related morbidity and mortality. Over one-fifth of PLHIV are aged 50 years and older, facing unique challenges, such as polypharmacy, multimorbidities, cognitive impairment, frailty, and mental health conditions. There is evidence of increasing HIV prevalence, high-risk behaviour, and low HIV literacy levels among older persons. Additionally, Older People Living with HIV (OPLHIV) increasingly face stigma and discrimination, including ageism, resulting in a heightened prevalence of social isolation and loneliness. It is thus crucial to understand the relationship between HIV and geriatric syndromes. This ongoing research aims to examine the biopsychosocial factors influencing the health and well-being of OPLHIV on ART in the Free State Province. The project is partially funded by the UFS Directorate Research Development (R150 000) and the CHSR&D (R150 000).

Prevalence and determinants of medical and mental health comorbidities among older adults admitted to the Free State Psychiatric Complex, South Africa

Principal investigator: Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D)

Co-principal investigator: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D)

Co-investigators: Prof Monique Brown (University of South Carolina, USA) and Dr Lerato Makhele (Department of Psychiatry, UFS)

The proportion of older people in South Africa has been steadily increasing. The intersection of ageing, chronic disease, and mental health is particularly concerning for older adults requiring psychiatric care. While data on the age distribution of patients at the Free State Psychiatric Complex (FSPC), the largest specialised mental health facility in the Free State Province, is limited, a substantial number of older adults are likely to be admitted, given the high prevalence of mental health conditions. The research aims to review comorbid medical and mental health conditions among older adults who accessed mental healthcare at the FSPC between 1 January and 31 December 2024. Prevalence factors and factors associated with comorbidities will be compared across sub-groups defined by age, sex and HIV status. The project is funded by the CHSR&D (R50 000).

Understanding the perspectives of parents, occupational therapists and advocacy group representatives on the Development Resource Stimulation Programme for Children with Down Syndrome: A qualitative study

Principal investigator: Dr Olive Khaliq (Department of Paediatrics, UFS)

Co-principal investigators: Dr Dorothy Russell (Department of Paediatrics, UFS) and Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D)

The Development Resource Stimulation Programme (DRSP) is vital in supporting the holistic development of children with Down syndrome. While the programme has been tested and shows promise in meeting their needs, it is important to gather insights from parents, occupational therapists, and advocacy group representatives to understand how effective the DRSP is and where improvements could be made. This research aims to explore the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by parents, as well as the perspectives of occupational therapists and advocacy group representatives on the DRSP. The project received R150 000 from a UFS Interdisciplinary Grant.

Capacity building for the use of implementation science in various typologies in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) for the prevention and/or management of the quadruple burden of disease

Principal investigator: Dr Phindile Shangase (Division of Public Health, UFS)

Co-principal investigator: Dr Lebogang Mogongoa (Department of Paediatrics, UFS)

Participants: Profs Gladys Kigozi-Male and Christo Heunis (CHSR&D)

This initiative is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goals 3 (Good health and well-being), 4 (Quality education), and 17 (Partnerships for the goals). The multidisciplinary nature of the project is expected to inform both curriculum development and research activities with a strong emphasis on community engagement to enhance public health outcomes.

As part of this initiative, a multi-stakeholder training programme was conducted for participants from the UFS, the Central University of Technology, Free State and various community stakeholders. The programme focused on building capacity in implementation research and strengthening the ability of diverse actors to design, implement, and scale evidence-based interventions and policies to improve public health in the Free State Province. The training was supplemented with field visits within Mangaung and an Implementation Science symposium. The project is jointly funded by the Directorate Research Development (UFS) and the Department of Research Development at the Central University of Technology, Free State, for a total of R280 000.

Factors influencing nursing students' involvement in mental healthcare in the Free State Province

Principal investigator: Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D)

Co-investigators: Prof Christo Heunis (CHSR&D), Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D), Dr Deirdre van Jaarsveldt (School of Nursing, UFS), and Prof Stephen Walker (Department of Psychology, UFS)

Over the past decade, mental health has generated significant public health concerns in South Africa, prompting calls for integrating mental health into PHC services. However, this implies that non-mental health specialists must care for mental health users (MHUs), potentially negatively affecting service delivery and patient outcomes. Assessing providers' perceptions of mental healthcare can improve service delivery and patient outcomes. Moreover, introducing new programmes in South Africa has reduced the focus on mental health training for nursing students, potentially affecting their attitudes and recruitment into mental healthcare. Research among nursing students in the African context is limited. It is essential to investigate their attitudes, awareness, experiences, and preparedness for mental healthcare to inform training and support interventions and promote positive health outcomes for MHUs in the Free State Province. This study explored nursing students' and educators' perspectives on nursing students' involvement in mental healthcare. The project was supported by the UFS Interdisciplinary Grant in the amount of R100 000.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

- Chauke, N.P., Kigozi, N.G., & Heunis, J.C. 2025. Patient and provider perspectives of male uptake of HIV testing at selected public health facilities in Orange Farm, South Africa. *Journal of Men's Health* (Accepted).
- Engelbrecht, M., Mulu, N., & Kigozi-Male, G. 2025. Sesotho women's preferences for male partner involvement during antenatal care and delivery. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 22, 1867.
- Peresu, E., Kigozi-Male, G., & Engelbrecht, M. 2025. Assessing mental health literacy among undergraduate nursing students in South Africa. *Nursing Reports*, 15, 337.
- Heunis, J.C., Kigozi-Male, N.G., Maeko, M., & van Jaarsveldt, D. 2025. **Mental health in nursing education: Perspectives of learning facilitators and students in South Africa.** *BMC Nursing*, 24:997.
- Nako, E., Marais, L., & Engelbrecht, M. 2025. Lesotho migrant miners' access to anti-retroviral therapy: Conversion factors during mobility. *Development Southern Africa*, 42(1), 176-188.

Conference Papers/Posters

- Heunis, C., & Kigozi-Male, G. 2025. Exploring providers' perceptions of integrating mental healthcare into tuberculosis services in the Free State. 13th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'Advancing Health in South Africa Together: Tackling Challenges, Strengthening Systems, and Embracing Digital Innovation.' Free State Department of Health, UFS and Central University of Technology, Free State, Virtual, Bloemfontein, 21 November 2025.
- Maeko, N.M., Heunis, C., & Kigozi-Male, G. 2025. Socio-ecological influences on sexual and reproductive health service use: Young adults and provider perspectives from Soshanguve, South Africa. 13th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'Advancing Health in South Africa Together: Tackling Challenges, Strengthening Systems, and Embracing Digital Innovation.' Free State Department of Health, University of the Free State and the Central University of Technology, Free State, Virtual, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 21 November 2025.
- Chikobvu, P., Heunis, J.C., Setlogelo, M., & Tshilo, T.R. 2025. Progress on registration and utilisation of the Health Patient Registration System (HPRS) in the Free State. 13th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'Advancing Health in South Africa Together: Tackling Challenges, Strengthening Systems, and Embracing Digital Innovation.' Free State Department of Health, University of the Free State and the Central University of Technology, Virtual, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 21 November 2025.
- Heunis, C., Kigozi-Male, G., Maeko, M., & van Jaarsveldt, D. 2025. Mental health in nursing education: Perspectives of learning facilitators and students in South Africa. 13th Annual Free State Provincial Health Research Day on 'Advancing Health in South Africa Together: Tackling Challenges, Strengthening Systems, and Embracing Digital Innovation.' Free State Department of Health, University of the Free State and Central University of Technology, Free State, Virtual Bloemfontein, South Africa, 21 November 2025.
- Heunis, C., & Kigozi-Male, G. 2025. Providers' perceptions of integrating mental healthcare in tuberculosis services in the Free State, South Africa. World Conference on Lung Health 2025. Copenhagen, Denmark, 18-21 November 2025. Abstract: EP35-1038-20. *The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease*, 29(1): S504.
- Van Straaten, M., Heunis, C., & Ncube, A. 2025. Proposed integrated disaster risk reduction social work framework for teaching, research, and practice to enhance mental health and psychosocial support services. 2025 ASASWEI Biennial International Conference on 'Advancing Social, Economic and Environmental Justice, Peace Building, and Sustainable Development through Teaching, Research and Practice.' International Association of Schools of Social Work, UFS, Bloemfontein, 10-12 September 2025.
- Heunis, J.C., Malakoane, B., Chikobvu, P., Kigozi-Male, N.G., & Kruger, W.H. 2025. Insights into health systems strengthening. Free State Department of Health Medico-Legal Workshop. Bloemfontein, 13-14 August 2025.
- Van Jaarsveldt, D., Heunis, C., Chikobvu, P., Kigozi-Male, G., & Litheko, M. Stakeholder involvement in health research priority setting in the Free State Province, South Africa. Technical Session 14 – Community Health II. The 8th Global Public Health Conference (GLOBEHEAL 2025) on 'Community Empowerment and Engagement: Strengthening Health Promotion Initiatives.' Virtual, Bangkok, Thailand, 21-22 February 2025.
- Engelbrecht, M., Mulu, N., Kigozi-Male, N. Addressing social determinants of health: Involving male partners in an evidence-based intervention to improve maternal health outcomes in the Free State, South Africa. Plenary presentation. The 8th Global Public Health Conference (GLOBEHEAL 2025) on 'Community Empowerment and Engagement: Strengthening Health Promotion Initiatives.' Virtual, Bangkok, Thailand, 21-22 February 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

- Prof Heunis on 30 years of African health research and future vision. LinkedIn. 13 November 2025. https://ultrashort.info/MkmXWJ
- Prof Christo Heunis marks three decades of transforming African health systems through research. UFS News Archive. 13 November 2025. https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item/campus-news/2025/november/prof-christo-heunis-marks-three-decades-of-transforming-african-health-systems-through-research

National and International Collaboration

- Prof Mufaro Kanyangarara, from the University of South Carolina in the USA, visited the CHSR&D on 14 September to explore opportunities for potential collaboration. On 13 September 2025, she presented an Implementation Science for Global Health Seminar, which Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male attended.
- Prof Christo Heunis: Participant, Health Systems Trust Strategic Planning Retreat and Organisational Transformation Discussion, Durban, 8-9 December 2025.
- Prof Christo Heunis: Organising team member, National Research for Health Summit on "Towards 2030: Accelerating Action on Health-Related Research – towards achievement of SDGs in South Africa", National Health Research Committee, Johannesburg, 28-29 November 2025.
- Profs Christo Heunis and Gladys Kigozi-Male: Engagement with the University of Pretoria regarding incorporation of the CHSR&D in the South African Health Research Consortium.
- Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male: Reviewer, SAMRC Extra-Mural Unit Application.
- Prof Christo Heunis: Exco member: National Health Research Committee.
- Prof Christo Heunis: Member, Board of Trustees, Health Systems Trust (HST) – Subcommittee on Governance.

Postgraduate Students

Completed PhD

- Johannes Jurie Jansen van Vuuren. *Internship model for South African post-qualification emergency care practitioners*. PhD in Health Professions Education (Module: HPET9100), UFS. Supervisor: Dr René Botha (Department of Clinical Sciences, Central University of Technology, Free State); Co-supervisor: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS)

Completed Honours research projects

- N.M. Makhoba. *A critical review of the impact of mental health stigma on individuals living with bipolar disorder (outpatients) and their families*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male (CHSR&D, UFS).
- Z. Mthethwa. *Exploring the impact of social media use on self-esteem among university students*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS).
- L. Ngcobo. *Coping strategies of parents with children living with disabilities: A critical review*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- Z. Ngwenya. *Understanding the psychological burden and coping experiences of parents and caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder: A critical review*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- K. Saul. *Exploring the relationship between childhood trauma, emotional invalidation and borderline personality disorder in adolescents: A literature-based critical review*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht (CHSR&D, UFS).
- Y. Thantsi. *Exploring the socioeconomic disadvantages of parental styles in Black communities*. Honours research project in Psychology (Module: PSHR6808), UFS, Supervisor: Prof Christo Heunis (CHSR&D, UFS).

Other Activities

- Prof Christo Heunis and Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male, in partnership with Makerere University (Uganda) and the University of Queensland (Australia), submitted a proposal under the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases' (GACD) 10th Funding Call (2025) for a five-year project on strengthening health systems for equitable, high-quality care in the context of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- Prof Michelle Engelbrecht and Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male, in partnership with the Department of Psychiatry (UFS), University of South Carolina and Central University of Technology, submitted a proposal under the National Institutes of Health Funding Call (2025) for a five-year project on group-based psychotherapy intervention to improve mental health and HIV treatment outcomes of older adults living with HIV in the Free State Province, South Africa.

Staff (2025)

Prof Michelle Engelbrecht	Director
Prof Christo Heunis	Professor
Prof Gladys Kigozi-Male	Associate Professor
Bridget Smit	Administrative Officer



Department of

Communication Science

Academic Head of Department

Prof Nyasha Mboti

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Overview of 2025

Communication is at the heart of social, professional, political, economic, and cultural discourse, shaping human affairs, identities and our encounters and relations with others. The field of Communication Science is by nature interdisciplinary. Our students get to study key communication ideas, concepts, and practices, and apply them to a variety of lived contexts, in a way that allows them not only to solve communication problems but also to see communication at work across different communication and media contexts. Our grounding and focus of application are in South Africa, Africa, and the global south, while we are able to abstract and interlink with the rest of the international scene. The Communication Science Department is one of the biggest in the Faculty of the Humanities, offering two undergraduate, three Honours, three Master's and a PhD degree programme on the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campuses. We teach 27 undergraduate modules and 10 Honours modules on the Bloemfontein campus, and eight undergraduate and five Honours modules on the Qwaqwa campus. Teaching and learning are student-focused and provide hundreds of undergraduate students with access to a strong academic foundation with an emphasis on employability through formal job opportunities and entrepreneurship. The current undergraduate programmes, BA (Journalism) and BA (Integrated Organisational Communication), were introduced in 2018. In 2025, the Department continued to focus on teaching excellence, postgraduate throughput, increased research, engaged scholarship, and internationalisation. Robson Nkosi joined the Department as a new lecturer in 2025 at the Qwaqwa Campus, a welcome addition that brings quality, youth, and versatility to the Department.

Achievements

Staff Achievements

Dr Elbie Christie, a member of staff in the Department, graduated with her PhD. Her study, praised by examiners, investigated the interface of tattoos and identities among Afrikaner women in Bloemfontein.

Robson Nkosi, who joined the Department in 2025 as a permanent member of staff, graduated with his Master's. He conducted an exceptionally high-level rhetorical analysis of South African presidents' state-of-the-nation addresses in the democratic era.

Rentia du Plessis received an Exceptional Achievers Award in the Teaching and Learning category for innovation in assessment.

Rentia du Plessis was the 2025 winner in the doctoral category of the Humanities 3-Minute Thesis competition, receiving R6000 in prize money.

ProfNyasha Mboti participated in the inaugural Global Racisms workshop at the University of Cambridge, presenting his emerging work in Apartheid Studies.

Dr Elbie Christie participated in the Women Researchers in the Humanities (WoRiTH) workshop on 2 December 2025, sharing insights from her PhD journey.

Student Achievements

Lusanda Madikane, a Master's candidate in the Department, was named among the *Mail & Guardian's* 200 Young South Africans for 2025. The prestigious annual initiative recognises trailblazers under the age of 35 who are making meaningful contributions across diverse fields, showcasing the depth of talent and leadership shaping South Africa's future. She leads three community-based organisations: The Nozizwe Foundation, The Woman Sorrows, and Iqhayiya LeMveli Institute. Her initiatives range from hosting annual Christmas luncheons for underprivileged children in Mqanduli, Eastern Cape, to empowering women economically and preserving indigenous languages through the African Languages Students Association, which she chairs at UFS.

Sambulo Maphumulo, a third-year BA Integrated Organisational Communication student, was awarded the prestigious Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship to study in Hungary. Sambulo is hosted at the Széchenyi István University in Győr. The Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship is a flagship initiative of the Hungarian government in partnership with South Africa's Department of Higher Education and Training. It provides full financial support for South Africans to study in Hungary.

Keneilwe Chologi graduated with a Master's degree under the supervision of Prof Diana Breshears. Her thesis was titled "Identity negotiation and Identity gaps in LGBTQ University Students' Familial Communication".

Gina Hooper, a Master's candidate in the Department, was the 2025 winner in the master's category of the Humanities 3-Minute Thesis competition, making her eligible to represent the Faculty at the Institutional 3MT Competition held on 10 October 2025. Hooper received a R5 000 prize.

Nonsindiso Qwabe, a MA (Communication Science) student, is in the final stages of her Master's research under a R90 000 grant from the UFS-QQ Risk and Vulnerability Science Centre (RVSC), a National Research Foundation (NRF) programme under the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU). Qwabe's work is part of Prof Diana Breshears' ongoing ARU project on Qwaqwa families.

Robson Nkosi participated in the Article Refinement programme under Prof Corli Witthuhn of the Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences.

Teaching

The Department of Communication Science continues to consciously and actively promote the development and mentoring of a cohort of emerging lecturing talent. This cohort currently has seven young Black South African lecturers permanently employed in the Department: Duduzile Dlamini, Lesego Radebe-Nkosi, Boitumelo Mampane, Millicent Mavimbela, Anathi Nyadu, Babalwa Sibango and Robson Nkosi. The temporary lecturers in the cohort include Anthony Mthembu and Kgalalelo Mphephuka. Facilitators are Sinakho Maphekula and Clement Selepe. This large cohort is part of an approach to "growing our own timber", development, and talent retention that we hope will pay off by 2030.

Research Projects

Prof Diana Breshears is collaborating with Prof Haley Horstman from the University of Missouri on the ARU project on Qwaqwa families.

Prof Colin Chasi is in the last stages of writing his two forthcoming publications, *Mongrelisation* (Brill, 2026) and *Rugby, Decolonisation and African Moral Philosophy* (Routledge, 2026).

Prof Ian Glenn continues his fieldwork with past and present Kruger Park wilderness trails' guides.

Prof Nyasha Mboti is working on the second volume of *Apartheid Studies: A Manifesto*, to be published in 2026.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Breshears, D., & Rabe, M. (2025). Contextualising family communication in South Africa. *Journal of Family Communication, 25*(4), 310-318.

Du Plessis, R., Breshears, D., & Naudé, L. (2025). Towards an Inclusive and Identity-Conscious Approach to Higher Education in South Africa. *IAFOR Journal of Education, 13*(3), 13-36.

Chapters in edited volumes

Chasi, C.T., 2025. Communication as Soul Food: Decolonising the Communication Space, in Mano, W., and Milton, V.C., T. (Eds.). *African Media and Communication Foundational Conversations*. London: Routledge, Chapter 17.

Mboti, N. 2025. Sensible AI: An Apartheid Studies Treatise on Artificial General Intelligence, in Tshuma, L., and Matsilele, T. (Eds.). *Critiquing Generative AI in Africa's Media Ecosystems*. London: Routledge, Chapter 3.

Conference Papers/Posters

Dlamini, D. "See me and hear me: Black South African Women using YouTube as a site of belonging and visibility", Sociology Seminar Series, Sol Plaatjie University, 21 October 2025.

Du Plessis, R. "Feedback is the Assessment: Ending Academic Ghosting in Large Classes", The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture (KAMC2025).

Glenn, I.E. "Swedish death cleaning and the archive", 2025 International Association for Media and History (IAMHIST) Conference, Cape Town.

Mampane, T. "Feminist villains in South African soap operas", International Association of Communication Researchers (IAMCR), Singapore, July 2025.

Mampane, T. "Theorising soap operas with and through feminism", African Feminisms (AFEMS), Nelson Mandela University, May 2025.

Mboti, N. "Apartheid Studies and Global Racisms", Global Relational Racisms Conference, University of Cambridge, 29 June to 3 July 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

Dr Elbie Christie, at the invitation of the Student Governance Office (SGO), facilitated a skills and induction training workshop for the newly elected 2025/26 Student Representative Council (South Campus), focusing on communication and formal writing.

Prof Nyasha Mboti facilitated a university-wide workshop for UFS postgraduate students on Science Communication and Academic Writing at the invitation of the Centre for Graduate Support.

Prof Nyasha Mboti examined two doctoral theses in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology.

Rentia du Plessis serves as an adjudicator for school debating competitions organised by the ATKV.

Dr Willemien Marais is the Executive Editor of *Communitas*, the Department of Communication Science's flagship DHET-accredited journal. *Communitas* is published annually and aims to promote a better understanding of communication-related issues in the global south, with a focus on South Africa and Southern Africa. The journal is included in the following lists/indices: Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection: Emerging Sources Citation Index, SciELO SA, DOAJ and the DHET list.

Prof Diana Breshears is an active member of the National Communication Association and the National Adoption Coalition of South Africa, as well as a peer reviewer for *Children and Society*, *Journal of Family Communication*, and *Journal of Family Issues*.

Dr Elbie Christie continues in her role as a member of the Centre for Cinema and Media Studies (CIMS) at Ghent University in Belgium.

Margaret Linström mentors and coaches journalists at Courant, a community newspaper in Bloemfontein.

Dr Elbie Christie serves on the Faculty of Humanities Engagement Scholarship Committee.

Prof Nyasha Mboti is a member of the Senate Task Team on Decolonisation, which is producing the University of the Free State's Decolonisation Framework, the Senate Engaged Scholarship Committee, and the Institutional Forum (IF).

National and International Collaboration

Prof Nyasha Mboti serves on the Steering Committee for MediArXiv, a scholar-led digital archive for media, film and communication studies, hosted by the Centre for Open Science.

Prof Diana Breshears collaborates with Prof Haley Horstman from the University of Missouri as part of her ARU project on Qwaqwa families.

Prof Ian Glenn is collaborating with Stanford University on an African digital mapping project.

Dr Elbie Christie is the Deputy President for the Ghent University Alumni Chapter South Africa, responsible for the continuous liaison with Ghent University and Ghent University Alumni in South Africa. She is also a member of the Stichting Neerlandia.

Postgraduate Students

Communication Science students in the Department's three Honours programmes were seconded, for the fifth year running, to departments in the Faculty of the Humanities as marketing communication student assistants. The success of this programme is shown by the fact that departments requested its continuation. The programme started in 2021 and continued in 2025. The programme is aimed at providing Honours students in the field of Communication Science with workplace experience while also providing administrative assistance to departments and units.

Staff (2025)

Prof Nyasha Mboti	Academic Head of Department
Dr Willemien Marais	Programme Director: Communication Professions

Academic and Lecturing Staff: Bloemfontein Campus

Dr Lucrezea de Lange	Lecturer
Duduzile Dlamini	Lecturer
Rentia du Plessis	Lecturer
Margaret Linström	Lecturer
Dr Elbie Christie	Lecturer
Boitumelo Mampane	Lecturer
Sinakho Mapekula	Academic Facilitator
Millicent Mavimbela	Lecturer
Dr Dalmé Mulder	Lecturer
Anathi Nyadu	Lecturer
Lesego Radebe-Nkosi	Lecturer
Clement Selepe	Academic Facilitator

Academic and lecturing staff: Qwaqwa Campus

Prof Diana Breshears	Subject Head: Qwaqwa Campus
Babalwa Sibango	Lecturer
Robson Nkosi	Lecturer

Administrative staff: Bloemfontein Campus

Nomvo Bam	Officer
Phumeza Madliwa	Senior Assistant Officer

Affiliated Staff

Prof I.E. Glenn	Research Fellow
Prof B. Mutsvairo	Research Fellow
Prof T. Tufte	Extraordinary Professor



Department of

Criminology

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Overview of 2025

In 2025, the Department of Criminology recorded meaningful staff achievements: one promotion to senior lecturer, two lecturers earning their doctoral degrees, three obtaining their master's degrees, and two submitted their dissertations for examination. Research initiatives expanded across various areas, including a partnership with the Department of Correctional Services to evaluate experiential learning outcomes for students and staff. Other projects encompassed the following:

- A comparative study on rehabilitation and reintegration practices between South Africa and the United Kingdom.
- Examinations of pathways and experiences of street-connected youth.
- Impacts of victim-offender mediation services.
- Legal pluralism in addressing gender-based violence (supported by Faculty funding).
- Surveys on student victimisation through an inter-university consortium.
- Safety and security concerns for off-campus student accommodation at three universities.
- Post-release stigma and reintegration challenges for formerly incarcerated women.
- Procedural justice experiences of deaf individuals in the criminal justice system.

Research output showed increasing growth, featuring twelve accredited journal articles and more than thirty local and international conference presentations. Inter-institutional empirical research was conducted in conjunction with four universities.

The Department maintained close links with the Criminological Society of Africa, with two lecturers serving on its council and three serving various positions in the editorial team of the accredited *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology and Victimology*.

In addition to maintaining a large undergraduate contingent, notable growth took place in postgraduate enrolment, with more than 20 master's and doctoral students and 14 Honours students benefiting from research-informed supervision and mentorship. Learner experiences were enhanced by the Criminological Student Association's interactive engagements, which included several information sessions and a career day.

Achievements

Dr Matthew Cronjé was promoted to senior lecturer. Dr Ashwill Phillips and Dr Jean-Paul Pophaim obtained their doctoral degrees. Lindie Coetzee (cum laude), Alex Giddy, and Tholoana Mathaha (cum laude) obtained their master's degrees. Kananelo Mohapi and Albie Gildenhuys submitted their master's dissertations for examination.

The recipients of the best student awards were as follows:

- First-year: A.C. Hlatshwayo
- Second-year: Y. Scheffer
- Third-year: B.B. Gushman
- Honours: C. Anthony

Teaching

The Department continued to offer a broad scope of criminological, victimological and criminal justice-related knowledge to over 1800 students. With a growing cohort of postgraduate students, undergraduate students benefited from additional learning support in the form of peer mentorship through the tutorial system, in addition to the research-informed teaching approach, implemented by the growing seniority and research activity of the lecturers.

The Department continued its collaboration with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) under their MOU to offer its postgraduate students an Experiential Learning Programme (ELP). Fourteen Criminology Honours students participated in the programme, which involved them voluntarily assisting with the assessment and profiling of correctional clients and communities, and observing the delivery of correctional programmes, both in the correctional environment and outside (for parolees). Students were also exposed to the day-to-day operations of DCS officials, providing opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge gained in class in a more practical setting.

The collaboration also opened an opportunity for Dr Cronjé to contribute to a position paper with the Department of Correctional Services on the "Use of Criminologists in the DCS Services" and assisted in identifying South African Criminologists to contribute to a round table discussion on the topic.

The reports from these engagements contributed to the creation of vacancies specifically for Criminologists in the DCS, which were advertised in December 2025.

Short Learning Programmes offered

Dr Cronjé commenced developing a short learning programme on Correctional Criminology, aimed at building specific areas of knowledge relevant to the correctional context: risk and intervention assessment; research skills; parole board report writing; knowledge of rehabilitation and reintegration; and the development, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions. Dr Phillips, in collaboration with Prof Theodore Petrus (Department of Anthropology), developed a short learning programme titled "Gang Subculture: Practical Intervention Strategies".

Research Projects

Drs Phillips and Cronjé commenced a research project with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to examine the outcomes of the experiential learning programme focused on offender risk and community profiling. The study explores the value, challenges and outcomes of the programme for both students and correctional officials. Ethical clearance has been obtained from the UFS General/Human Research Ethics Committee and DCS; data collection has been completed, and the research team has commenced data analysis and the write-up of the findings.

Dr Cronjé continued coordinating a research project with colleagues from the School of Criminal Justice at Arden University in the United Kingdom. The project, which aims to develop comparative studies on the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration interventions between the United Kingdom and South Africa, entered the final stages of data collection in 2025. The study aims to broaden the comparative scope of recidivism and desistance research and to share best practices in rehabilitation and reintegration. Dr Cronjé visited Arden University to further develop the collaborative research project, present a public lecture on the importance of inclusive and multivariate approaches to addressing recidivism in South Africa, co-lectured a class on career opportunities in Criminology, and contributed to a roundtable discussion on offender rehabilitation.

Jean-Paul Pophaim and Prof Steyn initiated a project aimed at understanding the pathways and lived experiences of street-connected youth in Mangaung, Free State. The project seeks to examine the social, familial, and structural factors that shape the experiences of youth who live and work on the streets. The planning phase has been completed, and the research protocol has been submitted to GHREC for ethical clearance. Once approved, the project will commence data collection through questionnaires completed by approximately 65 respondents. As part of ongoing efforts to network and collaborate with local organisations, Kidz Care Trust has agreed to support the initiative by facilitating participant access and providing debriefing services where needed.

Jean-Paul Pophaim and Prof Steyn collaborated with the Restorative Justice Centre to conduct a second round of interviews to assess the impact of the Centre's victim-offender mediation services. The 2025 phase built on the findings of an earlier technical report by exploring the participants' experiences, perceptions, and outcomes over time. The project seeks to generate deeper insight into the effectiveness of the mediation process and to identify areas for service improvement. Participation in the interview process increased substantially, and the comparative technical report will be submitted in 2026.

Dr Murhula commenced a research initiative entitled "Legal pluralism and gender-based violence in South Africa: Integrating traditional and contemporary laws in pursuit of justice for victims". The project secured funding from the Research Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities. The study aims to investigate the perception and integration of access to justice for women who are victims of gender-based violence within the pluralistic justice system. The project obtained ethical clearance in November, with empirical data collection scheduled to begin in February 2026.

The Criminology Consortium, under the stewardship of Dr Cronjé, is an inter-university project that aims to determine the experiences of undergraduate students regarding victimisation in relation to personal and property offences. The comparative nature of the study allows for the identification of correlations between students' biographic profiles (gender, socioeconomics, geography) and experiences of victimisation. The study aligns with sections of the 2022/2023 Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey, providing an opportunity for research of this nature to contribute to the current dearth of research on the victimisation experiences of South African students. A total of 1030 students have participated in the surveys, and several publications are underway that focus on rural/urban institutional comparisons and the gendered experiences of university students.

The Department is participating in the UFS Critical History Book Project through a discipline-specific

study tracing the establishment, evolution and intellectual development of Criminology at the University of the Free State from 1953 to 2026. The project is led by Dr Phillips, Dr Murhula, and Prof Steyn, and contributes to a broader institutional initiative that reflects on knowledge production within South African universities. Based on archival research, oral histories and scholarly literature, the study will result in a peer-reviewed, accredited scholarly output. Full ethical clearance has been granted by the UFS General/Human Research Ethics Committee, and a preliminary interview was conducted with a former Head of Department.

Lindie Coetzee's research project focuses on how formerly incarcerated women in South Africa navigate overlapping stigma as offenders, mothers, and citizens. While formal prison sentences end, punishment continues indefinitely through criminal records that block employment, housing, and social belonging. The study examines how women experience stigma in post-release life using Bourdieu's symbolic violence, Goffman's stigma theory, and Ubuntu philosophy to analyse how criminal records function as mechanisms of ongoing exclusion in post-apartheid South Africa. The study will centre women's voices while exploring survival strategies within structural constraints.

Kelebogile Boleu's research explores procedural justice for deaf people in the South African criminal justice system, from arrest to corrections. The study examines how deaf people experience procedural justice within South Africa's criminal justice system, identifies barriers to fair participation, particularly communication challenges, and investigates how these barriers affect perceptions of voice, respect, and neutrality. Participants will include deaf individuals involved at various stages of the justice system, police officers, legal practitioners, correctional officials, and South African Sign Language interpreters. Using a qualitative design grounded in the social model of disability, the study will involve semi-structured interviews and apply inductive thematic analysis to understand lived experiences and assess whether current legal frameworks and accommodations support fair and meaningful participation for deaf persons.

Prof Steyn and Dr Phillips continued their research on the safety and security of students who rent off-campus accommodation, particularly in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the Bloemfontein Campus. The research objectives included the security measures at these accommodations, students' feelings of safety, victimisation, and students' risk-taking behaviour. A total of 315 students participated in the survey, and the data analysis included gender differences and a correlation analysis to determine associations among the survey scales.

Research Outputs

Articles (accredited)

Bernardi, D.A., & Steyn, F. 2025. Intimate partner violence: Impact of a faith-based biopsychosocio-spiritual approach to intervention. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 44(1):44-69.

Boleu, K. 2025. The value of Criminologists in the South African criminal justice system: Court work. *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, 38(1):63-80.

Cronjé, M. 2025. A qualitative exploration of factors associated with recidivism in South Africa. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 83(1):39.

Gwambe, S., Jordaan, J., & Cronjé, M. 2025. Perceived social support, aggression, age, and repeat offending as predictors of coping amongst male maximum-security offenders. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice*, 1-24.

Jordaan, J., & Cronjé, M. 2025. Psychometric properties of the Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI) in a South African male incarcerated offender sample. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 25(4):449-470.

Mahlako, G.M., Jordaan, J., & Cronjé, M. 2025. In healing from perpetrator trauma: The experiences of juvenile offenders incarcerated for violent offences in South Africa. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice*, 1-25.

Parsons, S., Steyn, F., & Sadiki, L. 2025. South-African students' experiences of and reactions to online victimisation: A gender analysis. *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, *38*(3):47-62.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. Trajectories into gang membership: Exploring risk exposure, protective factors and the factors motivating involvement in devil-worshipping gangs. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 61(3):593-618.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. Gangs, diabolatry and witchcraft: Towards a contemporary typology of occult-gangs. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 11(1):1-23.

Pophaim, J.P. 2025. Taking stock of South African responses to homelessness: Advocating for victim-inclusive and protective policy reform. *Social Sciences*, 14(10):611.

Sadiki, L., & Steyn, F. 2025. Silenced and marginalised: Navigating gender bias in post-apartheid South African academia. *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development*, 14(2):53-75.

Yamini, S., Nair, V.V., & Peacock, R. 2025. Exploring the role of creative arts therapy in reducing emotional victimization and improving mental health and wellbeing among youth in higher education institutions: A systematic review. *Youth Voice Journal*, (online):2056-2969.

Articles (non-accredited)

Peacock, R. 2025. Green victimology and restorative justice as an emancipatory framework. *Revista de Victimología/Journal of Victimology*, 20:9-24.

Chapters in edited volumes

Peacock, R. 2025. Criminologia verde y justicia restaurative como un marco emancipador, in Varona, G. (ed.) *Criminologia verde: Alternativas a la impunidad y al punitivismo ante los danos bio-socio-ecologicos* (pp. 157-168). Madrid: Dykinson.

Technical report

Mathaha, T., Pophaim, J.P., & Phillips, A.R. 2025. *Expungement of criminal records: Applications and implications for young offenders*. Report prepared for the UFS Law Clinic.

Conference Papers

Boleu, K. 2025. *Identity and belonging as criminogenic risk factors for d/Deaf children: Parental concerns and fears*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Boleu, K. 2025. *Intersecting roles: Parental advocacy and educational barriers for deaf children in South Africa*. Paper presented at the 10th World Disability & Rehabilitation Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 28-29 August.

Coetzee, L. *Beyond the sentence: Spiritual resilience, stigma, and the intergenerational impact of women's incarceration in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Social Work and Criminology Research Symposium, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 August.

Coetzee, L. *Stigma and social reintegration: Narratives of formerly incarcerated women*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Cronjé, M. 2025. *Exploring offending behaviour trajectories: Insights from a South African recidivist sample*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Bengaluru, India, online, 29-30 March.

Cronjé, M. *Deviant cognitions: Analysing cognitive-behavioural factors associated with recidivism*. Paper presented at the 25th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, Athens, Greece, 3-6 September.

Giddy, A. *From incarceration to integration: Parolees' perceptions of the accessibility and implementation of post-release support services in Mangaung, Free State*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Gildenhuys, A. *Corruption, capacity and enforcement: How DPCI Investigators navigate the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2020-2030)*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Jordaan, J., & Cronjé, M. *Coping during incarceration: A confirmatory and bifactor analysis of the Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI) in a South African Correctional Context*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Klopper, H., & Steyn, F. 2025. *Violence experienced, violence expressed: A comparison of women behind bars and a matched community sample*. Paper presented at the Social Work & Criminology Research Symposium, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 August.

Mahlako, G.M., Jordaan, J., & Cronjé, M. 2025. *Perpetrator trauma in offenders: The experiences of juvenile offenders incarcerated for violent offences in South Africa*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Bengaluru, India, online, 29-30 March.

Mathaha, T. *Autopsies in criminal investigations: The utility and personal experiences of investigators*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Mohapi, K. *Factors associated with canine attacks: Perspectives from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in South Africa*. Paper presented at the CRIMSA International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Murhula, P.B.B. 2025. *Criminal justice reforms: Perspectives from Africa*. Paper presented at the African Perspectives on Criminal Justice Reforms Panel Discussion, Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya, online, 31 January.

Murhula, P.B.B. 2025. *Integrating traditional and contemporary laws in finding justice for victims of gender-based violence in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Social Work & Criminology Research Symposium, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 August.

Murhula, P.B.B. 2025. *Addressing colonial legacies: A decolonial approach for peace and security in the Great Lakes region of Africa*. Paper presented at the Intersectionality for Sustainable Impact and Inclusion in Africa, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, 27-28 August.

Murhula, P.B.B. 2025. *Restorative justice and land reform policy in South Africa*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Electronic Conference on Land, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, online, 4-5 September.

Murhula, P.B.B. 2025. *Approaches, frameworks and guidelines on the response to high rates of recidivism amongst parolees*. Paper presented at the National Summit on the Parole Review System, Kgoši Mampuru II Correctional Centre, Pretoria, South Africa, 22-23 September.

Peacock, R. 2025. *Decolonising Criminology: Reimagining justice and knowledge production*. Keynote at the 2025 World Criminology Conference of the International Society for Criminology, Delhi, India, 19-22 June.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *'Gangland pathways': An exploration of risk factors for youth gang membership and the protective factors promoting rehabilitation*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences (ICLSS 2025), International Institute of Justice and Police Sciences, Bengaluru, India, online, 29-30 March.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *Exploring the influence of gang membership and programme responses to rehabilitation in a sample of gang members, non-gang-affiliated offenders and service providers*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences (ICLSS 2025), International Institute of Justice and Police Sciences, Bengaluru, India, online, 29-30 March.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *Gangs, devil worship and African witchcraft: Toward the development of a contemporary typology for occult-gangs*. Paper presented at the 25th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, Athens, Greece, 3-6 September.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *From risk to resilience: Understanding the criminogenic risk, protective factors and occult dimension of youth gang subculture in the Free State province*. Paper presented at the 2025 ASASWEI International Conference on Advancing Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice, Peace Building, and Sustainable Development through Teaching, Research and Practice, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 10-12 September.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *Navigating the gangland: An exploration of risk, gang impact, programme responses and barriers to effective reintegration*. Paper presented at the 2025 CRIMSA Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel & Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Phillips, A.R. 2025. *Blood, rituals and power: Deconstructing the social anatomy of occult-inspired gangs in the Free State province*. Paper presented at the 2025 CRIMSA Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel & Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Pophaim, J.P. 2025. *A critical review of South African policy responses to homelessness: Advocating for victim protection and inclusivity*, International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Bengaluru, India, online, 29-30 March.

Pophaim, J.P. *A victim-inclusive policy framework for people experiencing homelessness: Outcomes of a consultative stakeholder engagement*. Paper presented at the 2025 ASASWEI International Conference on Advancing Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice, Peace Building, and Sustainable Development through Teaching, Research and Practice, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 10-12 September.

Pophaim, J.P. *Unshackling the chains of adversity: Examining the trends of homelessness, victimisation and the impact of persistent systemic barriers*. Paper presented at the 25th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, Athens, Greece, 3-6 September.

Pophaim, J.P. *Masked by marginality: Intersections of adversity, victimisation and crime in the lives of people experiencing homelessness*. Paper presented at the Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA) International Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel and Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Pophaim, J.P. *Stacked marginality: An exploration of the multiple axes of disadvantage confronting women experiencing homelessness*. Paper presented at the Social Work & Criminology Research Symposium, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 August.

Pophaim, J.P. 2025. Life on the margins: The multi-layered realities of people experiencing homelessness in South Africa. The Center for Antiracist Scholarship, Advocacy, and Action (CASAA) Global Conversations Series, online, 30 October.

Steyn, F., & Phillips, A.R. 2025 *The safety and security of students who rent off-campus accommodation in Bloemfontein, Free State province*. Paper presented at the 2025 CRIMSA Biennial Conference, Lagoon Beach Hotel & Spa, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August.

Steyn, F. 2025 *Hangry behind bars: Female offenders' experiences with formal foodways in a South African prison*. Paper presented at the 25th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, Athens, Greece, 3-6 September.

Conference Proceedings

Murhula, P.B.B. *Restorative justice and land reform policy in South Africa*. In proceedings of the 2nd International Electronic Conference on Land, 4-5 September 2025, MDPI: Basel, Switzerland.

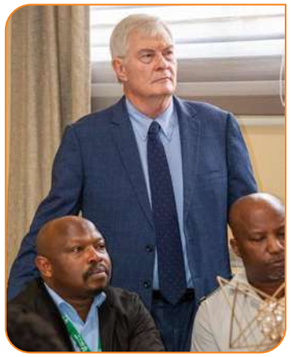
At the 2025 CRIMSA Biennial International Conference in Cape Town, Albie Gildenhuys won the award for the best presentation by an emerging researcher, and Alex Giddy won the runner-up prize in the same category.



Prof Steyn, Giddy and Gildenhuys at the CRIMSA conference.



Prof Nontembeko Bila, Head of the Department of Social Work & Criminology, and Prof Steyn in conversation at the Research Symposium, University of Pretoria.



Dr Murhula, Dr Pieter Groenewald (Minister of Correctional Services), and Justice Sihlango (Department of Correctional Services) at the National Summit on the Parole Review System.

Engaged Scholarship

The Department maintained a strong engagement with the Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA), with all academic staff holding active membership. Dr Phillips and Dr Cronjé served as elected members of the CRIMSA Council, and Dr Cronjé also served on the CRIMSA Executive Committee as Treasurer. In addition, the Department continued to play a key leadership role in *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, CRIMSA's accredited scholarly journal. Prof Steyn served as Editor-in-Chief, Dr Phillips as Senior Editor, and Jean-Paul Pophaim as Assistant Editor. In addition, Jean-Paul Pophaim became an editor of the *International Journal on Homelessness*.

Dr Cronjé established a working relationship with the Department of Geography to include GIS expertise as part of the collaborative agreement to provide experiential learning and research opportunities for colleagues and students with Khulisa Social Solutions. This relationship will enable the use of GIS technology to assist Khulisa in developing community resource maps to identify community-based challenges and strengths, thereby enabling sustainable interventions and increasing community capacity for these interventions. The systems will also be used to monitor and evaluate interventions, providing evidence-based support for further resource allocation and exploration.

Kelebogile Boleu co-founded the HEARTS project in collaboration with the Department of SASL and Deaf Studies, and the UFS Library Services. The programme supports and encourages reading skills among deaf learners and improves SASL acquisition among parents. In the project's first year, 2025, eight children benefited and showed improved reading and overall academic performance at the end of the 2025 school year. Both parents and children participated in the Deaf awareness march organised by UFS and CUT in September, during Deaf awareness month, encouraging self-advocacy among children and positive family engagement.

On the international Human Rights and Transitional Justice research line hosted by KU Leuven, Prof Peacock participated in seminars on forced disappearances in post-transitional justice contexts and transitional justice in Angola. He also served as an adjudicator for postgraduate and sabbatical bursaries of the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, and he became a member of the Justice and Governance research line at the Institute of the Sociology of Law in the Basque Country. Prof Peacock presented a master's class on the topic, "The Politics of Victimisation", at the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security of Maribor University in Slovenia. He further participated as a member of the roster of African Transitional Justice experts in an African Union and CSVR Thematic Policy Brief, sharing strategies for advancing justice and accountability and integrating African traditional justice mechanisms into transitional justice processes on the continent. He served as a member of the executive and scientific committees of the 2025 World Conference on Criminology of the International Society for Criminology, held in Delhi, 9-22 June. Prof Peacock also served as a board member of Just Detention International and as an honorary research fellow at the Jindal Behavioural Institute, O.P. Jindal Global University of Eminence, India. In addition, he served on the editorial boards of *Temida*, *Victimology and Victim Justice*, *Ethnicity and Criminal Justice*, *Criminologia e Vittimologia, Mediarres, and Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology and Victimology*, as well as serving as a senior editor of *Global Advances in Victimology and Psychological Studies*. Prof Peacock participated in Living Classrooms for Ecological and Animal Restorative Justice in Action hosted by the Basque Institute of Criminology, Donostia/San Sebastian, 28-29 April.

Following completion of his doctoral research, Dr Phillips was invited to several radio and television engagements:

- Smile 90.4fm regarding the government's new anti-gang plan for the Western Cape. The Honest Truth, 10 November.
- eNCA regarding the mass shootings and the suspected links to the drug trade in South Africa, 8 November.
- eNCA regarding the mass shooting and suspected gang links in Reiger Park, as well as SAPS responses to gang-related crime and violence, 3 November.
- eNCA regarding suspected gang shooting in Westbury, Johannesburg, 22 October.
- SABC News regarding gang violence in Westbury, Johannesburg. Westbury: What is the attraction for teenagers to get involved in gangs, 21 October.
- Newsroom Africa regarding organised crime, syndicates, contract killings and gangs, 29 July.
- eNCA regarding occult gangs, the factors that perpetuate youth involvement and potential reduction strategies, 23 July.
- Power 98.7fm regarding devil worship, muti and murder. Occult gangs in South Africa, The Power Perspective, 22 July.
- CapeTalk regarding the characteristics and dynamics within occult gangs. Murder by muti: Unpacking SA's occult underworld, CapeTalk, Afternoon Drive, 21 July.
- SAfm Radio regarding the rise in occult gangs, practical reduction measures and responses from law enforcement, 20 July.

- SAfm Radio regarding the dynamics of occult gang involvement in the Free State Province. Devil worship, muti and murder, The Full Circle, 16 July.
- Smile 90.4fm regarding the occult gang structure, beliefs and the spiritual elements related to gang ideology and practices. The Honest Truth, 15 July.
- Debrief Network regarding the surge in occult gangs across South Africa. Deadly Satan-worshipping gangs are on the rise, 15 July.
- CapeTalk regarding South Africa's occult gang culture. Inside South Africa's occult gang culture, Early Breakfast Talk, 15 July.

Dr Murhula was invited to serve on the Review Board for MDPI journals *Humanities, Land, and Social Sciences*. Dr Phillips and Prof Steyn served on the Free State Provincial Child Justice Forum, and Lindie Coetzee served on the Free State Provincial Task Team on Trafficked Persons and the Free State Provincial Forum on Sexual Offences. Dr Phillips was an invited panellist on Men, Masculinities and Gangs, hosted by the Commission for Gender Equality, 18 September. Dr Murhula, Dr Phillips, and Jean-Paul Pophaim served as members of the Scientific Abstract Review Committee for the ASASWEI International Conference on Advancing Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice, Peace Building, and Sustainable Development through Teaching, Research and Practice. Drs Cronjé and Phillips served on the Conference Organising Committee of the Criminological Society of Africa.

National and International Collaboration

Through his continued involvement in the Centre for Anti-Racist Scholarship, Advocacy and Action (CASAA), Dr Cronjé, together with Prof Favian Martín of Arcadia University, USA, established the CASAA Global Conversations Series. This monthly cross-continental initiative is designed to engage with global discourse on racism and marginalisation and to promote social justice, as well as equity across diverse cultural contexts.

The Criminology Consortium, under the Department's stewardship, collaborates with the University of Pretoria, the University of Venda, and the University of Fort Hare on research into students' fear of crime and victimisation. In a similar vein, the Department partnered with the University of Cape Town and the University of Pretoria in rolling out the off-campus safety and security project. In 2025, the Department served as coordinator for the BSocSci Academic Advisory Board.

Postgraduate Students

Castlemaine, M. PhD. Towards a criminological framework for offender-informed violence reduction in South African correctional centres. Supervisor: Prof Steyn; co-supervisor: Dr Phillips.

Diale, P. MSocSci. An exploration of the reciprocal nature of co-operation between probation officers and residential social workers with specific reference to the effectiveness of Secure Care Centre services. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Gildenhuys, A. MSocSci. Navigating the nexus of law and society: A socio-legal exploration of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2020-2030) through the lens of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation. Supervisor: Dr Cronjé; co-supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim.

Gunguluza, L. MSocSci. Male experiences of intimate partner violence in Mangaung Metropolitan, South Africa. Supervisor: Kelebogile Boleu; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Hayman, C. MSocSci. 'Out in the inside': The victimisation vulnerability of LGBTQI+ individuals in places of detention. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Jonker, G. PhD. Functional imperatives for the system of intermediary services for child witnesses in South African criminal courts. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Kolotla, L. MSocSci. Perspectives on decriminalisation of commercial sex workers in Matjhabeng, Free State. Supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Leburu, K. MSocSci. University employees' perceptions of crime and victimisation: A comparative study in rural and urban South African universities. Supervisor: Dr Cronjé; co-supervisor: Alex Giddy.

Marityi, S.K. MA. Examining the impact of imposing protection fees on small businesses in Alice Town, Eastern Cape. Supervisor: Dr Murhula; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Mathaha, T. MA. Autopsies in criminal investigations: Utility and personal experiences of investigators in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Supervisor: Dr Cronjé; co-supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim.

Mene, A. MSocSci. Hate crime: An exploration of the victimisation of LGBTQIA+ students in South Africa. Supervisor: Lindie Coetzee; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Mohapi, K. MSocSci. Factors associated with canine attacks: Perspectives from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in South Africa. Supervisor: Dr Cronjé; co-supervisor: Dr Phillips.

Molebatsi, N. MSocSci. Girls' affiliation with gangs in the Free State and Northern Cape: Exploring the risks, roles, consequences and protective factors. Supervisor: Dr Phillips; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Mokae, B. MSocSci. Adult female rape survivor experiences of post-incident assistance and empowerment. A critical analysis of rape survivors' experiences of secondary victimisation. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Mosia, M. MSocSci. Voices behind bars: Exploring childhood risk factors as pathways to female offending behaviour. Supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Mtawarira, P. MSocSci. Exploring the dynamics of Blesser-Blessee relationships among university students in Bloemfontein, Free State. Supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim.

Mtetandaba, H. MSocSci. The phenomenon of female incarceration within a transitional justice framework. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Nathane, B.K.K. Pathways to victim-offender interchangeability among adult male sex offenders. Supervisor: Dr Phillips; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Ncube, D.T. MSocSci. Towards a sustainable future in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality: An exploration of environmental harm within a green victimological framework. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Ngwane, L. PhD. A criminological analysis of the modern forms of extortions: A case study of gang protection fees in Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Supervisor: Dr Murhula; co-supervisor: Dr Phillips.

Nthatisi, R. MSocSci. Moral development and involvement in criminal activities among adolescents. Supervisor: Jean-Paul Pophaim; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Obotseng, T.K. MA. The victimisation vulnerability of crime news reporters. Supervisor: Prof Peacock.

Pophaim, J.P. PhD. An analysis and reframing of South African policies in response to homelessness: Towards an evidence-based victim-inclusive policy framework. Supervisor: Prof Steyn; co-supervisor: Dr Cronjé.

Qhosha, A. MA. An empirical study of male victims of gender-based violence perpetrated by females in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Supervisor: Dr Murhula; co-supervisor: Prof Steyn.

Other Activities

Kelebogile Boleu was elected as Chairperson and Jean-Paul Pophaim as Vice-Chair of the Kidz Care Trust governing board. Kelebogile Boleu was awarded best session presentation at the 10th World Disability and Rehabilitation Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. She was appointed as Country Coordinator for the 2026 World Disability and Rehabilitation Conference. Prof Peacock served as Chair of three panel sessions of the 2025 Criminology World Conference in Delhi, India. Dr Phillips and Kelebogile Boleu participated in the Researcher Excellence Accelerator Programme (REAP), and Dr Phillips received the award for the top performer in the programme. Kelebogile Boleu participated in the week-long "Transforming Your Career Trajectory" programme, and she and Lindie Coetzee were accepted into the UFS Staff Doctoral Programme. Dr Cronjé participated in the Emerging Scholars Accelerator Programme. Dr Murhula became a member of the Affiliation to the Africa Peace and Development Network/ Mtandao wa Amani na Maendeleo Afrika (MAMA).

The Criminology Student Association (CSA) engaged in several activities throughout the year. Two "class takeovers" occurred where experts shared their knowledge and experience: 1) Constable Ross from the Anti-Gang Unit of the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Western Cape and Dr Phillips from the Department; and 2) Lt-Col Khumalo, Provincial Commander of the SAPS Investigative Psychology Unit in the Free State Province.

The CSA Career Day, held on 8 August, was a cornerstone event aimed at preparing students for future professional pathways. Representatives from the Department of Criminology, Faculty of the Humanities (Scholarship of Engagement), SAPS, the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), the Thuthuzela Care Centre, and UFS Career Services shared valuable insights into career opportunities, skills development, and professional conduct. UFS Protection Services ran a competition where students had to redefine and rename the term "gender-based violence" to engage a conversation on the various contexts of such violence; three students won vouchers from Van Schaik. The event was made possible through logistical and financial support of Protection Services, reinforcing a shared commitment to student development and campus safety. The CSA also hosted a documentary on crime and discussed how Criminology is valuable in investigation, and how the behaviours of the perpetrators in the documentary align with the characteristics highlighted by various criminological theories. This was a practical experience with class material, and senior students were able to share knowledge. The CSA also held its annual welcoming picnic, and new awards were announced to celebrate participation, attendance, and exceptional contributions from members who volunteer their time and resources to make the Association's activities successful.



Const. Ross, Zethu Vanda, David Ncube, Sgt Mkhuzangwe, Dr Phillips and Kelebogile Boleu.



Back: Nathi Phohleli, Tholoana Mathaha, Hlubi Mtethandaba, Zethu Vanda, David Ncube. Front: Kagiso Makwati, Zandisile Mbele.

Staff (2025)

Permanent

L Coetzee	Junior Lecturer
KP Boleu	Lecturer
AM Giddy	Learning Facilitator
Dr BB Murhula	Senior Lecturer
Dr AR Phillips	Lecturer
JP Pophaim	Lecturer
Dr M Cronjé	Senior Lecturer & Programme Director
Prof R Peacock	Professor
Prof F Steyn	Academic Head of Department

Contract

A Gildenhuys	Teaching Assistant
L Mahalo	Lecturer
T Mathaha	Research Assistant
K Mohapi	Teaching Assistant

Support Staff

M Wouda	Administrative Officer



Department of

Drama and Theatre Arts

Academic Head of Department

Anthea van Jaarsveld

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Overview of 2025

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts experienced a year of sustained excellence, consolidation, and strategic expansion in 2025. Across teaching, research, creative production, and engaged scholarship, the Department reaffirmed its position as a nationally influential and internationally connected centre for theatre education, practice-led research, and socially responsive performance-making within South Africa's higher education landscape.

Throughout the year, the Department demonstrated a strong alignment between curriculum, creative output, and research imperatives. Teaching and learning were characterised by an integrated, practice-led pedagogical model in which performance, directing, design, and applied theatre functioned as both instructional methodologies and research sites. Students at all levels (undergraduate, Honours, and postgraduate) were actively embedded within professional production environments, festival platforms, interdisciplinary collaborations, and community-facing projects. This ensured that learning extended beyond the classroom into lived, public, and professional contexts, preparing graduates for the complexities of contemporary cultural practice.

Creative output in 2025 functioned as a central driver of the Department's academic and artistic identity. Accredited productions, festival works, and touring performances operated simultaneously as research outputs, pedagogical laboratories, and public engagements. These works addressed a wide spectrum of themes, including identity, memory, justice, ritual, childhood spectatorship, ethics, and social transformation, reflecting the Department's commitment to theatre as a critical and dialogic art form. The Department's strong presence at the Vrystaat Arts Festival and the National Arts Festival further affirmed its role in shaping national theatrical discourse and in mentoring emerging artists within professional ecosystems.

The Department's research profile was significantly strengthened through participation in international conferences, scholarly presentations, and academic appointments. Staff members contributed to global debates in Theatre for Young Audiences, scenography, ritual performance, and curriculum development, positioning the Department as an active participant in international research networks. These engagements translated into tangible outcomes, including external advisory roles, curriculum moderation appointments, and the establishment of new international partnerships, notably with institutions in North America, the Middle East, and West Africa.

Community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration remained integral to the Department's mission. Through sustained initiatives in rural community engagement, health-sector simulation, psychology training, and youth-centred theatre, the Department continued to demonstrate the relevance of performance methodologies within broader social, educational, and civic contexts. These projects reinforced the Department's commitment to socially responsive pedagogy, decolonially attentive practice, and knowledge production that extends beyond traditional academic boundaries.

Student achievement in 2025 reflected the effectiveness of this integrated model. Students and alumni received national awards, professional recognition, and leadership opportunities across theatre, film, and community arts sectors. Postgraduate completions and Honours directing projects further evidenced a strong culture of mentorship, research-informed practice, and academic progression within the Department.

Taken together, 2025 represents a year in which the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts consolidated its strengths while expanding its reach. Through the deliberate integration of teaching, research, creative practice, and engagement, the Department continues to function as a dynamic site of artistic innovation, scholarly enquiry, and sectoral leadership, contributing meaningfully to the cultural life of South Africa and to international conversations in theatre and performance studies.

Achievements

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts marked 2025 as a year of exceptional creative distinction, national recognition, and pedagogical impact. Across major arts festivals, national media platforms, and international collaborations, staff members, students, alumni, and affiliated artists achieved significant Honours, underscoring the Department's sustained contribution to South Africa's theatrical and cultural landscape. Collectively, these achievements reflect not only individual excellence but also the Department's integrated model of mentorship, practice-led research, and community-responsive theatre-making.

The year commenced with national acclaim at the **kykNET Fiësta Awards**, reinforcing the Free State's position as a vital cultural hub within South Africa. Alumnus and former lecturer **Gerben Kamper** received the award for *Best Performance in a Supporting Role* for *Ons wag vir Godot*, while lecturer **Dion van Niekerk** was named *Best Director* for the same production. The ensemble, comprising lecturer **Chris Vorster**, alumnus **Peter Taljaard**, and alumnus **Charl Henning**, was nominated for *Best Ensemble*, highlighting the collaborative strength of the production. Alumna **Katelynne Matthews** was nominated for *Best Emerging Artist* for her performance in *Khanya and Her Golden Dream*.



Significant recognition followed at the **Vrystaat Arts Festival's Vryskitters Awards**, where members of the Department and its extended creative community received multiple top Honours. Senior lecturer **Dr Chris Vorster** received awards for *Best Performer* and *Best Set Design* for *Gebou soos Stefi Graff*. This visually striking and emotionally resonant production was also nominated for *Best Production*. The work was widely recognised for its conceptual clarity and layered aesthetic language. Emerging artist and third-year student **Norman Doubell** was named *Best Upcoming Artist* for his compelling performance in *Harte-Bliksems*, a production directed by lecturer **DeBeer Cloete** that received three further nominations: *Best Production*, *Best Marketing* and *Best Upcoming Artist* (Honours student **Anke Meyer-Auld**). Further recognition of the Department's technical excellence came from **Paquot,** who received the *Best Technical* award, reflecting the Department's reputation for high-level technical artistry and design innovation. Honours student **Jane Mpholo** was awarded *Best South African Short Film* for *Echoes of the Land*, a lyrical cinematic work exploring memory, identity, and land through a poetic visual language. Her achievement highlights the Department's interdisciplinary reach across theatre, film, and visual media. Additional nominations further underscored the breadth of creative excellence associated with the Department, including **Gert Hay's** nomination for *Best Director* for *Perspectives on Perspectives of Love*, which also received nominations for *Best Set Design* and *Best Costume Design*. Academic Head of Department, Prof Anthea van Jaarsveld, noted the remarkable scope of work showcased by students and alumni during the festival, with productions spanning diverse genres, audiences, and aesthetic registers. Notable works included *The Semblance of Permanence*, *Bielie*, *Harte-Bliksems*, *Verbode Gedagtes in Stereo*, and *Spookstories van C.J. Langenhoven*, alongside a strong suite of Theatre for Young Audiences productions such as *Willemien en Meraaitjie en Willie Wragtig die Troeteldrakie*, *Rooikappie en die Drie Varkies*, *Dimpho and the Catfish*, *Die Moedige Avonture van Prinses Petronella*, and *Die Verlore Ballerina*. Together, these works demonstrate the Department's commitment to artistic plurality, audience development, and culturally responsive storytelling.



The Department also enhanced its international research profile through the contribution of Dr **Annebelle Smit**, who was invited to present at the Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (TYA/USA) 2025 Festival and Conference in Washington, DC (6-8 May 2025). As the largest Theatre for Young Audiences gathering in North America, the conference provides a key platform for global scholarly exchange. Dr Smit presented a peer-reviewed paper titled *"Empowering Rural Childhoods: Co-Production Models and Nontraditional Spaces in South African Theatre for Young Audiences," which contributed* to the conference's academic Working Group focused on bridging research and professional practice. Her participation positioned the Department as an active contributor to international discourse on Theatre for Young Audiences, applied theatre, and socially responsive performance research.

The Department's international profile was further strengthened through the participation of lecturer **Dion van Niekerk** at *World Stage Design 2025 (WSD25)* and *Scenofest*, hosted at the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (SPAA) in the United Arab Emirates. Van Niekerk was invited to present a research paper, entitled *"Reflecting on the Fluidity of Visual Language: Ons wag vir Godot,"* at the Vrystaat Arts Festival as part of the WSD'25 Research Symposium, themed *"Scenographic Heritage, Design Futures, and Sustainability."* The presentation was well received and led directly to his invitation to serve as an external advisor for SPAA's MFA programmes in Directing and Scenography.

WORLD STAGE DESIGN
SHARJAH 2025

In addition, Van Niekerk was appointed as an International Curriculum Moderator for SPAA's MFA programmes across multiple performing arts disciplines, including Directing, Acting, Scenography, Musical Theatre, Choreography, and Production Management. This three-year appointment includes annual on-site engagement and positions the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts as an active contributor to postgraduate curriculum development and quality assurance within an international conservatoire context.

In September 2025, Dr **Obakeng Kgwasi**, Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Arts (UFS), participated in the international *Confluences* seminar hosted by the University of Cape Town, where he presented a peer-reviewed paper titled *South African Ritual Dance Theatre Progression and Chronicle in Contemporary Time: Vincent Mantsoe as a Case Study*. The paper's abstract was subsequently published by the University of Cape Town, affirming its scholarly contribution to contemporary South African performance discourse. In October 2025, Dr Kgwasi further contributed to national arts development through his participation in *Dance Pages* at Maibuye Dance Academy, serving as a panel member in academic discussions on dance and movement practice. His involvement foregrounded critical issues relating to performance devising, arts policy, and professional preparation, reinforcing the Department's engagement with practitioner-led knowledge production and community-based performance networks.



Further national recognition came through the selection of **Rondo Mpiti-Spies** (junior lecturer) and **Oliver Sikhathuli Bonga** (alumnus and former lecturer) as *Sunday World's Unsung Heroes in Sports, Arts and Culture*. This acknowledgement celebrates artists whose contributions extend beyond the stage into cultural leadership and community empowerment. Mpiti-Spies' impact was further recognised at the **National Arts Festival**, where she received a *Standing Ovation Award* for her one-(wo)man show *So Over the Rainbow*, directed by **Dion van Niekerk**. The production was widely commended for its emotional intensity, incisive social commentary, and fearless narrative voice.

In October 2025, **Rondo Mpiti-Spies** represented the Department at the University of Ghana, Legon, through participation in the Broadway Arts Festival (now rebranded as the *Heritage Theatre Arts Festival*). Her engagement included adjudicating festival productions within the School of Performing Arts, serving as a panellist in academic discourse sessions, and contributing to the official launch of the festival's rebrand. In recognition of her scholarly and professional contributions, she received a formal award and was appointed to the festival's board. This engagement established formal collaborative pathways between the Department and the University of Ghana, with identified prospects for joint festivals, staff and student exchanges, and collaborative research and performance initiatives.

Student excellence was further affirmed at the **National Arts Festival** through the achievement of the Department's second-year cohort, whose production *Umnqophiso: The Covenant* received a *Silver Standing Ovation Award*. The **Standard Bank Ovation Awards** recognise innovation and excellence on the Festival Fringe. They are widely regarded as indicators of work of national significance. Prof van Jaarsveld praised the cohort for independently conceptualising, developing, and executing the production, demonstrating both artistic maturity and collective responsibility.



The Department also celebrates the recognition of **Jane Mpholo-Mehlape**, Honours student specialising in Theatre for Young Audiences and Directing, who received the top honour, **UFS Student of the Year,** at the **Executive Director: Student Affairs (EDSA) Prestige Awards**. A multi-award-winning theatre-maker, filmmaker, and social entrepreneur, Mpholo-Mehlape has distinguished herself through arts-based initiatives that confront social issues, generate employment, and mentor young people. Her work exemplifies the Department's commitment to theatre as a vehicle for leadership, transformation, and community engagement beyond conventional performance contexts.

Taken together, these achievements affirm the Department's sustained excellence across performance, direction, technical design, and ensemble practice, and reflect the enduring professional impact of its staff, students, and graduates within the national and international cultural sector.

Teaching

In 2025, the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts sustained a rigorous, practice-led teaching framework that integrates theoretical enquiry, embodied learning, and socially responsive pedagogy across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Teaching within the Department is underpinned by an ethos of *learning-through-making*, where performance, design, directing, and applied theatre operate simultaneously as pedagogical tools, research methodologies, and modes of civic engagement. This approach ensures that graduates are not only technically proficient but critically literate, ethically grounded, and professionally adaptable within South Africa's evolving cultural landscape.

The Department's curriculum continues to be structured around a progressive scaffold that moves students from foundational skills acquisition to advanced conceptual and independent creative practice. At the undergraduate level, teaching foregrounds ensemble-based learning, critical reflection, and embodied knowledge, enabling students to engage with theatre as both an artistic and a socio-political practice. Studio-based modules are complemented by theory-driven courses that contextualise performance within historical, philosophical, and contemporary frameworks, ensuring intellectual depth alongside practical competence.

At Honours level, the curriculum prioritises research-informed practice, authorship, and leadership. Students are required to conceptualise and realise directing and performance projects that function as capstone learning experiences, integrating dramaturgical analysis, rehearsal methodologies, and reflective scholarship. The successful completion of directing projects by Honours students Jane Mpholo-Mehlape and Anya Rust in 2025 exemplifies the Department's emphasis on independent creative enquiry supported by structured academic mentorship.

Teaching within the Department is deeply entangled with practice-led research and accredited creative outputs. Major departmental productions staged throughout the year functioned as pedagogical laboratories, providing students with sustained exposure to professional rehearsal processes, collaborative authorship, and public presentation. Students participated across all levels of production (performance, directing assistance, stage management, design, and technical execution), ensuring holistic training aligned with industry standards.

Productions such as *The Maker*, *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, *To Dream Again*, *Twelve Angry Jurors*, and *Alice in Wonderland* were embedded within teaching cycles, enabling students to engage with diverse theatrical forms, including Theatre for Young Audiences, experimental performance, adaptation studies, political theatre, and large-scale spectacle. These projects allowed staff to integrate contemporary research questions directly into teaching practice, reinforcing the Department's identity as a site of scholarly performance-making.

In line with institutional transformation priorities, the Department continues to advance decolonially attentive teaching practices that foreground African performance traditions, ritual, embodied knowledge systems, and community-based theatre-making. Teaching content actively interrogates Eurocentric canons while positioning South African and Global South performance practices as sites of theoretical and artistic authority.

Modules incorporate critical engagement with themes such as identity, memory, land, gender, ritual, and cultural heritage, encouraging students to locate their creative voices within broader socio-historical contexts. Student-led productions such as *Umnqophiso: The Covenant* at the National Arts Festival exemplify how curriculum design translates into work that engages questions of heritage, belonging, and cultural continuity through performance.

The Department's teaching portfolio is further distinguished by its strong emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and experiential learning. Projects such as moulage medical simulation and psychological patient simulation integrate theatre pedagogy into health sciences and psychology training, allowing drama students to apply performance techniques in real-world professional contexts. These initiatives develop transferable skills, including empathy, adaptability, ethical awareness, and professional communication, while demonstrating the relevance of theatre methodologies beyond traditional performance spaces.

Students are consistently exposed to professional environments through festival participation, touring productions, and collaborative projects with alumni and industry practitioners. This experiential learning model bridges the gap between academic training and professional practice, equipping graduates to transition confidently into the creative industries.

The effectiveness of the Department's teaching model is evidenced by sustained student success at national platforms, such as the National Arts Festival and the Vrystaat Arts Festival, as well as through individual accolades, postgraduate progression, and professional appointments. Teaching outcomes extend beyond performance excellence to include leadership development, critical citizenship, and community engagement.

Collectively, the Department's teaching in 2025 reflects a mature, adaptive, and future-facing pedagogical framework, one that aligns academic rigour with creative risk, disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary reach, and local relevance with international standards.

In 2025, the University of the Free State hosted the G20 summit, providing a significant international platform for scholarly and cultural exchange. In this context, the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts presented the theatre production *Return of the Ancestors* by **Mike van Graan**, featuring **Rondo Mpiti-Spies** (junior lecturer), **Oliver Sikhathuli Bonga** (alumnus and former lecturer), **Dion van Niekerk**, and **Adriaan De Ridder**. The production foregrounded the Department's sustained commitment to socially engaged theatre, intercultural dialogue, and the articulation of African-centred knowledge systems within global conversations. By combining ritual, contemporary performance practices and critical reflection on ancestry and memory, *Return of the Ancestors* positioned theatre as both an artistic and epistemic intervention, demonstrating how performance can function as a site of knowledge production, ethical inquiry and cultural diplomacy. In moments such as these, where the Department's work is positioned on national and international stages, its pedagogical philosophy becomes visible in practice. Through an integrated approach that brings together theory, creative research and public performance, the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts continues to cultivate artist-scholars capable of shaping South Africa's cultural, educational and creative futures.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Creative Outputs

In 2025, the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts sustained a robust portfolio of accredited creative research outputs, reflecting its commitment to practice-led scholarship, pedagogical experimentation, and public-facing artistic enquiry. These productions functioned as sites of embodied research, where dramaturgy, performance, design, and audience engagement intersected with theoretical investigation and curriculum development. Collectively, the outputs demonstrate the Department's sustained contribution to artistic research within South Africa's higher education landscape.



The Maker

Scaena Rehearsal Room Theatre

22-25 October

Directed by **Annebelle Smit**, this production constituted a Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) research project centred on ethics, identity formation, and affective pedagogy. Through puppetry and symbolic narrative, the production interrogated the socio-cultural implications of labelling, belonging, and difference, offering a practice-based exploration of how performance can function as an early intervention in social empathy. The work contributes to ongoing research in applied theatre, childhood spectatorship, and values-based storytelling.



Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind

Scaena Theatre

25-26 September

Directed by **Dion van Niekerk** and **Paquot**, this production engaged Neo-Futurist performance principles as a laboratory for investigating temporality, liveness, and audience agency. Featuring 30 short plays performed in 60 minutes, the production foregrounded chance, speed, and interactive dramaturgy, allowing for nightly variation and co-authorship with spectators. As a pedagogical and research exercise, the work examined ensemble responsiveness, performative risk, and contemporary experimental theatre practices.



To Dream Again

Scaena Rehearsal Room

3-6 September

Directed by **DeBeer Cloete**, this TYA production served as a practice-led adaptation study, reimagining Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through the lens of memory, childhood perception, and familial rupture. Framed through the perspective of a nine-year-old protagonist, the production interrogated the limits of romantic idealism and the ethics of emotional inheritance. The work contributes to research on adaptation, postmodern reworking of classical texts, and theatre as a medium for intergenerational discourse.



Blithe Spirit

Wynand Mouton Theatre

4-6 June

Director **Thys Heydenrych's** production offered a contemporary staging of Noël Coward's 1941 comedy, positioning high farce as a vehicle for examining theatrical timing, gender politics, and performative excess. The production balanced textual fidelity with modern sensibilities, contributing to scholarly debates on revivals, canon re-contextualisation, and comedic performance as a serious mode of theatrical inquiry.



Twelve Angry Jurors

Scaena Theatre

21-23 May

Director **Lorenzo Dampies'** staging functioned as a socially responsive research project that interrogated justice, bias, and collective decision-making. By re-engaging a canonical courtroom drama in a contemporary South African context, the production examined how performance can expose the fragility of legal systems when filtered through human prejudice and moral uncertainty. The work aligns with the Department's research interests in political theatre, ethics, and spectatorship.



Alice in Wonderland

Wynand Mouton Theatre

26-29 March

Directed by **Thys Heydenrych**, the production constituted a large-scale practice-based investigation into theatrical spectacle, adaptation, and family audiences. Through inventive design, physical performance, and imaginative staging, the production explored how fantastical narratives can be mobilised to stimulate critical imagination across age groups. The work contributes to research on visual dramaturgy, narrative play, and accessibility in theatre-making.

Taken together, these accredited creative outputs evidence the Department's sustained integration of research, teaching, and artistic practice. Each production functioned as a form of scholarly enquiry, advancing knowledge through performance while simultaneously training emerging practitioners and engaging diverse public audiences. The 2025 output portfolio affirms the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts as a leading contributor to practice-led research in South African theatre.

Engaged Scholarship

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts continues to affirm its commitment to socially responsive and community-rooted pedagogies through a range of engaged scholarship initiatives. These projects foreground theatre and performance as dialogic spaces that foster reflection, social critique, and participatory transformation, while also enhancing students' civic literacy and public impact. In 2025, the Department broadened its reach through dynamic interdisciplinary projects, youth education, health-sector collaborations, and festival-based community engagement.

Soutpan Community Engagement

(Coordinated by **Dr Annebelle Smit**)

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts proudly participates in the Faculty of the Humanities' flagship community engagement initiative in Ikgomotseng, Soutpan, which was launched on 18 April 2023 and expanded throughout 2024 and 2025. Located approximately 40km from Bloemfontein, the partnership seeks to address pressing social challenges such as substance abuse, gender-based violence, and intergenerational trauma.



The Dean of the Faculty, Prof Mogomme Masoga, underscored the university's responsibility to engage in meaningful, transformative work beyond the classroom: "Universities have an important role to play in the healing of communities by engaging in initiatives that address social ills such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and violence against children, women, and the elderly."



Moulage Medical Simulation

(Led by **DeBeer Cloete** and **Amira van Biljo**n)

In 2025, lecturer DeBeer Cloete once again led the Department's contribution to interdisciplinary collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences and the National Department of Health. Cloete and his team of students specialising in theatre make-up conducted four high-impact moulage simulation sessions at Pelonomi Academic Hospital. These simulated trauma scenarios allowed medical students to practise their clinical responses in lifelike, high-stress environments, enhancing both the realism and ethical integrity of medical training. The moulage project not only develops technical artistry among theatre students but also enables them to engage with social issues through cross-disciplinary knowledge exchange, a key pillar of engaged scholarship at the UFS.

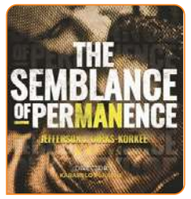
Patient Simulation – Psychology

(Coordinated by **Dr Thys Heydenrych** and **Jani Marais**)

In another significant interdisciplinary partnership, senior lecturer Dr Thys Heydenrych and junior lecturer Jani Marais coordinated a collaboration with the Department of Psychology at the UFS. The project involved third-year and Honours acting students portraying patients experiencing a variety of psychological conditions and emotional states during simulated consultations. These simulations served as a vital training tool for Psychology students, allowing them to practise diagnostic and communication skills in controlled, yet emotionally realistic, scenarios. For Drama students, the project offered a valuable opportunity to apply their acting techniques in therapeutic, human-centred contexts, demonstrating the value of performance-based methodologies in non-traditional domains such as health care and counselling.

National and International Collaboration

In 2025, the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts sustained a strong culture of national collaboration through its extensive participation in major arts festivals and touring circuits, positioning staff, students, alumni, and former lecturers within shared creative ecologies. These collaborations functioned as platforms for professional exchange, mentorship, and sectoral visibility, reinforcing the Department's role as a nexus between higher education, professional practice, and the national theatre industry.



At the Vrystaat Arts Festival, the Department demonstrated a particularly robust collaborative footprint, with multiple productions drawing together current staff, students, alumni, and former lecturers in various creative capacities. *The Semblance of Permanence*, directed by former lecturer **Karabelo Plaatjie**, exemplified sustained alumni engagement through a creative team comprising alumni performers **Jefferson J. Dirks-Korkee** and **Peter Taljaard**, alongside staff-linked facilitation and stage management. The production engaged contemporary social themes, including patriarchy, racism, sexism, and queer intimacy, reflecting the Department's commitment to socially engaged theatre within national festival contexts.



Similarly, *Bielie*, directed by lecturer **DeBeer Cloete** and scripted by alumnus **Ilne Fourie**, foregrounded alumni-driven authorship and performance, with alumni **Jané Schnetler Terblanche** and **Barend Kriel** contributing to stage management and acting, respectively. The production illustrates the Department's continued cultivation of graduate artists whose work circulates within national cultural platforms.



Harte-Bliksems also exemplified staff-student collaboration, with direction by **DeBeer Cloete**, a student-authored script by **Anke Meyer-Auld**, and performances by current students **Anke Meyer-Auld** and **Norman Doubell**, supported by alumnus **Elizri Malan** in stage management. The work reflects the Department's pedagogical model in which emerging artists are positioned as creative leaders within professional festival environments.



Similarly, *Verbode Gedagtes in Stereo*, directed by lecturer **Thys Heydenrych**, represented a collaboration between academic staff at different career stages. The script was written and performed by junior lecturer **Jani Marais**, with stage management by junior lecturer **Daniëlle Doubell**. The production engaged contemporary social discourse and confessional performance aesthetics, reinforcing the Department's emphasis on reflective practice and research-informed theatre.



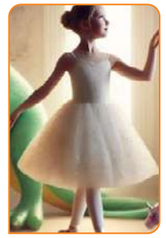
The Department's collaborative strength was further evident in ensemble-driven productions that united senior academics, lecturers, alumni, and students. *Spookstories van C.J. Langenhoven,* directed by senior lecturer **Thys Heydenrych**, featured an ensemble comprising **Prof Anthea van Jaarsveld**, senior lecturer **Chris Vorster**, lecturers **DeBeer Cloete** and **Jani Marais**, and alumni **Alec Debbo** and **Barend Kriel**. The production revitalised South African literary heritage through live radio-style performance, demonstrating collaboration across academic ranks and generations.



The Theatre for Young Audiences production *Rooikappie en die Drie Varkies*, also directed by **Thys Heydenrych**, exemplified collaborative practice, bringing together junior lecturers **Daniëlle Doubell** and **Jani Marais**, alumni **Barend Kriel** and **Gert Hay**, and student **Norman Doubell**. The work underscores the Department's commitment to audience development, pedagogical theatre, and collaborative authorship within national cultural platforms.



Perspectives on Perspectives of Love, presented at the Vrystaat Arts Festival and directed by alumnus **Gert Hay**, demonstrated collaborative authorship and multiplicity of creative voices within a single production framework. Featuring performances by alumni **Jaco Enslin, C.W. Laten**, and **Jené Heymans** alongside student **Jane Mpholo-Mehlape**, the work foregrounded alumni-student collaboration within a professional festival environment. Structured as four short performances under the direction of four different directors, the production explored love through varied aesthetic, emotional, and ideological lenses. This format enabled a dialogic encounter between divergent creative approaches while reinforcing the Department's ethos of plurality, experimentation, and mentorship across generational lines.



Die verlore ballerina, directed by Santie van Biljon and performed by alumni **Peter Taljaard** and **Claudi Els**, contributed to the Department's strong presence in Theatre for Young Audiences at the Vrystaat Arts Festival. Set within the imaginative world of a child's toy room, the production mobilised puppetry, fantasy, and narrative play to explore themes of loss, care, and collective responsibility. The collaboration between alumni practitioners positioned the work within national discourses on early childhood spectatorship and imaginative engagement, while extending the Department's footprint in family-oriented and youth-centred theatre practice.



Dimpho and the Catfish, directed by student **Jane Mpholo-Mehlape**, represented a significant example of student-led national collaboration within a professional festival context. Featuring performances by junior lecturer **Rondo Mpiti-Spies** and alumni **Mosa Nyelele** and **Zizipho Nyulu**, the production brought together emerging and established practitioners in a work that interrogated digital culture, online vulnerability, and intergenerational relationships. By addressing contemporary technological anxieties through accessible family theatre, the production demonstrated how student leadership can successfully operate within collaborative professional networks, reinforcing the Department's commitment to nurturing artist-leaders capable of socially responsive theatre-making.



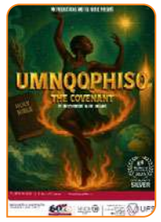
Willemien en Meraaitjie en Willie Wragtig die Troeteldrakie!, directed by assistant officer **Nic Beukes**, extended an established Theatre for Young Audiences narrative through a collaborative alumni-driven ensemble. Featuring performances by alumni **Tiaan Gerber, C.W. Laten, Stella Nortier, Marnique Terblanche**, and **Gert Hay**, the production showcased sustained alumni engagement with the Department's creative output. As a sequel rooted in adventure and moral imagination, the work reinforced the Department's long-standing investment in serial storytelling for young audiences, while strengthening professional networks within the national children's theatre sector.



Die Moedige Avonture van Prinses Petronella, directed by alumna **Keila van Vuuren**, further consolidated alumnistudent collaboration within the Theatre for Young Audiences strand at the Vrystaat Arts Festival. The cast included alumni **Elizri Malan, Jaco Enslin, Tiaan Gerber,** and **Jené Heymans** alongside student **Anke Meyer-Auld**. Through subversive fairytale tropes and playful reversals of gendered expectations, the production addressed themes of identity, courage, and self-discovery. The work reflects the Department's commitment to inclusive storytelling and its capacity to mobilise alumni networks in support of emerging practitioners and socially attuned performance work.



Gebou soos Steffi Graf, co-directed by senior lecturer **Chris Vorster** and Marion Holm, showcased collaboration between academic staff and professional practitioners. With stage management by assistant officer **Lorenzo Dampies** and performance by Vorster himself, the production bridged autobiographical storytelling, concert performance, and critical reflection. Its presentation at the Vrystaat Arts Festival reinforced the Department's capacity to generate work that resonates beyond institutional boundaries while remaining grounded in scholarly and artistic inquiry.



National collaboration extended beyond the Vrystaat Arts Festival through the Department's participation in the National Arts Festival (NAF). The student-led production *Umnqophiso: The Covenant*, directed and performed entirely by **current students**, positioned emerging artists within one of South Africa's most significant national cultural platforms. The work's focus on identity, heritage, and cultural memory aligns with the Department's commitment to socially responsive and decolonially attentive performance practices.

Further national reach was achieved through *So Over the Rainbow*, directed by lecturer **Dion van Niekerk** and written by former Artist-in-Residence **Mike van Graan**. Following its premiere at the National Arts Festival, the production toured extensively to venues such as the Avalon Theatre in Cape Town, the Garden Route, and Isithatha Theatre in Gqeberha. Performed by junior lecturer **Rondo Mpiti-Spies**, the production exemplifies sustained collaboration between the Department and leading figures in South African theatre, while extending the Department's impact across multiple provincial and cultural contexts.

International collaboration reached a significant milestone with the production of *Carousel* at the Wynand Mouton Theatre. This large-scale musical formed part of an ongoing partnership between the University of the Free State, the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas, and the Odeion School of Music. Directed by Dr **Thys Heydenrych**, with musical direction by Prof **Barbara Hill Moore** (SMU), the production integrated **staff and students from both institutions**. The collaboration facilitated interculturalexchange, professional benchmarking, and shared pedagogical methodologies, with visiting SMU staff and students commending the UFS team's professionalism and technical excellence.



Collectively, these collaborations affirm the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts' embeddedness within national creative networks. Through sustained engagement with festivals, touring circuits, alumni practitioners, and professional artists, the Department continues to function as a dynamic site of artistic exchange, mentorship, and sectoral leadership within South Africa's theatrical landscape.

Postgraduate Students

2025 MA (Drama and Theatre Arts):

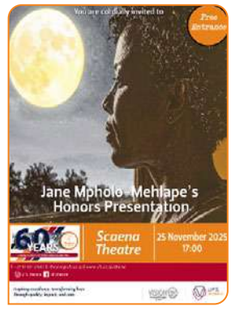
- Danielle Doubell (Supervisor: DeBeer Cloete; Co-Supervisor: Annebelle Smit)
- Danyke de Beer (Supervisor: Annebelle Smit)
- D.J. Kruger (Supervisor: DeBeer Cloete; Co-Supervisor: Annebelle Smit)

2025 BA Honours (Drama and Theatre):

- Anke Meyer-Auld
- Anya Rust
- Jane Mpholo-Mehlape

Other Activities

As part of the Department's ongoing commitment to advanced undergraduate training and mentorship, two Honours students in Drama and Theatre Arts presented fully realised directing projects in 2025. These productions formed a core component of the Honours curriculum, functioning as capstone learning experiences that integrate textual analysis, conceptual development, rehearsal methodology, and reflective practice. Both projects demonstrated a high level of artistic maturity and critical engagement, underscoring the Department's emphasis on directing as a research-informed and reflexive practice.



Honours student **Jane Mpholo-Mehlape** presented a character-driven production that engaged themes of authorship, memory, emotional suppression, and personal narrative. In her directorial approach, Mpholo-Mehlape foregrounded the affective complexities of writing the self, drawing on the protagonist's struggle with childhood trauma, isolation, and creative confrontation. Her work emphasised tonal balance, allowing moments of humour to surface organically alongside emotional vulnerability. Central to the project was an intention to foster audience identification and catharsis, encouraging spectators to recognise aspects of themselves within the characters and to leave with a renewed sense of hope. The production formed part of a structured mentorship process under the supervision of Dr **Thys Heydenrych**, with particular emphasis placed on reflective learning, risk-taking, and the pedagogical value of experimentation within a supported academic environment.



Honours student **Jane Mpholo-Mehlape** presented a character-driven production that engaged themes of authorship, memory, emotional suppression, and personal narrative. In her directorial approach, Mpholo-Mehlape foregrounded the affective complexities of writing the self, drawing on the protagonist's struggle with childhood trauma, isolation, and creative confrontation. Her work emphasised tonal balance, allowing moments of humour to surface organically alongside emotional vulnerability. Central to the project was an intention to foster audience identification and catharsis, encouraging spectators to recognise aspects of themselves within the characters and to leave with a renewed sense of hope. The production formed part of a structured mentorship process under the supervision of Dr **Thys Heydenrych**, with particular emphasis placed on reflective learning, risk-taking, and the pedagogical value of experimentation within a supported academic environment.

Honours student **Anya Rust** directed *Tennessee Williams's The Magic Tower*, a poetic and intimate exploration of artistic aspiration under conditions of precarity. Rust's production examined the fragile coexistence of love, creativity, and material hardship, situating the play's crumbling apartment setting as a metaphorical "tower" sustained by imagination rather than stability. Her directorial vision foregrounded the tension between decay and beauty, framing the work not as a narrative of defeat, but as an articulation of artistic resilience. Through restrained staging and close attention to emotional atmosphere, the production highlighted Williams' sensitivity to silence, longing, and the quiet persistence of creative voice even in moments of collapse.

Together, these Honours directing projects reflect the Department's sustained investment in cultivating independent, critically engaged theatre-makers. They demonstrate how undergraduate creative work, when embedded within rigorous mentorship structures, can operate as both pedagogical practice and meaningful artistic enquiry.

Staff (2025)

Permanent Academic Staff

Prof Anthea van Jaarsveld	Academic Head of Department
Dr Thys Heydenrych	Programme Director / Senior Lecturer
Dr Chris Vorster	Senior Lecturer
Dr Annebelle Smit	Lecturer
DeBeer Cloete	Lecturer
Dion van Niekerk	Lecturer
Dr Obakeng Kgwasi	Lecturer
Walter Strydom	Lecturer
Zabesutu Mpiti-Spies	Junior Lecturer

Permanent Support Staff

Brandon Hewetson	Officer (Wynand Mouton Theatre)
Karen Combrinck	Senior Assistant Officer
Nic Beukes	Assistant Officer (Wynand Mouton Theatre)
Lorenzo Dampies	Assistant Officer (Visual Media Hub)

Contract Staff

Adriaan de Ridder	Lecturer (Units)
Danielle Doubell	Junior Lecturer (Units)
Jani Marais	Junior Lecturer (Units)
Jean-Pierre Paquot	Junior Lecturer (Units)
Charl Henning	Facilitator (Units)
Amira van Biljon	Facilitator (Units)

Department of

English



Academic Head of Department
Dr Kudzayi Ngara
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Overview of 2025

The Department of English continued to make strides across the performance areas defined by the University's strategic thrust, as guided by Vision130, during the period under review. As shown by the achievements highlighted below, the Department, through its permanent staff and research fellows, maintained its proud publication record by being represented in accredited and high-quintile academic journals, as well as producing a fair number of creative outputs and contributing to various social and political discourses and debates through some well-thought-out opinion pieces in various media outlets. These successes are also reflected in the undergraduate and postgraduate throughput rates, the result of the determined efforts of all staff, academic and non-academic, notwithstanding a few staffing challenges on both sides of the Human Resources spectrum. The Qwaqwa Campus Department of English has been particularly affected, with two vacant positions not filled (one support staff and one academic staff). The effect was especially noticeable by the departure of the recently qualified academic, Dr Moopi, who left for North-West University because the Department was unable to appoint him. Nonetheless, the Department contracted administrative interns and a lecturer for the interim, although this hinders future planning.

The Department showcased a stellar performance across all metrics (undergraduate student throughput, postgraduate supervision, research outputs, and scholarly engagement). The year closed with the unfortunate news of reduced funding for the Learning Facilitator programme; this programme played a key role in the Department's improved pass rates and outcomes at undergraduate levels.

In terms of equity and transformation, 2025 saw the appointment of the first-ever Head of the English Department, based on the Qwaqwa Campus. With the subject head responsibility now shifting to the Bloemfontein Campus, this historic appointment is sure to bring renewal, as well as unknown challenges, for the Department. This appointment also speaks to the Department's commitment to social justice and inclusivity, especially regarding staff on previously marginalised campuses.

Achievements

The following staff members' PhD degrees were conferred during the April 2025 graduation ceremony:

- **Peter Moopi** (Qwaqwa)
- **Ndhivhuwo Ndou** (Bloemfontein)
- **Hanta Henning** (Bloemfontein)

Prof **Marthinus Conradie** was invited to deliver a lecture on research methodologies at the Department of Curriculum Studies at Texas A&M University-San Antonio in April 2025.

Dr **Doreen Tivenga** was awarded a C2 NRF rating.

Profs **Rick de Villiers** and **Thinus Conradie** were promoted to associate professors in the Department of English (Bloemfontein) on 1 January 2025. On the Qwaqwa campus, Prof **Oliver Nyambi** was promoted to full professor on the same date.

Prof **Rick de Villiers** was in residence as an Iso Lomso Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study between 15 September and 12 December.

Prof **Marthinus Conradie** was appointed as an adjunct professor at the University of Regina (Canada) for the period January 2026 to December 2030, allowing him to co-supervise Master's and PhD students and teach graduate courses at the UoR.

Prof **Helene Strauss** held an individual fellowship at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, where she was in residence from 14 July to 12 December 2025.

Prof **Helene Strauss** served as a visiting fellow at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry in Berlin from 6 May to 9 July 2025.

Dr **Nonki Motahane** was awarded a grant to participate in an interdisciplinary writing and mentoring programme on the theme of "Gender, Spirituality and Agency in Africa", organised by the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR), in collaboration with the University of Nairobi and the University of Leeds, and with support of the British Academy, Nairobi, in June 2025.

Student Achievements

Yonwaba Matshobotiyana received the Dean's medal for the best MA student in the Faculty of the Humanities (Bloemfontein Campus) for her MA dissertation titled "Of Speaking and Visibility: The Intersectional Resistance and Resilience of Black Women in Koleka Putuma's *Collective Amnesia*, Vangile Gantsho's *Red Cotton*, and Danai Mupotsa's *Feeling Ugly*". Prof Helene Strauss and Dr Doreen Rumbidzai Tivenga acted as supervisor and co-supervisor, respectively.

Zandile Matlolane (MA Student, Qwaqwa) presented a paper, titled "Not so funny: Humour and queer sexualities in *The Stalker* and *Woman to Woman* by Niq Mhlongo", at the Qwaqwa Postgraduate Conference, 6-7 November 2025.

Teaching

Susan Brokensha has embarked on a SETA training course, 'AI, Policy and Education', presented by the University of the Free State. The course runs until April 2026.

Rick de Villiers received second place in the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching and Learning.

Helene Strauss continues to develop methods of embodied pedagogy aimed at undoing the colonial separation of bodies and minds in the contemporary university classroom. In 2025, she offered a new Honours course titled "Reading, Breathing, and Sensing with Plants", which included somatic-sensorial activities designed to forge partnerships between people and plants.

Short Learning Programmes offered

Hanta Henning presented a series of academic writing workshops for postgraduate students across all faculties and disciplines at the University of the Free State in association with the Centre for Graduate Support. She also completed overseeing the implementation of an online academic writing short course for the Centre.

Dr **Hanta Henning** was approached by the Centre for Graduate Support, in association with the Kovsie Phahamisa Academy, to develop a staff development and training module regarding academic competence for lecturers. The module was completed in November 2025 and will form part of the Centre and Academy's cooperative ETDP SETA training programme in February 2026.

Research Projects

Prof **Rick de Villiers** continued work on his monograph project, *Ctrl Z: Narratives of Undoing*, as part of his Iso Lomso Fellowship at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study.

Prof **Helene Strauss** held residential fellowships at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies and at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry in Berlin in support of her ongoing project on *Phytospheric Justice*.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Motahane, N. 2025. 'In America, you are Black, baby': Race, transnationality and identity (re)formation in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*. 12(1): 2577867.

Matlolane, Z., & **Motahane, N**. 2025. Not so funny: Humour, Gender and Queer Sexualities in Niq Mhlongo's "The Stalker" and "Woman to Woman". *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 7(2): 1-10.

Nyambi, O., **Ngara, K.**, & Fingson, K. 2025. 'Country and countryhood': Perspectives on the Zimbabwean nation-projects in NoViolet Bulawayo's novels. *African Identities*. 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2025.2523817

Nyambi, O. 2025. Visuality, sick bodies, and the politics of the healthcare crisis in Zimbabwe. *Critical African Studies*. 17(2): 241-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2024.2443416

Brokensha, S., & **Brooks, M**. 2025. Understanding academic literacy facilitators' perceptions of ChatGPT through framing theory. *South African Journal of Higher Education*. 39(5): 75-94.

Brokensha, S., de Wet, K., Combrink, H., Redelinghuys, N., Matlhoko, K., & Scheltema-van Wyk, C. 2025. Developing an open educational resource (OER) for generative AI in higher education. *Práxis Educacional*, 21(52): eE17103-e17103.

De Villiers, R. 2025. Atomic Allusion: *Hamlet*, Oppenheimer, and Cormac McCarthy's Last Novels. *Notes and Queries*. 72(2): 192-194. https://doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gjaf032

De Villiers, R. 2025. 'A Defense of Wretchedness: *Molloy* and Humiliation'. In *On, Beckett, On!*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté, 185-202. Reprint.

Du Plessis, C. 2025. Deaf students and South African Sign Language in teacher training: Avoiding a Procrustean "BEd". *Journal for Language Teaching*. 59(1). https://doi.org/10.56285/jltVol59iss1a6682

Hall, L. 2025. "'Friend[s] of the Heart': Reconsidering "Queer" Archives, Ambivalence and Untranslatability in Texts from Lesotho." *Socal Dynamics*. 15(1): 1-20.

Hall, L. 2025. "Seeing Differently, Seeing Anew: The Strategic Use of Young Girl Narrators/Focalisers in Recent Queer African Short Fiction." *The Thinker*. 102(1): 12-25.

Conradie, M.S. 2025. Racialised emotions as maps for navigating learning facilitators' experiences teaching students about identity. *Ensovoort: Tydskrif vir Kultuur Studies*. 46(5): 1.

Conradie, M.S., & Boucher, M.L. 2025. Interrogating whiteness and masculinity: A duoethnographic critique of pedagogy in colonised spaces. *Whiteness in Education*. 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2025.2484769

Strauss, H. 2025. "Resonance." Forum on "Refugee Pedagogies" for Special Issue of *Canadian Literature* on the topic "Swirling into the Field of Life: Works in Conversation with Y-Dang Troeung." Co-edited by Christopher Patterson and Vinh Nguyen. 261 (2025): 104-5.

Chapters in edited volumes

Nyambi, O. 2025. "You all did love him once, not without cause": Shakespeare, Discourse and the Rise and Fall of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, in Ifeoluwa Aboluwade, Serena Talento, Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong, Oliver Nyambi (eds.). *African Shakespeare: Subversions, Appropriations, Negotiations*. New York, NY/London, UK: Routledge.

Books

Aboluwade, I., Talento, S., Chiangong, P.M., & **Nyambi, O.** (eds.). *African Shakespeare: Subversions, Appropriations, Negotiations*. New York, NY/London, UK: Routledge.

Creative Outputs

Marthinus Conradie's short story, *A Box Without A Lid*, won second place in the 2025 Nova Science Fiction and Fantasy Short Story contest.

Conference Papers/Posters

Brokensha, S. 2025. Bridging linguistic gaps at the University of the Free State: AI-powered speech recognition and translation tools fostering multilingual learning. Paper delivered at the *AI in Education Forum (2025)*, held at Sandton Sun & Towers, Johannesburg, South Africa, 29 to 31 October 2025. Hosted by the Chartered Institute of Professional Certifications/CIPC (Singapore).

Du Plessis, C. 2025. Die suksesvolle institusionalisering en intellektualisering van inheemse tale in Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys: Lesse uit die verlede (Afrikaans), hede (die Sintutale) en toekoms (Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal) *[The successful institutionalisation and intellectualisation of indigenous languages in South African higher education: Lessons from the past (Afrikaans), present (the Sintu languages) and future (South African Sign Language)]* . Co-presenter of paper delivered at the International Language Conference, Sol Plaatje University, 27-29 August 2025.

Hall, L. 2025. "'Friend[s] of the Heart': Queer Ambivalence and Untranslatability in Texts from Lesotho". Paper presented at the African Literature Association (ALA) Conference, University of Nairobi, Kenya. June.

Tivenga, D.R. "The Performance of Female Identities by Male Comedians and Social Media Influencers in Zimbabwe: A Challenge to or Reinforcement of Gender Norms and Stereotypes?" Paper presented at the 6th Biennial Conference of the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA2025), hosted by the University of Cabo Verde (Uni-CV), Praia in Cabo Verde, 24-27 September 2025.

Strauss, H. 2025. "Playing in Plant Airs: Conversations with Manthipe Moila's *Rootbound*." Invited for possible inclusion in a volume on *Slow Affect*, co-edited by Lou-Marié Kruger and Tamara Shafer. Prof Strauss presented a short version of this paper at the 'write-shop' held at STIAS, 3 December 2025.

Els, C.A. 2025. Echoes of (postmemory), multimodality and multilingualism in Jonathan Safran Foer's *A Primer for the Punctuation of Heart Disease*". Paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Languages, Multilingualism, and Decolonisation Practices in Higher Education. University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 25-27 November.

Motahane, N. 2025. "An invisible rash": Migrant (im)mobility and corporeality in Yewande Omotoso's *Bom Boy*, presented at the African Literature Association Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 25-28 June 2025.

Motahane, N. 2025. "I had a million selves, too many to gather": Spirituality and unsettled diasporic identities in Yaa Gyasi's *Transcendent Kingdom* (2020)» presented at an interdisciplinary writing and mentoring programme on the theme of "Gender, Spirituality and Agency in Africa", organised by the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR), in collaboration with the University of Nairobi and the University of Leeds, and with support of the British Academy, Nairobi, 29-30 June 2025.

Invited Lectures

Profs Isabel Hofmeyr and Sarah Nuttall invited Prof Helene Strauss to serve as Plenary Speaker for the "Plant Lives" seminar series hosted by the *Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research* (WISER), 24 March 2025.

Prof **Helene Strauss** was invited to give a talk as part of the Department of English Speakers Series at the University of Stellenbosch, 23 October 2025. She presented a paper titled "Feminist Phytospherics."

Susan Brokensha was invited to chair a session of the SAQA Conference held in Johannesburg, 8-9 October 2025, to mark the *30th anniversary of the SAQA Act*. The conference theme was 'The Establishment, Evolution and Future of the NQF'. The sub-theme of the session was 'Global Discourse around the National Qualifications Frameworks, including Regional Meta Frameworks'.

On behalf of the Chartered Institute of Professional Certifications//CIPC (Singapore), **Susan Brokensha** was invited to serve as a distinguished speaker at the *AI in Education Forum 2025*, held at Sandton Sun & Towers, 29-31 October 2025. The CIPC is the world's largest professional skills certification body, globally active and fully accredited.

Gemma Field was invited to speak on an expert panel on the theme of World Science Fiction at the Critical Research in Science Fiction conference in Liverpool, UK, 3 June (online).

Dr Ndhivhuwo Ndou presented at the South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT), the Linguistic Society of South Africa (LSSA), and the Barcelona Conference on Education (BCE2025) on topics including inclusive education, translanguaging, and English Second Language teaching.

Conference Proceedings

Field, G. 2025. "Precarious assemblages in Chinese science-fiction: Chen Qiufan's *Waste Tide* (2013)" presented at the Critical Research in Science Fiction conference in Liverpool, UK, 4 June (online).

Engaged Scholarship

Susan Brokensha was selected to serve as a 2025 reviewer of applied linguistic abstracts submitted for the *TESOL 2054 International Convention & English Language Expo* hosted in the United States.

The annual Speaker Series, administered by **Dr Hanta Henning**, again brought a variety of national and international speakers to the University of the Free State's audience. Along with **Elani Boshoff**, **Drs Mariza Brooks** and **Hanta Henning**, as well as **Profs Helene Strauss**, **Rick de Villiers**, and **Thinus Conradie**, these speakers brought groundbreaking research to the table. The Speaker Series remains committed to promoting engaged teaching, learning, and research.

Upon invitation by the Art Clinic, the Physical Divine, and the Lifestyle Entertainment Travel Studio (LETS), **Drs Ndhivhuwo Ndou** and **Hanta Henning** presented public lectures at the Gen Z Lingo Soirée held at Du Monye art gallery in Westdene on 25 October 2025. The theme of the event was "Bridging Generations through Language." It highlighted linguistic differences between older generations and Gen Z. Dr Ndou's lecture centred on language development, with a specific focus on language in education and language variation. **Dr Henning** spoke on the power of language and shifting inter-generational language-power relations, and their specific application to Gen Z.

Rick de Villiers wrote an essay for *The Conversation* on the Afrikaans translation of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (*The Conversation*, 29 May). The essay was subsequently reprinted in JSTOR Daily on 10 July. The author was interviewed about the piece on Cape Talk.

Rick de Villiers launched a Substack on literary technique, freely available to students and the public.

Susan Brokensha was invited to be part of SAQA's 2025 academic review process.

Susan Brokensha was invited to chair a session at *SAQA's 30-Year Celebration Conference*, which took place from 6 to 9 October 2025 in Johannesburg. The main theme was 'The Establishment, Evolution, and Future of the NQF'.

On behalf of the Chartered Institute of Professional Certifications, **Susan Brokensha** was invited to serve as a distinguished speaker at the *AI in Education Forum*, which was held at Sandton Sun & Towers, Johannesburg, South Africa, 29-31 October 2025.

Prof Helene Strauss continued her work on the Board of the *Association for Cultural Studies* and the core organising team of its *Virtual Lecture Series*. Notable talks hosted in 2025 include "Intshumayelo and the religion of imagination" by Athambile Masola (24 April) and "Thermoception and Post-AC Worldmaking" by Hsuan Hsu (27 August).

Prof Helene Strauss served on the following editorial and scholarly boards in 2025: *Cultural Studies*, *Association for Cultural Studies*, *Journal of Literary Studies*, *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, and the *Free State Centre for Human Rights*.

Gemma Field was re-elected treasurer of the Literature Association of South Africa.

Gemma Field served on the Writer's Day planning committee on behalf of the English Department. She secured the participation of novelists Futhi Ntshingila and Meg Samuelson for the event.

Dr Kudzayi Ngara served as the head of the organising committee and senior research advisor for the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI) Early Career Workshop, titled "Post-Colonial African Transportation and Mobility Research in Southern Africa". The workshop was hosted on the Qwaqwa Campus from 29 to 30 October 2025.

Dr Kudzayi Ngara presented the paper '"I got my things and left." – When home becomes unhomely in The House of Hunger (Marechera, 1978)' at the UFS Library and Information Services seminar (Mind-Altering Books) at the SASOL Library, Bloemfontein. The seminar was held on 16 September 2025.

Dr Kudzayi Ngara and Motsusi Nare presented the paper 'Podcasting as an alternative assessment platform: the @UFSQwaqwaEnglish3 YouTube channel' at the UFS Learning and Teaching Conference 2025.

Dr Kudzayi Ngara and Mpho Tsiloane presented a paper at the Second International Conference on Languages, Multilingualism and Decolonisation Practices in Higher Education, held at the UFS Bloemfontein Campus from 25 to 27 November 2025.

National and International Collaboration

The Department of English Speaker Series continued to contribute to the Department's ongoing national and international research collaboration efforts. Postgraduate students and staff in the Department are offered opportunities to meet and network with speakers and researchers from across the globe and South Africa. The Department hosted several international speakers during the 2025 Speaker Series. Prof Susie O'Brien's book panel, co-hosted by Prof Helene Strauss and Hanta Henning on 10 April 2025, featured not only Prof O'Brien, but also three other Canadian scholars (Profs Zishad Lak, Tania Aguila-Way, and Catriona Sandilands). The book panel was subsequently revised for publication in the journal *Studies in Social Justice*. German researchers, Profs Peter Schneck and Laura Zander (Osnabrück University), were co-hosted by Prof **Rick de Villiers** and **Hanta Henning** on 20 March 2025. Dr **Hanta Henning** hosted Prof Megan Doney (New River College, VA) on 15 May 2025, while Dr Nikoleta Zampaki (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece) was co-hosted by Drs **Mariza Brooks** and **Hanta Henning** on 31 July 2025. Prof **Thinus Conradie** and Dr **Hanta Henning** co-hosted, on 28 August 2025, Prof David Schalkwyk (Queen Mary University of London). Regarding local speakers, **Elani Boshoff** and **Hanta Henning** co-hosted South African academic Dr Mike Hart (Read 2 Learn) on 13 February 2025. On 27 February, 6 March, and 8 May, departmental staff members, Prof **Susan Brokensha**, Dr **Doreen Tivenga**, and **Dr Leila Hall**, respectively, were hosted by Henning. Dr Henning also hosted Dr Karien van den Berg (NWU Potchefstroom) on 2 October 2025.

Marthinus Conradie conducted research at Texas A&M University-San Antonio in collaboration with Prof Michael Boucher.

Helene Strauss participated in the international seminar series on "Breathing In: Air and Atmospheres" and "Plant Lives," respectively hosted in 2024 and 2025 by the *Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research* (WISER). Her chapter, "The Northern Cape Phytosphere, Artisanal Mining, and Multispecies Remediation in *Eureka*," invited for inclusion in a book on *Postcolonial Air and Atmospheres: Elemental Life and Environmental Crisis* (co-edited by Sarah Nuttall and Isabel Hofmeyr), is forthcoming with UCL Press in 2026.

Other Activities

Dr Ndhivhuwo Ndou enrolled in the Research Excellence Accelerator Programme (REAP) and was nominated as the university's representative for the Linguistic Society of South Africa (LSSA), the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa (HELTASA), and the International Conference on Education (ICEDU). She also became a member of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and the Women Researchers in the Humanities (WoRiTH). Dr Ndou has also enrolled for the AI in Teaching and Leading course.

Staff (2025)

Dr Kudzayi Ngara — Academic Head of Department, Senior Lecturer

Academic Staff

Permanent

Prof Oliver Nyambi	Professor
Dr Nonki Motahane	Senior Lecturer
Dr Peter Moopi	Lecturer
Gemma Field	Lecturer
Elani Boshoff	Lecturer
Dr Nonhlanhla Dlamini	Senior Lecturer
Prof Susan Brokensha	Associate Professor
Dr Mariza Brooks	Senior Lecturer
Prof Marthinus Conradie	Associate Professor
Dr Hanta Henning	Lecturer
Prof Helene Strauss	Professor
Dr Ndhivhuwo Ndou	Lecturer
Dr Colleen du Plessis	Senior Lecturer
Dr Carla Els	Lecturer
Dr Doreen Tivenga	Lecturer
Prof Rick de Villier	Associate Professor
Dr Leila Hall	Lecturer

Support Staff

Karen McGuire	Senior Officer: Admin
Lesego Moqhaisa	Senior Assistant Officer
Nthabiseng Matsoso	Senior Assistant Officer: Assistant Dean/English
Nthabiseng Mofokeng	Assistant Officer: Intern
Tshepiso Makau	Intern: Assistant Dean/English/Psychology

Department of

Fine Arts



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Overview of 2025

The year 2025 was marked by significant growth, international engagement, and innovation for the Department of Fine Arts. The Department strengthened its national and global presence through high-impact collaborations, research-led teaching, and an expanded exhibition profile that foregrounded both staff and student excellence.

International partnerships were a defining feature of the year, most notably the deepening collaboration with Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama and the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale. Artist residencies at Mahama's Red Clay Studio, participation by Ghanaian curator Selom Kudjie in the Richmond Land Art Project, and sustained South–South exchange enriched research, teaching, and creative practice. The Department further expanded its global reach through staff participation in international residencies, conferences, solo and group exhibitions, and doctoral research partnerships, including a joint PhD programme with the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. At a national level, the Department's visibility was strengthened through major exhibitions such as *Visual Languages/Visuele Tale* at the South African Academy for Science and Art, staff and student participation in the Free State Arts Festival, and strong representation in prestigious platforms, including the SASOL New Signatures competition. Staff received significant recognition through NRF rating, solo exhibitions, invited keynotes, judging panels and curated and accredited publications.

Teaching and learning were substantially enhanced by the completion of the Digitalisation Project, which transformed the Department's digital infrastructure and enabled ambitious, interdisciplinary student work across all year levels. Research outputs, postgraduate exhibitions, and engaged scholarship continued to reflect a strong commitment to practice-based research, critical inquiry, and socially and environmentally responsive art-making. Collectively, these achievements position the Department as a leading centre for contemporary fine arts education, research, and creative practice in South Africa.

Achievements

Ibrahim Mahama, Ghana, Red Clay Artist Residencies

The Department strengthened its research collaborations with Ibrahim Mahama in 2025. This collaboration resulted in curator Selom Kudjie, Mahama's colleague and Director of the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale, Ghana, joining the Richmond Land Art project with second-year Fine Art students.

In addition, Prof Adelheid von Maltitz and du Plessis-Kleynhans were both awarded artist residencies at Ibrahim Mahama's Red Clay Studio in Tamale, Ghana, in July 2025. During the residencies, von Maltitz produced a new series of drawings, while du Plessis-Kleynhans created paper-based works. Both artists also facilitated workshops for learners in schools.

In addition, they visited the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi. The residencies were supported through funding from both Red Clay Studio and the University of the Free State.

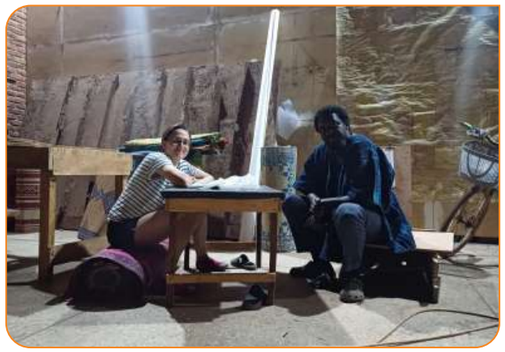
The Department is extremely proud that Ibrahim Mahama has been named the first African artist to be recognised as the most influential figure in the art world on *ArtReview* magazine's 2025 Power List.



The entrance to Red Clay Studio in Tamale, Ghana.



A social media post in which the news is shared of Ibrahim Mahama being named the most influential figure in the art world on @artreview magazine's 2025 Power List.



Prof von Maltitz working in a studio with Ibrahim Mahama in Tamale, Ghana.



J du Plessis-Kleynhans making paper in the studio with Ibrahim Mahama in Tamale, Ghana.

Visiting Artist and Residency: Cow Mash

The Department hosted Cow Mash for a 4-week-long art residency. During this time, Cow Mash attended critique sessions with the students and staff and created a new body of work. Cow Mash presented an insightful artist talk at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, which was well attended by students (from the Fine Arts Department and beyond) as well as staff.


Wednesday 9 April at 17:00 | Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, Sasol Library

The talk is presented by the UFS Art Gallery in partnership with the International Institute of the Arts and the Department of Fine Arts.

Please join as for an Artist Talk by **Cow Mash**

"I am a (non)-dimensional former. I form in the medium of sculpture to harvest and preserve memories of my living and transcended ancestors."

Cow Mash (Kgaogelo Mothapo Mashilo)(b. 1994, was born in Limpopo and is currently an academic lecturer in Fibre Arts and Professional Profile development at Tshwane University of Technology. The artist's self- adopted name 'Cow' acts as a conduit through which she accesses metaphorical and generational memory to unpack narratives attached to the black female body, blackness and land.

In 2016, Cow created a life-size public sculpture of freedom fighter Francis Baard, as part of the National Heritage Monument. In 2017, she was one of three artists to create a 2.5-meter sculpture of Political leader Oliver Tambo, which currently stands at the Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport. She won the 2019 PPC Imaginarium fashion category award and was a finalist in the sculpture category. In the same year, she collaborated on a life-size sculpture of Zanthi Ness for the Zanthi Nkosi Clinical Haematology Centre of Excellence at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital.

Cow holds a Master of Technology in Fine and Applied Arts (cum laude) and has participated in various local and international exhibitions including 1:54 Contemporary African art Fair (London and New York), the International Cape Town Art Fair, and outdoor sculptures at Nirox Sculpture Park, amongst others.

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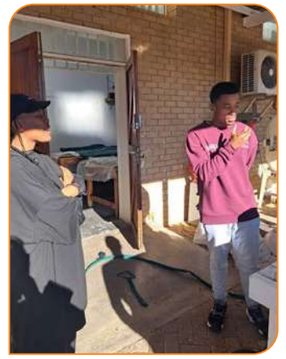
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Invitation design of Cow Mash's artist talk hosted by the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery on 9 April 2025.



Cow Mash making an experimental artwork in a butchery in Bloemfontein.



Cow Mash and Mpendulo Simamane, final year Fine Arts student, discussing his work during a critique session.

Visual Languages/Visuele Tale, SA Academy for Science and Art

The Fine Arts Department was the first department, as part of a larger project, to be invited by Dr Jan van der Merwe to exhibit at the SA Academy for Science and Art, Pretoria, with the show entitled *Visual Languages/Visuele Tale*, running from 23 August through 14 November 2025. Jan van der Merwe and Janine Allen curated the exhibition. Artists included the lecturers and postgraduate students of the Fine Arts Department: Janine Allen, Natasha Bezuidenhout, Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans, Sibenoxolo Foji, Adelheid Frackiewicz, Dina Grobler, Miné Kleynhans, Louis Krüger, Lyrene Kühn-Botma, Teboho Mokhotu, Siobhan Swart, Mikayla Swartz, and Leon Wittuhn.

Following is Dr Jan van der Merwe's foreword to the exhibition in the catalogue:

"The exhibition Visual Languages was made possible by Die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (the South African Academy for Science and Arts), which provides a platform for the introduction of visual art across a wide spectrum. This exhibition focuses on the artmaking and conceptualisation processes of artists who are also affiliated with the Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State, whether as lecturers or postgraduate students. At such an institution, the term visual languages is important because the individuality of each student is cherished, within a unique contemporary context to which students and lecturers must remain sensitively attuned.

Over the years, I have developed a connection with the Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State, both as a guest lecturer and an external examiner, which has afforded me a glimpse into the department's working methods and the distinctive tone it sets, as well as the dedication with which the art-making process is approached and the high quality of the resulting artworks. The emphasis placed on the development of individual voices or languages is reflected in the structure of the course and the richness of choice in terms of materials and working methods offered to students. What struck me about this art school is that each lecturer's "office" also functions as an art studio: in this way, academic lecturers continue to develop as visual artists, and students can experience the creative process first-hand. This dynamic is enriched by the department's regular collaborations with guest artists such as Prof Willem Boshoff, who brings with him an immeasurable wealth of knowledge and experience.

The Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State is supported by its collaboration with the Oliewenhuis Museum – a national art collection – as well as with the UFS Art Gallery. Not only are the students exposed to the workings of a professional gallery and to art of outstanding quality and variety, but they and the lecturers are given the opportunity to present their work professionally. In this way, a valuable and visible art culture is created in Bloemfontein, which is also reflected at national level: artists from Bloemfontein are regularly named prize winners at national art competitions and their work forms an important contribution to art production in South Africa.

It is a great privilege to present the outstanding art of this group of lecturers and postgraduate students from the Free State here, together with ProfJanine Allen, head of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State. The accompanying catalogue will serve as a valuable source of documentation and research.

Jan van der Merwe"



Dr Jan van der Merwe opening the Visual Languages / Visuele Tale exhibition.

Staff exhibition: Breaking Ground, Free State Arts Festival, Bloemfontein (2025)

Prof Adelheid von Maltitz was awarded her C2 NRF rating, a first for the Department. She also completed her Absa L'Atelier Solo exhibition at the AVA gallery in Cape Town.



The exhibition invitation of Prof Adelheid von Maltitz's solo exhibition, Drawing The Line.



Prof Adelheid von Maltitz at her exhibition at the AVA gallery in Cape Town in August 2025.

Other achievements

Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans was selected as a finalist in the *Vuleka Art Competition* in Cape Town in 2025.

Bontle Tau, as the resident curator for art collective KOLLECTIVA, co-curated the exhibition titled Names Like Rivers, Faces Like Fire at the Women's Jail in Constitutional Hill, Johannesburg.

This was a collaborative effort between the Johannesburg-based art collective BLVCK BLOCK and the Free State-based art collective KOLLECTIVA. The exhibition opened on 9 August 2025 (Women's Day) and included works by UFS postgraduate students Sibenoxolo Foji and Jacobeth Selinga, as well as UFS Fine Arts alumni Teboho Mokothu.



The exhibition Names Like Rivers, Faces Like Fire at Constitutional Hill, Johannesburg, with Teboho Mokothu's work in the foreground.



The work of Sibenoxolo Foji at the Names Like Rivers, Faces Like Fire exhibition.

Janine Allen, alongside Dr André Rose, was invited to present their artworks from *Eureka* at the International New Futures Arts Collaborative Residency programme for artists in the session Exploring Visual Cultures. Artists from across the globe were invited, including Brazil, India, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, among others.

Janine Allen was invited to serve on the judging panel for the prestigious Helgaard Steyn Award.

Janine Allen had an acclaimed solo exhibition entitled "New World" at the Glen Carlou Gallery in the Western Cape.



Janine Allen with a sculpture of Ledelle Moe in the Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria during the Helgaardt Steyn judging.



Janine Allen's solo exhibition, New World, Glen Carlou Art Gallery, Klapmuts.



Janine Allen revealing her conceptual photograph entitled Keepers (2025).

Finalisation of Digitalisation Funding Project: R927 430.99

The Fine Arts Department's Digitalisation Project, led by Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans and Lyrene Kühn-Botma and supported by funding of R927 430.99, significantly upgraded the Department's digital infrastructure, enabling access to professional-standard equipment essential for contemporary artistic practice and research-led teaching. The project established an integrated digital ecosystem comprising cameras, drones, tablets, printers, audiovisual tools, and advanced computing equipment that supports teaching, learning, production, documentation, and exhibition across all levels of study. This investment has had an immediate and transformative impact on student learning, allowing individual access to equipment, deeper engagement with digital and hybrid practices, and the successful realisation of ambitious projects ranging from first-year video and land art to postgraduate AI-based and interactive installations. Beyond digital-focused modules, the enhanced infrastructure has strengthened overall curriculum delivery, expanded digital literacy, and supported professional skill development, positioning the Department at the forefront of digital creativity and innovation while providing a robust foundation for future growth.



Students in the computer studio busy with their digital painting projects.

Student Achievements

Sebotse Selamulela and Linde Kriel were jointly **awarded the Dot Vermeulen Prize for Best Fourth-Year Student** in Fine Arts at the 2025 Humanities Prizegiving. Sebotse Selamulela's mini-exhibition was titled ***In Search of Home: Objects, Devotion, Religious Exchange***. Linde Kriel's mini-exhibition was entitled ***Sacred offerings***.

Graduate Student Exhibition at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery (2025).

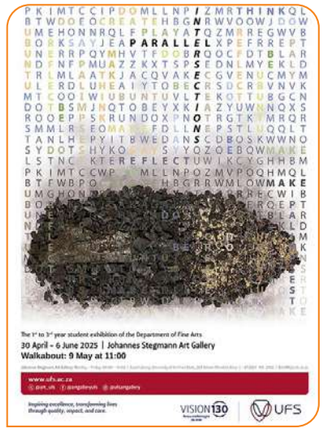
Annual student exhibition, *Parallel Intersections*, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery (2025).



Sebotse Selamulela after receiving the Dot Vermeulen Prize for Best Fourth-Year Student.



An artwork of Sebotse Selamulela at the Graduate Student Exhibition.



Poster and invitation for the Annual Student Exhibition, Parallel Intersections.

Attached to the soil: International student collaborative exhibition

Louis Kruger, Janine Allen and Prof Peter Glendinning collaborated to realise the international exhibition of second-year photography as part of the Global Youth Advancement Network (International Studies and Programmes), Michigan State University, *Attached to the Soil* (2023-2025) and in collaboration with North-West University. The output of the engagement is lectures, presentations, a written piece and an exhibition of student artworks from the University of the Free State published on the Michigan State University platform. Dr Louisemarie Combrinck was invited to write an accompanying exhibition statement for the UFS contribution.

Sasol New Signature Art Competition

Every year, the Department of Fine Arts is proud to see current and alumni students selected as finalists in the SASOL New Signatures art competition. This prestigious competition, with an exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum, is an excellent stepping stone and opportunity for emerging artists to showcase their work. The artists associated with the Department included in the 2025 finalist exhibition were as follows:

Alumni and postgraduate students:

- Linde Kriel
- Sebotse Selamulela
- Teboho Mokhothu
- Mikayla Swartz
- Micaela Balie
- Sibenoxolo Foji

Undergraduate students:

- Helen Stewardson
- Tinyiko Sekobi



Tenyiko Sekobi: What was never meant to be known. Stone Lithograph, 51cm x 65cm, Edition 2.



Micaela Balie: Ghost in the machine. Digital drawing and photography, Edition 1 of 5, 90cm x 60cm.



Linde Kriel: Unspoken sacrifice. Pyrolised apples, cloth, burnt wooden bowl and altar, 80cm x 118cm x 50cm.



Sebotse Selamulela: Morongwa (The one who is sent). Perspex, candle wax, wicks, carpet imprint and beads, 2 part, 121cm x 70cm, 114cm x 70cm.



Helen Stewardson: It is just a game. Ceramics, 32cm x 120cm x 60cm.



Mikayla Swartz: Consumed: A self-portrait I & II. Photography on Fabriano, Edition 1 of 1, 2 part (2), 102cm x 75cm.

Miné Kleynhans, alumnus from the Department of Fine Arts and SASOL New Signatures overall winner of 2024, unveiled her own solo exhibition at the 2025 finalist show at the Pretoria Art Museum. As Kleynhans described, the exhibition titled *Augury After Autogogues* "playfully and satirically stages a kind of speculative mysticism that indulges the sovereignty of 'personal truth'. In a time when shared systems of belief are breaking down, and facts are met with scepticism, the exhibition imagines the advent of the Autogogue: A self-guided mystic who looks inward for meaning, interpreting the world through emotion, affect, and intuition."

Teaching

Richmond Land Art Project 2025

The Department continued the highly successful and prolific Richmond Land Art project in 2025, led by Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans and Lyrene Kühn-Botma. This year, the project was joined by Selom Kudjie, a Ghanaian artist and curator at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art in Tamale, and Abrie Fourie, a South African artist based in Berlin and co-owner of MAPSA.

The project was once again a great success, with second-year BA Fine Arts students producing introspective, confrontational, and thought-provoking works in the landscape. The Department was also delighted to make use of equipment acquired through the digitalisation funds for this project. All student land art was documented using the newly acquired drone. This aerial perspective offered new ways of engaging with the works, enriching and strengthening each student's practice.

Presentations were delivered by all participating lecturers, artists, curators, and students. This initiative forms part of the Department's ongoing commitment to fostering meaningful artistic connections between South Africa and Ghana. In addition, students and participants each created a hand-bound book during a bookmaking workshop.



Tankiso Morabe's land art project.

Video Art projects

First- and second-year students completed video art projects in 2025. First-year students explored the theme of the Anthropocene while second-year students undertook a thematically self-directed video art project designed to prepare them for senior-level study in their third year. In these projects, students were introduced to shooting with DSLR and mirrorless cameras, the use of video, photographs, and audio in the digital artmaking process, and editing in Adobe Premiere Pro, with an emphasis on conceptual development and independent research. Collectively, these projects strengthened students' digital literacy and readiness for advanced studio practice.

Visiting international artists

The BA Fine Arts programme was enriched by workshops and critique sessions with the artists Tina Marais from France and Prof Magda Sebøn from Poland. Olga Speakers, the curator from the AVA gallery in Cape Town, also joined the students for a critique session.



Olga Speakers and Tina Marias in a critique session with third-year student Cailyn Nuttall.



Tina Marais and Magda Sebøn in critique sessions with BA Fine Art students.



Soft sculpture workshop with Tina Marais.



Paper-making workshop with Magda Sebøn.

Final year (fourth year) BA Fine Arts research projects and exhibitions

The final-year (fourth-year) students completed a practice-based research project comprising a mini dissertation and a mini exhibition held at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery. A published exhibition catalogue designed by the students accompanied the exhibition. The research projects are idiosyncratic and stem from the lived experiences of the researchers. The artworks will be on public display at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery in February 2026.

Two outstanding research projects of 2025 were the following:

Ilse Greeff's cutting-edge research project and exhibition were entitled *Matrix Matters: form and transformation*. The exhibition comprises mixed-media sculpture, installation, video, and photography. It is informed by Greeff's early life experiences, specifically a complex mother-child relationship. The body of work becomes a palimpsest of her transformative journey as a child, an adult, a mother, and an artist.

Lizka Fouché had a prolific exhibition, "After the Hunt", that dealt with the post-traumatic stress experienced by members of a South African anti-poaching unit. She also explored secondary trauma and her own role as an artist interacting with members of the anti-poaching unit.

Research Projects

Both Prof von Maltitz and Johandi du Plessis received funding from Red Clay Studio and the University of the Free State for their artist residencies at Red Clay Studio in Tamale, Ghana.

Bontle Tau submitted her MAFA dissertation titled *The African Polyglot: Of Autobiography and Fictional Perspectives on Identity*.

Janine Allen received funding for the African Mountainscapes conference and the exhibition *Visual Languages / Visuele Tale*.

Research Outputs

Articles (accredited)

Lyrene Kühn-Botma produced two accredited articles.

Kühn-Botma, Lyrene. 2025. Art, Images, and their Media as Sites of Memorialisation. *Critical Arts*, *39*(1-2), 203-217. https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2023.2284220

Kühn-Botma, Lyrene. 2025. That which remains: Memorialisation in art and the 'living' melancholy object. *Image & Text*, (39), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.17159/2617-3255/2025/n39a15

Creative Outputs (accredited by the DHET)

Prof Janine Allen's series of artworks, "The Aura of Corona", was accepted as an international creative output by the DHET.

Creative Outputs (solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and art residencies)

Du Plessis-Kleynhans, J. *Red Clay Artist Residency*, Tamale, Ghana, July 2025.

Du Plessis-Kleynhans, J. *Breaking Ground: A Stethoscape Exhibition*, Group Exhibition, Free State Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Du Plessis-Kleynhans, J. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Academy for Science and Art, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.



Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans, Crosslines, Series of 3 photographs.

Du Plessis-Kleynhans, J. *Vuleka Art Competition* (Finalist), Belville Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, 2025.

Kühn-Botma, L. *Breaking Ground: A Stethoscape Exhibition*, Group Exhibition, Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Kühn-Botma, L. *The Marks we Make*, Group Exhibition with The Printing Girls, Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Kühn-Botma, L. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Academy for Science and Art, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

Kühn-Botma, L. *A Garden of Expression*, Group Exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

Von Maltitz, A. *Drawing the Line*, Solo exhibition, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, 2025.

Von Maltitz, A. *Uprooted/Rerooted,* Three-person show with artists Tina Marias (France) and Magda Sebøn (Poland). Johanes Stegmann Art Gallery, Bloemfontein, 2025.

Von Maltitz, A. *Red Clay Artist Residency*, Tamale, Ghana, 2025.

Allen, J. *New World*, Solo exhibition, Glen Carlou Gallery, Klapmuts, 2025.

Allen, J. *Visual languages*, Group exhibition, SA Academy of Science and Art Gallery, Pretoria, 2025.

Allen, J. *Breaking ground*, Group exhibition, Vrystaat National Art Festival, Bloemfontein, 2025.

Krüger, L. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Academy of Science and Art, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

Krüger, L. *Breaking Ground*, Group Exhibition, Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.



Visual Languages / Visuele Tale exhibition



Louis Krüger, Pleiades, on show at the Visual Languages / Visuele Tale exhibition, 2025.



Johandi du Plessis, Tipping Point (Detail), on show at the Visual Languages / Visuele Tale Exhibition, 2025.

Conference Papers/Posters

Prof Janine Allen presented a paper at the UNESCO-sponsored South African Mountainscapes International Conference, Champagne Castle, KwaZulu-Natal, under the session "Mountainscapes and the Anthropocene". She presented the article "Playing on mountains and with microbes: Generative edges and the tenebrescent imagination".

Conference Proceedings

Prof Janine Allen chaired a session at the South African Mountainscapes International Conference, Champagne Castle, KwaZulu-Natal.

Engaged Scholarship

Janine Allen, Louis Kruger and artist Jan van der Merwe published the catalogue *Visual languages / Visuele Tale*. Pretoria: South Africa Academy of Science and Art & the University of the Free State.



Janine Allen and Glen Carlou Art Gallery published the catalogue: Allen, J. & Swart, C. 2025. *New World*. Klapmuts: Glen Carlou Art Gallery.

Janine Allen was guest editor for a special edition of *Image and Text* entitled "Stairways and Ruins", and co-published the special edition editorial: Combrinck, L., Allen. J., & Lotz, C. 2025. Special selection editorial. *Image and Text*, Tshwane: School of the Arts, University of Pretoria, pp.1-7.

Janine Allen's digital collage, entitled Digitales Medica, was presented as part of Prof Amanda Werner's inaugural lecture, "Navigating change within organisations: The human element", at Nelson Mandela University.

Janine Allen is a member of SANAVA.

Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans was invited as external examiner for the third-year module, Professional Practice, of the Department of Visual Arts, School of Art, University of Pretoria.

Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans was invited to be the opening speaker for the ***Annual Graduates Exhibition*** at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery.

Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans was invited to serve as a judge in the Visual Arts section of the Goudveld High School Language and Art Festival, which included schools from the Free State.

Janine Allen was invited to review creative outputs for the Department of Higher Education.

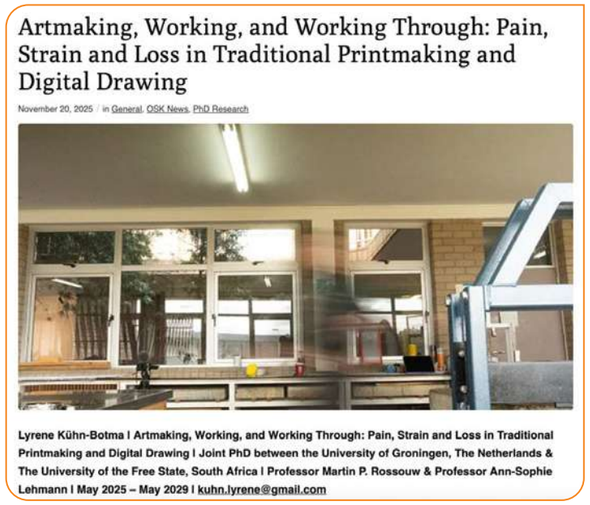
Janine Allen was invited to serve as a reviewer for bursary applications for the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust.

Lyrene Kühn-Botma had the opportunity to review the book titled *Contact: Art and the Pull of Print* by Jennifer L. Roberts. This book review was published in the esteemed German journal for Art History: Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte: Kühn-Botma, Lyrene. "In Praise of Process" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 88, no. 3, 2025, pp. 452-456. https://doi.org/10.1515/zkg-2025-3013

Lyrene Kühn-Botma attended an Expert Workshop at the University of Groningen on the theme of *Linen, Paper, Silk: Ecologies of Artist's Ground Materials*. This expert workshop involved many international researchers, including those from Great Britain, Austria, and the Netherlands, and found collaboration between practice-led and materiality research with theoretical research. Apart from the invited researchers, the workshop also featured interactions among weavers, book restorers, and artists.

Lyrene Kühn-Botma was invited by the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of the Free State to complete a commissioned lithograph print to celebrate the Department's 60th anniversary. The created print thematised the Wynand Mouton Building at the University of the Free State. She was also invited to curate an exhibition showcasing the Department's rich history of academic excellence and prolific theatre productions since its inception. This exhibition was on display at the 2025 Vrystaat Arts Festival in the Scaena Theatre Foyer.

Upon enrolling at the University of Groningen towards her joint PhD degree, Lyrene Kühn-Botma joined the National Research School for Art History. https://onderzoekschoolkunstgeschiedenis.nl/artmaking-working-and-working-through-pain-strain-and-loss-in-traditional-printmaking-and-digital-drawing/


Artmaking, Working, and Working Through: Pain, Strain and Loss in Traditional Printmaking and Digital Drawing

November 20, 2025 / in General, OSK News, PhD Research

Lyrene Kühn-Botma I Artmaking, Working, and Working Through: Pain, Strain and Loss in Traditional Printmaking and Digital Drawing I Joint PhD between the University of Groningen, The Netherlands & The University of the Free State, South Africa I Professor Martin P. Rossouw & Professor Ann-Sophie Lehmann I May 2025 – May 2029 I kuhn.lyrene@gmail.com

Lyrene Kuhn-Botma, PhD project published on OSK's website.

Louis Krüger was invited to serve as a judge for the Visual Arts competition at the 2025 Bloem Show (Bloemfontein, South Africa), which showcased artworks by school pupils (Grade RR–Grade 12) and adults.

Louis Krüger delivered the opening speech for the solo exhibition of South African artist Lisa Ledwick titled *Soliloquy: The Untold Story of Sleeping Beauty's Dreams* at Oliewenhuis Art Museum on 15 July 2025.



Louis Krüger opening Lisa Ledwick's exhibition, Soliloquy: the Untold Story of Sleeping Beauty's Dreams.

Louis Krüger collaborated with the Department of Astrophysics of the University of the Free State to install a new addition to the permanent exhibition at the Boyden Observatory, as part of an ongoing effort to celebrate, showcase, and educate the public about the historic contribution to astrophysics made at the observatory. The latest addition is titled *287541 Photographic Plates (1885-1980)*.

National and International Collaboration

Apart from the international ties with Ibrahim Mahama of Ghana, the *Attached to the Soil* project with Michigan State University, and the other international collaborations already mentioned in the report, Lyrene Kühn-Botma was invited to serve as an associated researcher on the *Curious Hands* project. The *Curious Hands* project investigates how creative skills and material knowledge are taught and learned in different educational settings. Spearheaded by Prof Ann-Sophie Lehmann and her team of researchers, including Vanessa Bakhuizen-van t'Hoogt, this project continues to develop as part of the two principal PhD candidates' research topics. https://curioushands.nl/

Lyrene Kühn-Botma enrolled in a joint PhD programme between the University of the Free State and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. At the University of Groningen, Kühn-Botma is supervised by Prof Ann-Sophie Lehmann, a trailblazer and seminal researcher in Material Culture Studies. Lehmann's introduction of the Artistic PhD track at the University of Groningen is attracting significant interest from creative practitioners globally. As part of the agreement between the two institutions, in October 2025, Kühn-Botma left for the Netherlands on a six-month study leave.

While in Groningen, Kühn-Botma has partnered with a third institution, the Minerva Art Academy at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, to continue not only her theoretical research but also her creative research. Kühn-Botma's stay abroad is set until the end of March 2026. In the first three months, she has attended master workshops, presented at Colloquia, joined the National Research School for Art History (OSK), and continued her practice-based research in the Lithography workshop at Minerva Art Academy, in close partnership with Stone Lithography expert Marius Langerak.



Lyrene Kühn Botma's lithograph is being processed at the Minerva Academy, Netherlands.



Lyrene Kühn Botma. 2025. Pseudo Bezoar Scour. Lithograph, 80,5cm x 73cm.



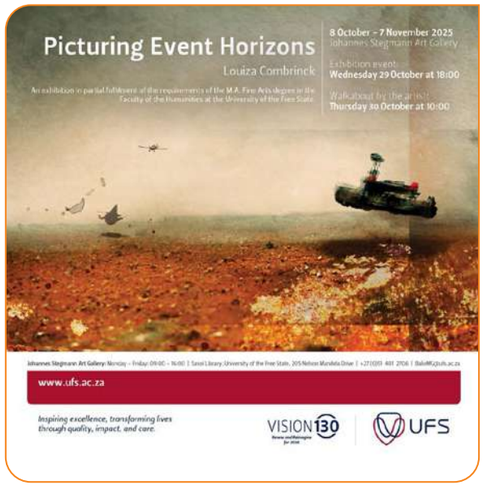
Lyrene Kühn Botma in the Netherlands.

Postgraduate Students

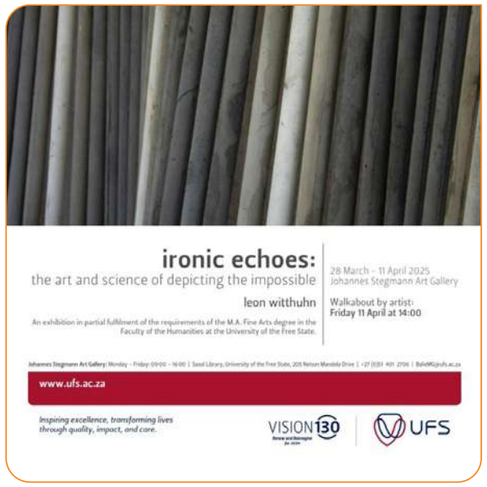
Louiza Combrinck had her MA Fine Arts exhibition, *Picturing Event Horizons*, at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery.

Combrink, L. *Breaking Ground,* Group exhibition, Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Leon Witthühn held his MA exhibition, *Ironic Echoes*, at the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery.



Invitation: Louiza Combrinck's exhibition, Picturing Event Horizons.



Invitation: Leon Witthühn's exhibition, Ironic Echoes.

Witthuhn, L. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Akademie van Wetenskap en Kuns, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

MA Fine Arts student, Mikayla Swartz, was invited to participate in several exhibitions in 2025:

Swartz, M. *Graduates Exhibition*, Group Exhibition, Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Swartz, M. *Breaking Ground,* Group exhibition, Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 2025.

Swartz, M. *Sasol New Signatures Art Competition,* Finalist Group Exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum, South Africa, 2025.

Swartz, M. Surface tension and the undercurrents of being, Group Exhibition, Aardklop Arts Festival, Potchefstroom, South Africa, 2025.

Swartz, M. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Akademie van Wetenskap en Kuns, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

Swartz, M. *The Marks We Keep*, The Printing Girls Group Exhibition, South Africa, 2025.

PhD student Natasha Bezuidenhout participated in three prominent exhibitions:

Bezuidenhout, N. *AbstRact - Synchrony Revealed*, Group Exhibition, Jan Rupert Art Centre, Graaff-Reinet, South Africa, 2025.

Bezuidenhout, N. *Bag Factory Artist' Studios Art Commission*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2025.

Bezuidenhout, N. *Visual Languages*, Group Exhibition, SA Akademie van Wetenskap en Kuns, Pretoria, South Africa, 2025.

Other Activities

A new lecturer, Louis Krüger, was appointed on 1 March 2025. He specialises in Digital Arts and Drawing.

Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans was appointed as Acting Programme Director from September 2025 to March 2026.

Staff (2025)

Prof Janine Allen	AHD, Painting, Drawing and Conceptual Art
Prof Willem Boshoff	Extraordinary Professor, Conceptual and Word Art
Prof Adelheid von Maltitz	Associate Professor, Sculpture and Conceptual Art
Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans	Lecturer and Acting Programme Director, Intermedia, Conceptual and Installation Art
Lyrene Kühn-Botma	Lecturer and Programme Director, Printmaking and Conceptual Art
Louis Krüger	Lecturer, New Media and Conceptual Art
Bontle Tau	Lecturer, Performance Art and Conceptual Art
Petrus Morata	Technical Assistant
Tanya Sarlius-Meyer	Professional Officer
Waldo Human	Technical Specialist

Department of

Hebrew



Academic Head of Department
Prof Tshokolo J Makutoane
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Overview of 2025

The Department of Hebrew is responsible for research and teaching of the Hebrew language and culture within the broader context of the Near East. We are committed to advancing the field of Hebrew to an understanding of and appreciation for the theory, methodology, and insights of modern linguistics alongside traditional Semitic philology. We are also committed to the internationalisation of our field, especially throughout Africa. To that end, we are bringing the study of Hebrew to Africa through innovative pedagogical methods that take into account the differing linguistic backgrounds and cultural contexts of African students. We are especially interested in empowering Bible translators on the African continent to gain the competency to translate the Bible from the source texts. We also want to promote an understanding of the shared roots of Judaism and Christianity, especially among students who lack an appreciation for the richness of Jewish culture and history. In our endeavours, we are further committed to the principles of excellence in research and teaching, equity, openness, and internationalisation, especially in Africa.

In addition to postgraduate qualifications, we are responsible for the postgraduate programmes in Hebrew, namely BA Honours, MA, and PhD with specialisation in Hebrew, as well as for the postgraduate programmes in Bible Translation that are housed in the Faculty of Theology, namely, the MA Bible Translation, MA Bible Translation Management and the PhD Bible Translation. We focus on the history, theory and practice of Bible translation within the context of religious translation, including research on orality, biblical performance criticism, paratexts/metatexts and key cultural terms. Our research involves both modern Bible translation and the earliest ancient translations into Samaritan Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac and Latin.

These are our stories.

Achievements

In 2025, Prof Tshokolo J. Makutoane, the Academic Head of the Department of Hebrew, demonstrated significant scholarly and administrative leadership through a diverse range of academic activities. Prof Makutoane began serving as chair of the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies, hosting the society's Annual Conference at the UFS in September 2025. He remained active in the international and national conferences, presenting on the complexity of Basotho oral genres in the translation of Psalm 79 at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference and participating in the Africa Oral Bible Translation Consultative Conference.His research profile was highlighted by the publication in the *Journal for Semitics*, which explored left-dislocation constructions in Biblical Hebrew and Sesotho and their implications for pedagogy and linguistic typology, and by the arrangement and editing of a thematic volume for *Acta Theologica* on recent developments in oral Bible translation. His expertise was sought after for high-level peer reviews for journals *Acta Theologica*, *Language Matters*, and the *Journal for Semitics*, and by conducting an external programme review for the BA Honours in Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of South Africa and a book endorsement for a new publication on Oral Bible Translation in Southern Siberia.



Prof Tshokolo Makutoane

In 2025, Prof Tania Notarius continued to demonstrate a strong, multifaceted scholarly profile in Ancient Near Eastern and Hebrew studies, maintaining her status as a rated researcher with the South African National Research Foundation (NRF). She advanced her work on the project "Ancient Northwest Semitic languages as an areal development", an initiative secured by the NRF Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR) Award. Her international presence is reflected in her role as a Mercator Fellow at Göttingen University for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-supported "Edition des ugaritischen poetischen Textkorpus" (EUPT) project, and as an affiliated researcher with the Copenhagen Ugaritic Corpus, a cooperative project with the Epp Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). Her academic contributions spanned teachingundergraduate and Honours modules and supervising MA and PhD theses. Prof Notarius actively influenced the global academic community by serving on PhD assessment committees for the University of Copenhagen, University of Uppsala, and the Theological University of Utrecht. Her editorial impact included ongoing service as the Biblical Studies Book Review Editor for *Hebrew Studies*, as well as peer-review work for prestigious journals such as *Vetus Testamentum* and the *Journal of Semitic Studies*. She published six articles in prestigious peer-reviewed journals, edited books, and participated in international conferences.



Prof Tania Notarius

In 2025, Dr Kevin Chau demonstrated exceptional leadership in both pedagogical innovation and specialised research in the fields of linguistics and environmental ethics. He co-edited the milestone volume *Perspectives on Nature and Environmental Ethics in the Hebrew Bible* (Mohr Siebeck, 2026), contributing a chapter that applies fresh perspectives to Jacob's farewell poem in Genesis 49 through the analysis of oral features and metaphorical coherence. His research further expanded into cognitive linguistics with a forthcoming chapter on metaphor for the Society of Biblical Literature Resource Series and a collaborative project on metonymy for the *Oxford Handbook of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. A strong proponent of student development, Dr Chau co-presented a joint paper at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting with his PhD student, Luke Bert, which served as the foundation for their co-authored contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. In his teaching, he implemented a holistic curriculum designed to decolonise Hebrew instruction and support diverse learning styles by incorporating diagrammatic materials for visual thinkers.



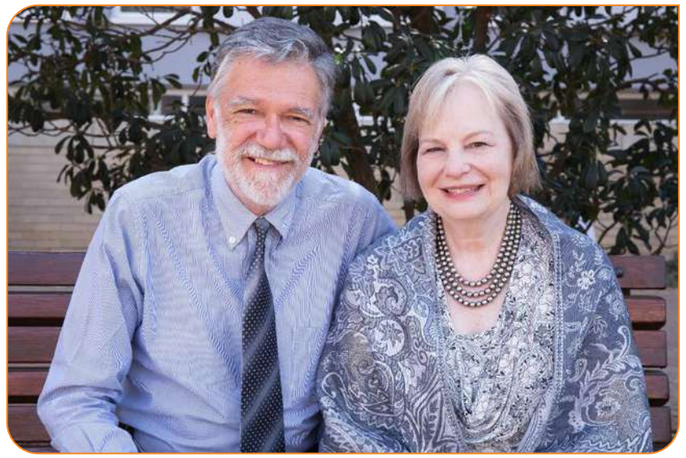
Dr Kevin Chau and Luke Bert at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting (Boston).

Prof Jacobus Naudé and Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé published three invited chapters for edited volumes. Their chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Censorship* is entitled "Religious Texts, Translation, and Censorship." The chapter provides a new analysis of the manifestations of censorship, especially new forms of censorship, in the translation of religious texts. New censorship (as opposed to regulatory [repressive], interventionist, or institutional censorship) involves constitutive or structural censorship, in which a set of unwritten rules shapes social interaction and communication by regulating what can be said by whom, to whom, how, and in what context. New censorship is thus a form of preventive or prior censorship. In religious translation, new censorship may involve omitting theological concepts that would be unacceptable to the translation's target audience, such as translations of the New Testament into Muslim-majority languages that use other terms for "son of God" to avoid offence. Market censorship may also be involved in cases where it is clear that the targeted readership strongly prefers a particular kind of translation, such as the 2020 Afrikaans Bible translation for denominations that insist that all messianic referents in the Old Testament (e.g., "angel of the LORD") must be capitalised ("Angel of the LORD") to indicate the messianic interpretation: A special "capital letter" edition of the Bible was produced to avoid market loss. Meta-censorship involves the suppression or removal of all information indicating that censorship has taken place, as illustrated in Bible translations such as the English Standard Version, which replaced "slave" with "servant" to avoid societal condemnation of the Bible. By removing footnotes from previous editions that explained the source text term and its meanings in the ancient and modern worlds, the translation obscured the fact that censorship for the modern reader had occurred by softening the term from "slave" to "servant".

Prof Jacobus Naudé and Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé also published a chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Translation Studies* entitled "Parallel Corpora of the Bible in Minority Languages". Translations

of the Bible offer significant opportunities to create parallel translation corpora, including massive parallel corpora, given that the Bible is among the most widely translated books worldwide. In addition, the division of the biblical text into chapters and verses allows accurate, electronic alignment of parallel translations. This chapter provides an overview of parallel translations of the Bible, beginning with the first polyglot parallel Bible dating to the third century CE, the *Hexapla* of Origen, a massive handwritten codex (book) with six columns (Hebrew Old Testament, Hebrew transliterated into Greek characters, followed by four different Greek translations), to the first electronic parallel Bible corpus in the late 1990s. Of particular importance is the chapter's emphasis on the use of minority language Bible translations in parallel Bible corpora, especially the use of Paratext (a specialised Bible translation software) for producing minority language parallel corpora. Corpus-based comparative studies of the lexical content of Bible translations into minority languages can inform us about the diverse translation strategies adopted by translators, the impact of the Bible translations (or lack thereof) on the expressive range of the languages, and how attitudes towards the languages and their social and cultural status have shifted from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, especially with respect to their status as national or official languages. The chapter furthermore poses significant questions concerning how oral Bible translations in minority languages (that is, translations that are not written but exist only in audio and/or video) and sign language translations (which are video translations) can be incorporated into future parallel Bible corpora.

Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Prof Jacobus Naudé were invited to contribute a chapter to the Festschrift of Prof Geoffrey Khan, the retiring Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, entitled *Interconnected Traditions: Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*. Their chapter, "A Case for Distributive Quantification of *kol* in Biblical Hebrew", responds to claims by the linguist Edit Doron in 2020 that the Biblical Hebrew word *kol* has a collective meaning ("all") and never a distributive meaning ("each, every"), and is a determiner rather than a quantifier. Their chapter presents compelling and definitive linguistic arguments against each of Doron's claims, using Biblical Hebrew data to demonstrate that *kol* has a syntactically determined collective and distributive meaning, and is a quantifier rather than a determiner.

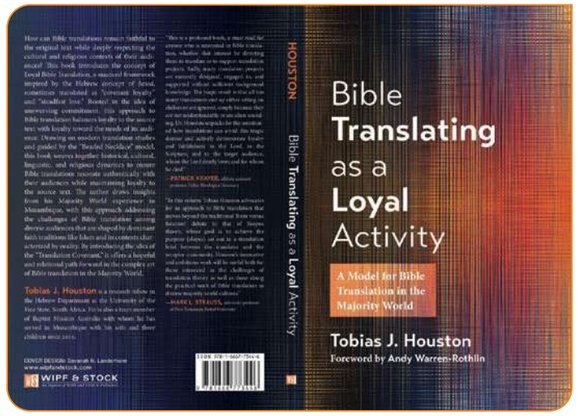


Prof Jacobus Naudé and Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé

The Department is proud of the achievements of its research fellows.

Dr Emmylou Grosser joined Mesa Scholars, a global theological cohort serving under-resourced institutions and students, as a scholar and educator.

Dr Tobias Houston published a book, *Bible Translating as a Loyal Activity: A Model for Bible Translation in the Majority World*. The book by Tobias Houston introduces the framework of Loyal Bible Translation, which is deeply rooted in the Hebrew concept of *hesed* (covenant loyalty or steadfast love). This approach seeks to balance unwavering commitment to the source text with an equal loyalty to the needs and cultural contexts of the target audience. Drawing on his extensive experience in Mozambique, Houston utilises the "Beaded Necklace" model and the "Translation Covenant" to navigate the complexities of translating for diverse, oral-preference audiences, including those shaped by Islamic faith traditions.





Dr Tobias Houston

In addition to publishing a monograph and a research article, Dr Tobias Houston undertook library research at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in England, and at the National Library of Scotland. The purpose of this research was to gather archival materials related to his study of historical Bible translations in the Ciyawo language in Mozambique. Dr Tobias Houston signed a book contract with Bloomsbury Academic and is currently preparing a new edition of a vital ethnographic and historical work originally authored by an African Bible translator, focusing on the editing of the original text and the preparation of a new introductory chapter and a fresh English translation. Tobias also submitted a contribution to the thematic volume of *Acta Theologica* dedicated to Oral Bible Translation.

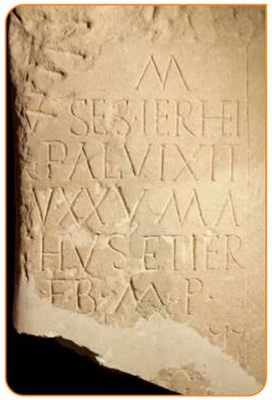


Dr Sophia Pitcher

For the Department's research fellow, Dr Sophia Pitcher, this year became a milestone. Not only did she present five conference papers at four international conferences, but for the first time, one of her conference presentations on her interdisciplinary research was delivered to an audience of specialists in prosodic phonology, positioning her as an expert on her research topic. Additionally, this year, Sophia was invited to serve as a reviewer for the Journal of Semitic Studies (a top journal in the field of Semitic Studies) and had a productive publishing year, including a chapter in an edited volume and an article in conference proceedings. An article to be published in a Brill journal was also accepted and should appear in the Spring of 2026. Finally, Dr Pitcher continues to teach Biblical Hebrew at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN (USA).

In 2025, the research fellow, Dr Emanuela Valeriani, continued her research activities at the Centre for Advanced Studies Beyond Canon (Universität Regensburg). In October 2025, she began a full-time postdoctoral position (TV-L E13) at the Faculty of Theology, University of Regensburg, within the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-funded project *Exploring Textual Fluidity in Parabiblical Literature* (March 2025 to February 2028). The project investigates textual fluidity in parabiblical literature through text-critical analysis, material philology, and hermeneutical reflection. In 2025, she presented papers at the International Conference, *Entangled Traditions. Parabiblica about the End of Times* (Bucharest) and at the Regensburg–Prague Post-Doctoral Seminar in Early Christianity. She published the peer-reviewed article *L'Apocalittica e la questione della violenza* (Credere Oggi XLV, 3/2025) and co-edited the

volume *Dramatis Personae* (Bari 2025). She also served on the Scientific Committee of the International Conference, *"The Palatine Chapel in Palermo"* (September 2025). In 2025, she served as Chair of the European Association of Biblical Studies Research Unit, The Language of Colours in the Bible, and as Chair of the International Society of Biblical Literature Research Unit, *Apocalyptic Literature*. On 18 December 2025, she organised the workshop, *The Palatine Chapel in Palermo (12-13 September 2025): Results and Open Questions* at the University of Regensburg, fostering interdisciplinary discussion on the interaction between biblical, parabiblical, and visual traditions.



Latin Inscription and Upper Portion of Aramaic Inscription, IDR III/1 167 (PAT 0994) Photo N.E. Greene and J.M. Hutton, WPAIP (2016).

In 2025, affiliated researcher Prof Jeremy M. Hutton significantly elevated the Department's international standing through a series of high-level publications and invited presentations at major European forums. At the *Palmyre et ses épigraphistes* conference in Paris, he discussed the critical documentation of Palmyrene epigraphy amid the Syrian civil war, highlighting the use of Reflectance Transformation Imaging and the potential for AI to decode ancient scribal culture. At the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament triennial conference in Berlin, Prof Hutton engaged in the debate over Northern Hebrew in the Iron II epigraphic corpus. By challenging assumptions of scribal uniformity, he provided a sophisticated account of geographically based dialectal distinctions, reinforcing the Department's leadership in historical linguistics.

Beyond Palmyra, Prof Hutton co-authored a substantial study in *Maarav* proposing a "franchise" model for the development of Iron Age "national" scripts, suggesting these were products of shared training regimens rather than top-down political identity. He also contributed to the study of the Books of Samuel with a chapter examining the materiality and text-critical issues of the David and Goliath narrative.

Dr Bronwen Cleaver published a groundbreaking monograph, *Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia: A Design for a Performance-Based Oral Bible Translation in the Southern Altai Language (Siberia)*. This book offers a specialised framework for contextualised performance-based translation, specifically designed for oral-preference learners in the Republic of Altai in Russia. By merging Oral Bible Translation with local artistic genres, the work provides a model for making Scripture culturally resonant and impactful.

Research fellow Prof Lénart de Regt served as an external examiner and reviewer for the MA thesis titled *Focus Particles in Biblical Hebrew: Semantics and Distribution* by Alexey Kozlov. This role involved sitting on the Examination Committee at the Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies at the National Research University in Moscow.

Student Achievements

The postgraduate students of the Department of Hebrew demonstrated significant achievements.

Brian Baucom graduated with a PhD in Hebrew in December 2025. The title of his thesis was "Hexaplaric Readings of the First Palestinian Catena of Psalms 1-26 in the Light of Editorial Theory" and was supervised by Prof J.A. Naudé and Prof C.L. Miller-Naudé. The thesis is the first study to examine the First Palestinian Catena (an exegetical commentary by early church leaders) to identify a primary source of revisionary readings of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) within the exegetical extracts of various authors in the catena. The study was recommended for publication in the series De Septuaginta Investigationes, published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in Germany, by one of the international external examiners.



Dr Gift Nyirenda.

Gift Nyirenda graduated with a PhD in Bible Translation in April 2025. The title of his thesis was "Intersemiotic Bible Translation for an Orally Dominant Culture: The Case of Translating Lamentations into Nsenga" and was supervised by Prof C.L. Miller-Naudé and Prof J.A. Naudé. The thesis demonstrates that an intersemiotic approach (oral, visual, and written) is crucial for translating biblical texts. By analysing traditional laments in Nsenga, he was able to produce an entirely new oral translation of the biblical Book of Lamentations that can be utilised as a lament by the Nsenga people. Dr Nyirenda works with the Bible Society of Zambia as the Translation Manager, overseeing the Translation Department.

Nebeyou Terefe Alemu is a PhD Bible Translation student who is writing on the cultural and linguistic alterity in the Amharic translations of the Book of Revelation, supervised by Prof C.L. Miller-Naudé and Prof J.A. Naudé. He chaired a session of the "Ethiopic Bible and Literature Section" at the Society of Biblical Literature conference in Boston (24 November 2025).

Jeremiah Zuo, a PhD student supervised by Dr Chau, presented a paper, "A Homogenous Metaphorical Reading of Psalm 38", at the Southern African Society for Near Eastern Studies (9 September 2025).

Fianarana Rampanjato, a PhD student supervised by Prof J.A. Naudé and Prof C.L. Miller-Naudé, presented his MA research at the Southern African Society for Near Eastern Studies in a paper entitled "The Morphosyntax of the Qumran Hebrew infinitive Construct in 1QS and 1QM" (9 September 2025).

Michael Seheri, MA student supervised by Prof C.L. Miller-Naudé and Prof J.A. Naudé, presented a paper, "Ancient Near Eastern/Old Testament Prophetism – Divination and Traditional (South) African Traditional Society: Parting or Meeting of the Ways?", Southern African Society for Near Eastern Studies (9 September 2025).

Rachel Grimm, a postgraduate student, was a member of a panel on Biblical Hebrew pedagogy entitled "Imagine Universal Assessment of Proficiency in Biblical Hebrew (Working Group)" sponsored by the National Association of Professors of Hebrew at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual meeting in Boston (22 November 2025).



Rev. John Motswetsa.

In 2025, John Motswetsa obtained a Master of Arts (MA) in Bible Translation from the University of the Free State (UFS). In this mini-dissertation, "Orality and Performance in Bible Translation Post-Colonial South Africa: A Call to Worship in Revelation 5", Motswetsa integrates Biblical Performance Criticism with the oral-written tradition and advances translation theory by proposing a performance translation of Revelation 5 that bridges Jewish Hellenistic and Zulu oral traditions, offering a participatory, culturally resonant model that democratises Scripture in post-colonial South Africa. In recognition of his outstanding academic achievement, he was awarded the Dean's Medal for attaining the highest results in the Faculty of Theology at the master's level. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies (PhD) in Bible Translation.

Motswetsa is the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Greater Soweto District, Johannesburg, having previously served in Mpumalanga among predominantly isiZulu congregations. His research directly contributes to church activities through the methodological integration of biblical translation with oral performance traditions. The performance translation of Revelation 5 functions as both a liturgical and pedagogical tool. By dramatising the text, congregants are invited to actively participate in worship, thereby experiencing scripture as the living word of God. In this way, the translation bridges the gap between ancient text and contemporary oral culture, empowering congregants to embody worship as communal resistance and spiritual transformation.

Rev. Mias Nortier obtained his MA in Hebrew. His dissertation is titled 'Representations of Trauma in Poetic Parallelisms of the Biblical Hebrew Book of Job: A Complexity Theoretical Analysis', which examines how poetic parallelism in the Hebrew text of Job conveys the protagonist's traumatic experiences.



Rev. Motswetsa with his congregation.



Mias Nortier

Applying complexity theory to selected chapters (3, 6, 9-10, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 21, 23-24, 26-31, and 38-42:1-6), the study analyses the dynamic interplay of semantics, syntax, prosody, metaphor, and other poetic devices, revealing how these interconnected linguistic elements create emergent patterns of emotional intensity and theological inquiry. This approach moves beyond traditional reductionist interpretations by integrating insights from orality, semiotics, and emergent systems, offering a holistic understanding of how parallelism both intensifies trauma and shapes the reader's engagement with the text's deeper meanings. The research further compares these features in modern English (NRSV/NRSVue) and Afrikaans (2020) translations to assess how the poetic and emotional nuances are retained, altered, or mitigated. Its primary contribution and novelty lie in being the first sustained application of complexity theory to parallelism in Job, thereby opening new avenues for understanding the intricate relationship between language, emotion, and meaning in Biblical Hebrew poetry. In 2025, Rev Mias presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference with the paper "The Silent Centre of Job: Unity and Diversity in the Complexity of Job 28" and won the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies New Researchers Award.



Job 29:24 – "I smiled on them when they had no confidence; and the light of my countenance they did not extinguish".

Teaching

The Department of Hebrew's mission centres on the high-quality instruction of Northwest Semitic and Afroasiatic languages, including Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This curriculum integrates the study of Ancient Near Eastern culture and history with a focus on its African contexts, while offering specialised postgraduate training in Hebrew linguistics and Bible translation theory. Through rigorous research supervision, the Department fosters innovative scholarship at the MA and PhD levels, equipping students to contribute original insights to the fields of Hebrew studies and Bible translation.

Under the moderation of Dr Kevin Chau, the first-year Biblical Hebrew programme and BA Honours studies have adopted a holistic pedagogical approach that prioritises student success by recognising diverse learning styles. Dr Chau believes that while many students enter with passion, they require explicit instruction in "learning how to learn," particularly through diagrammatic materials that cater to visual thinkers, a group often overlooked by traditional, verbally centric academic materials. At the Honours level, the curriculum is specifically designed to decolonise Hebrew instruction by decoupling it from the English medium. The programme facilitates comparative linguistic discussions that contrast Hebrew with students' native African languages. This approach ensures that future teachers are equipped to provide nuanced, sensitive instruction in global environments where English is not the dominant language.

Prof Tania Notarius continued to contribute to the teaching mission of the Department of Hebrew at the University of the Free State. Her involvement included direct instruction and the moderation of undergraduate modules in Ancient Near East, Hebrew, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Aramaic. In collaboration with Dr Kevin Chau, she taught Hebrew BA Honours modules. Her supervision load included one PhD candidate and two MA students.

The teaching achievements of the research fellows advance the Department's mission worldwide.

Emmylou Grosser participated in the development of workshops on biblical Hebrew poetry for educators and translators. The workshops are designed to challenge and replace the Eurocentric models that predominate globally. As part of this activity, she developed *Reading Biblical Poems: A Workshop Series for Bible Translation*, offered virtually, and "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world—try part-whole poetic thinking: A workshop on the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-18)*" that was presented at the Forge Annual Meeting, Mesa Scholars, Boston, MA.

In 2025, the research fellow Lénart de Regt contributed to the Department's teaching mission through high-level international instruction and postgraduate examination. From 11-24 May, he taught Hebrew Discourse Analysis at the Jerusalem Center for Bible Translators (JCBT). This training was a specialised component of a programme specifically designed for translation consultants.

Dr Emanuela Valeriani acted as a guest lecturer on the Book of Revelation at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology, Rome (29 April 2025) and on The Old Testament Apocrypha at Università Roma Tre – Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, as part of the course *Introduzione alla Bibbia*.

Short Learning Programmes offered

The Hebrew Department does not have any specific short learning programmes. Instead, we use our 'extended' first-year Hebrew modules (HEBR1504 first semester and HEBR1604 first semester) extended over a year to allow occasional students to begin their study of Hebrew. Of particular importance is the enrolment in these Hebrew modules for 'occasional studies' by Sesotho pastors who did not previously have the opportunity for formal university training in Hebrew.

Research Projects

Prof T.J. Makutoane developed his research agenda that combines Sesotho Bible translation and Biblical exegesis. He published a primary research article in the *Journal for Semitics* that explored the pedagogical and typological implications of left dislocation constructions in Biblical Hebrew and Sesotho. This focus on comparative African-Hebrew linguistics was complemented by his presentation at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, where he utilised a complexity approach to examine Basotho oral genres within Sesotho Bible translations.

Prof Tania Notarius (the NRF-rated scholar) continues her international research engagement by cooperating with the Eep Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculty of Theology, as part of her work on the Copenhagen Ugaritic Corpus. She is awarded the Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR) grant for the project titled "Ancient Northwest Semitic languages as an areal development: The Sociolinguistic Approach to the Semitic Languages in the Levant". The project encompasses comprehensive tagging of the Ugaritic alphabetic corpus, as well as research on the languages, genres, and motives of Ugaritic literature. Six research papers have been published in 2025 as an outcome of these grants.

Dr Kevin Chau focuses on cognitive linguistics and metaphor studies. He submitted his contributory chapter "Metaphor" to *Cognitive Linguistics for Biblical Studies: An Introduction* (SBL Resource Series), with a tentative 2026 publication. This highly anticipated volume aims to fill a need in the field of Biblical Hebrew linguistics and in biblical scholarship at large by offering a volume surveying cognitive linguistics specifically for biblical scholars. He is also drafting a contribution to the Oxford Handbook of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible with his PhD student Luke Bert on the importance of metonymy for metaphor interpretation. By co-editing and contributing to *Perspective on Nature and Environmental Ethics in the Hebrew Bible* (Mohr Siebeck, Nov 2026), Dr Chau specifically addresses environmental ethics for the Hebrew Bible.

Prof Jacobus Naudé and Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé have a long-term project on religious translation. In 2025, they published chapters on "Religious Texts, Translation, and Censorship" in the *Routledge Handbook of Translation and Censorship*. The project is funded from the authors' research and NRF incentives.

As part of their long-term project on the corpus translation of religious texts, they published a chapter, "Parallel Corpora of the Bible in Minority Languages," in the *Routledge Handbook of Corpus Translation Studies*. Prof Jacobus Naudé also published an article on "The role of the 1920 trial translation in the development of Afrikaans as a Bible language". The article is based on a long-lost trial edition from 1920 that preceded the 1933 Afrikaans Bible translation. The trial edition was thought to be lost, but Prof Naudé discovered it in the Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church in Stellenbosch. This trial edition shows the development of the Afrikaans church language towards the nationalisation of Afrikaans as an official language in 1925. The project is funded from the authors' research and NRF incentives.

In another long-term project, Prof Miller-Naudé and Prof Naudé are researching the application of linguistic theory to pre-modern Hebrew. In 2025, they published a chapter on "A Case for Distributive Quantification of לכ in Biblical Hebrew." The project is funded from the authors' research and NRF incentives.

Prof Miller-Naudé and Prof Naudé, together with Dr Daniel Wilson (a former PhD student and now a research fellow in the Department), are involved in a project titled "Negative Existential Cycle in Ancient Hebrew". This project examines how ancient Hebrew changed over time by recognising that change occurs in cycles. One publication appeared in 2022 as a chapter in a volume published by the Language Sciences Press (Berlin). Another publication is in press with Uppsala University (Sweden). The project is funded from the authors' research and NRF incentives.

The Department's research contour is significantly strengthened through the work of the research fellows. Beyond publishing a monograph and a research paper, Dr Tobias Houston is preparing a comprehensive update of the landmark 1919 work *Chiikala cha Wayao*, under the working title *The Yaos by Yohanna Abdallah: A Modern Language Edition*. Originally authored by Yohanna Abdallah, a Yawo Anglican clergyman and pioneering Bible translator, the book represents one of the earliest examples of African history written by an African in their own language. The new edition, contracted with Bloomsbury Academic, features updated Ciyawo text along with fresh English and Portuguese translations. In addition to editing the entire volume, Dr Houston is contributing a new introduction and detailed annotations that will highlight Abdallah's significant yet often overlooked contributions to the early Ciyawo Old Testament translation.

In 2025, affiliated researcher Dr Emanuela Valeriani advanced a multi-institutional research agenda focused on the evolution and cultural impact of ancient sacred texts. Beginning in March 2025, she serves as a postdoctoral researcher for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-funded project "Exploring Textual Fluidity in Parabiblical Literature" (2025-2028), a collaborative initiative between the University of Regensburg and Charles University, Prague. This project examines the transmission and variation of parabiblical texts, contributing to the Department's focus on historical-linguistic and textual development.

Parallel to her work on parabiblical fluidity, Dr Valeriani serves as the Co-Director of the "Apocalipsis: un universo de color" research project, based at Universidad Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEU), San Pablo in Madrid. This interdisciplinary project explores the Apocalypse not merely as a theological text, but as a vast cultural, literary, and symbolic universe, bridging ancient religious scholarship with broader humanities perspectives.

Dr Bronwen Cleaver significantly contributed to the Department's research in Bible translation and performance studies with the publication of her monograph, *Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia*. This work establishes a design for performance-based translation within the Southern Altai language, utilising local poetic features and epic story genres to provide oral-preference learners with culturally resonant access to Scripture. By integrating disciplines such as complexity theory, multimodality, and performance criticism, the book offers a practical model for translation teams to engage communities through deep cultural resonance. Her contribution reinforces a research profile dedicated to making Scripture accessible and impactful through the innovative intersection of local genres and oral translation methodologies.

New affiliated research fellows who joined the Department in 2025 expand its research profile. Dr Gudrun Elisabeth Lier brings a focus on Targumic studies and the redaction history of the Pentateuch, specifically within the exegetical context of early Judaism and Christianity. Dr Yitzhaq Feder, the author of *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context and Meaning* (2011) and *Purity and Pollution in the Hebrew Bible: From Embodied Experience to Moral Metaphor* (2022), contributes a distinguished expertise in the intersection of ancient Near Eastern ritual and moral philosophy, with a specific focus on the comparative study of Hittite and Biblical law and the cultural and cognitive foundations of purity.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Makutoane, T.J., and A.S. Motsei. "A Comparison of Left Dislocation Constructions in Biblical Hebrew and Sesotho: Implications for Pedagogy and Linguistic Typology." *Journal for Semitics* 34, no. 1-2 (2025): 16-35.

Notarius, Tania. "Middle Voice in Ugaritic in Historical View." *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics* 17, no. 2 (2025): 1-28.

Notarius, Tania. "Loanwords in the Language of Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry: A Case for Akkadianisms." *Orientalia Suecana* 74 (2025): 136-48.

Notarius, Tania. "Ugaritic *prln* and Hurrian *furullinni* 'Haruspex'." *Göttinger Miszellen zur Ugaritistik* 2 (2025): 1-6.

Notarius, Tania. "Lexicon and Grammar in the Aramaic Land Description Ostraca from Idumea." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 145, no. 1 (2025): 173-90.

Notarius, Tania. "Impersonal Experiential Constructions in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages in a Diachronic Perspective." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 70 (2025): 31-65.

Naudé, Jacobus A. "Die rol van die 1920-proefvertaling in die ontluiking van Afrikaans as 'n Bybeltaal." *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 65, no. 1 (2025): 294-318. https://doi.org/10.17159/2224-7912/2025/v65n1a17.

Cleaver, Bronwen, and Justin Randolph. "Translating and Performing Psalm 133 Using Oral Bible Translation and Local Genres." *The Bible Translator* 76, no. 1 (2025): 73-82.

Houston, Tobias J. "Experimenting with Excellence: Quality Assessment in a Mozambican Oral Bible Translation and Transcription Project." *The Bible Translator* 76, no. 1 (2025): 35-53.

Hutton, Jeremy M., and Nathaniel E. Greene. "The Rise of 'National' Scripts in the Iron Age II: A Proposal." *Maarav* 29, no. 1-2 (2025): 27-119.

Valeriani, Emanuela. "L'Apocalittica e la questione della violenza." *Credere Oggi* 45, no. 3 (2025): 94-107.

Chapters in edited volumes

Notarius, Tania. "'Every Glance of Their Eyes – like a Flame, Two Flames': The Ugaritic Gt ʔ-*m*-*r* 'See' in *Yitmr* KTU 1.2 I 32 Reconsidered." In *Interconnected Traditions: Semitic Languages, Literatures, Cultures*, edited by Aaron D. Hornkohl, Nadia Vidro, Janet C.E. Watson, Eleanor Coghill, Magdalen M. Connolly, and Benjamin M. Outhwaite, 529-53. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2025.

Chau, Kevin. "Brotherly Nature and Nature Metaphors in Jacob's Farewell Poem." In *Perspectives on Nature and Environmental Ethics in the Hebrew Bible*, edited by Kevin Chau. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Miller-Naudé, Cynthia L., and Jacobus A. Naudé. "A Case for Distributive Quantification of לכ in Biblical Hebrew." In *Interconnected Traditions: Semitic Languages, Literatures, Cultures – A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan*, Vol. 1: *Hebrew and the Wider Semitic World*, edited by Aaron D. Hornkohl, Nadia Vidro, Janet C.E. Watson, Eleanor Coghill, Magdalen M. Connolly, and Benjamin M. Outhwaite, 259-90. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures. Cambridge: University of Cambridge and Open Book Publishers, 2025.

Naudé, Jacobus A., and Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. "Religious Texts, Translation, and Censorship." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Censorship*, edited by Denise Merkle and Brian James Baer, 455-74. London: Routledge, 2025.

Naudé, Jacobus A., and Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. "Parallel Corpora of the Bible in Minority Languages." In *A Handbook of Corpus Translation Studies*, edited by Defeng Li and John Corbett, 46-60. London: Routledge, 2025.

Hutton, Jeremy M. "Split Identities and Fragmented Texts: Considerations on Text, Source, and Materiality in 1 Sam 17–18 MT and OG." In *Zwischen Fiktion und Fakten / Between Fiction and Facts: Geschichte und Religion in den Samuelbüchern / History and Religion in the Books of Samuel*, edited by Johannes Klein and David J. Shepherd, 31-73. BWANT 248. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2025.

Hutton, Jeremy M. „Palmyrene Script-Morphologies in Roman Dacia." In *Studia in Honorem Adrian Ardeț*, edited by Livio Zerbini, Ioan David, Radu Ardevan, and Călin Timoc, 111-30. Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2025.

Scheumann, Jesse. "Negated Conjunction in Biblical Hebrew: A Syntactic, Semantic, and Pragmatic Analysis." In *In the Shadow of the Author: Contemporary Approaches in Translation, Lexicography, and Linguistic Analysis*, edited by Lisa Agaiby, Charbel El-Khaissi, and Godwin Mushayabasa, 55-85. Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages 17. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "Moving on from the Law of Continuous Dichotomy." In *In the Shadow of the Author: Contemporary Approaches in Translation, Lexicography, and Linguistic Analysis*, edited by Lisa Agaiby, Charbel El-Khaissi, and Godwin Mushayabasa, 3-54. Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages 17. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2025.

Books

Cleaver, Bronwen. *Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia: A Design for a Performance-Based Oral Bible Translation in the Southern Altai Language (Siberia)*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2025.

Houston, Tobias J. *Bible Translating as a Loyal Activity: A Model for Bible Translation in the Majority World*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2025.

Conference Papers

Chau, Kevin. "Finishing the Job: Reading Metaphor and Metonymy as Full Partners." Paper presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, University of the Free State, September 8-12, 2025.

Chau, Kevin, and Luke Bert. "Reading Metaphors through Metonymy: Unravelling Poetic Metaphor Complexes." Paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2025.

Cleaver, Bronwen, and Justin Randolph. "Translating and Performing Psalm 133 Using Oral Bible Translation and Local Genres." Paper presented at the Bible Translation Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 2025.

Grosser, Emmylou. "How Lines Matter in Biblical Poetry: The Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-18) as a Case Study." Paper presented at the Bible Translation Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 2025.

Hutton, Jeremy M. "Palmyrene Epigraphic Research since 2013: New Directions, New Frontiers." Invited paper presented at the Palmyre et ses épigraphistes conference, Paris, France, February 7, 2025.

Hutton, Jeremy M. "Identifying Northern Hebrew in the Epigraphic Corpus and Hebrew Scribal Culture: A Response to Na'ama Pat-El." Paper presented at the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament Triennial Conference: Linguistic Difference in Epigraphy, Berlin, Germany, August 16, 2025.

Makutoane, T.J. "A Call for Innovation: Reimagining Work-Integrated Learning at the UFS." Paper presented at the UFS Senate Conference, May 19-20, 2025.

Makutoane, T.J. "Basotho Oral Genres and the Translation of Psalm 79 in the Sesotho Bible Translations: Complexity Approach." Paper presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, University of the Free State, September 8-12, 2025.

Makutoane, T.J. "Lessons Learned, Ongoing Projects, and Future Collaborations." Paper presented at the Africa Oral Bible Translation Consultative Conference, October 14-16, 2025 (Virtual).

Miller-Naudé, Cynthia L., and Jacobus A. Naudé. "Oral Features of the Alphabetic Acrostic Poems of the Hebrew Bible in Light of Marcel Jousse, Milman Parry and Albert Lord." Paper presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, September 7, 2025.

Notarius, Tania. "Apophonic Causative in Ancient Northwest Semitic Reconsidered." Paper presented at the Uppsala Semitic Seminar, Uppsala, Sweden, 2025.

Notarius, Tania. "The Language of Ugaritic Poetry and Prose in a Historical-Linguistic Perspective." Paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2025.

Notarius, Tania. "Alphabetic Scribes and Linguistic Diversity in the Ugaritic Textual Tradition." Paper presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, University of the Free State, September 8-12, 2025.

Notarius, Tania. "The Language of Ugaritic Poetry and Prose Between Chronology, Dialects, and Style." Paper presented at the University of Göttingen Workshop, Göttingen, Germany, 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "Common Misconceptions about the Masoretic Accents." Paper presented at the Bible Translation Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "A Tenth Century ToBI Transcription of Tiberian Hebrew." Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Tone and Intonation, Herrsching, Germany, May 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "The Features of the Masoretic Accents as Post-lexical Phenomena: Evidence from Shalshelet and the Yemenite Reading Tradition." Paper presented at the 30th Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies, Berlin, Germany, August 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "Descriptions of the Melody of the Disjunctive Accents in the Hidāyat al-Qāri': A Modern Linguistic Interpretation." Paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2025.

Pitcher, Sophia. "The Contributions and Limitations of Dresher's (1994) Prosodic Model for the Masoretic Accents." Paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2025.

Retief, Charl Wynand. "The 'Salt' and 'Light' Community (Matthew 5:13-16) Beyond Metaphorical Confines." Paper presented at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies Annual Conference, University of the Free State, September 8, 2025.

Scheumann, Jesse. "Beyond Word Recognition: Expanding Vocabulary." Paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 22, 2025.

Scheumann, Jesse. "A Prosodic View of Pretonic Waw." Paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 24, 2025.

Valeriani, Emanuela. "The End of Times in the Apocryphal Apocalypse of John in the Greek and Romanian Traditions." Paper presented at the International Conference: Entangled Traditions. Parabiblica about the End of Times, Bucharest, Romania, March 2025.

Valeriani, Emanuela. "The Apocalypse of John the Theologian: A Comparative Study of the Manuscript Tradition." Paper presented at the Regensburg–Prague Post-Doctoral Seminar in Early Christianity, Český Krumlov Castle, Czech Republic, May 2025.

Conference Proceedings

Pitcher, Sophia. "A Tenth Century ToBI Transcription of Tiberian Hebrew." In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Tone and Intonation*, 16-18 May 2025, Herrsching, Germany, 25-29. International Speech Communication Association Archive, 2025.

Valeriani, Emanuela, and Vittorio Secco, eds. *Dramatis Personae: Temi, figure e testi delle tradizioni bibliche e parabibliche*. Bari: Edipuglia, 2025.

Valeriani, Emanuela, and Vittorio Secco, eds. "Voi chi dite che io sia? Alternative cristologiche nel Cristianesimo antico e tardoantico. Conférence internationale, Palerme, 6 mai 2023." *Apocrypha* 34 (2023, publ. 2025). Turnhout: Brepols, 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

In 2025, Prof Tania Notarius contributed to the open-source site TheTorah.com with the essay "Remnants of Archaic Hebrew Poetry Embedded in the Torah". She also began serving on the PhD Thesis Committee at the University of Helsinki for Daniele Soares and continued her role as an advisor of the Near Eastern Languages programmes at Polis, the Jerusalem Institute of Languages and Humanities.

Prof Jeremy M. Hutton contributed to the open-source site TheTorah.com with "Israel is a Rebellious Child; YHWH is a Parent but Not a Person".

Dr Kevin Chau continued to serve as a teacher at Upper House, a Christian study centre at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is involved with their Fellows programme, which provides theological, intellectual, and spiritual formation for undergraduates and postgraduates so that they may effectively work and lead in their future vocations.

Research fellow Emmylou Grosser launched The Biblical Languages Podcast (Biblingo): "Biblical Hebrew Poetry with Emmylou Grosser".

Dr Emanuela Valeriani played a central role in the organisational leadership of several high-profile international conferences, notably serving on the Scientific Committee for the Palatine Chapel Conference in Palermo and as a local organiser for the Society for New Testament Studies Annual Meeting in Regensburg. Her contributions to academic coordination were further highlighted at the EABS Annual Meeting, where she chaired two research units focused on apocalyptic literature and the language of colours in the Bible.

Research fellow Morné Joubert continued to provide high-level editorial expertise across a diverse range of religious and professional publications. His work included light editing for CLF Publishers on *Lewedraende Kanale* by Malan Nel, a compilation of religious reflections, and serving as the editor for Prof Marius Ungerer's *Living Our North Star* at the Clairvaux Writer's House, which explores religious approaches to corporate management. These contributions build upon his extensive 2024 portfolio, which featured significant archival documentation for the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) General Synod, as well as proofreading and editing for prominent houses such as Jonathan Ball Publishers and Red Mouse Design.

National and International Collaboration

In 2025, Prof Tshokolo Makutoane provided extensive professional service to the academic community through high-level peer reviews and programme evaluations. His peer-reviewed work was primarily focused on diverse topics, including equivalent terminology in Eastern Turki Gospel translations for *Acta Theologica*, comparative studies of English translations of JL Dube's *Insila kaShaka* for *Language Matters*, and the cultural factors influencing isiXhosa and Biblical Hebrew aspectual verbs for the *Journal*

for Semitics. Prof Makutoane also contributed to quality assurance in higher education by conducting an external programme review for the BA Honours in Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of South Africa in August 2025. Additionally, his expertise in translation and performance was recognised through a book endorsement for Bronwen Cleaver's 2025 publication, *Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia*.

Prof Tania Notarius continued to cultivate international partnerships. Her primary collaboration remains with Göttingen University, where she serves as an international Mercator Fellow and an editorial board member for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-supported "Edition des ugaritischen poetischen Textkorpus" (EUPT). Additionally, she maintains a critical partnership with the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam as an affiliated researcher focusing on the digitalisation and tagging of the Copenhagen Ugaritic Corpus. Her role in international academic governance is further evidenced by her service on PhD Assessment Committees for candidates at the University of Uppsala, University of Helsinki, the University of Copenhagen, and the Theological University of Utrecht, as well as her editorial work for the National Association of Professors of Hebrew (US) and as a peer reviewer in prestigious scholarly journals.

Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé was co-chair of the steering committee of the "Biblical Hebrew Language and Linguistics" programme unit of the International Society of Biblical Literature for the conference in Uppsala, Sweden. She is co-editor of the series *Linguistics Studies in Ancient West Semitic*, published by Pennsylvania State University Press. She was also a member of the editorial boards of *The Bible Translator*, the *Journal of North-West Semitic Languages* and the *Journal of Translation Studies in Africa*.

Dr Kevin Chau's international collaboration in 2025 is highlighted by his involvement in high-level academic publishing, currently working with partners on the *SBL Resource Series* and the *Oxford Handbook of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* to produce foundational research for the international biblical studies community.

Prof Jacobus Naudé served as co-editor of the series *Linguistics Studies in Ancient West Semitic*, published by Pennsylvania State University Press. Prof Naudé was a member of the editorial boards of several journals: *Handbook of Translation Studies*, *The Bible Translator*, *Folia Orientalia* and *Journal of North-West Semitic Languages*. He also served on the advisory board for the *Handbook of Terminology*. In addition, he was a member of the Regional Board of the Central Region of the Bible Society of South Africa.

Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Prof Jacobus Naudé served as translation consultants for the Dinka Cam Bible Translation project located in South Sudan. In 2025, the Bible was finally published, and its completion was celebrated in a special service in Juba led by members of the Anglican Church of South Sudan.



Celebration of completion of Dinka Cam Bible, Juba (South Sudan), 11 October 2025.

In 2025, research fellow Dr Emanuela Valeriani maintained a broad network of international partnerships, spearheaded by her Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-funded research with the University of Regensburg and Charles University Prague. Her collaboration further extended to the "Beyond Canon" centre in Regensburg, the University of Lausanne's Institut romand des sciences bibliques, and Universidad Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEU) San Pablo in Madrid, where she co-directs the interdisciplinary "Apocalipsis: un universo de color" research project.

Postgraduate Students

In 2025, there were six BA Honours Hebrew students, 11 MA Hebrew (research) students, 13 PhD Hebrew students, five MA Bible Translation (structured) students, two MA Bible Translation Management (structured) students and 10 PhD Bible Translation students.

The following students achieved milestones in 2025:

Natan Sales de Cerqueira. "Participial Phrases in the Book of Amos: A Synchronic Syntactic Analysis." BA Honours research project. T Notarius [supervisor]. With distinction.

Dean Evans. "'It's Not *What* You Say…': Reclaiming Orality through an Analysis of Reported Speech in the Psalms." BA Honours research project. K. Chau [supervisor]. With distinction.

Rachel Grimm. "The Subcategorisation Frame of the Verb *b'r* in Biblical Hebrew." BA Honours research project. J.A. Naudé, C.L. Miller-Naudé and T. Notarius [joint supervisors]. With distinction.

Surprise Mbuyiseni Mahlangu. "An Analysis of Reported Speech in Qumran Hebrew." MA with specialisation in Hebrew. C.L. Miller-Naudé and J.A. Naudé [joint supervisors]. With distinction.

Abigail Wiese. "A Typological Analysis of the Gender of Hybrid Nouns in Biblical Hebrew." MA with specialisation in Hebrew. K. Chau [supervisor]. With distinction.

Michael Seheri. "A Sesotho Performance-Oriented Translation of Psalm 51: Orality in Action within the Church Calendar." MA Bible Translation. C.L. Miller-Naudé and J.A. Naudé [joint supervisors]. With distinction.

Isaac Boaheng. "Managing Interdependencies in Bible Translation Projects: Toward a Complexity Model for Ghanaian Mother-tongue Bible Translation." MA Bible Translation Management. T.J. Makutoane, C.L. Miller-Naudé and J.A. Naudé [joint supervisors].

Jonathan Stephen Kehrer. "A Syntactic Analysis of Differential Object Marking in Biblical Hebrew Poetry and Prose." PhD Hebrew. J.A. Naudé and C.L. Miller-Naudé [joint supervisors].

Brian Phillip Baucom. "Hexaplaric Readings of the First Palestinian Catena of Psalms 1-26 in the Light of Editorial Theory." PhD Hebrew. J.A. Naudé and C.L. Miller-Naudé [joint supervisors].

Staff (2025)

Prof Tshokolo J. Makutoane	Academic Head of Department
Prof Tania Notarius	
Dr Kevin Chau	
Prof Cynthia Miller-Naudé	Emeritus, Senior Professor
Prof Jacobus Naudé	Emeritus, Senior Professor

[Dean's office to add contracted staff and research fellows]

Department of

History



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Overview of 2025

In 2025, the Department maintained its commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and engaged scholarship. This continued achievement was reflected in several key indicators, including staff promotions, NRF ratings, research awards, and a range of academic recognitions such as keynote invitations and prestigious fellowships. The year also marked significant curriculum development. The Department introduced new second-year modules and completed the recurricularisation of the undergraduate, Honours, and Structured MA programmes. These curriculum revisions are designed to advance the Department's goal of offering a decolonised and contextually relevant learning experience. The year saw sustained, high-quality research productivity. Staff members produced a substantial body of scholarly work, including journal articles, books, and book chapters published both locally and internationally. These outputs, comprising 13 journal articles, four books, and three book chapters, highlight the Department's growing research footprint and its meaningful contributions to scholarly conversations nationally and globally.



History Department Indaba.

Achievements

Saleem Badat was invited to present several keynotes:

- "Leading, managing and administering faculties: The purpose, roles and objects of Deans." University of the Free State Deans' Workshop: Building and Enhancing Leadership Capacity, and Size and Shape Planning by Faculties, 27 February 2025.
- "Mentorship and Research Excellence in the Humanities." Humanities Mentoring Workshop, University of the Free State, 4 March 2025.
- "On leadership and leading universities." Future Professor's Programme, Magaliesberg, 16 May 2025.
- "Academic research and activism – Key lessons from South Africa and Palestine." REAL Centre, the CLS and ACTforPAL, Cambridge University, 17 June 2025.
- "Decolonising International Research Collaboration for Epistemic and Epistemological Justice." Leeds Social Sciences Institute Workshop, University of Leeds, 24 June 2025.
- "On Academic Freedom and Social Justice." University of Cape Town Council Social Ethics and Transformation Committee Meeting, 14 October 2025.
- "Why We Should Mentor – Reflections on Mentoring." Future Professoriate Programme webinar, 31 October 2025.
- "Political Banishment within, from and to South Africa under Dutch and British colonialism and Apartheid, 1658-1986." Histories of Indigenous ('traditional'/Amakhosi/iinkosi/Kgosi) Leaders Imprisoned/Banished to Robben Island, and Cape Slavery Colloquium, UNISA, 4-5 November 2025.
- "Contesting Northern Hegemony in Knowledge Making in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences." African Research Network, 8 November 2025.
- "Professor Lis Lange: The vice-chancellor that wasn't." Memorial Symposium - The contribution of Prof Lis Lange to higher education in South Africa: A critical appraisal, Stellenbosch University, 19 November 2025.

Clement Masakure was promoted to Associate Professor.

Clement Masakure was awarded the 2025-2026 AfOx Visiting Fellowship.

Clement Masakure was invited to be part of the Bachelor of Arts Internal Programme Reviews at Walter Sisulu University. He was also invited to serve on the External Review Panel for the History Department at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Jared McDonald was promoted to Associate Professor and was awarded a C2 NRF rating, which recognises him as an established researcher with national and international recognition for the quality and impact of his publications.

Jared McDonald was an invited keynote speaker at the Second Biannual International Conference on Languages, Multilingualism, and Decolonisation Practices in Higher Education hosted by the University of the Free State's Academy for Multilingualism, 25 to 27 November 2026. His keynote address was titled, "Looking Back, Looking Forward: Multilingual Futures in Historical Perspective".

Lazlo Passemiers received 4,000 GBP as part of a visiting fellowship in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow for the period 20 January 2025 to 20 February 2025.

Victor Gwande was awarded the UFS Faculty of Humanities Excellent Awards: Research with International Impact.

Victor Gwande was invited as an expert panellist to present a paper at the British Zimbabwe Society 2025 Research Days, themed: "History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Historiography", organised in collaboration with the Oxford Centre for African Studies and *the Journal for Southern African Studies*, held at St Antony's College, Oxford University, UK, 20-21 June 2025, funded by the *Journal for Southern African Studies*.

Victor Gwande was a visiting fellow at the University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS) Programme, organised by the African Studies Centre (ASC) at the University of Michigan (U-M), January to May 2025.



Dr Victor Gwande delivered the Keynote.

Victor Gwande was a keynote speaker at the YSI Early Career Workshop on Post-colonial African Transportation and Mobility Research in Southern Africa: Bridging Gaps and Creating Links, 29-30 October 2025, University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus, South Africa.

Victor Gwande was selected into the UFS Future Professoriate Programme (2025-2027).

Victor Gwande was awarded an NRF Y1 rating.

Victor Gwande was appointed as an external reviewer for the University of Pretoria's Historical and Heritage Studies Department modules.

André Wessels gave a keynote address titled "South Africa's role in the war against Japan, 1941-1945" at the VJ Day 80th Anniversary Online Conference, 15 August 2025.

Student Achievements

Dimpho Boitumelo Mokhoantle was conferred the MA degree with distinction.

Thuso Dlamini won the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) Johan Bergh Historia Award, presented to deserving third-year History students at participating universities.

The following were the best-performing students in 2025:

- Second-year Level: Kutlana Skosana
- Third-year Level: Thuso Dlamini
- Honours Level: Mikie Dikotse

Teaching

In 2025, the Department introduced two new second-year modules: HIST2634 (South Africa Uncovered: Themes from the Past) and HIST2644 (Africa: A History of a Continent). HIST2634 introduces students to key themes in South Africa's past. The module explores various social, cultural, economic, and political issues that have shaped the country's history. It highlights how internal and external forces influenced South Africa's unique historical trajectory. The module further demonstrates how both 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' individuals contributed to shaping the nation, and it provides students with critical perspectives on the writing and rewriting of South Africa's contested past. HIST2644 introduces students to significant themes in Africa's history. It examines diverse social, cultural, economic, and political issues that have influenced the continent over time. The module emphasises how internal and external factors shaped Africa's historical development and equips students to place African history in conversation with broader themes in world history. The lecturers responsible for the conceptualisation and curriculum development of these modules were Phumla Nkosi, Prof Neo Ramoupi, Prof Clement Masakure, Dr Victor Gwande, Dinpho Mokhoantle, and Dr Thapelo Mokhoatsi.





History Honours Workshop.

Several members of the Department were appointed as external examiners:

- **Dr Marietjie Oelofse**: One Honours research report from the University of Pretoria and one PhD thesis, North-West University.
- **Dr Lazlo Passemiers:** Third-year History modules for the University of Johannesburg and one MA dissertation from the University of Cape Town.
- **Dr Victor Gwande**: Two PhD dissertations for Stellenbosch University and the University of Johannesburg.
- **Prof Clement Masakure**: Senior undergraduates at Walter Sisulu University, Honours module for University of Pretoria, two MA dissertations for Walter Sisulu University and Stellenbosch University.
- **Prof André Wessels**: One MA dissertation for the University of Pretoria.

Research Projects

Prof Saleem Badat. Research project on the histories of universities in South Africa (RPHUSA); R900 000

Prof Saleem Badat. Ruth First as Teacher: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning; R300 000

Prof Saleem Badat. History of Science in South Africa project; R200 000

Research Outputs

Articles

Brahic, B., Ingram, N., **Ramnund-Mansingh, A.**, Heyes, K., Seedat-Khan, M., & Arun, S. 2025. Beyond access: Intersectional challenges for higher education success in South Africa. *International Sociology*. 40(3): 454-480. https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809251334933

Chanza, N., & **Makombe, E.K.** 2025. Positioning Zimbabwe in the climate change mitigation-adaptation discourse: Exploring benefits, barriers and risks. *Environ Dev Sustain*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-025-06723-1

Dandah, G., & **Muguti, T.** 2025. The 'White Man's Game'? Race, power, and politics in Zimbabwean cricket. *Sport in History*. 45(3): 368–389. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2025.2589088

De Bruin, J., & Wessels, A. 2025. Die organisatoriese transformasie van die Oranje-Vrystaatse krygsmag in die periode Oktober 1899 tot Julie 1900. LitNet Akademies Jaargang. 22(2):187-20. https://doi.org/10.56273/1995-5928/2025/j22n2b6

Du Bruyn, D., 2025. 'To make a shape in a tree': Mondelinge beskrywings van tuine, tuinstyl en tuinmaak in die Batho-township, Bloemfontein. *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*. 65(3):741-775. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-akgees-v65-n3-a1

Gwande, V.M., 2025. Propping up the rebellion: big business, late colonialism, and decolonisation in Rhodesia,1966-1979. *Itinerario*: 1-17.

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Masakure, C., & Money, D. 2025. 'Fiery Collieries' and Explosive Situations: Towards a History of the 1972 Hwange Colliery Disaster. *Moving the Social*. 76 (1): 75-97. https://doi.org/10.7767/mots.2025.76.1.75

Ndlovu, A.S., **Twala, C.,** & Sithole. 2025. Coalition Government in South Africa: A True Reflection of Democracy or a Vehicle for Political Officials to Pursue Narrow Interests? *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives*. 10 (1): //hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-jpada_v10_nsi1_a10

Raath, A.W.G. 2025. Neoplatonistiese Eros-spiritualiteit, transmutatiewe wilsmistiek en William Law se Böhmistiesmistieke invloed op Andrew Murray se teologie. *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*. 2de Kwartaal: 136-152.

Ramnund-Mansingh, A. 2025. Exploring Synchronicity and Flexibility: Bichronous Learning as a Model for Inclusive Higher Education in South Africa. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*. 13(1): 1-15. https://www.iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/2222

Sershan, N., **Mansingh, A.,** Naidoo, K., Uddin, R.S., & Singh, M. 2025. Adapting to the New Frontier: The Transformative Role of Academics in Shaping Higher Education. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*. 7(1): 164-178. https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v7i1.3985

Chapters in edited volumes

Houston, G., Smith, D., Saber, T., & Harold. M. 2025. Wentworth reflections on the promise and experience of democracy' in S. Masoetsa, C. Hongoro, N. Zungu & M. Makoae (eds.). *The future South Africa we want: Localities and stories of change*. 149-170. Pretora. HSRC.

Wessels, E., & **Heunis, V**. 2025. Boer prisoner of war in India. In Venter, L., & Pretorius (eds.). *Caught in crossfire: Journal of Indian Involvement in the South African War, 1899-1902*. 60-92. Bloemfontein: The War Museum of the Boer Republic.

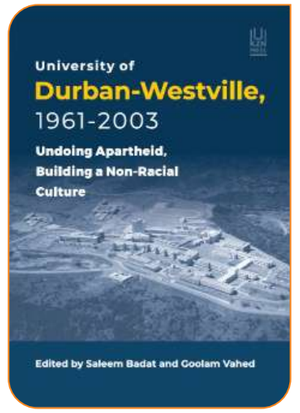
Books

Badat, S. & Vaheed. G. 2025. *University of Durban-Westville, 1961-2003: Undoing Apartheid, Building a Non-Racial Culture*. Scotsville: UKZN Press.

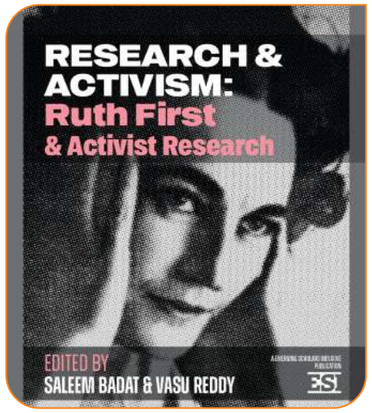
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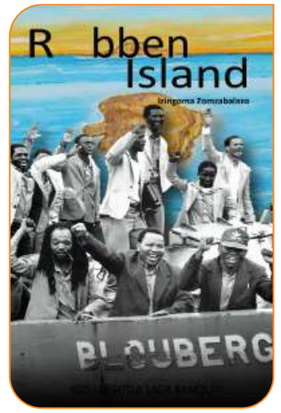
Snyders, H. 2025. *Rough Diamonds: A History of South African Baseball*. Jeffersons, McFarland & Co.



Prof S. Badat – University of Durban-Westville, 1961-2003: Undoing Apartheid, Building a Non-Racial Culture.



Prof S. Badat – Research & activism: Ruth First & Activist Research.



Prof N. Ramoupi – Robben Island, Songs of Struggle.

Creative Outputs

McDonald, J. Co-directed a documentary with Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation at the UFS, titled "Qwaqwa: Place of Barriers and Bridges". Since the documentary's official premiere at the second Southern African Mountain Conference in March 2025, it has amassed 5,000 views on YouTube.

Conference Papers/Posters

Badat, S. "Decolonising knowledge and research: Epistemic, epistemological and strategic issues." Whose Knowledge Is It? Conference: Panel 1: Theoretical Frameworks and Decolonial Epistemologies, Cambridge University, 17 June 2025.

Badat, S. "University of Cape Town School of Education and UCT Alumni for Palestine Academic Freedom and Justice." Prof Saleem Badat in conversation with Dr Anna Selmeczi, 2 September 2025.

De Wet, W. "Snapshots into the History of Golf in the Eastern Free State Province, South Africa." British Society of Sports History (BSSH) Conference, Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, 21-22 August 2025.

Masakure, C. "Dr Andrew Fleming and the Establishment of Biomedical Services in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1897-1931." Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA), Sol Plaatje University, Kimberly, 18-20 June 2025.

Masakure, C. "Trade Unions and the Struggle for Life in Zimbabwe's HIV/AIDS Crisis." Zimbabwe Historical Association Conference, Bindura University of Science Education, 28-29 August 2025.

McDonald, J. "Myths of Menace and Mercy: Settler and Humanitarian Visions of Cape San Children in the Cape Colony." The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) Conference held at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, October 2025.

Oelofse, M. "Dit was net só anders: Van stadsmense tot suksesvolle entrepreneurs van *Ons Dien*, Philippolis, 1984-2004." Paper presented at the National Conference of the South African Society for Cultural History, Philippolis, 30 August 2025.

Passemiers, L. "The Transnational Biography of Manelisi Ndibongo: The Twists and Turns of a Southern African Freedom Fighter." University of Glasgow Economic and Social History Unit, 18 February 2025.

Passemiers, L. "We have something to tell about the evolutionary process of the African Revolution: Methodological reflections on writing a biography of Manelisi Ndibongo." Presented at Legacies of Immersive Social Histories Past, Present, and Future: A Conference in Honour of the Life, Work, and Communities of Prof Robert R. Edgar, University of the Free State, 16-18 October 2025.

Gwande, V.M. "In Service to Commerce and Industry: Rhodesian Recorder, Advertising, and Industrial Publicity in Southern Rhodesia, 1949-1970s." Paper presented at the 18th African Economic History Network Annual Meeting, National University of Lesotho, 30-31 October 2025.

Conference Proceedings

Ramoupi, N.L.L. International Hybrid Conference, 16-18 October 2025, titled "Legacies of Immersive Social History: Past, Present and Future: A Conference in Honour of the Life, Work and Communities of Robert R. Edgar."

Gwande, V.M. Co-organised and coordinated the British Academy-funded Writing Workshop in collaboration with Dr Ushe Kufakurinani (University of Sussex) and Dr Godfrey Hove (National University of Lesotho), held at the National University of Lesotho, 9-10 January 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

Several members of the Department undertook various forms of community engagement and public scholarship in 2025.

Prof Saleem Badat wrote several opinion pieces for newspapers.

- The Ruth First legacy. *Post*, 4 June.
- The Freedom Charter at 70, *Post*, 19 June.
- Ruth First and activist research: The legacy of a South African freedom fighter. *The Conversation*, 3 July.
- Apartheid: The UDW saga, *Post*, 30 July.
- With Barney Pityana, Jonathan Jansen, Malegapuru Makgoba, Brian Fijagi, Yunus Ballim, Tyrone Pretorius, Wim de Villiers, and Max Price. Vice-chancellors call for support for Prof Buhlungu and Fort Hare. Media release, 21 October 2025.

Dr Wouter de Wet was a reviewer for Historia.

Prof Jared McDonald co-edited a special issue of *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* with UFS Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation, Prof Vasu Reddy. The special issue, titled *African Mountainscapes and the Anthropocene*, brought together selected papers from a dedicated stream at the second Southern African Mountain Conference, hosted by the University of the Free State's Afromontane Research Unit in March 2025. Jared McDonald and Vasu Reddy convened the stream.

Prof Clement Masakure continued to serve as a member of the Pan-African Scientific Committee of the Encyclopaedia Africana, the flagship project of the African Union. He also maintained his editorial responsibilities as EditorinChief of *Historia*, the journal of the Historical Association of South Africa. Furthermore, he continued his service on the Association's Executive Committee.

Dr Marietjie Oelofse reviewed academic articles for *Scientia Militaria (South African Journal of Military Studies)*, for the *South African Journal of Cultural History*, and the *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*.

Dr Lazlo Passemiers acted as a book discussant for the launch of Saleem Badat and Vasu Reddy's *Research and Activism: Ruth First and Activist Research*, at the Vrystaat Kunstefees, 16 July 2025. He also acted as a book discussant for the launch of Julia Tischler's Cultivating Race: Transatlantic Agricultural Reform in South Africa, c. 1900-1950, at the International Studies Group, 25 August 2025, and was interviewed for the Al Jazeera article "As Israel struck Qatar, South Africans saw echo of last decade of apartheid". https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/17/as-israel-struck-qatar-south-africans-saw-echo-of-last-decade-of-apartheid



Conference in honour of Prof Edgar.

Prof Neo Ramoupi wrote "UFS Honours Prof Robert R. Edgar: A Lifelong Friend Of South Africa's Freedom Struggle". https://newssa.co.za/2025/10/24/ufs-honours-prof-robert-r-edgar-a-lifelong-friend-of-south-africas-freedom-struggle/

Dr Rebecca Swartz conducted peer reviews for the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* and the *South African Historical Journal*. She was also a peer mentor for the British Academy-funded Writing Workshop, organised by Drs Gwande, Kufakurinani and Hove, and continued to serve as editor of *Historia*.

Prof André Wessels reviewed articles for local accredited academic journals and a book manuscript for a publisher in the United Kingdom. He also wrote an article on the Simon's Town Agreement (1955) and its abrogation (1975) that was published in various formats in City Press, 22 November 2025, Ports & Shipping, November 2025, and DefenceWeb, 12 December 2025 (with several cross-references in other DefenceWeb editions).

National and International Collaboration

Prof Jared McDonald continued serving on the editorial advisory board of the *Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa*.

Prof Neo Ramoupi continued to serve as a committee member of the UFS-IZIKO Museums of South Africa Heritage Research Project and the UFS-Limpopo Heritage Research Project.

Postgraduate Students



Dimpho Mokhoantle, MA graduate with distinction.

Five students completed their Honours degree:

- M. Dikotse
- A. Mhlongo
- P. Moeketsi
- L. Ramuthelo
- A. Phaswana

Dimpho Mokhoantle completed her MA degree (*cum laude*) and was supervised by Dr Marietje Oelofse; her dissertation title was "Women and Transitional Justice: Assessing and comparing the participation and impact of women within the truth commissions of South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Liberia".

Other Activities



Prof Neo Ramoupi's book launch.

The Department, in collaboration with the *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*, hosted the book launch of Dr Christopher Conz's *Environment, Knowledge, and Injustice in Lesotho: The Poverty of Progress* and Dr Neo Lekgotla Laga Ramoupi's *Robben Island: Songs of Struggle / Izingoma Zomzabalazo*.

Prof Saleem Badat launched two books: *Research and Activism: Ruth First and Activist Research* and *University of Durban-Westville, 1961-2003: Undoing Apartheid, Building a Non-Racial Culture*. The Ruth First volume was launched at key venues, including the Alan Paton Book Festival (22 May), University College London (11 June), Ike's Bookshop in Durban (1 July), and leading South African universities such as Wits (11 August), University of Cape Town (2 September), University of the Western Cape (3 September), Stellenbosch University (4 September), Nelson Mandela University (7 October), and Rhodes University (8 October).

Prof Saleem Badat's history of the University of Durban-Westville was launched at Ike's Bookshop (5 August), the University of Johannesburg's Ali Mazrui Centre (11 August), and Rhodes University.

Prof Saleem Badat delivered a series of presentations titled "On Theory" across several South African universities in 2025. He presented the lecture at Nelson Mandela University's School of Theory during the "Theory Formulation for a New Generation Scholars" programme on 27 May 2025, followed by a session at the University of the Free State as part of the Transformation of the Professoriate Mentoring Programme on 2 July 2025. On the same day, 2 July 2025, he also presented *On Theory* at the University of the Witwatersrand's Doctoral Academy. Later in the year, on 9 October 2025, he delivered the same presentation during the CHERTL PhD week at Rhodes University.

Prof Saleem Badat led the ANTC1624 *Anthropology: Understanding Ourselves and Others* sessions, focusing on Black Consciousness and culture, during the week of 13 October 2025.

Dr Rebecca Swartz served as a member of the supervisory committee for Alicia Haripershad's doctoral research at KU Leuven/Max Planck Centre for Legal History and Legal Theory, guiding the project through to its successful defence in December 2025. She also coordinated the Grants Committee for the Society for the History of Childhood and Youth.

Staff (2025)

Prof C Masakure	Academic Head of Department

Academic Staff

Prof S Badat
Dr W de Wet (Qwaqwa)
Dr V Gwande (Qwaqwa)
Prof J McDonald (Qwaqwa)
Dr T Mokhoatsi (September 2025)
P Nkosi
Dr M Oelofse
Dr L Passemiers
Prof N Ramoupi
Dr R Swartz
L Bloch

Support Staff

N Masalla

Affiliated Staff

Dr JC Aerni-Flessner
Prof NF Awasom
AB Blake
Dr L Bolliger
Dr SM Botes
Dr CR Conz
Dr JH de Bruin
Dr HJ du Bruyn
Dr L Efron
Dr VR Heunis
Dr GF Houston
Dr B Kusena
Dr EK Makombe
Dr PP Molosiwa
Prof NR Ndille
Prof AWG Raath
Dr H Snyders
Prof CM Twala
Dr JJR van Zyl
Prof A Wessels



International Studies Group

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Overview of 2025

From January to December 2025, seven books were published or accepted for publication by leading academic presses; over 30 articles appeared in accredited journals, including *Third World Quarterly*, *Journal of African History*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *International History Review*, and *African Economic History*; and approximately 38 papers were presented at national and international conferences. As in the past, these were often supported by external funding awards, travel grants or research fellowships. The Department hosted two workshops attended by scholars from across the African continent. Among the tokens of academic esteem secured by the International Studies Group were favourable reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* and *African Studies Review* of ISG-authored books, and the Desmond Tutu Gerrit Brand Book Prize.

Achievements

Student Achievements

In 2025, the following postgraduate students successfully defended their PhD proposals (24 October):

Banda Denice

Thesis Title: Gold mining and its toxic 'afterlives': A social and environmental history of Shamva Gold Mine c.1893-2023.

Chideme Titus

Thesis Title: A Socioeconomic and Environmental History of Manufacturing, c1954 to 2020: A Case of Cement Production in Zimbabwe.

Khanyetsi Bohlokoa

Thesis Title: The Development of Christian Mission Hospitals and Healthcare in Basutoland: The Historical Analysis of Selected Mission Hospitals in Lesotho from 1937 to 1966.

Mborera Colette

Thesis Title: A History of Zimbabwe's Traditional Handicraft Industry, 1945-2024.

Research Projects

PhD Students



Nyasha Bushu was awarded the **Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa 2025 Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship Award of US$10,000** for the completion of his doctoral dissertation titled "Beyond Chiefly Courts: African Grassroots Justice Practices in Southern Rhodesia c.1890-1937". The thesis uses a decolonial lens to analyse the role of non-judicial systems and institutions in conflict resolution. Its primary focus is the role of spirit mediums in settling disputes and fostering peacebuilding in the colonial period. The research contributes to knowledge by bringing to the fore a marginalised area of study, that of non-judicial systems, hidden from global debates on peacebuilding, yet playing an essential role at the community level, thereby providing new perspectives and debates about conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa.



Audrey Maringa was awarded the **CODESRIA AFRIAK Fellowship of US$9,000** for her doctoral project titled "The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in the Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe". The study investigates the centrality of African cultural practices in ensuring healing from STDs, while noting changes and continuities across the colonial and postcolonial periods. Of the myriad of STDs, the study examines more closely *njovhera* (syphilis) and *drop* (gonorrhoea), to provide a nuanced understanding of the continued use and impact of indigenous knowledge systems in the prevention, treatment and management of STDs in Zimbabwe. Ultimately, the study is also an examination of the multifaceted roles played by African indigenous healers as custodians and transmitters of indigenous health knowledge and healing systems.

Postdoctoral Fellows



Dr Kaluba Jickson Chama's research project focuses on the history of cassava in Zambia from the pre-colonial period to the present. His ongoing monograph, derived from this project, is tentatively titled 'A History of Cassava in Zambia from Pre-Colonial Times to the Present' and will be published by *Brill* in February 2026. It underscores cassava's contribution to the political economy of Zambia. It provides a historically comprehensive and theoretically grounded economic and socio-political history of cassava while exploring the crop's centrality in the long-term relationship(s) emerging between producers and successive governments. Conversely, it underscores cassava's contribution to food security and its role in transforming the social and economic lives of Zambians, particularly women involved in its production. Chama has also published articles related to the project in peer-reviewed international journals, including *African Economic History* and *Food and History*.



Dr Jennifer Chibamba Chansa's research project encompasses mining and environmental regulation in Zambia. Her project title, "State, Mining Companies and Communities: A History of Environmental Pollution and Regulation on the Zambian Copperbelts (1964 to 2020)," culminating in a monograph, examines the historical development of mining-related pollution and environmental regulation in Zambia. It compares developments in environmental regulation and pollution concerns on the 'old' and 'new' Copperbelts. Specifically focusing on Nkana and Mufulira mines on the 'old' Copperbelt, and Kansanshi and Kalumbila mines on the 'new' Copperbelt, the project explores the development of environmental management in line with significant global advancements as well as local economic and political transitions such as nationalisation and privatisation. It further investigates the differentiated gendered experience of men and women in indigenous communities resettled due to the introduction of greenfield mining projects on the 'new' Copperbelt.



Dr Nyasha Samuel Chikowero continues to explore human-nature relations. To this end, Chikowero has two main projects: a first titled "*Chavaroyi*: The Environmental and Socio-Political Ecologies of African Restorative Justice", where he uses the sacred *Gandavaroyi* river and area in Zimbabwe as a case study to examine the sacralisation of landscapes and the spiritual significance attached to the land. Of immense interest in this project is Chikowero's use of anthropological methods, such as attending and observing traditional courts, alongside observing the working lives/daily routines of African environmental healers in central and southwestern Zimbabwe. Using these non-traditional methods, he argues that Africans, with the help of healers and traditional leaders, have long been determined to keep their land healthy by driving out what they determine to be evil and harmful to it. In his second project, Chikowero follows the lives of those displaced for spiritual reasons, titled "Forced Displacement, Witchcraft and Social Exclusion in Southwestern Zimbabwe". He argues that these displaced migrants become *vatorwa munyika yechizvarwa* (refugees in their country of birth) as he unpacks the interface between forced displacement and the historical injustices that transform an individual from a citizen into a refugee.



Dr Innocent Dande's project, *On the Faeceocene: Sewerage Works, Sanitation and Society in Harare (Zimbabwe), 1890-2020,* joins theories of excremental colonialism and excremental postcolonialism in introducing the concept of excremental decolonialism with the aim of positively writing about the sanitary and toileting histories of the colonised lower-class and working-class Africans. It uses architectural concepts in showing how excrements differently affected the city's segregated landscapes, going beyond existing histories of Harare that either separately focus on formerly White suburbs or on formerly African locations. The project follows the flow of excrements in integrating excremental narratives into existing Zimbabwean urban histories that overly focus on statist, racial, class, gendered and ethnic narratives. More importantly, the project, which will culminate in a monograph, combines human histories with plant and animal histories by highlighting how excremental pollution of Harare's water bodies altered existing marine ecosystems, geographies, and microclimates. That way, it deploys trans-corporeal concepts to show how human excrements transferred both their good and toxic agency to other living creatures. Dande won the **six-month Writer-in-Residence Fellowship at the University of Munich, Germany,** for this project, which ran from October 2024 to March 2025.



Dr Michael Glover explores cattle-centred histories of Southern Africa from the 1960s to the present. His project uses an innovative, multidisciplinary animal history approach to examine the historical impacts and processes that affect the subjective experiences of cattle. Building on previous publications, including book chapters, articles, an edited volume and a monograph, this research project examines how colonial legacies and shifting global markets shape and affect cattle's experiences and lives in Southern Africa. Themes include climate change impacts, feedlot systems, global cattle flesh markets and trade, diseases and epidemics, and intensified industrial breeding. By positioning cattle as sentient agents with their own umwelts rather than commodities and economic units, this research challenges anthropocentric norms while broadening conceptions of how global markets, veterinary science, and climate impacts affect more-than-human communities.



Dr Phillip Hofmann received his PhD in African History from the University of Lisbon in 2023. His main area of research is the early modern history of West Central Africa and the Atlantic World, with a focus on the intersections of religion, colonisation, land dispossession, and slavery. He is currently working on a monograph under contract with Brill Publishers, tentatively titled *The Sword of the Church: Christianity and Portuguese Rule in Eighteenth-Century Angola*. It argues that, despite its precarity, the presence of the Catholic Church in eighteenth-century Angola was a crucial element in securing Portuguese rule and influence in West Central Africa. The monograph also demonstrates that ecclesiastical structures not only fulfilled a religious role but were politically and economically connected to Portuguese colonisation in the region. He has published research articles on his broader research interests in international journals, including *African Economic History* and *Early Modern History*.



Dr Priscillah Machinga's project, drawn from her PhD thesis titled "A History of Maternal and Infant Health Practices in Northern Zimbabwe, 1880s-1990s", will culminate in a monograph that offers an unprecedented in-depth study of African maternal and infant health in Zimbabwe. The project not only explores the impact of Western medicine on African maternal and infant health practices but also reveals the superiority of indigenous medicine and knowledge in this regard. Machinga argues that despite the colonial onslaught against it, indigenous knowledge remains a relevant component of African maternal and infant health practices to this day. The reasons for its endurance may be found in the indigenous peoples' undying trust in their historic cultural practices and in the inadequacy of the official/Western healthcare systems, particularly in twenty-first-century Zimbabwe. Machinga collaborates with scholars sharing similar interests while also mentoring young academics investigating varied facets of indigenous knowledge systems in Africa. She is in the process of co-editing a special issue to be published in the University's own *Southern Journal of Contemporary History*, born from a workshop she organised themed 'Pandemics, People and Economic Margins'.



Dr Mutale Tinamou Mazimba is involved in multiple research projects and collaborative efforts. Worth mentioning is her ongoing book project under contract with Ohio University Press titled *Northern Rhodesia's Inkondo: A Grassroots Labour History of the First World War*. The book tells the so-called "commoner's story" - African experiences in First World War, focusing on Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). It argues that though the war had European origins, its success in East Africa depended on African labourers and requisitioned food. It also reveals the transformative and definitive experience for Africans during the First World War, which caused immense suffering, exploitation and fundamentally shaped emerging national identities. Her second project, a collaborative project with Drs Mathew Ruguwa and Mwayi Lusaka, won the **CODESRIA Meaning-Making Research Initiatives (MRI) 2025 US$25 000 Research Grant**. The award-winning project, tentatively titled 'A Comparative Analysis of Environmental Management, Resource Extraction and Social Conflict in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 1950-2024', is a transnational study examining developments in mining regulation and policy implementation in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Mazimba was also awarded **£1000 funding from the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI)** for a workshop on "Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections", which she organised with Dr Peter Uledy.



Dr Saima Nakuti Ndahangwapo's project, "International diplomacy and big business in Namibia: The case of the Rössing Uranium Mine", drawn from her PhD thesis, explores the history and development of the Rössing Uranium mine during the colonial and early post-colonial periods in Namibia. Although the mine became a symbol of injustice for Namibian nationalists and international opponents of South African rule, it survived decolonisation in Namibia virtually unscathed and was reimagined as part of modern, independent Namibia. The survival of the mine forms the focus of the research project, which documents the various survival strategies adopted by the mine. The project culminated in an open-access publication by Brill Publishers in 2025.



Dr Mathew Ruguwa's research interests investigate the nexus between mineral extraction, the environment and natural resource conflicts in Southern Africa. To this end, Ruguwa's project "The Green Transition: Artisanal Lithium Mining, Social Conflict and Resilience in Rural Zimbabwe, 2021-2024" uses lithium extraction in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East Province, as a lens for examining local-level social conflict provoked by the recent lithium rush. With Drs Mutale Mazimba and Mwayi Lusaka (Malawi), he examines how interactions between people and the environment influence social developments in the context of mineral resource exploitation. The project titled "A Comparative Analysis of Mineral Extraction and Social Conflict in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 1963-2025", which specifically examines the end of the Central African Federation (CAF) in 1963 to 2025, explores social conflicts triggered by the regulation of mineral exploitation between local communities and various groups such as local and foreign large-scale miners, the government and artisanal and small-scale miners. The project was awarded the **CODESRIA Meaning-Making Research Initiatives (MRI) 2025 US$25 000 Research Grant**.



Dr Geraldine Sibanda is preoccupied with understanding the spread of economic and financial ideas from the North to the South or on a South-South plane, across epochs. She also investigates the suitability of these ideas within the contexts in which they are implanted or imposed. She traces the development of economic ideas in the global context, the role of international organisations in spreading or imposing economic and financial thinking in Africa, the international thinkers responsible for implementing these ideas, and the impact these ideas have had and continue to have on African economies. She is involved in multiple projects to fulfil the described quest; of note is her ongoing monograph on international economic thinker Bernard Thomas Gibson Chidzero, who became Zimbabwe's longest-serving Minister of Finance. Aimed at publication with Routledge, the monograph, tentatively titled *The Genealogy of Ideas: From the United Nations to Zimbabwe Through the Footsteps of Bernard Thomas Gibson Chidzero*, is important for illuminating forgotten African international economic thinkers who played significant roles in the development and spread of economic ideas across the globe. She has also written about other forgotten African economic thinkers in various fora. In collaboration with Dr Tinashe Nyamunda of the University of Glasgow, Sibanda leads a project investigating the development and impact of financial and monetary ideas in Southern Africa in a project titled "Money and Economy Making in Southern Africa". The project was **awarded US$2,000 by the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI)** for a symposium hosted at the UFS.



Dr Peter Uledi's project titled "'Plunder for Profit?' Zimbabwe's Look East Policy, Chinese Firms, and the Environment since 2000" interrogates Chinese mining operations, their impact on the environment and rural development between 2000 and 2025, revealing institutional capture, corruption and power politics in Zimbabwe's mining sector. The project also juxtaposes Chinese mining investments with Chinese agricultural investments by magnifying contract farming models introduced by the Chinese in Zimbabwe's agricultural landscape. Overall, Uledi's project investigates South-South engagements, questioning the differences between looking east and looking west, as well as the value of "looking east". In his pursuit of understanding South-South engagement, Uledi collaborated with Dr Mazimba and organised a workshop, "Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections", jointly funded by the International Studies Group and the New York-based Young Scholars Initiative, which provided a US$ 1,750 grant.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Books

- **Dee Henry.** *Militant Migrants: Clements Kadalie, the ICU and the Mass Movement of Black Workers in Southern Africa, 1896-1951.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2025.
- **Glover Michael.** *Cattle's Experiences of Colonialism: An Animal History of Southern Africa.* Leiden: Brill, 2025.
- **Horn Karen.** *Bold in Battle: South African Stories from the Second World War.* Warwick: Helion & Co, 2025.
- **Manamere Kundai**. *Malaria on the Move: Rural Communities and Public Health in Zimbabwe, 1890-2015.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2025.
- **Ndahangwapo Saima Nakuti.** *Defending the Investment: Rössing Uranium and the Business of Decolonisation in Namibia.* Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2025.
- **Phimister Ian**. *Bulls, Bears, Boers and Brits: Finance and the Coming of War in Southern Africa, 1894-1899.* Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2025.

Articles

- **Bishi George.** "Fires and floods: records, archives management and destruction in Zimbabwe since the colonial period", *Archival Science* 25 (35), 2025, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-025-09502-z
- **Chama Kaluba Jickson.** "Women's Stronghold": Cassava and the Transformation of the Status of Women in Pre-colonial Zambia", *Food and History* 23 (1), 2025, 107-122. https://doi.org/10.1484/J.FOOD.5.145076
- **De Cola Alessandro and Sibanda Geraldine.** "Dossier: Reframing African Monetary History: A Southern African Perspective", *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 49 (2), 2025, 3-9, 2025. https://doi.org/10.38140/sjch.v49i2.7973
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- **Gerits Frank. "**East African Economic Order: How EEC–EAC Relations Shaped European and African Politics, 1967-77", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2025, 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094251396912
- **Graham Matthew and Fevre Christopher**. "Anti-Apartheid at the Periphery: A Case Study of Grassroots Activism in Dundee, 1967-1990", *Modern British History* 36 (1), 2025, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwae064
- **Grilli Matteo.** "Beyond the Borders of Lesotho: The Basutoland Congress Party's Transnational Connections and its Political and Ideological Pragmatism, 1952-1970", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 51 (1), 2025, 93-111. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2025.2476856
- **Hofmann Philipp**. "The Jesuits and the Lisbon Inquisition in Angola, 1681-1760," *Journal of Early Modern History* 30 (3), 2025 [advance article]. https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-bja10105
- **Koke Honest Elias and Masikinye Simbai.** "The Federation, Fiscus, and Failure: The Fiscal Commissions in the Central African Federation,1952-1963", *South African Historical Journal* 77 (1), 2025, 107-125. https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2025.2574933
- **Koke Honest Elias and Ncube Sibanengi.** "'Britain's Wars are our Wars': The Politics and Economics of Southern Rhodesia's Support for Britain During the Second World War, 1939-1945", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 53 (6), 2025, 1460-1483. https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2025.2544844
- **Machinga Priscillah.** "A History of *Ananyamukuta* – Shona midwives: Identity, Roles and Development in Zimbabwe, 1880s to 1970s", *Third World Quarterly*, 2025, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2025.2518597
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- **Mazimba Mutale Tinamou**. "Flight of Insecurity? Racial Hierarchy, the Northern Rhodesia Rifles (NRR), and the First World War", *Journal of African Military History* 9 (2), 2025, 118-147. https://doi.org/10.1163/24680966-bja10026
- **Money Duncan.** Perspectives – "The Place of Regions in Transnational Connections: Cumberland Miners in Northern England and the Witwatersrand, 1880s-1920s", *Historia* 70 (1), 2025, 2-28. https://doi.org/10.17159/
- **Money Duncan and Chansa Chibamba Jennifer**. "Sixty Years Since Zambia's Independence: Revisiting Scholarship on the Struggle Against Colonialism", *South African Historical Journal* 76 (1), 2025, 228-232. https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2024.2441739
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- **Munene Hyden and Kapesa Robby**. "Trade Unionism and Decolonisation in Africa: The Zambian Experience, 1949-1964", *Labor History*, 2025, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2025.2485320

- **Nkhoma Bryson G**. "State Power, Dilemmas and African Agency: Peasant Food Production and the Making of the Colonial State in Malawi, 1883-1961", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2025, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2024.2461962
- **Nkhoma Bryson, Tambulasi Richard, Banda Harvey and Mphande Chrispin.** "Change Without Transformation: Experiences with the Implementation of Agricultural Extension Delivery Policy in Malawi, 2000-2020", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 2025, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2025.2595923
- **Milo Gough and Bryson Nkhoma et al.** "Colonialism, Governance, and Fisheries: Perspectives from Lake Malawi", *The Journal of African History*, 66, 2025, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002185372500012X
- **Santebe Mbozi**. "Suppressed data: The controversy on Lynn Saffery's enquiry into African living conditions on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1942-1945", *Historia* 70 (2), 2025, 23-46. https://doi.org/10.17159/
- **Sechele Unaludo**. "The Return of Husbands: Of Male Labour Returnees and Women in Botswana, C.1970-2023", *Third World Quarterly*, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2025.2499083
- **Sibanda Geraldine**. "'*Chakachenjedza Ndochakatanga* (Once Beaten Twice Shy)!': Zimbabwe and the Economics of Mistrust", *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 49 (2), 2025, 34-59. https://doi.org/10.38140/sjch.v49i2.7875
- **Stevenson Ana**. "'Workin' 9 to 9, 24/7': Political Humour About Australian Politicians and Ministerial Staffers During the Rudd-Gillard Era", *History Australia*, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2025.2482812
- **Stevenson Ana**. "'Tearing Off the Bonds': Suffrage Visual Culture in Australia, New Zealand and the USA, 1890-1920", *Gender & History* 37, 2025, 234-266. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12694
- **Campbell Rosa and Stevenson Ana**. "From 'White Slavery' to 'Female Sexual Slavery': The UN And Global Radical Feminism Against Sex Work", *Third World Quarterly*, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2025.2460652
- **Lonsdale Karen Anne and Stevenson Ana**. "Making an Entrance on a Man's Stage: Pioneer Women Flautists in Australia", *Journal of Australian Studies* 49 (4), 2025, 477-495. https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2025.2570316.
- **Brennan Claire and Stevenson Ana**. "Monumentally Kitsch: The Decommissioned Captain Cook Statues of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Australia", *Radical History Review* 152, 2025, 32-52. https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-11609996
- **Tshayana Saneze**. "Gendered Histories: The Past, the Present, and Power in Niq Mhlongo's Way Back Home", *South African Historical Journal*, 2025, 1-19. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02582473.2025.2566419
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- **Van Zyl-Hermann**. "Visions of (Tuberculosis) Control: Medical Photographs in Mau Mau–Era Kenya", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 99 (4), 2025.
- **Williams Rosa**. "Being Seen to Care: Photographs, Audiences, and the Swiss Medical Mission in Colonial Mozambique at the Turn of the Twentieth Century", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 99 (4), 2025.
- *Chapters in edited volumes*
- **Cohen Andrew and Pilossof Rory**. "Wage labor history in Central and Southern Africa". In Spear Thomas (ed), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2025, 1-28.
- **Joseph Mujere and Dande Innocent**, "Diamonds, Animals and Artisanal Miners: Towards a Multispecies History of Diamond Mining in Chiadzwa, Zimbabwe" in Jan-Bart Gewald, Sabine Lunning and Harry Wels (eds.). *Gaping Holes: Towards Multispecies Histories and Ethnographies of Mining in Southern Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2025, 119-146.
- **Evans Laura**. "Apartheid and the Bantustans from Reserves to Reincorporation" in Daniel Magaziner (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of South African History*, Oxford: Oxford, 2025.

- **Grilli Matteo**. "The Political Use of History from the Nineteenth-Century Gold Coast to Nkrumah's Ghana", *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial African Historiography*, London: Routledge, 2025, 27-52.
- **Narain Vrinda and Asma Hamam**. "Nationhood, Equality, and the Hijab: Indian Muslim Women in the Face of Theological Secularism" in Cesari Jocelyne and Greenfeld Liah (eds.). *The Wiley Companion to Religion, Politics, and Nations*, New Jersey: Wiley and Sons, 2025.
- **Ndahangwapo Saima Nakuti**. "Rössing Uranium Mine: The German link to a British Enterprise" in S. Mikloweit (ed.). *Transpositional Geologies*, Berlin: Kerber Publishers, 2025.
- **Nkhoma Bryson G**. "The Making of a Historian" in Thula Simpson and Immanuel R. Harisch, *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial African Historiography*, London: Routledge, 2025, 235-239.
- **Pallotti Arrigo and Tornimbeni Corrado**. "Dar es Salaam and Portuguese Decolonization in Africa: The Case of Mozambique" in Pedro Aires Oliveira, Fernando Tavares Pimenta, Aurora Almada e Santos (eds.). *The Liberation of Portuguese Africa, 1961-75 International Exile and Solidarity*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025, 109-140.
- **Sun Jodie Yuzhou and Yuan Mingqing**. "Networking Liberation, Translating Revolution: China's Support of Anti-colonial Struggles in Lusophone Africa (1954-1975)" in Pedro Aires Oliveira, Fernando Tavares Pimenta, Aurora Almada e Santos (eds.). *The Liberation of Portuguese Africa, 1961-75 International Exile and Solidarity*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025, 197-222.
- **Sun Jodie Yuzhou**. "'A single spark can start a prairie fire': Viriato da Cruz e o seu exílio chinês" in Organização de Francisco Soares, Francisco Topa and Regina Queiroz (eds.). *Mandei-lhe uma carta»: a obra poética e o pensamento político de Viriato da Cruz*, Porto: Sombra pela cintura, 2025, 75-92.

Book Reviews

- **Chambwe Tawanda**. Review of Sinan Baran, *State-Business Relations and Economic Transformation in South Africa and Zimbabwe: Unfinished Transformation*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023. *African Studies Review*, 2025.
- **Dande Innocent**. Review of *Segregated Species: Pests, Knowledge, and Boundaries in South Africa*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2024. *Agricultural History Journal* 99 (3), 2025, 499-501.
- **Dlamini Hlengiwe Portia**. Review of Cabrita, Joel, *Written Out: The Silencing of Regina Gelana Twala*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2023. *Southern Journal of Contemporary History* 50 (1), 2025, 98-100.
- **Makare Belinda**. "Progress, Development and Knowledge in Lesotho's Environmental History". Review of Christopher Conz, *Environment, Knowledge, and Injustice in Lesotho: The Poverty of Progress*. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2024. *Historia* 70 (1), 2025, 94-97.
- **Maringa Audrey**. "'Humans as a Disease Vector': The History of Malaria Transmission in Zimbabwe". Review of Kundai Manamere, *Malaria on The Move: Rural Communities and Public Health, 1890-2015*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2025. *Historia* 70 (2), 2025, 135-138.
- **Sibanda Geraldine**. "The art of making a market": Review of Ian Phimister, *Bulls, Bears, Boers and Brits: Finance and the Coming of War in Southern Africa, 1894-1899*. Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2025. *Historia* 70 (2), 2025, 138-141.
- **Sun Jodie Yuzhou**. H-Diplo Roundtable XXVI-42 of Joseph Parrott and Mark Atwood Lawrence (eds.). *The Tricontinental Revolution: Third World Radicalism and the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. *H-Diplo*, 7 July 2025, 18-22.
- **Van Zyl- Hermann Danelle**. Review of Neil Roos, *Ordinary Whites in Apartheid Society: Social Histories of Accommodation*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2024. *South African Historical Journal* 77, 2025.

Conference Papers/Posters

- **Mborera Colette.** "The role of social protection programs in addressing poverty and inequality in rural Zimbabwe: The case of Murehwa District, 2000-2023". The Political Economy of Inequality in Africa, African Social Research 6, https://www.pasiri.org/general-5-2, (2025).

Conference Proceedings and Presentations

Denice Banda

- "Chinese mining companies and small-scale chromite mining practices in Mhondoro-Ngezi, Zimbabwe, 2000-2021". **Regional History Society of Southern Africa (RHSSA)**, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique, 26-27 November 2025.



Denice Banda at the RHSSA Conference, Maputo, Mozambique.

Nyasha Bushu

- "Beyond Chiefly Courts: African Grassroots Justice Practices in Southern Rhodesia c.1890-1937". African Peacebuilding Network (APN) and Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa (Next Gen) programme of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), **National Grant Writing and Proposal Development Workshop**, Amaryllis Hotel, Blantyre, Malawi, 28 February 28 to 1 March 2025.
- "Rethinking African Custom and Quasi-Religious Aspirations for Justice in Colonial Zimbabwe's Judicial Historiography c.1890-1937". **Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) and the Journal of Southern African (JSAS) Research Days 2025**: History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Past and the Shaping of its Present and Potential Futures, St Antony's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 20-21 June 2025.
- "The Role of Spirit-Based Systems of Conflict Resolution and Dispute Settlement in Southeastern Zimbabwe: Lessons from the Global South". **International Peace Research Association 30th Biennial Conference,** Aotearoa, New Zealand, 5-9 November 2025.
- African Peacebuilding Network (APN) & Next Gen Social Sciences in Africa **Research Methods & Proposal Development Workshops,** University of Mauritius, July 2025.
- University of the Free State: International Studies Group (ISG) and Young Scholars Initiative. **Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections in Social Science/Humanities Workshop**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 7-8 August 2025.

Kaluba Jickson Chama

- "'Icimbo ca Malilo' as Oral History: Social and Therapeutic Role of a Funeral Dirge in Post-colonial Zambia". **International Oral History Association (IOHA) Conference,** Krakow, Poland, September 2025.
- Rationing the Mineworker: Food Demand of the Copperbelt Mines and its Impact on the Environment, **Environmental Histories of Mining on the Zambian Copperbelt Workshop**, Copperbelt University in Zambia, May 2025.



Kaluba Jickson Chama presenting at Copperbelt University in Zambia.

- Social, Economic and Political Development of Cassava in Zambia. **Lecture given at Southwestern University,** Texas, United States of America, March 2025.

Jennifer Chibamba Chansa

- "Mosquitoes, dambos and mine tailings: The environmental impact of malaria control and waste management on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt". **Boom to Dust Conference**, Kimberley, South Africa, 23-24 June 2025.
- "The impact of global advancements in natural resource conservation and environmental sustainability on environmental protection in Zambia (1970s to 1990s)", **Environmental Histories of Mining on the Zambian Copperbelt Workshop**, Kitwe, Zambia, 22 May 2025.

Titus Chideme

- "Livelihood and Food Security in a Mining Setting: A Case of Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, Zimbabwe, 1980-2020". Biennial Conference of the **Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.
- "Livelihood and Food Security in a Mining Setting". **Regional History Society of Southern Africa (RHSSA)**, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique, 26-27 November 2025.

Nyasha Samuel Chikowero

- "*Chavaroyi*: The Environmental and Socio-Political Ecologies of African Restorative Justice and Healing in Zimbabwe". **Regional History Society of Southern Africa (RHSSA)**, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique, 26-27 November 2025.



Nyasha Chikowero presenting at RHSSA, in Maputo.

Philipp Hofmann

- **Organiser and Chair of the panel** "New Approaches to Slavery and Resistance in West Central Africa". **European Social Science History Conference 2025**, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 26 March 2025.
- "Colonization, Enslavement, and Resistance: The Revolt of the Inhabitants of *Mbangu kya Tambwa* in Late-Eighteenth Century Angola". **European Social Science History Conference 2025,** Leiden University, The Netherlands, 26 March 2025.

Bohlokoa Khanyetsi

- "Christian Missions and Healthcare in Basutoland: The Case of St. Joseph's Hospital in Roma, 1937-1966". Biennial Conference of the **Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.



Bohlokoa Khanyetsi, HASA, Sol Plaatje University.

Priscillah Machinga

- "Problematizing Zimbabwe's Health History: A Historiographical Review", with Prof Clement Masakure and Dr Kundai Manamere. **Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) and the Journal of Southern African (JSAS) Research Days 2025**: History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Past and the Shaping of its Present and Potential Futures, St Antony's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 20-21 June 2025.

Belinda Makare



Belinda Makare, Land, Life and Society Conference, Western Cape.

- "Towards a New Paradigm? The State, African Agriculture, and the Soil Conservation Discourse in Leribe District, Lesotho, c.1930s", Biennial Conference of the **Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18 to 20 June 2025.
- "Towards a New Paradigm?" 18th **Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network (AEHN)**, Central Bank of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho, 30- 31 October 2025.
- "A New Paradigm: The state, African agriculture, and soil conservation discourse in Lesotho in the 1930s-2000s". **Journal of Peasant Studies Writeshop** in Critical Agrarian Studies and Scholar-Activism, Institute for Poverty and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, 29 September to 6 October 2025.
- "A New Paradigm". **Land, Life and Society International Conference** on the road to ICARRD+20, University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, 7-9 October 2025.
- University of the Free State: International Studies Group (ISG) and Young Scholars Initiative. **Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections in Social Science/Humanities Workshop**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 7-8 August 2025.

Audrey Maringa

- "Syphilis, colonialism and the African society 1890-1969". **Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.



Maringa Audrey, AFRIAK fellowship induction workshop, Kigali, Rwanda.

Mutale Tinamou Mazimba

- "Flight of Insecurity? Racial Hierarchy, the Northern Rhodesia Rifles (NRR), and the First World War". **Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.

Colette Mborera



Colette Mborera, AEHN, Central Bank of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho.

- "Investment Futures? Bilateral Investments Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPAs) In Zimbabwe's Agricultural Sector: 1980-2005". **Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.
- "Investment Futures?" 18th **Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network (AEHN)**, Central Bank of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho, 30- 31 October 2025.

Saima Nakuti Ndahangwapo

- Roundtable discussant. **60th International Conference of Labour and Social History (ITH)**, Linz, Austria, 25-27 September 2025.

Shalot Nhete

- "Towards a Historiography of Drug History in Zimbabwe". **Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) and the Journal of Southern African (JSAS) Research Days 2025**: History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Past and the Shaping of its Present and Potential Futures, St Antony's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 20-21 June 2025.



Shalot Nhete (extreme left) and Machinga Priscilla(left), presenting at the BZS Conference in Oxford.

Geraldine Sibanda

- **Organiser, Money and Economy Making in Africa Symposium,** University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 12-13 December 2025.
- "Money and Economy Making in Southern Africa and the 'Monster' called the ESRC". **Symposium, Money and Economy Making in Africa,** University of the Free State, 12-13 December 2025.
- "The Global South as an Object of Study". **Speaker: Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections in Social Science/Humanities Workshop**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 7-8 August 2025.


Geraldine Sibanda (in white), presenting at the Money and Economy Making Symposium, at the UFS.

Saneze Tshayana

- "The 'Second Pandemic': Representations of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in South Africa", **Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA)**, Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.
- "Looking for Love in the Wrong Places? Representations of Transactional Sexual Relationships in Post-1994 South Africa". **Australian Historical Association Annual Conference,** James Cook University, Australia, 30 June to 4 July 2025 (virtual presentation).


Saneze Tshayana presenting at HASA, Sol Plaatje.

Peter Uledi

- Workshop Organiser. University of the Free State: International Studies Group (ISG) and Young Scholars Initiative. **Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections in Social Science/Humanities Workshop**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 7-8 August 2025.
- Ad hoc and reactionary? State survival, African agriculture and rural conservation in Rhodesia, 1963-1979. **Biennial Conference of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA),** Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, 18-20 June 2025.
- "Plunder for Profit?" Zimbabwe's Look East Policy, Chinese Firms, and the Environment since 2000. 18th **Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network (AEHN)**, Central Bank of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho, 30-31 October 2025.

- "Plunder for Profit?" **Ghent Africa Platform Resources in Africa International Conference**, Ghent University, 4 December 2025 (virtual presentation).
- "Researching Sino-Zim relations: Tracing Conversations and Debates on the Look East Policy in Zimbabwe". **Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) and the Journal of Southern African (JSAS) Research Days 2025**: History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Past and the Shaping of its Present and Potential Futures, St Antony's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 20-21 June 2025 (virtual presentation).



Peter Uledi (far left), SAYWHAT Partnership, Young Researcher Programme Workshop, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Nicola Yon

- "Social Protection and Black Women in Zimbabwe's Historiography: Reflecting on Legacies and Exploring New Directions". **Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) and the Journal of Southern African (JSAS) Research Days 2025**: History, Histories and Historians: Reflecting on Legacies and New Directions in Zimbabwe's Past and the Shaping of its Present and Potential Futures, St Antony's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 20-21 June 2025.
- University of the Free State: International Studies Group (ISG) and Young Scholars Initiative. **Writing and Researching on the Global South: Shared Experiences and Reflections in Social Science/ Humanities Workshop**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, 7-8 August 2025.



Nicola Yon (with mic) presenting at BZS Conference, Oxford.

Engaged Scholarship

- **Glover Michael.** "Experiences that matter: writing history from a perspective of cattle", https://www.growkudos.com/publications/10.1163%25252F9789004742925_002/reader
- **Mazimba Mutale Tinamou and Kanduza Ackson.** "Precolonial Foundations of One Zambia, One Nation: The Role of Ethnic Cousinship (Ichimbuya) in Forging National Unity in Independent Zambia", *Zambia Journal of History*, 11 (1) (2024), 90-111. https://journals.unza.zm/index.php/zjh/information/authors
- **Nhete Shalot.** Socio-Economic Analyst, Zimpapers Television Network (ZTN), *Drug Haven Television Programme*, 27 January 2025.
- **Sechele Unaludo.** "Marriage and migration: What happens when men return to the family home in Botswana", *The Conversation*, 18 December 2025. https://theconversation.com/marriage-and-migration-what-happens-when-men-return-to-the-family-home-in-botswana-270403.
- **Sibanda Geraldine**. 'International Economic Thinkers-Profile: Kenneth K.S. Dadzie', *ECOINT IET Profile #11*, available at: https://www.ecoint.org/post/profile-of-kenneth-k-s-dadzie, 2025.
- **Sibanda Geraldine.** 'International Economic Thinkers-Profile: Bernard Thomas Gibson Chidzero', *ECOINT IET Profile #10*, available at: https://www.ecoint.org/post/profile-of-bernard-thomas-gibson-chidzero, 2025.
- **Stevenson Ana**, Balloo Kieran and Piper Alana. "How to Do Academic Blogging", Public Humanities 1, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1017/pub.2025.12

National and International Collaboration

Chama Kaluba Jickson became a member of the International Oral History Association (IOHA) Africa Group.

Chansa Chibamba Jennifer was appointed as Associate Editor of the Southern Journal for Contemporary History of the University of the Free State.

Sibanda Geraldine collaborates with the Twentieth Century International Economic Thinking and the Complex History of Globalisation (ECOINT) based at the European University Institute, where she is responsible for curating the International Economic Thinking in Africa site (https://www.ecoint.org/africa).

Sibanda Geraldine became *H-Diplo* Review Editor and her commissioned reviews were published as follows:

(a) H-Diplo Roundtable Review of David H. Shinn and Joshua Eisenman. *China's Relations with Africa: A New Era of Strategic Engagement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2023. ISBN: 9780231210010. **30 June 2025 | PDF: https://issforum.org/to/jrt16-46**

(b) H-Diplo Roundtable Review of Antony G. Hopkins. *Capitalism in the Colonies: African Merchants in Lagos, 1851-1931*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024. ISBN 9780691258843. **8 September 2025 | PDF: https://hdiplo.org/to/RT27-1**

Uledi Peter partnered with SAYWHAT Zimbabwe, a non-governmental organisation, to train and mentor young researchers.

Postgraduate Students

Four Students in the International Studies Group Completed Their PhDs in 2025:

Nyasha Bushu

Thesis Title: Beyond Chiefly Courts: African Grassroots Justice Practices in Southern Rhodesia c.1890-1937

Supervisor: Dr Sibanengi Ncube

Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister and Dr Mathew Ruguwa

Belinda Makare

Thesis Title: Agriculture, Soil Conservation, and the State in Lesotho: The case of Leribe district, c.1884-1966

Supervisor: Dr Clement Masakure

Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Lotti Nkomo, Dr Bryson Nkhoma, Dr Chibamba Jeniffer Chansa, and Dr Laura Evans

Keaobaka Tsholo

Thesis Title: The Role of Development Corporations in Bophuthatswana's Political Economy, 1977-1994.

Supervisor: Dr Victor Gwande

Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Prof Chitja Twala, Dr Alessandro De Cola, Dr Saima Nakuti Ndahangwapo, and Dr Chama Kaluba Jickson

Nicola Yon

Thesis Title: African Women and Formal Social Protection Systems in Zimbabwe, c.1950s-2016
Supervisor: Dr Rebecca Swartz
Co-Supervisors: Dr Geraldine Sibanda and Dr George Bishi

The Department's PhD Students and their Supervisory Teams are as follows:

Denice Banda

Thesis Title: Gold mining and its toxic 'afterlives': A social and environmental history of Shamva Gold Mine c.1893-2023
Supervisor: Dr Victor Gwande
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Saima Nakuti Ndahangwapo, and Dr Peter Uledi

Titus Chideme

Thesis Title: A Socioeconomic and Environmental History of Manufacturing, c1954 to 2020: A Case of Cement Production in Zimbabwe
Supervisor: Prof Clement Masakure
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Chibamba Jennifer Chansa, and Dr Mathew Ruguwa

Bohlokoa Khanyetsi

Thesis Title: The development of Christian mission hospitals and healthcare in Basutoland: The historical analysis of selected mission hospitals in Lesotho from 1937 to 1966
Supervisor: Prof Clement Masakure
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Rebecca Swartz, Dr Mazimba Mutale Tinamou, and Dr Priscillah Machinga

Audrey Maringa

Thesis Title: A Social History of Venereal Diseases in Zimbabwe, 1890-2005
Supervisor: Prof Clement Masakure
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Hyden Munene, Dr Priscillah Machinga, and Dr Victor Gwande

ColetteMborera

Thesis Title: A History of Zimbabwe's Traditional Handicraft Industry, 1945-2024
Supervisor: Dr Lazlo Passemiers
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Geraldine Sibanda, Dr Innocent Dande, and Dr Chama Kaluba Jickson

Shalot Nhete

Thesis Title: A History of Recreational Drug Use in Zimbabwean Urban Areas, 1955 to 2021
Supervisor: Dr Lazlo Passemiers
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Miyanda Simabwachi, Dr Michael Glover, and Dr Unaludo Sechele

Saneze Tshayana

Thesis Title: Ties that Bind: Representations of Black Love in a Selection of South African Narratives
Supervisor: Dr Rebecca Swartz
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Innocent Dande, Dr Ana Stevenson, and Dr Nonhlanhla Dlamini

The Department was happy to welcome a new cohort of PhD students:

Dimpho Mokhoantle

Thesis Title: African restorative practices and healing post-conflict
Supervisor: Dr Rebecca Swartz
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Phillip Hofmann, and Dr Nicola Yon

Lillian Munetsi

Thesis Title: War and Exile: Everyday Lives of Zimbabwean Liberation Fighters at Mgagao Camp, Tanzania, 1970-1979
Supervisor: Prof Clement Masakure
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Mazimba Kaunda, and Dr Michael Glover

Ernest Tewesa

Thesis Title: The New African Landlords: Drivers of Depeasantisation and Food Insecurity in the Shire Highlands, 1964-2000
Supervisor: Dr Victor Gwande
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Prof Bryson Nkhoma, and Dr Geraldine Sibanda

Nhlakanipho Zulu

Thesis Title: Enemies of the State: The Role of the Murder and Robbery Squad in Criminal Investigation and Political Repression, 1960-2000
Supervisor: Dr Lazlo Passemiers
Co-Supervisors: Prof Ian Phimister, Dr Mathew Ruguwa, and Dr Priscilla Machinga

Other Activities



Attendees at the Writing and Researching the Global South Workshop, UFS, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

The ISG successfully hosted 20 seminars in the 2025 academic year under its Ramblers and Stanley Trapido seminars. The seminars gave ISG postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows room to elaborate on and receive feedback on their research projects, often in preparation for publication, while also providing a platform for international visitors to the Department. The seminar schedules are listed below.

Ramblers Seminar

Date	Presenter	Topic	Affiliation	Chair
19 February 2025	Dr Mathew Ruguwa	Mining accidents, injuries and coping strategies among artisanal diamond diggers in Marange Communal Area, Eastern Zimbabwe, 2006-2008	UFS	Belinda Makare
26 March 2025	Dr Leila Hall	"Friend[s] of the Heart": Reconsidering 'Queer' Archives, Ambivalence, and Untranslatability in Texts from Lesotho	UFS, English Department	Nicola Yon
23 April 2025	Belinda Makare	Towards a New Paradigm? The State, African Agriculture, and the Soil Conservation Discourse in Leribe District, Lesotho, c.1930s	UFS	Nyasha Bushu
21 May 2025	Dr Mutale Mazimba-Kaunda	Flight of Insecurity? Racial Hierarchy, the Northern Rhodesian Rifles (NRR), and the First World War	UFS	Dr Peter Uledi
9 July 2025	Dr Peter Uledi	"Until … we find ways to give more land to the peasants, we are sitting on a time bomb": Land reform, peasant livelihoods and the environment, c.1992 to 2005	UFS	Saneze Tshayana
17 September 2025	Dr Innocent Dande	"The Irishman's blanket—when the Irishman pulled it up to his chin, it came away from his feet": Night soil work, sanitary challenges and urban expansion in Salisbury, 1900-1970	UFS	Titus Chideme
22 October 2025	Dr Sam Chikowero	A Community of Outcasts and Misfits? The Historical Analysis of Indigenous Environmental Ethics in Gokwe, Zimbabwe	UFS	Denise Banda
12 November 2025	Dr Priscillah Machinga	Exploring Contemporary Zimbabwe's Sexual and Reproductive Health Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge, Beliefs and Practices as Represented on Social Media Platforms	UFS	Colette Mborera

Stanley Trapido Seminar

Date	Presenter	Topic	Affiliation	Chair
24 February 2025	Dr Abraham Mlombo	Fighting sub-imperialism in Southern Africa? Zimbabwe and regional unity against South Africa's power	University of Pretoria	Dr Priscillah Machinga
10 March 2025	Prof Paul Stubbs	The Non-Aligned Movement and the New International Economic Order: Lives, Alter-lives, and Afterlives	Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia	Dr Geraldine Sibanda
24 March 2025	Dr Eric Makombe	From Aid to Abandonment: Assessing the Sustainability of the Mutema Banana Contract-Farming Project, Chipinge District, Zimbabwe, 2011-2024	University of Zimbabwe	Dr Chama Kaluba Jickson
26 May 2025	Dr Geraldine Sibanda	An Internationalist by Training, Experience and Aptitude": Bernard Thomas Gibson Chidzero, Economic Thinking and International Organisations in the Global South	UFS	Dr Mutale Mazimba
BOOK LAUNCH 25 August 2025	Prof Julia Tischler	Cultivating Race, Transatlantic Agricultural Reform in South Africa, c. 1900-1950	University of Basel, Switzerland	Dr Lazlo Passemiers **Discussant**
25 August 2025	Dr Innocent Dande	Municipal sewerage works, the water hyacinth 'problem' and Salisbury's multispecies aquatic history, 1950s-1970s	UFS	Dr Victor Gwande
29 September 2025	Dr Priscillah Machinga	"The Enigma that was (is) Winnie Madikezela Mandela: Revisiting her Role(s) and Character in the History of Anti-Apartheid Political Activism in South Africa, Paying Attention to her Eulogies, Obituaries, Social Media Discourses and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Records	UFS	Dr Peter Uledi
27 October 2025	Dr Lazlo Passemiers	The Southern Africa League: Decolonisation and White Immigration Schemes to South Africa in the 1960s	UFS, History Department	Dr Geraldine Sibanda
24 November 2025	Dr Victor Gwande	Everyday Politics and Developmental Dynamics in Rural Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Murehwa District, 1990-2016	UFS, Qwaqwa History Department	Dr Peter Uledi

Staff (2025)

Academic Staff

Prof I Phimister — Senior Research Professor

Support Staff

I Le Roux
T Gwena

Affiliated Staff

Research Fellows

Amaral Rita
Bishi George
Chambwe Tawanda
Cohen Andrew
Daimon Anusa
De Cola Alessandro
Dee Henry
Dlamini Hlengiwe
Evans Annette
Evans Laura
Fevre Chris
Frank Sarah
Gerits Frank
Ginsburg Nicola
Graham Matthew
Grilli Matteo
Horn Karen
Koke Honest
Koorts Lindie
Krozewski Gerold
Law Kate
Manamere Kundai
Mitchel Les
Money Duncan
Munene Hyden
Narain Vrinda
Nkhoma Bryson
Pallotti Arrigo
Patrick David
Pilossof Rory
Raftopoulos Brian
Santebe Mbozi
Sechele Unaludo
Simwabachi Miyanda
Stevenson Ana
Sun Jodie
Tembo Alfred
Van Zyl-Hermann Danelle
Walton Sarah-Jane
Williams Rosa
Zimmerer Jurgen





Department of

Linguistics and Language Practice

Academic Head of Department

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Overview of 2025

In 2025, we had a full cohort of staff, comprising three linguistics and four language practice lecturers, for the first part of the year. However, Kelly Kilian left the Department halfway through the year. Dr Engela de Villiers will join the Department from January 2026.

The Department put in a lot of effort to assist staff in obtaining PhDs and to arrange lecture replacements for two staff members who are currently busy completing their PhDs. Senior staff members focused on various research projects and managed to publish several outputs. Several staff members were invited to publish in and/or guest-edit esteemed journals in Translation Studies and Linguistics.

In teaching, staff continued to rework modules to ensure that teaching was up to date with the latest knowledge, and that students were employable after obtaining the degrees our Department offers.



Department of Linguistics and Language Practice.

Achievements

Kobus Marais was the CETRA Chair Professor at the 36th CETRA Research Summer School in Translation Studies in Antwerp, Belgium, where he delivered five keynote lectures from 26 August to 3 September 2025.

Xany Jansen van Vuuren was promoted from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer from 1 January 2025.

Xany Jansen van Vuuren was selected to form part of the Future Professoriate Programme. This programme is aimed at accelerating the development of the research, teaching and learning and leadership skills and attributes of candidates to enable them to meet and exceed the criteria for promotion to professoriate levels.



Kobus Marais at the CETRA Summer School.

Teaching

While we did not have any significant project interventions, we, as a Department, continue to re-evaluate our curricula within a decolonising approach. We hosted two successful postgraduate contact sessions (which we have renamed 'research week' to emphasise the research aspect of postgraduate studies). One was held in February 2025, and the second in July 2025.



Students presenting at our research week.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Marais, K. 2025. 'Identity in university students: The semiotic work of making sense of yourself', **Culture and Psychology** 31(3): 849-866. DOI: 10.1177/1354067X241242413

Marais, K. 2025. 'Exploring an ecology of translation', **TTR** 38(1): 269-291. DOI:10.7202/1121683ar

Marais, K. 2025. 'Why complexity might not be too simple for translation studies.' **Translation Studies** 18(1): 44-60. DOI: 10.1080/14781700.2024.2421545 (with R. Meylaerts as second author)

Marais, K. 2025. Response to Evangelos Kourdis' "Multimodal, polysemiotic, multisemiotic: A necessary demarcation for semiotics and translation studies". **Social Semiotics** 35(5): 740-742. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2025.2567774

Biberauer, T., & van Heukelum, M. 2025. "Afrikaans negation is **really** unlike Dutch negation: Corpus-based evidence from the acquisition and use of *geen*". **Nederlandse Taalkunde**. *30 (1/2), 9-46*. DOI: 10.5117/NEDTAA2025.1-2.003.BIBE

Jansen van Vuuren, X., & Cawood, H.M. 2025. "Heed the Mute Language of Nature": An Ecosemiotic Approach to Urban Wildlife Photography as Translation of Solastalgia. **Critical Arts**. 39(1-2):113-132. DOI: 10.1080/02560046.2023.2269563

Chapters in edited volumes

Van Rooyen, M. 2025. 'Thinking with actor-network theory to unearth the (in)visibility of translation in a journalistic setting' in: Rogl, R., Schlager, D. & Risku, H. **Field Research in Translation and Interpreting**. Benjamins, pp. 251-276.

Marais, K. 2025. What is the 'stuff' that gets totally translated?: Peeter Torop and the materiality of translation in M. Ojaama and E. Sutiste. **Dialogues with Peeter Torop: Festschrift in Honour of Peeter Torop's 75th Birthday**, Tartu University Press, pp. 255- 262.

Marais, K. 2025. "'What is the matter with Juri Lotman?': Exploring the relationship between semiosphere, biosphere and physiosphere' in A. Biglari. **Open semiotics**, **Vol. 4**. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Marais, K. 2025. 'Translating Innenwelt: The biosemiotics of art' in M. Gamrat (ed.). **Translating human inner life in and between the arts: A semiotic approach to the emotions and the process of translation**. London: Bloomsbury. pp. 31-48.

Jansen van Vuuren, X. 2025. "Exploring interspecies translation and interpreting through multispecies ethnography" in **Field research in translation and interpreting**. Edited by Regina Rogl, Daniela Schlager & Hanna Risku. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 338-362.

Books

Jansen van Vuuren, X. 2025. "Interpreting, communication and animal welfare: An ecosemiotic analysis of interspecies translation". De Gruyter: Berlin.

Conference Papers/Posters

Van Heukelum, M. *Negative Concord in the L2 English of Afrikaans-English bilinguals in the Free State: A case of pattern replication?* Talk given at the 13th Southern African Microlinguistics Workshop, Rhodes University, South Africa. 26 November.

Jansen van Vuuren, X. 2025. *An ecotranslational approach to landscape photography: an autoethnographic view of the Anthropocene.* Presented at Dialogues and Dissonances: The Environmental Humanities from North-South Perspectives, Lisbon, Portugal, 25-27 September 2025.



Marie van Heukelum at the SAMWOP Conference.

Van Rooyen, M., Davier, L., Rodriquez-Blanco, N., & Lahdili, N. 2025. 'An actor-network approach to infrastructure in news translation'. 11th Congress of the European Society of Translation Studies, University of Leeds, UK. July 2025.

Rodriquez-Blanco, N., Davier, L., Van Rooyen, M., & Lahdili, N. 2025. 'When agency news travels from South to North: Infrastructure, actants, and actor–networks'. 11th Congress of the European Society of Translation Studies, University of Leeds, UK. July 2025.

Davier, L., Rodriquez-Blanco, N., Van Rooyen, M., & Lahdili, N. 2025. 'The benefits of the low institutionalization of translation in global news agency AFP'. 11th Congress of the European Society of Translation Studies, University of Leeds, UK. July 2025.

Smith, R., Bonafede, C., de Milander, M., Devenier, M., Jansen van Vuuren, X. (Department of Linguistics and Language Practice), Jordaan, E.M., Kruger, A., Louw, M., Nkmo, T., Russell, D.C., Sivhugwana, I., van der Merwe, M., & van Rooyen, M. (Department of Linguistics and Language Practice). 2025. 'Transitioning to a flexible, tiered, developmentally informed same-day screening model for preschoolers in low-resource settings'. Faculty of Health Sciences Research Form, University of the Free State.

Conference Proceedings

Biberauer, T., & van Heukelum, M. 2025. "Not Nothing: the Significance of Timing Differences in the Acquisition of Afrikaans and Dutch *geen* ('no')". *BUCLD 49 Proceedings*, Cascadilla Press.

Engaged Scholarship

Xany Jansen van Vuuren (serving on the Association for Translation Studies in Africa's marketing portfolio) and Marlie van Rooyen (Vice-President of the association) initiated an online webinar series on theoretical and conceptual frameworks in Translation Studies. The audience included postgraduate students and emerging scholars in Translation Studies. The series ran over a year from November 2024 to October 2025. This project was a great success, and there have already been requests for a subsequent webinar series.

Kobus Marais is the editor-in-chief of the Journal for Translation Studies in Africa.

Concerning community engagement, Xany Jansen van Vuuren, Kobus Marais and Marlie van Rooyen led the service-learning module in the Bachelor of Arts in Language Practice. Third-year students in Language Practice served as interpreters for healthcare students as part of a research project led by the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Interpreting students shared their language and cultural knowledge to facilitate and mediate between healthcare students and mothers/caregivers at early childhood development centres in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and the Kopanong Local Municipality.

Xany Jansen van Vuuren and her colleague from the Department of Philosophy and Classics, Helen-Mary Cawood, founded the South African Eco-Humanities Network in 2025, which brings together colleagues interested in ecology from a humanities perspective from all over South Africa (and beyond) for monthly online seminars.

Monnapula Molefe was invited to facilitate a translation theory workshop at the NWU Language Directorate Translators Workshop. This workshop aimed to provide North-West University language practitioners with translation and editing skills. The Language Directorate wanted to empower practitioners, especially those from the era of structural realignment, who have taken on a key role in translation and editing alongside their responsibilities as interpreters. Monnapula was responsible for presenting on translation theory, specifically translation strategies and professional ethics, on 29 October 2025. Prof Thapelo Otlogetswe from the University of Botswana presented on editing on 30 October 2025.

Xany Jansen van Vuuren and Kobus Marais were invited to write a commentary for the *South African Journal of Science* on bio- and ecosemiotics: Jansen van Vuuren, X., & Marais, J. 2025. "Engaging the Anthropocene beyond disciplinary boundaries: Biosemiotic and ecosemiotic perspectives". *South African Journal of Science*.

Dr Marlie van Rooyen presented at the UFS Humanities Engaged Scholarship Workshop in collaboration with Prof Corlia Janse van Vuuren (Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning, Health Faculty) and Dr Robyn Smith (senior lecturer in the School for Health and Rehabilitation Sciences). They presented on 'Collaborating with faculties in engaged scholarship projects'.

National and International Collaboration

Kobus Marais visited China from 30 November to 14 December 2025, giving nine guest lectures at five universities. As a result of this visit, negotiations are underway to establish MOUs with some of these universities to facilitate collaboration in research and learning and teaching.

Marlie van Rooyen is part of the International News Translation Network (NewsTraN). The mission of the network is to enhance, support, and strengthen academic research collaboration on news translation between scholars from universities across the globe. The researchers propose to highlight the convergence between translation studies and journalism in a rapidly evolving media landscape and the need to better consider the multimodal and multimedial nature of news.

Marlie van Rooyen serves on the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) international conference committee. IATIS is a global forum designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources among scholars worldwide. She also served on the Scientific Committee for the 2025 conference held in Oman towards the end of 2025.

The Department partnered with the Department of Semiotics at the University of Tartu to obtain an Erasmus+ Mobility grant for staff and student exchanges between 2024 and 2026. As part of this mobility, from August 2024 to February 2025, our MA student, Lani de Beer, completed a semester at the University of Tartu's Department of Semiotics. In October 2025, Xany Jansen van Vuuren visited the same department as part of the staff exchange programme. She gave three guest lectures during her 9-day visit and attended several translation and semiotics lectures.

Kobus Marais and Xany Jansen van Vuuren are both part of the eco-translation network and the EPISTRAN project. The eco-translation network consists of scholars working on translation, ecology, and the environment. The objectives of the eco-translation network are as follows:

- To bring together international researchers working on translation and the more-than-human world.
- To promote further research in this area.
- To build and highlight a resource base for teaching and scholarly activity in order to enhance the visibility of ongoing work.
- To encourage outreach initiatives that foster awareness of eco-translation in mainstream debates on climate action.

The EPISTRAN project is a transdisciplinary research project that uses concepts, methods and theories from Translation Studies to investigate the semiotic processes (verbal and nonverbal) involved in the transfer of information between different 'epistemic systems'.

Monnapula Molefe is a member of the **Scientific Network Participatory Translation Studies Project.** This project aims to create a scientific network of scholars whose common interest is the investigation of heteroglossic communication situations and translation dynamics in complex, diverse societies from the perspective of social actors´ participation. The socio-political concept of participation has gained in relevance and is seen as an important key to the implementation of equal rights and social integration. The network adopts an innovative perspective on forms of multilingual communication, including community interpreting (e.g., court interpreting) and community translation, with a special focus on the actors. The network comprises scientists from Austria, Costa Rica, Germany, Peru, South Africa, and the UK.

Postgraduate Students

MA completed

Two MA students, Jacoba De Beer (supervisor: Xany Jansen van Vuuren) and Joané Jansen van Rensburg (supervisors: Xany Jansen van Vuuren and Kobus Marais) completed and submitted their dissertations in November. Both passed, with Jacoba De Beer obtaining a distinction.

Honours completed

Language Practice

- Oyama Pulumani
- Jessica Mncwabe
- Chulumanco Sityana
- Kamohelo Mercy Shelile

Linguistics

- Sanna Sibeko
- Khazimla Joba
- Kwakhanya Dyantyi



The Language Practice lecturers and students of 2025.

Other Activities

Hlumela Mkabile and **Marlie van Rooyen** took the lead of the Department of Linguistics and Language Practice's participation in the University of the Free State Open Days. Students, staff, and interns in the Department participated in the event by sharing their experiences with eager school learners interested in language-related career opportunities.

In November 2025, the Department hosted an interdisciplinary conversation on ecology with representatives from various faculties, including the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Theology, and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The conversation led to promising collaboration discussions that will be pursued in 2026.



Hlumela Mkabile at the Open Day .



Xany Jansen van Vuuren speaking at the interdisciplinary meeting.

Staff (2025)

Prof Kobus Marais	Academic Head of Department, Professor
Pulane Plaatjies	Administrative Officer
Monnapula Molefe	Lecturer
Dr Marlie van Rooyen	Senior Lecturer
Kelly Kilian	Lecturer (until June 2025)
Dr Xany Jansen van Vuuren	Senior Lecturer
Dr Marie-Louise van Heukelum	Lecturer
Hlumela Mkabile	Lecturer

Interns

Jacoba de Beer
Olebogeng Mohatlane
Mpho Ramongalo

Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr Admire Phiri
Dr Nadia Ladhili



Odeion School of Music

Academic Head of Department
Dr Frelét de Villiers

Artistic and Operational Head
Dr Jan Beukes

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Overview of 2025

The year 2025 was a veritable whirlwind of opportunities, activities, and events. Our staff members and students excelled in numerous ways and at different levels. Internationally, Prof Danré Strydom represented the Odeion School of Music (OSM) in Linz, Austria, at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and at Fontys University of Technology. Dr Frelét de Villiers and Dr Joseph Kunnuji presented at international conferences in Madeira, Barcelona (online), Cape Town, New Zealand and Nigeria. We delivered nine presentations at the South African Society of Research in Music Conference. International collaboration at the Odeion was realised through the visit of students and staff from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, which culminated in the production of the musical *Carousel*. This was a collaboration with the UFS's Department of Drama and Theatre Arts. Other international projects included highlights such as hosting the fifth OSM Liesbeth Schlumberger Organ Chair and the premiere of the complete works of composer Jan Coetzee.

Achievements

Staff Achievements

Dr Anchen Froneman, Dr Joseph Kunnuji and **Dr Sonkanise Nkosi** were selected for the UFS Future Professoriate Programme 2025-2026. **Dr Frelét de Villiers** was part of the Women Influencing Scholarship and Education (WISE) mentorship programme and the UFS Teaching and Learning Fellowship. She was also elected Vice-President (Free State and Northern Cape region) of the South African Society of Music Teachers (SASMT).

Dr Joseph Kunnuji graduated with a postgraduate diploma in Theology from the UFS Faculty of Theology in April 2025. He also delivered the keynote speech at the 2025 Mother Language Celebration event organised by the UFS library on 21 February 2025.

Dr Frelét de Villiers won the Vice-Chancellor's Award in Teaching and Learning at the annual prestigious UFS Exceptional Academic Achievers Awards event. Prize money of R25 000 accompanied this award. She also took first place in the 'Scholarship of Teaching and Learning' category at the annual Faculty of Humanities Excellence Awards ceremony.

We are proud to celebrate **Léon Snyman**'s election as Chair of the African Planetarium Association (APA), a regional affiliate of the International Planetarium Society (IPS) and a valued partner of the African Astronomical Society (AAS). Adding to this remarkable achievement, Snyman will assume the role of IPS Board Member for Africa from 1 January 2026, representing the continent on the international stage. These organisations serve as creative and collaborative platforms for innovation and co-operation among planetaria and dome theatres worldwide.



Dr Frelét de Villiers receiving her 'Scholarship of Teaching and Learning' award from Prof Hester Klopper.



Léon Snyman.

Dingaan Chabalala was invited to serve as an external examiner of brass instrumentalists at the North-West University. This invitation reflects professional recognition of his expertise in brass performance and pedagogy.

Dr Sonkanise Nkosi was appointed the Secretary General for the 2025-2027 term of the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE). PASMAE is the African arm of the International Society for Music Education (ISME); it serves as a continental platform that represents, supports, and advocates for music education and music educators across Africa.

Dr Luzanne Eigelaar received her PhD in Visual and Performing Arts from the North-West University. The title of her thesis is 'Music teaching and learning in first-year BMus music theory courses: The experiences of lecturers in South Africa'. In the study on which her thesis is based, Luzanne explored lecturers' experiences of their teaching and learning journeys. Her study focused on bridging formal music theory and andragogy, using lecturers' perspectives, to inform an adaptive, responsive andragogy.



Dr Sonkanise Nkosi



Dr Luzanne Eigelaar.

Student Achievements

Master's student **Kamo Maloka** has been awarded a prestigious Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship in support of the completion of her MMus degree in Ethnomusicology. From a total of 473 applications, only 45 candidates were shortlisted. The scholarship has been awarded for two years, and Drs Kunnuji and Röntsch are serving as her supervisors.

Chesney Palmer, a PhD student pursuing the integrated doctorate, consisting of a portfolio of creative work and a thesis, achieved several accolades during 2025, including:

- Finalist for the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra Composers Competition and second prize winner in March 2025.
- Participating in an opera workshop with Robert Lehmeier at the Windybrow Arts Centre.
- The broadcast of his orchestral work *Spectrums of hues and obscure shapes* on Fine Music Radio on 10 July 2025.
- Artistic residency and the premiere of *The line that shattered stillness* with Ensemble Modern in Switzerland in July 2025.
- Winner of the 7th Stefans Grové National Musical competition.



Kamo Maloka.



Chesney Palmer.

OSM students achieved notable success at the 2025 Free State Symphony Orchestra (FSSO) Youth Concerto Festival. Soprano **Xoliswa Memane** (in the voice class of **Dr Albertus Engelbrecht**) captivated audiences with her rendition of 'O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn' from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Pianist **Karlin Olivier** (an MMus student of **Nicolene Gibbons**) performed the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with poise and musical maturity. Karlin also received the generous Kathleen Irish Scholarship from the SASMT for 2026.



Karlin Olivier.



Xoliswa Memane.



Paballo Tejane at the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival.

Paballo Tejane (a student of **Dingaan Chabalala**) was selected to participate in the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival following a highly competitive audition process that included leading young musicians from South Africa and abroad. He demonstrated excellent performance ability and was appointed first chair (principal player in the section) in the festival's concert orchestra. In addition, he participated in intensive masterclasses led by established international professional musicians, which significantly contributed to his artistic and professional development and confirmed the university's commitment to student success and global exposure.

Teaching

Dr Joseph Kunnuji established the OSM's Pan-African jazz ensemble in February 2025 to advance the teaching of African musics within popular presentational frameworks in the Department.



The OSM Pan-African jazz ensemble.

Dr Suzanne Strauss developed foundational and module-specific academic writing and referencing interventions in the first semester (MUSG1513, MUSH1512, MUSH2612), as well as module- and assignment-specific interventions in the second semester (MUSG1523, MUSH1522, MUSH2622, MUSM1642).

From 1 to 4 May 2025, the South African Strings Foundation (SASF), in collaboration with the Odeion String Quartet, hosted the second national Synergy of Strings Convention at the OSM. The four-day convention offered a comprehensive programme of concerts, masterclasses, workshops, panel discussions, and exhibitions, attracting musicians, luthiers, and music professionals from across South Africa. Six themed concerts featured leading ensembles, including the Odeion String Quartet, the Juliet String Quartet and the East Meets West Ensemble. Highlights included the gala closing concert, which featured the premiere of Franz Joseph Keyper's Harp Concerto in G Major and the finals of the SASF National String Quartet Competition. Five emerging quartets competed together with the premiere of a newly commissioned work by Lise Morrison and Ivan Vukosavljevic. The convention reinforced the SASF's commitment to string education, artistic excellence and industry development in southern Africa.

Dingaan Chabalala contributed to teaching and curriculum delivery through a practice-oriented module that focuses on professional development for brass musicians. The emphasis was based on employability, entrepreneurship and community engagement in the South African context. His teaching content supported decolonised and contextually responsive curriculum practices by foregrounding local and national educational events, opportunities to perform, community music initiatives and relevant international professional contexts.

Violins for Peace workshops were held on 28 February and 29 August 2025. **Angelique Novella** presented music theory workshops to the students of *Violins for Peace*, a community music initiative. The workshops focused on experiencing theoretical music concepts in a fun, interactive and creative way through the body and various materials.



Participants at one of the Violins for Peace workshops.

Angelique Novella presented a session at the annual workshop of the Music Education and Practice Unit, focusing on creating lesson plans using online resources. This was held on 14 March at the OSM.



The flyer for the workshop.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

De Villiers, F. 2025. 'Towards a seamless approach for quality education: Re-thinking my curriculum'. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* (*IETI*). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14703297.2025.2551647

Kunnuji, J. 2025. 'Gbokos: A history of cosmopolitan ambiguities involving omolúàbí, artistic development and the economics of brass band music in Lagos, Nigeria (1970s-2000s)'. *Muziki*, 21(2):5-26.

Chapters in edited volumes

Strauss, S. 2025. 'Song of the siren, cry of the warrior: An exploration of song structures and female vocal techniques in power metal' in Burns, L., & Scotto, C. (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook to Metal Music Composition: Evolution of Structure, Expression, and Production*. New York: Routledge.

Creative outputs

Prof Danré Strydom received DHET accreditation (1) for her creative output, W.A. Mozart Clarinet Concerto K622, Danré Strydom and the Free State Symphony Orchestra, Sand du Plessis Theatre.

Dr Joseph Kunnuji produced four episodes of a documentary film about an iconic art-music composer, Kehinde Okusanya, from Lagos, Nigeria. The docuseries is titled *The Artistry of Kehinde Okusanya: A Metaphor for Musical Conviviality*.

Dr Joseph Kunnuji recorded an album titled *Marabi meets highlife* in collaboration with legendary South African jazz bassist Mlungisi Gegana in June 2025. The album's release date is 6 February 2026.



Conference papers/posters

De Villiers, F. 9-12 September 2025. 'Digitalisation and the use of generative AI tools: Taking the lead in a transformative environment'. 10th Annual International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives, Cape Town, SA.

De Villiers, F. 16-19 September 2025. 'Seamless innovation through digitalisation: Taking the lead in a transformative environment'. UFS Learning and Teaching Conference, Bloemfontein, SA.

De Villiers, F., & Coetzer, S. 19-23 May 2025. 'From boundaries to bridges: A student perspective on implementing a seamless learning approach to using the SLED framework'. EdMedia World Conference on Educational Technology, Barcelona, Spain.

De Villiers, F. 1-3 March 2025. 'Towards a seamless approach for quality education: Re-thinking my curriculum'. 21st International Conference on Mobile Learning, Funchal, Portugal.

De Villiers, F., & Coetzer, S. 1-3 March 2025. 'Adapting a Year 9 LGR-22 music curriculum using a seamless learning approach through mobile technology'. 21st International Conference on Mobile Learning, Funchal, Portugal.

Froneman, A. 17-19 July 2025. 'Perceptual oper(a)tunity: Creating strategies and approaches facilitating embodied reflection for opera students, integrating Laban Bartenieff Movement Studies, Lessac Kinesensics, and Contemplative Pedagogy'. School of the Arts, University of Pretoria.

Kunnuji, J. 9-15 January 2025. 'We should all be ethnomusicologists! Re-thinking the positionality of ethnomusicology within music departments in South Africa'. 48th International Council of Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) World Conference, Wellington, New Zealand.

Kunnuji, J. 17-21 June 2025. 'Conducting research in Nigeria: Lessons from contrasting fieldwork experiences in Lagos'. 9th Annual Conference of the Lagos Studies Association (LSA), University of Lagos.

Kunnuji, J. 16-18 July 2025. 'Musical inculturation in the liturgical works of Kehinde Okusanya: From the decolonial challenge to contextual artistry'. Symposium on Modern African Art Music (online), Mountain Top University, Ogun State, Nigeria.

The following OSM colleagues and students presented papers at the annual congress of the South African Society for Research in Music hosted at Stellenbosch University:

- **Dr Luzanne Eigelaar**. **'**Teaching and learning in first-year BMus Music Theory courses: The experiences of lecturers in South Africa'.
- **Dr Albertus Engelbrecht**. 'Dido and Takotsubo cardiomyopathy: Meaning-making in staging Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*'.
- **Dr Melissa Gerber** (UFS PhD alumna, now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Johannesburg). 'Aida reimagined: Afrofuturism, representation, and the afterlives of Verdi's opera in South Africa'.
- **Dr Joseph Kunnuji** (panel with Mandy Carver and Prof Brett Pyper). 'Aesthetic education, African musics, and curricula worth having: OSM's Bach to Rachmaninov curriculum and its post-apartheid aftermath'.
- **Lisa Lombaard** (MMus student). 'Boerepompie, in die stad of op die plaas: Portrayals of Afrikaner masculinity and the performance thereof in the song "Boerepompie" by Ricus Nel and Snotkop'.
- **Prof Danré Strydom** (with Prof Johan Ferreira). 'A two-decade survey of symphonic programming of selected South African orchestras: Observations and reflections'.
- **Prof Danré Strydom** (with Prof Mario Nell). 'Aligning expectations: Investigating the disparity between secondary school music curricula and tertiary admission requirements in South Africa'.
- **Prof Matildie Wium**. '"Transposed nationalism": Hubert du Plessis and Arnold van Wyk's intermedial music'.
- **Friederike Scholtz** (PhD student). '"Alles aards en alledaags en klein": Conceptions of mid-century Afrikaner femininity in Blanche Gerstman's song cycle "Die lied van 'n vrou"' (1958).



Dr Melissa Gerber, Dr Joseph Kunnuji, Prof Matildie Wium, Lisa Lombaard and Friederike Scholtz.

Engaged Scholarship

The following concerts were presented as part of the OSM Concert Series:

- **5th OSM Liesbeth Schlumberger Organ Chair**
  Re-inauguration of the OSM/UFS Marcussen Organ
  30 January to 8 February 2025
- **Spina and Benignetti piano duo**
  Eleonora Spina and Michele Benignetti
  27 February 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **Marabi meets highlife: Jo Kunnuji in concert with Mlungisi Gegana**
  Joseph Kunnuji (trumpet), Mlungisi Gegana (double bass), John Smit (drums), Thembi Dunjana (piano) and Vuyani Gxavu (trombone)
  29 March 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **Yaron Kohlberg piano recital**
  31 March 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **Quatuor Avena saxophone quartet**
  Nicolas Allard (soprano saxophone), Fabio Cesare (alto saxophone), Sumika Tsujimoto (tenor saxophone) and Adam Campbell (baritone saxophone)
  10 April 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **An evening of timeless romantics**
  Nicol Viljoen and Piet Koornhof
  24 April 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **Mooi(ste) Afrikaanse liedere**
  Teresa de Wit (mezzo-soprano) and Lesley-Ann Mathews (piano)
  8 May 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- ***Carousel* musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein**
  19 June 2025 | 15:00
  20 June 2025 | 15:00
  21 June 2025 | 18:00
  22 June 2025 | 14:00
  Wynand Mouton Theatre
- **A songmaker's journey**
  Marie Vassiliou (soprano) and Nicolene Gibbons (piano)
  16 August 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **The music of Jan Coetzee**
  Nicolene Gibbons (piano), Anmari van der Westhuizen (cello) and Marie Vassiliou (soprano)
  18 August 2025 | Odeion | 18:00
- **A tribute concert and archive handover: Prof Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph**
  20 August 2025 | Odeion | 13:00
- **Journeys – a musical evening of masterpieces**
  Jeanne-Louise Moolman (viola), Elna van der Merwe (piano) and Piet Moolman (piano)
  28 August 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- ***Gypsy***
  Albertus Engelbrecht (tenor) and Albie van Schalkwyk (piano)
  18 September 2025 | Odeion | 19:00

- **Cello recital**
  Michael Kevin Jones, with guest artist Nicolene Gibbons (piano)
  2 October 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
  This was repeated at the Theatre on the Square in Sandton and at a music society concert in Pretoria on 3 and 5 October, respectively.
- **Reflections**
  Zanta Hofmeyr (violin) and Cameron Upchurch (organ)
  25 October 2025 | Odeion | 19:00
- **From classics to jazz**
  Nicol Viljoen (piano)
  30 October 2025 | Odeion | 19:00

Prof Matildie Wium contributed to the field of engaged scholarship in several ways. She delivered two music-historical talks as part of local commemorative initiatives in Bloemfontein:

- Duitse Bydrae tot die Bloemfonteinse Musieklandskap in die 1870s (German Contributions to the Bloemfontein Musical Landscape in the 1870s). This lecture was presented at the sesquicentennial of the St Paulus Lutheran Congregation in Bloemfontein on 3 December.
- Indrukke van Musiek in Bloemfontein, 1875 (Impressions of Music in Bloemfontein, 1875). This lecture was presented at the Nasionale Afrikaanse Literatuurmuseum en Navorsingsentrum (NALN) in Bloemfontein on 9 August.

She also published the following book review: 'Review of Kofi Agawu, *On African music: Techniques, influences, scholarship*' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023) in the *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 22:169-171. In addition, she chaired a discussion on the music of Jan Coetzee during the launch of a critical edition of his compositions by Prof Winfried Lüdemann at the OSM on 18 August.

Dr Suzanne Strauss was the adjudicator at the Northern Cape Arts Festival, and **Angelique Novella** was invited to adjudicate the Harrismith Eisteddfod from 11 to 16 August 2025.

Dr Anchen Froneman attended the 2025 Choral Celebration Network Foundation Mzanzi Conductors Convention at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, 12-14 March 2025. Besides expanding her knowledge of choral music in South Africa, she connected with the choral community and was chosen as a presenter at the 2026 Mzanzi Conductors Convention.



Poster of the Harrismith Eisteddfod.



Dr Anchen Froneman.

Dr Joseph Kunnuji served as the principal adjudicator (African music section) at the National Institute of Allied Arts (NIAA) Vocal and Instrumental Eisteddfod 2025 (5 March to 5 April 2025 – Harare and Gweru, Zimbabwe). During this Eisteddfod, he presented a workshop to African music teachers and practitioners on the topic, 'African Musical Heritage as Cultural Capital.'



Sibusiso Njeza, Dr Joseph Kunnuji and Natalie Bacon (NIAA Director).

Dr Joseph Kunnuji currently serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Artistic Research* (*JAR*) and as an associate editor for the *Journal of the Music Arts in Africa* (*JMAA*).

Dr Frelét de Villiers was elected the Vice-President (Free State and Northern Cape Region) of the SASMT. In addition, she served as an adjudicator for the SASMT Music Competition, the National Yamaha Music Competition and the Victoria K Bennet National Music Competition.

Nicolene Gibbons and **Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen** joined forces for a recital that included works by Messiaen, Beethoven and Prokofiev at Northward House in Parktown, Johannesburg. This recital, held on 21 September, formed part of the prestigious Mzanzi Chamber Music Collective concert series.

OSM Piano lecturer **Nicolene Gibbons** recorded the monumental work *Reflections* by South African composer Jacobus Kloppers, commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for pianist Colleen Athparia. Gibbons described the work as 'South African *Pictures at an exhibition*' (https://youtu.be/WnYfM-cMkzc?si=0wGD5nBTzZ_Inr5q). The film version of *Reflections* was screened at the planetarium on Naval Hill, Bloemfontein, on 22 May 2025, followed by an interdisciplinary colloquium. The panel comprised Dr Martin Laubscher (Department of Practical Theology, UFS), Rev. Jan Lubbe (Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church – the facilitator), Nicolene Gibbons (pianist and lecturer), Prof Johann Rossouw (Head of the Department of Philosophy, UFS) and **Profs Nicol Viljoen** and **Martina Viljoen** (emeritus professors associated with the OSM).



Members of the panel discussing historical and philosophical themes in Reflections by Jacobus Kloppers. From the left: Dr Martin Laubscher, Dr Jan Lubbe, Nicolene Gibbons, Prof Johann Rossouw, Prof Nicol Viljoen and Prof Martina Viljoen.



Poster for "Reflections".

On 20 August 2025, the OSM hosted a tribute concert in honour of Prof Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, one of South Africa's most distinguished composers and a key contributor to the revised national anthem. The event marked the official donation of Prof Zaidel-Rudolph's entire archive, comprising more than 80 compositions, manuscripts, correspondence and artefacts, to the UFS. A pioneer of South African music, she was the first woman in the country to obtain a doctorate in Music Composition (1979). She later studied in London and Germany under György Ligeti. Secured through the good offices of Prof Alexander Johnson (Director of the International Institute of the Arts), the archive will be digitised and housed under the oversight of the Archive for Contemporary Affairs. Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation, formally received the archive on behalf of the university. The tribute concert featured the world premiere of *Unications for String Quartet*, performed by the Odeion String Quartet, and also piano works presented by OSM lecturers Nicolene Gibbons and Nina Phillip.



Poster for the tribute concert and archive handover.

Dingaan Chabalala has remained actively engaged in community-based music development by coordinating the Bloemfontein Live Change Centre for Music in the community of Heidedal, Bloemfontein. This initiative focuses on providing access to music education and youth development through structured musical activities and mentorship. Chabalala organised a masterclass with Sarah Slatter from the University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrück, Germany, which provided his students with exposure to international professional expertise. In addition, he was invited to present a music workshop for the Field Band Foundation as part of their annual Music and Movement Workshop.



A Brass masterclass facilitated by Sarah Slatter (University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrück, Germany).



A full band rehearsal at the Bloemfontein Life Change Centre for Music.

National and International Collaboration

In February 2025, Dr Joseph Kunnuji was elected Chair of the Board of Directors of the African Researchers Network CIC (a UK-based association of academics specialising in Africa-related research).

The fifth OSM Liesbeth Schlumberger Organ Chair coincided with the re-inauguration of the UFS's Marcussen Organ, which marked a significant milestone for organ music at the University. The restoration fulfilled a long-held vision of **Dr Jan Beukes**, the Artistic and Operational Head of the OSM, lecturer in Organ and the curator of the instrument. The University appointed Jan Elsenaar of Protea Organ Builders, a specialist in Marcussen organs, to carry out the restoration. To commemorate the re-inauguration, Dr Beukes curated an extensive programme of concerts, lectures and masterclasses, staged or presented from 30 January to 8 February. Founded in 2015 by **Marius Coetzee**, OSM Manager: Innovation and Development, the Liesbeth Schlumberger Organ Chair is presented biennially and aims to counter the

decline in organ studies in South Africa. Its activities prioritise accessibility and knowledge-sharing, benefiting students, lecturers, liturgical musicians, and amateur organists nationwide. Supplementary audiovisual documentation was released via OSM's digital platforms, including an in-depth OSM *TV Hardtalk* discussion focused on the restored Marcussen Organ.



Poster of the Liesbeth Schlumberger Organ Chair.



Liesbeth Schlumberger.

A concert dedicated to works composed for the rare combination of organ and piano was showcased during this event. The demanding Piece Concertante by Jacobus Kloppers was performed by Nicolene Gibbons and Gerhard de Bruin, with Maritsa Barlow on timpani. Nicolene Gibbons then joined Fabio Tafuni, the Italian organist and former student of Dr Jan Beukes, in a performance of the Concerto for Organ and Piano Opus 74 by Flor Peeters. This is a showpiece of the highest order and was an immediate hit with the audience (https://youtu.be/QHpRT4JYAWA).

The staging of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* at the University of the Free State was the product of a significant international collaboration between the OSM and Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas. The production was presented at the Wynand Mouton Theatre on 21 and 22 June 2025. The project formed part of the SMU's *Study Abroad Programme*. Students and staff from the SMU's Meadows School of the Arts collaborated with the OSM and the UFS's Department of Drama and Theatre Arts. The SMU assumed full responsibility for funding and production, integrating performance with academic coursework, including a Human Rights module presented by Dr Brad Klein. The collaboration was initiated through discussions between Marius Coetzee and Prof Barbara Hill-Moore, Senior Associate Dean and Meadows Distinguished Professor of Voice at the SMU, with institutional support from Dr Jan Beukes. Stage direction was led by Dr Thys Heydenrych (UFS), with support from **Dr Albertus Engelbrecht**, **Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen** and vocal coach **Hans Potgieter**. Musical direction was shared between Prof Hill-Moore, Dr Engelbrecht, and Prof Brian Bentley, with Prof Van der Westhuizen conducting the OSM Camerata. In general, participants described the production as transformative, and it was well received by local audiences. Discussions are underway for a follow-up collaboration in 2026 to maintain a sustainable international partnership between the two institutions.





Cast of the Carousel production.

During her period of research leave, **Prof Danré Strydom** was a Visiting Professor at the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University and Fontys University of the Arts (Tilburg, the Netherlands). While she was at Fontys, she established a collaborative project between the institution and the UFS. In the wake of her efforts, staff members from FONTYS visited the UFS, and as a result, our initial joint project will be launched in 2026. During her time at these three institutions, **Prof Strydom** also taught individual lessons, conducted masterclasses, gave chamber music classes and orchestra sectionals and presented various seminars.



Prof Strydom presenting a seminar at the University of Pretoria.

In addition, **Prof Strydom** was selected to participate in a staff mobility project at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. This project is a collaboration between the Tshwane University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, the UFS, and the Royal Conservatory, one that culminated in the premiere of the first two acts of In the Blink of an Eye, with music composed by Arthur Feder. During **Prof Strydom**'s visit to the Anton Bruckner Private University (Linz, Austria), she presented a public lecture titled 'Resonance of diversity: Unearthing gems in South African clarinet–piano repertoire' on 5 May 2025.

Dr Suzanne Strauss was elected a member of the Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) committee.

Nicolene Gibbons was asked to perform the complete works of Jan Coetzee for the launch of the critical edition of Coetzee's work, a project initiated by Prof Winfried Lüdeman (a former student of Coetzee's). All the piano parts were originally written for Leonore Kloppers, a well-known former lecturer at the UFS. Quite extensive correspondence was exchanged between Prof Lüdemann and Gibbons regarding the original score, and their in-depth analyses of the music helped to clarify anomalies in the composer's manuscript. The songs were performed by Marie Vassiliou, a British soprano and Professor of Voice at both the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Prof Vassiliou visited the OSM as part of an Artistic Residency (see below) under the auspices of the newly convened International Institute of the Arts. **Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen** performed the cello works.



Nicolene Gibbons and Prof Marie Vassiliou performing Jan Coetzee's songs at the OSM.



Prof Marie Vassiliou, Nicolene Gibbons, Leonore Kloppers (original dedicatee of the Coetzee piano sonata), Prof Winfried Lüdemann, Prof Matildie Wium and Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen





Prof Marie Vassiliou gave masterclasses.

Postgraduate Students

The following PhD candidate graduated with the degree PhD (Music):

Johannes Coetzer. 'The application of a seamless learning approach in the Year 9 of the LGR-22 Music Curriculum using the SLED framework: A case study.'

Supervisor: Dr Frelet de Villiers

Other Activities

Dr Anchen Froneman was accepted as a Certification Candidate by the Lessac Training and Research Institute and commenced the process towards becoming a Lessac Certified Trainer. Having already qualified as a Certified Movement Analyst, she will expand her somatic education and research impact to include a broader community of musicians. This results from Lessac Kinesensics' focus on cultivating neurophysical sensory processes in order to support the functional and expressive development of the BodyVoice.

The OSM, in collaboration with the UFS International Arts Institute, hosted Prof Marie Vassiliou as its first Artist-in-Residence from 8 to 18 August 2025. Prof Vassiliou has been affiliated with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama since 2005 as a voice teacher, historical performance coach and mentor on the *Voiceworks* project. She also serves as Professor of Voice at the Royal Academy of Music and maintains an active private practice with professional singers. The residency comprised several initiatives, including:

- A colloquium and concert dedicated to the life and oeuvre of South African composer Jan Coetzee (1912-1999), presented at both the OSM and the Department of Music at Stellenbosch University.
- A seminar entitled *Collaborative storytelling*, presented by Nicolene Gibbons and Prof Vassilou, examined narrative collaboration in vocal music through works by Jean Sibelius, Peter Klatzow, Clara Schumann and Giacomo Puccini.
- A concert entitled *A Songmaker's Journey*, with Prof Vassiliou accompanied by Nicolene Gibbons, was presented at the OSM and Stellenbosch University.
- An extended masterclass series for students of the OSM Voice Department.



Posters of concerts.

Dingaan Chabalala was actively involved in professional performance and music leadership. As the conductor of the Free State Youth Orchestra, he presented educational concerts at schools in Bloemfontein and Thaba-Nchu. These concerts were aimed at music education outreach and youth development.

As the conductor of the Free State Youth Wind Ensemble, he led a collaborative concert together with the Northern Cape Symphonic Youth Wind Band, which visited Bloemfontein.



Collaborative concert between the Free State Youth Wind Ensemble and the Northern Cape Symphonic Youth Wind Band.

Furthermore, he made his solo debut with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, a significant professional milestone in his career.

In addition, he was invited to perform with the Mzansi National Orchestra as part of its annual national tour, reflecting his strong professional standing in the South African orchestral landscape.



Concert poster featuring Dingaan Chabalala as soloist with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra.



Performance with the Mzansi Philharmonic Orchestra. A backstage photograph of Dingaan Chabalala with internationally renowned conductor Marin Alsop during the orchestra's annual tour.

OSM alumnus and cellist Wille Naudé has been accepted for postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Mons, Belgium, where he commenced a Master's degree in Cello Performance under the guidance of Prof David Cohen (https://davidcohen.be/). Naudé completed the Bachelor of Music (BMus) degree in Performance at the OSM, where he studied under the mentorship of Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen.



Willie Naude.

Staff (2025)

Permanent staff

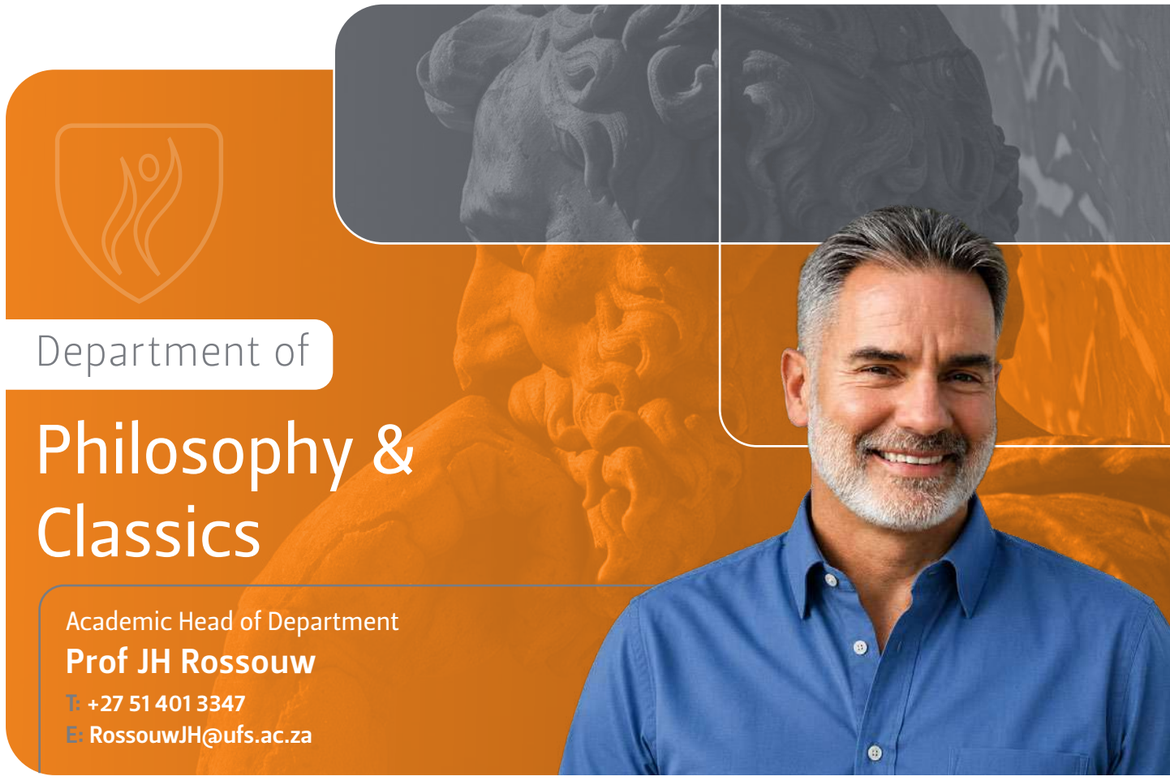
Dr Jan Beukes	Senior Lecturer, Artistic and Operations Head
Dr Frelét de Villiers	Senior Lecturer, Academic Head of Department
Dingaan Chabalala	Lecturer
Dr Albertus Engelbrecht	Lecturer
Dr Anchen Froneman	Senior Lecturer
Dr Joseph Kunnuji	Senior Lecturer
Dr Sonkanise Nkosi	Senior Lecturer
Lance Phillip	Lecturer
Dr Marc Röntsch	Senior Lecturer
Prof Danré Strydom	Associate Professor
Prof Matildie Wium	Associate Professor

Contract staff

Maritsa Barlow	Lecturer
Teresa de Wit	Lecturer
Dr Luzanne Eigelaar	Lecturer
Nicolene Gibbons	Lecturer
Michelle Horn	Junior Lecturer
Karlin Kock	Junior Lecturer
Aubrey Lodewyk	Lecturer
Manuela Lovisa	Lecturer
Mariechen Meyer	Junior Lecturer
Renée Neuhoff	Lecturer
Angelique Novella	Lecturer
Hans Potgieter	Lecturer
Claire Röntsch	Lecturer
Dr Suzanne Strauss	Senior Lecturer

Support staff

Marius Coetzee	Senior Officer
Ella Kotze	Officer
Ninette Pretorius	Officer
Leon Snyman	Officer
Charlene Williams	Officer



Department of

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Overview of 2025

This was yet another groundbreaking year for the Philosophy & Classics Department. I mention just a few highlights:

- An undergraduate pass rate of more than 80%.
- All philosophy Honours students on course to pass, of which two with distinction, with three of the four planning to do an MA in the Department.
- Four students completing their master's degrees, of which one with distinction.
- Four students completing their doctoral degrees.
- More than 10 peer-reviewed articles, more than three book chapters, and one book was published.

Achievements

Staff Achievements

Prof Johann Rossouw

- "Trump, realism and religion: A Girardian analysis of current geo-politics". Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Colloquium on Violence & Religion, Rome Campus of the Australian Catholic University, 4-7 June 2025.
- "Nicea: 'n Apokaliptiese bron vir ons apokaliptiese era?". Paper presented at the annual conference on Philosophy and Theology, Akademia, Centurion, 21 July 2025.
- Talk given on invitation on Ukraine, Russia and geopolitics at the inaugural annual day conference of the Pionier-inisiatief, 14 August 2025, Stellenbosch.

- Invited panellist at the celebration of the launch of Akademia's Honours programme in Philosophy, 17 November 2025, Centurion.
- Invited participant at annual Hariekwaggo-beraad of Cape Forum on reconciliation in Afrikaans, 21 November 2025, Stellenbosch.

Dr Ulrich Kleinhempel

- Chair of closed panel at the XXIII Quinquennial World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), Kraków, Poland, 24-30 August 2025: *Divination in modern African culture: its retrieval in the fields of culture, therapy, literature, religion, spirituality, sciences, and the law*.

Dr Dennis Masaka

- TORCH-AfOx visiting fellow, Uehiro Oxford Institute, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, January-December 2025.

Prof Gysbert Olivier

- Invited plenary speaker at The Islands Conference, Jeju University, South Korea, 2-6 August 2025. Delivered plenary address on 5 August 2025: "Archipelagic thinking and (inter-) subjectivity". (One of six plenary addresses, by invitation.)
- Invited contributor to an international anthology on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, edited by Prof Nina Dmitrieva (Kaliningrad University, Russian Federation).
- Accepted chapter (submitted 2025): "Kant's Perpetual Peace (1795), the Russia–Ukraine/NATO Conflict, and the Relevance of Ethical and Moral Considerations in this Regard." (Forthcoming publication, possibly 2025 or 2026.)

Lindani Gobingca

- Elected as a member of the PSSA Executive Committee, serving in the role of Vice Treasurer.
- Invited to Hillsdale College (USA) as part of ongoing academic development and international institutional exposure.
- Attended a range of academic symposiums across Philosophy, Political Science, and the broader Humanities.
- Observed undergraduate and postgraduate lectures to gain insight into Hillsdale's pedagogical approach.
- Received two invitations to deliver guest lectures based on PhD thesis research.
- Attended an academic symposium at the University of Chicago, themed *Plato and the Concept of Emancipation*.
- Member of GHREC.

Evert Pistorius

- Successful completion of the two-year probation period.
- Member of GHREC.

Dr Helen-Mary Cawood

- Invitation to participate in a panel discussion at the international conference: Dialogues and Dissonances: The Environmental Humanities from North–South Perspectives, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, NOVA University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal, 25-27 September 2025.
- Panel discussion: *Eco-Translation as Ecological Humanities*.
- Paper presented: *A constellation of eco-translation: Photography as hermeneutic interpretation of non-verbal narratives of the veld*.

- Invitation by Prof Karen Bennett (Professor of Translation Studies, NOVA University of Lisbon; CETAPS researcher; Editor of *Translation Matters*; Editorial Board member of Brill series *Approaches to Translation Studies*) to guest edit a special edition on eco-translation for the journal *Translation Matters*, Vol. 9.2 (Autumn 2027).
- Co-founder (with Dr Xany Jansen van Vuuren) of the **Eco-Humanities Network in Southern Africa**, a research network for Eco-Humanities scholars with a monthly online research seminar and growing Global South participation.

Dr Charles Villet

- International conference participation at the University of Tübingen, Germany.
- Participation in the 8th International Erich Fromm Postdoctoral Seminar, Fromm Institute, Tübingen, Germany.

Dr John Meyer

- Participation in three academic conferences in 2025 (two publications pending).

Prof R.M. Britz

- Adjunct Professor, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, USA.
- Visiting Professor, Theological University, Utrecht.
- Co-supervisor to three candidates.
- Member, Neo-Calvinism Research Institute.
- Member, Centre for Dutch Reformation Studies.

Prof Kristof Vanhoutte

- Founded (together with two academic colleagues in Basel, Switzerland) an association aimed at promoting the distribution of scientific knowledge to a broader public audience.
- 2025: Pilot/test-run events conducted.
- Active engagement in the event: "The Winner Is ..." Secured generous funding from the Christophe Merian Stiftung to continue the project.
- Established personal academic website (since the end of 2024).

Mark Amiradakis

- Co-organiser of the November 2025 Conference of the South African Society for Critical Theory (SASCT) at NMU.
- Co-editor of the special edition of the SASCT 2025 Conference in the *Acta Academica* Journal Series.
- Guest editor of the A*cta Academica* SASCT special edition, 2025.

Madhlozi Moyo

- Permanent member of the Classics at the Crossroads initiative, pioneered by the Universities of Cambridge and Ghana, as well as Memorial University.
- Recipient of the Memorial University Research Grant for the year 2025.

Student Achievements

Johann Rossouw

- Carel Boshoff, Rudi van Rensburg, and René Eloff graduated with a PhD in Philosophy (UFS) in 2025, under the supervision of Prof Johann Rossouw.

- Francis Modiko completed an Honours mini-thesis on the philosophy of drones in contemporary warfare.

Gysbert Olivier

- Marc Smit graduated with a PhD in Philosophy (UFS) in 2025, under the supervision of Prof Gysbert Olivier.

John Meyer and Louise Cilliers

- A Smit (BA Hons):
  The culinary experience of an ancient Greek banquet (obtained with distinction).

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Kelee Powell (BA Hons):
  A critical analysis of whether the digital domain provides Gen Z women with the necessary conditions for a functional public sphere (obtained with distinction).
- Dehanie Bronkhorst (BA Hons):
  A critical investigation into the communal possibilities associated with the digital (obtained with distinction).
- Diane Desiree Prins (MA):
  Digital colonialism in the Global South: A critical analysis of the instrumental view of Technology (obtained with distinction).

John Meyer

- A. Smit (MA):
  'Music Education in Early Greece', graduated, 2025.

Prof Rudolf Britz

- Co-supervision of three postgraduate candidates (Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, USA).
- Co-supervision of three postgraduate candidates (Theological University Utrecht, Netherlands). (Completions not specified.)

Dr Mark Amiradakis

- Diane Desiree Prins (MA):
  Digital colonialism in the Global South: A critical analysis of the instrumental view of Technology (obtained with distinction).

Teaching

Evert Pistorius

- Virtually presented a paper in the academic panel:

  "Playing Catch-up: Interventions" at the *Classics and Classical Studies Teaching, Learning and Assessment Indaba*, arranged by the Classical Association of South Africa, 17-19 September 2025.

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Delivered a seminar through Incite Seminars (Academic Online Platform, Philadelphia, USA), August-October 2025:*THE MIRROR OF DEATH. Hermeneutical Reflections on the Afterlife*.

Prof Rudolf Britz

- Participation in master's and PhD programmes at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (USA).

Short Learning Programmes offered

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Incite Seminars (Philadelphia, USA):

  THE MIRROR OF DEATH. Hermeneutical Reflections on the Afterlife from August to October 2025.

Research Projects

Johann Rossouw

- Completing a monograph on tradition and modernity in the late novels of Karel Schoeman.
- Ongoing research for a monograph on South Africa's enduring colonial nature.
- Ongoing research on technics and tradition.

Ulrich Kleinhempel

- African Traditional Religion, Philosophy, Divination, and Spirituality, and its Afro-Brazilian Offshoots. Retrieval and Reaffirmation, in Global Horizons, of Post-Secularism, and 'Multiple Modernities'. [Working title] Funding: Not specified.

Dennis Masaka

- Collective Responsibility and Collective Meeting of Needs, and the Question of Land Redistribution in Zimbabwe.

  Conducted under the guidance of Dr Alberto Giubilini, Uehiro Oxford Institute, University of Oxford.

  Undertaken during TORCH-AfOx Visiting Fellowship (2025).

Gysbert Olivier

- Online Civilisation (edited volume in preparation)
  Collaboration with Nic Jordan-Asher (editor), Montagu House Publishers, USA.
  Prof Olivier serves as co-editor.
  Contribution:
  Introduction: *"Introduction: A new epistéme for the age of the network society?"*
  Chapter: *"Online civilisation and its discontents."*
  Future collaboration planned on a volume on Science Fiction.
- Artificial Intelligence and Society

  Ongoing research focus on the impact and implications of AI on society and culture.Submitted paper (2025) to an overseas Scopus-indexed journal:

  "The (un)founded fear of AI."

  Currently preparing a book-length manuscript on AI (Introduction in progress). Funding: Not specified.

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Ongoing research in eco-translation, ecological humanities, and epistemic translation (through Eco-Humanities Network in Southern Africa and EPISTRAN).
- Broader research focus contributing to edited volume *Intellectual De-colonisation: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2025).

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Ongoing research programme with two publications already in the pre-publication phase for 2026 (details not specified).

Madhlozi Moyo

- Completing a monograph on *Classical presences in Zimbabwe*, conducted under the auspices of the Torch/ AfOx initiative.

Funding

Christophe Merian Stiftung: funding secured for the continuation of the Basel-based public knowledge initiative (2026).

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Ulrich Kleinhempel

- "*Stigmata and embodiment: Tattoos and piercings as mediums of culture and soul.*" Sociology International Journal (SoSoc Int J), 2025, Volume 9, Issue 3, pp. 144-148. https://doi.org/10.15406/SIJ.2025.09.00429
- "*Russian Orthodoxy and the East Slavic realm: The integration of the Pagan heritage, and 'territorialisation' in history, nature, and shared culture. Considerations on the background of the present Ukrainian war, and of differences with the West.*" Sociology International Journal (SocIntJ), 2025, Volume 9, Issue 2, pp. 79-83. https://doi.org/10.15406/SIJ.2025.09.00420

Dennis Masaka

- "*Overcoming epistemic injustice in Africa: A Global South perspective. Inquiry*: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2025.2521663
- Dennis Masaka (2025). *Ubuntu as Belonging to Community and the Challenge of Afrophobia in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Africa Today, 72(1), 2025, pp. 43-59. https://doi.org/10.2979/at.00048

Gysbert Olivier

- *Die ervaring van Afrikaans as konferensietaal in 'n oorwegend Engelstalige globale omgewing* (The experience of Afrikaans as a conference language in a predominantly English-language global environment). Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe (Journal for the Humanities), 65 (1), 2025, pp. 427-440.
- *Scatterings of Light and Dark – In the Time of Tyranny* (book). Christel Foord Publishers, May 2025.
- *C.S. Lewis's The Four Loves and Kieslowski's Three Colours Blue, White and Red.* South African Journal of Art History, 2025.
- *Necrotechnology, Stiegler and the digital. Phronimon.* Journal of the South African Society for Greek Philosophy and the Humanities, December 2025. https://unisapressjournals.co.za/index.php/Phronimon/article/view/20219/8835

Charles Villet

- "Agency and Violence: An African Philosophical Approach" (editorial introduction). African Studies (Special edition: Agency and Violence), 84 (3): 169-176 (Print ISSN: 0002-0184, Online ISSN: 1469-2872). Available online: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00020184.2025.2539653.

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- "*Model Failure. The implications of the 'classical' as a paradigmatic concept.*" Vita pensata, no. 32, May 2025, Classico I, pp. 108-119. Available online: https://www.vitapensata.eu/2025/05/10/model-failure-the-implications-of-the-classical-as-a-paradigmatic-concept/

Books

Gysbert Olivier

- *Scatterings of Light and Dark – In the Time of Tyranny*. Christel Foord Publishers, May 2025.

Book Chapters

Johann Rossouw

- "Scapegoating, Mimesis, and the Human Future: Thinking with René Girard and Bernard Stiegler on the Automation of Desire" in Desiring Machines: Mimetic Theory and Artificial Intelligence in Technology, Philosophy, Film and Fiction, edited by Sandor Goodhart and Thomas Ryba, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025.

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Helen-Mary Cawood & Mark Amiradakis: *Intellectual decolonisation and the danger of epistemic closure: The need for a critical decolonial theory* in *Intellectual Decolonisation: Critical Perspectives*, Routledge, 2025.

Mark Amiradakis

- Amiradakis, M.J. & Cawood, H.-M. (2025). *Intellectual decolonisation and the danger of epistemic closure: The need for a critical decolonial theory* in *Intellectual Decolonisation: Critical Perspectives*, Routledge.

Conference Papers / Presentations

Ulrich Kleinhempel

- Symposium: *San Gregorio Palamas: l'atto increato ed il principio trascendentale della scienza,* Pisa, Italy, 10 January 2025.
  Presentation: *La genesi dell'esicasmo da parte della ricezione neoplatonica dello yoga nell'antichità – Caratteristiche comuni, ricezione e onseguenze per l'interpretazione.*
- 38th Conference: ISSR (International Society for the Sociology of Religion): *Religion, Migration, and Conflicts in Polarized Societies* Kaunas, Lithuania, 26 June to 4 July 2025.
  Presentation: *Africanising the Western Cape: Ritual transformations of a 'white' secular landscape into a spiritual African 'life-world', as symbolic decolonisation and 'territorialisation'.*
- Conference: ESSWE (European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism): *Esotericism and Rationality* Vilnius, Lithuania, 26-28 June 2025.
  Presentation: *Esotericist hermeneutics in inter-cultural encounter: The South African psychiatrist J.B.F. Laubscher as pioneer of studies on Bantu spiritistic practices, beliefs and phenomena in a psychiatric context.*

- Conference: XXIII Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR: *Out of Europe: Studying Religion(s) in Interconnected Worlds,* Jagiellonian University & Polish Society for the Study of Religions, Kraków, Poland, 24-30 August 2025.
  Presentation: *Bantu African Divination and its reception in poetics and culture in Southern Africa and Brazil* (chaired within a closed panel).
- 35. Deutscher Orientalistentag, Erlangen, 6-11 September 2025.
  Presentation: *Byzantinische Yogins? Von der neuplatonischen Rezeption des Yoga zum Hesychasmus.*
- Webinar: IUAFS (Commission on the Anthropology of Religion), 24 September 2025.
  Presentation: *Traditional Religions and Medical Systems in South Africa.*
- Conference: 3rd International Academy of Africana Indigenous Religions, Theology and Arts, 2025.
- Conference Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. 27-30 October 2025.
  Presentation: *Sacralising Times and Spaces as Pathways to Africanisation of the 'Life-World'.*
- Conference: CESNUR (Centre for Studies on New Religions), Cape Town, 14-19 November 2025.
  Presentation: *Umbanda – An Afro-Brazilian Religion with a Bantu Core: Interactions and Transformations in New Horizons and Establishment in Modernity*.

Dennis Masaka

- "Collective meeting of needs' and pursuit of land justice: Lessons from Zimbabwe's land redistribution exercise." Uehiro Oxford Institute, Research in Progress Seminar Series, University of Oxford, 17 June 2025.
- "Collective responsibility, land repossession and land justice question in Zimbabwe." Uehiro Oxford Institute, Research in Progress Seminar Series, University of Oxford, 4 November 2025.

Gysbert Olivier

- The Islands Conference, Jeju University, South Korea, 5-6 August 2025. Plenary Address (5 August 2025): *Archipelagic thinking and (inter-) subjectivity*.
  Invited by Dr Alex Taek-Gwang Lee, Professor, School of Global Communication; Director, Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies; Global Centre for Technology in Humanities.

Lindani Gobingca

- Presented a paper at the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA) Conference**,** hosted by North-West University (2025).

Evert Pistorius

- "Playing Catch-up: Interventions."
  Classics and Classical Studies Teaching, Learning and Assessment Indaba, Classical Association of South Africa, 17-19 September 2025 (virtual).

Helen-Mary Cawood

- *A constellation of eco-translation: Photography as hermeneutic interpretation of non-verbal narratives of the veld.*
  Panel discussion: Eco-Translation as Ecological Humanities.
  Dialogues and Dissonances: The Environmental Humanities from North–South Perspectives, NOVA University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal. 25-27 September 2025. (Invited participation.)
- Virtual lecture: *Urban wildlife photography as activism: A visual translation of solastalgia,* EPISTRAN (Epistemic Translation), virtual lecture series 2024–5 – International Lecture Series Session 8, 6 February (5-6:30 pm). Co-presented with Dr Xany Jansen van Vuuren.

Charles Villet

- Conference: *A phenomenology of racism: Hegelian (mis)recognition and the structure of colonial consciousness:* Conference on Decolonisation and Violence (15-16 May 2025), College of Fellows, University of Tübingen, Germany.
- Seminar: *Fromm's existential wager: Screen-existence and social character (trans)formation,* 8th International Erich Fromm Postdoctoral Seminar (10-13 September 2025), Fromm Institute, Tübingen, Germany.

John Meyer

- Conference: SOS II (Stanford, Oxford and Stellenbosch), Stellenbosch University, 30-31 January 2025. (Publication pending.)
- Publication pending: *Approaching Foreigners in Antiquity,* North-West University, 5-8 February 2025.
- Conference: Recalibrating Foreign Policy Framework for Sharing Indigenous Knowledge among the Global South, University of Delhi, 23-24 October 2025.

Rudolf Britz

- Global Summit (Theological Education), Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, USA, 24-26 June 2025.

Madhlozi Moyo

- Conference: *Animals as symbols of "sophia" in ancient Greek and some African fables,* University College London, 3 July 2025.

Conference Proceedings

Gysbert Olivier

- Extended version of previously delivered paper (2024 Kant 300 Conference, Kaliningrad University): *"Kant's Perpetual Peace (1795), the Russia–Ukraine/NATO Conflict, and the Relevance of Ethical and Moral Considerations in this Regard."* Accepted for publication in an international anthology on Immanuel Kant (forthcoming).

John Meyer

- Publications pending from SOS II Conference, Stellenbosch University, January 2025.
- Publications pending from *Approaching Foreigners in Antiquity*, North-West University, February 2025.

Mark Amiradakis

- Co-editor of SASCT 2025 special edition, *Acta Academica*.

Engaged Scholarship

Johann Rossouw

"Donald Trump en 'n nuwe wêreldorde," LitNet Akademies, 2025-01-23, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-donald-trump-en-n-nuwe-wereldorde/

"Wat die De Villiers-era aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch ons kan leer", LitNet Akademies, 2025-02-05, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-wat-die-de-villiers-era-aan-die-universiteit-stellenbosch-ons-kan-leer/

"Oor Trump en Suid-Afrika", LitNet Akademies, 2025-02-13, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-oor-trump-en-suid-afrika/

"Charles Villet oor geweld en die postkoloniale in Suid-Afrika", LitNet Akademies, 2025-02-21, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossuw-gespreksreeks-charles-villet-oor-geweld-en-die-postkoloniale-in-suid-afrika/

"Oor Novak Djokovic, moderne tennis en eer", LitNet Akademies, 2025-03-03, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-oor-novak-djokovic-moderne-tennis-en-eer/

"Van idealisme na realisme: Hoe die Trump-omwenteling verstaan moet word", LitNet Akademies, 2025-03-07, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-van-idealisme-na-realisme-hoe-die-trump-omwenteling-verstaan-kan-word/

"Oor ons trane, nou – en die mistiese groot trek", LitNet Akademies, 2025-03-13, https://www.litnet.co.za/oor-ons-trane-nou-en-die-mistiese-groot-trek/

"Zirk van den Berg se *Landuit want jy wil mos* – oor gemeenskap, ontheemding en tuiste," LitNet Akademies, 2025-03-14, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-zirk-van-den-berg-se-landuit-want-jy-wil-mos-oor-gemeenskap-ontheemding-en-tuiste/

"Onderhoud met Ullrich Kleinhempel oor die Indiese en Neoplatoniese bronne van die Ortodokse stilgebed", LitNet Akademies, 2025-04-11, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-onderhoud-met-ullrich-kleinhempel-oor-die-indiese-en-neoplatoniese-bronne-van-die-ortodokse-stilgebed/

"Gesprek met Jo Prins en Francois Bekker oor Jo en Johann se geestelike reise", LitNet Akademies, 2025-04-17, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-gesprek-met-jo-prins-en-francois-bekker-oor-johann-en-jo-se-geestelike-reise/

"Onderhoud met Laurent Devèze oor die ontstaan en era van die Franse Instituut van Suid-Afrika dertig jaar gelede", LitNet Akademies, 2025-04-30, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-onderhoud-met-laurent-deveze-oor-die-ontstaan-en-era-van-die-franse-instituut-van-suid-afrika-30-jaar-gelede/

"*Dienaar van die waarheid* deur M.C. Botha", LitNet Akademies, 2025-05-15, https://www.litnet.co.za/litnet-akademies-resensie-essay-dienaar-van-die-waarheid-deur-mc-botha/

"Oor Trump en Ramaphosa", LitNet Akademies, 2025-05-22, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-oor-trump-en-ramaphosa/

"*Reflections* deur Jacobus Kloppers – proloog, variasies en epiloog op 'n Afrikaanse volksliedjie", LitNet Akademies, 2025-06-06, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-reflections-deur-jacobus-kloppers-proloog-variasies-en-epiloog-op-n-afrikaanse-volksliedjie/

"'Die Aristoteles van ons tyd': Oor Alasdair MacIntyre", LitNet Akademies, 2025-06-24, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-die-aristoteles-van-ons-tyd-oor-alasdair-macintyre/

"Reisjoernaal", LitNet Akademies, 2025-07-07, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-reisjoernaal/

"In gesprek met Johannes de Villiers oor sy roman, *Op pad na 'n klooster in die sneeu*", LitNet Akademies, 2025-07-10, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-in-gesprek-met-johannes-de-villiers-oor-sy-roman-op-pad-na-n-klooster-in-die-sneeu/

"My pad met Breyten", LitNet Akademies, 2025-07-30, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-klankopname-van-my-pad-met-breyten/

"Om vir eens iemand te wees – oor onlangse studenteprotes in die hartland", LitNet Akademies, 2025-11-14, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-om-vir-eens-iemand-te-wees-oor-onlangse-studenteprotes-in-die-hartland/

"Oor verdiepende samewerking in die Afrikaanse wêreld – gedagtes na aanleiding van Kaapse Forum se derde Hoeriekwaggo-beraad", LitNet Akademies, 2025-11-27, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-oor-verdiepende-samewerking-in-die-afrikaanse-wereld-gedagtes-na-aanleiding-van-kaapse-forum-se-derde-hoeriekwaggo-beraad/

"Die wêreld op sy kop gekeer – Gilles Kepel oor 7 Oktober 2023 en die voortslepende konflik in die Midde-Ooste", LitNet Akademies, 2025-12-04, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-die-wereld-op-sy-kop-gekeer-gilles-kepel-oor-7-oktober-2023-en-die-voortslepende-konflik-in-die-midde-ooste/

"Michel Serres – filosoof van ons tyd en ons toekoms", LitNet Akademies, 2025-12-09, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-michel-serres-filosoof-van-ons-tyd-en-ons-toekoms/

"Oor Afrikaner(on)geloof en ons geloofsbesering", LitNet Akademies, 2025-12-18, https://www.litnet.co.za/die-johann-rossouw-gespreksreeks-oor-afrikanerongeloof-en-ons-geloofsbesering/

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Co-founder of Eco-Humanities Network in Southern Africa (monthly online seminar; Global South research collaboration).
- Member of EPISTRAN (Epistemic Translation) – International Research Network for Epistemic Translation.
- Member of PSSA (Philosophical Society of Southern Africa).
- Member of SASCT (South African Society of Critical Theory); founding member (2018). Society now internationally recognised, hosting annual conference and annual special journal edition with *Acta Academica: Critical Views on Society, Culture, and Politics* (Q2-rated journal).

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Collaboration with Incite Seminars (Philadelphia, USA).
- Co-founder of Basel-based association promoting public dissemination of scientific knowledge.
- Public-facing event engagement: "The Winner Is ..." (2025).

Mark Amiradakis

- Co-organiser of SASCT 2025 Conference.
- Guest editor, *Acta Academica* SASCT special edition (2025).
- Member of SCI-COMM Languages.

National and International Collaboration

Ulrich Kleinhempel

- International conference participation in Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Nigeria, and South Africa.
- Panel chair at IAHR World Congress (Kraków, Poland).

Dennis Masaka

- TORCH-AfOx visiting fellowship, Uehiro Oxford Institute, University of Oxford (United Kingdom), January-December 2025.
- Research collaboration with Dr Alberto Giubilini (Uehiro Oxford Institute, University of Oxford).

Gysbert Olivier

- Ongoing collaboration with Prof Nina Dmitrieva, Director, Programme in Kant Studies, Kaliningrad University, Russian Federation.
- Contribution to international Kant anthology (accepted 2025).
- Established contact with international Kant scholars (including USA and Germany).
- Collaboration with Nic Jordan-Asher, Montagu House Publishers (USA).
- Co-editing volume on Online Civilisation.
- Planned future collaboration on Science Fiction volume.
- Long-standing collaboration with Prof Cho (South Korea), including an invitation to The Islands Conference (2025), continuing a collaboration spanning more than ten years.

Lindani Gobingca

- International academic engagement with Hillsdale College (USA), including symposium participation and pedagogical observation.
- Attendance at symposium at the University of Chicago (USA).
- Executive Committee member, Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA).

Evert Pistorius

- Participation in national academic forum: Classics and Classical Studies Teaching, Learning and Assessment Indaba (Classical Association of South Africa).

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Eco-Humanities Network in Southern Africa (co-founder; regional and Global South collaboration).
- EPISTRAN (International Research Network).
- Collaboration with Dr Xany Jansen van Vuuren.
- Academic engagement with NOVA University of Lisbon (Portugal).
- Invitation to guest edit special issue of *Translation Matters* (Portugal).

John Meyer

- Participation in SOS II (Stanford–Oxford–Stellenbosch collaborative conference).
- Academic engagement at North-West University.
- International conference participation at the University of Delhi (India).

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Collaboration with Incite Seminars (USA).
- Academic collaboration with colleagues in Basel, Switzerland.
- Funding relationship with Christophe Merian Stiftung (Switzerland).

Rudolph Britz

- Adjunct professorship: Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, USA.
- Visiting professorship: Theological University Utrecht, Netherlands.
- Member: Neo-Calvinism Research Institute.
- Member: Centre for Dutch Reformation Studies.

Mark Amiradakis

- Member: Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA).
- Member: South African Society of Critical Theory (SASCT); founding member (2017). SASCT is now internationally recognised, hosting an annual conference and an annual special journal edition with *Acta Academica: Critical Views on Society, Culture, and Politics* (Q2-rated journal).

Madhlozi Moyo

- Torch/ Africa Oxford initiative is still ongoing.
- Member: The Classical Association of South Africa (CASA).

Postgraduate Students

PhD

Johann Rossouw

- Ronée Robinson (continuation): *La servitude volontaire: An enquiry five centuries hence.*
- Lindani Gobingca: The Modern Project in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A tension between Reform and Revolution.
- Candess Kostopoulos: Marthinus Versfeld.

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Nathisvaran Govender (continuation): *"Erotic Technics": A Reconsideration of Fromm and Marcuse's Utopian Critique of Technological Modernity*.

Mark Amiradakis

- Nathisvaran Govender (continuation): "Erotic Technics": A Reconsideration of Fromm and Marcuse's Utopian Critique of Technological Modernity. (Co-supervisor)

Rudolph Britz

- Participates in master's and PhD programmes.
- Acts as co-supervisor for three candidates.

MA

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Diane Desiree Prins: Degree obtained with distinction (2025).
- Peetjan du Plessis: Degree obtained (2025), co-supervisor).
- Heloise le Roux: *A Critical Analysis on the Societal Roles and Stereotypes of 'Angry Women' in The Walking Dead* (continuation); submission due 2026.

John Meyer

- A. Smit: Graduated in 2025.

Mark Amiradakis

- Diane Desiree Prins, 2015177906: *'Digital colonialism in the Global South: A critical analysis of the instrumental view of technology'* (obtained with distinction).
- William Shaer, 2017493616: *Truth and Digital Ludic Culture: Video Games, History, Play, and the Criteriology of Consciousness* (awaiting external examiners' reports).
- Whitney Quist, 2020205866: *The evolution of surveillance practices in the digital era and their impact on the modern individual* (continuation).
- Chanté van Biljon, 2009074887: *The metaphysics of time through the lens of the extended mind* (continuation).

Honours

Evert Pistorius

- A. Smit: *The culinary experience of an ancient Greek banquet* (obtained with distinction, 2025).

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Kelee Powell: Obtained with distinction (2025).
- Dehanie Bronkhorst: Passed with distinction (2025).

Mark Amiradakis

- Dehanie Bronkhorst, 2021726373: "*A critical investigation into the communal possibilities associated with the digital'* (obtained with distinction).
- Oyama Gqola, 2021088766: *A Critical analysis of the impact social media is having on the privacy and autonomy of the modern individual* (obtained).

Other Activities

Gysbert Olivier

- Increasing research focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI), including the preparation of a monograph on the subject.

Lindani Gobingca

- Observational engagement with undergraduate and postgraduate teaching practices at Hillsdale College (international academic development exposure).
- Service role: Vice-Treasurer, Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA).
- Member of GHREC.

Evert Pistorius

- Requested to review an article for publication in *Akroterion*: *"Matteo Noris's Attila (1672) and the Representation of Late Antiquity in the Seventeenth-Century Stage."*

Helen-Mary Cawood

- Guest editor (forthcoming 2027 special edition): *Translation Matters* (eco-translation focus).

Kristoff Vanhoutte

- Development of an expanded publication pipeline for 2026 (two publications in the pre-publication phase).

Staff (2025)

Permanent staff members:

Prof JH (Johann) Rossouw	Academic Head of Department
Dr H (Helen-Mary) Cawood	Senior Lecturer: Philosophy
Dr MJ (Mark) Amiradakis	Lecturer: Philosophy
Dr JC (John) Meyer	Lecturer: Classical Studies & Legal Language and Culture
	Facilitator: Medical Terminology
Dr M (Madhlozi) Moyo	Lecturer: Classical Studies
E (Evert) Pistorius	Lecturer: Classical Languages
	Facilitator: Medical Terminology
L (Lindani) Gobingca	Lecturer: Philosophy
IL (Ilsa) van Wyk	Administrator / Office Manager

Contract staff members:

RG (Reinhard) Schreiber	Junior Lecturer: Classical Languages
	Facilitator: Medical Terminology
A (Anisja) Smit	Facilitator: Classical Studies & Legal Language and Culture
DD (Diane) Prins	Facilitator: Philosophy
W (William) Shaer	Facilitator: Philosophy
PJ (Peetjan) du Plessis	Facilitator: Philosophy
W (Whitney) Quist	Facilitator: Philosophy





Department of

Political Studies and Governance

Academic Head of Department

Dr Albert Schoeman

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Overview of 2025

The Department of Political Studies and Governance experienced a year of significant academic growth, intellectual innovation, and expanding national and international visibility. Staff achievements highlighted the Department's scholarly strength, with colleagues receiving prestigious invitations, presenting keynote lectures, publishing widely, and contributing expert analysis across multiple media platforms. Promotions, postgraduate qualifications, and numerous research engagements further underscored the Department's commitment to professional excellence.

Teaching and curriculum development remained a central focus. Notably, the restructuring of POLS3724 marked a transformative shift toward a more global, decolonised political theory curriculum, integrating African, Asian, and Western traditions through thematic conversation. Guest lectures and methodological collaborations enriched student learning, while pedagogical interventions across undergraduate and postgraduate modules strengthened the Department's academic offering.

Research productivity was robust, with accredited publications spanning political theory, security studies, international relations, and nuclear geopolitics. Staff secured competitive grants, presented at leading international conferences, and contributed chapters to high-profile edited volumes. The Department also maintained a strong presence in public scholarship through media commentary, expert interviews, and widely circulated opinion pieces.

Engaged scholarship and international collaboration expanded through extensive external examining, moderation roles, advisory board appointments, and participation in global research networks. These activities deepened the Department's academic partnerships across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Postgraduate supervision flourished, with several Honours, master's, and doctoral candidates completing their qualifications under departmental guidance. Additional professional service, community engagement, and leadership roles within institutional structures further demonstrated staff commitment to shaping both the discipline and the broader academic environment. Overall, 2025 was a year of meaningful progress, enhanced scholarly impact, and continued dedication to academic excellence and innovation.

Achievements

Dr Bianca Naudé

On the invitation of the SARChI Chair in African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, she delivered a public lecture titled "States as distributed persons: A mycorrhizal approach to political collectivity" at the University of Johannesburg (16 September 2025).

Nominated for the "Best Paper Award" for a paper presented at the 2024 ISA Virtual Conference.

Dr Mamokhosi Choane

Special invitation to be among the selected guests at the acclaimed Founder's lecture and gala dinner, April 2025 and delivered a paper, The Significance of Ubuntu Pedagogy: Transforming Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State in South Africa.

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Promoted to Senior Lecturer in January 2025.

Mosibudi Motimele

Was selected as the Decolonisation Team lead for HELTASA (Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa.

Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

Completed a *Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDip in HE)* in the Faculty of Education, University of Free State (UFS). Graduation scheduled for April 2026.

Was invited as an expert by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), ORF Middle East, South African BRICS Think Tank (SABTT) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), to participate in the Roundtable on *"Rethinking Connectivity: New Geographies, New Markets, New Infrastructure"* hosted and co-funded by the ORF, ORF Middle East, SABTT and HSRC, at the DP World Pavilion, al Forsan Crescent, Expo City, Dubai; United Arab Emirates (UAE): 13 October 2025. Conference details available at: https://orfme.org/event/rethinking-connectivity-new-geographies-new-markets-new-infrastructure/

Was invited to participate in the *Masterclass on Colonial Legacies in Public Law: Histories, Theories, Pitfalls and Potentials with a Focus on Africa,* co-funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Nigeria and the African Network of Constitutional Lawyers (ANCL) at the Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan (UI), Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 8-10 December 2025. Masterclass programme details available at: https://knowledgesteez.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Brochure-15.pdf

Student Achievements

Dr Bianca Naudé

Batseba Moloto (supervisor: Bianca Naude) was named second runner-up in the Humanities 3-Minute Thesis competition.

Nomthandazo Motaung (supervisor: Bianca Naude) achieved a distinction for her Honours mini-dissertation titled "Beyond vulnerability: Bangladesh's engagement in global climate governance for climate displacement solutions".

Teaching

Dr Mamekhosi Choane

- POLS2614 (Globalisation and World Politics)
- POLS6836 (Political Theory)
- POLS6808 (Mini dissertation: Independent research report)
- POLS8900 (MA with specialisation in Political Science)

Prof Eben Coetzee

- POLS 1524 (Introduction to World Politics and Global Governance)
- POLS 6856 (Contemporary Thinkers in International Relations)

Bianca Naude and Alta Grobbelaar

Engaged in a thematic and pedagogical restructuring of the module POLS 3724, Political Theory and Ideology. The revised curriculum integrates African, Indian, and Chinese traditions thematically alongside Western political thought. Rather than positioning non-Western texts as derivative or supplementary, the new structure places diverse traditions into meaningful conversation around key political concepts, such as virtue, ethics, and responsibility, thus disrupting the Cartesian foundations of conventional political theory and cultivating a genuinely global intellectual space. This project is further enriched by the application of metacognitive strategies, grounded in the work of John Flavell, which encourage students to reflect on their own positionalities and how these shape their engagement with political theory.

Dr Bianca Naudé

- POLS 2634 (Cooperative Governance and Electoral Politics)
- POLS 3724 (Ideology and Political Theory)
- FRAP 8616

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Two guest lectures initiated in the Honours class: POLS6816: Methodology and Research Proposal

Guest lecture 1: Presented by Prof Peter Onah Thompson (Appalachian State University) on 7 April 2025 via MS Teams.

Class Presented: Quantitative Political Science

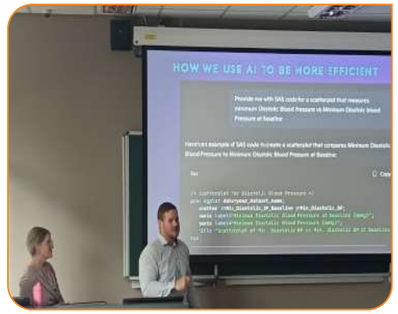
This was the second year that Prof Thompson taught a quantitative Political Science class to our Honours students. This enables our Honours students to have a clearer understanding of the possibilities of quantitative research. Prof Thompson's expertise in quantitative research methods helps our Department bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative political science research and enables our students to see the potential to expand their knowledge beyond what they are necessarily comfortable with.

Guest lecture 2: Presented collaboratively with Ian Carney (Principal Programmer from ICON PLC) on 8 April in FGG 167.

Class Presented: Using AI as a Complementary Tool in Political Science Research

This lecture effectively combined the use of technology and Artificial Intelligence by someone removed from the academic and research space, with Political Science, providing students with a "bigger picture" of how technology is used, and can be used responsibly to enhance research projects. Carney works in the fields of data analytics, statistical analysis, and programming, and illustrated to the students how AI can assist in interpreting and compiling large datasets into understandable, workable content that can be used for research in any field.





- POLS6816 (Methodology and Research Proposal) (Coordination and co-lecturing with Me Sam-Maree Rooi)
- POLS3724 (Ideology and Political Theory)
- SCSI2612 (One lecture on Hydropolitics)
- SCSR2622 (One lecture on qualitative research methods and co-coordination of the module with Dr Matthew Cronje)
- FRAP8616 (One lecture on French Political thought in African societies)

Mosibudi Motimele

- POLS 2624 (Governance and Political Transformation in South Africa)
- POLS 6836 (Political Theory)

Dr Albert Schoeman

- POLS 1514 (Introduction to Politics)
- POLS 1524 (Introduction to World Politics and Global Governance)
- POLS 2624 (Governance and Political Transformation in South Africa)
- POLS 3714 (Security and Conflict Studies)
- POLS 3734 (Political Risk Analysis and Strategic Planning)
- POLS 3744 (International Political Economy)
- FRAP8616 (One lecture on Francophone Africa)
- POLS 6866 (Foreign Policy and Diplomacy; presented lectures on two study units)

Sanet Solomon

- POLS 1514 (Introduction to Politics)
- POLS 6826 (Forms of State and Systems of Government: Comparative Systems)

Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

- POLS 2634 (Cooperative Governance and Electoral Politics)
- POLS 3744 (International Political Economy)

Short Learning Programmes offered

Dr Schoeman

Coordinator: African Union Short Learning Programme (Conflict Prevention and Early Warning). Planning and course development were completed, and teaching commenced in 2025 with 10 candidates successfully passing the course.

Research Projects

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Recipient of NRF Knowledge Interchange & Collaboration (KIC) Grant (R48 400.00).

Recipient of conference funding from the Central UFS Research Fund (R18 350.00).

Both funding opportunities contributed to the successful attendance and presentation at the 28th IPSA World Congress of Political Science in Seoul, South Korea.

This funding also contributed to ongoing research projects, one publication in process at the Journal for Contemporary African Studies and one forthcoming chapter in the Routledge Handbook for Online Violent Extremism (publication forthcoming in 2026).

Mosibudi Motimele

Co-editing a book with two professors from Wits University, which Wits Press will publish. The book is about the July 2021 riots.

Working on a special issue of Theoria on Prefigurative Politics with a colleague from King's College, London.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Dr Mamokhosi Choane

Choane, M. 2025. The Significance of Ubuntu Pedagogy: Transforming Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State in South Africa, Journal of Education and Learning Technology (JELT).

Dr Eben Coetzee

Coetzee, E., & Neethling, T. "Oorloë en gerugte van oorloë: Vraagstukke oor oorlog en vrede in die een-en-twintigste eeu", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe,* 65 (4), 2025.

Coetzee, E. "Die Irannese kern(wapen)dossier: Implikasies vir Israel se nasionale veiligheid ná 7 Oktober 2023 (Deel I)", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe,* 65 (4), 2025.

Prof Theo Neethling

Neethling, T. "The SANDF after 30 Years: Walking the tightrope between external and internal operations on a shoestring budget", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, vol 46, no 1, 2025.

Chapters in edited volumes

De Kluiver, J. and Neethling, T. "The Digital Silk Road: Implications for Africa's digital governance and transformation" in: Onyango, G., Karuri-Sebina, G. (eds.). ***Digitalisation and public policy in Africa. Studies in national governance and emerging technologies***. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham. ISBN 978-3-031-75078-6.

Dr Eben Coetzee

Coetzee, E. "Introduction: The Politics of Nuclear Energy – A Debate Renewed" in Coetzee, E. (ed.). *The Politics of Nuclear Energy in Africa: Opportunities, Fears and Constraints,* UJ Press, 2025.

Coetzee, E ."The Geopolitics of Nuclear Energy in Africa: What, Who, and Why?" in Coetzee, E. (ed.). *The Politics of Nuclear Energy in Africa: Opportunities, Fears and Constraints,* UJ Press, 2025.

Coetzee, E. "Conclusion" in Coetzee, E. (ed.). *The Politics of Nuclear Energy in Africa: Opportunities, Fears and Constraints,* UJ Press, 2025.

Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

Vhumbunu, C.H. (2025). Populism in L. Vincent (ed.). *An Introduction to Comparative Politics for South African students* (pp. 73-101), Cape Town: Juta.

Books

Dr Eben Coetzee

Coetzee, E. (ed.). *The Politics of Nuclear Energy in Africa: Opportunities, Fears and Constraints*, UJ Press, 2025.

Conference Papers/Posters

Dr Mamokhosi Choane

The importance of participatory action research (PAR) for effective teaching and learning in the humanities at the University of the Free State, 2025.

With Seokwe, L. Beyond the Ballot: South Africa and the struggle for true democratic consolidation, UFS, 2025.

Dr Eben Coetzee

Coetzee, E. "The future constellation of world power: Implications for disarmament and verification". Paper delivered at "Seminar on the impact of the current global situation on prospects for nuclear disarmament and verification", Institute for Security Studies, 28-29 February 2025.

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

"Are Africa's Historic Experiences of Terror Informing Current Terrorism Discourse?" 28th IPSA World Conference. Seoul, South Korea, July 2025.

"International vs continental understandings of terrorism: The value of context". International Symposium on Radicalisation, Mainstreaming and Reconciliation: From the extremes to the centre and back again? Radicalisation, mainstreaming and reconciliation in local, national and global context. University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain, June 2025.

Dr Bianca Naudé

"Research as rupture and repair: The narrative mediation of ontological insecurity in social research". Paper presented at the *Inaugural BISA-ISA Joint International Workshop*, Newcastle, United Kingdom, 10-12 October 2025.

Sanet Solomon

Solomon, S. 2025. *An analysis of the political and economic freedom dichotomy in the South African context*. SAAPS Biennial Conference, Nelson Mandela University. Gqeberha (PE).

Prof Theo Neethling

Neethling, T. Private military companies as proxy forces in international politics with special reference to the Russian Wagner Group/African Corps and its operations in Africa. 8th Annual Conference of the European Initiative for Security Studies, Thessaloniki, 26-27 June 2025.

Neethling, T. The pursuit of extremist Islamic states in north-eastern Nigeria and northern Mozambique: Reflections on state fragility and its challenges. Extremisms, Ambiguities, Ideologies, Agency, organised by the Aleksanteri Institute, the Finnish Centre for Russian, Eurasian and Eastern European Studies at the University of Helsinki, 22-24 October 2025.

Mosibudi Motimele

Democratisation and Inclusive Growth: Bedfellows or adversaries. South African Association of Political Science. Nelson Mandela University, 10-12 September 2025. Forthcoming.

The Black Public Humanities Pedagogical Imperatives. International Sociological Association Forum. Mohammed V University, Morocco, 6-11 July 2025. Forthcoming.

Exploring bodily dimensions of theorising legacies of colonial violence, residues of apartheid, and a debilitating neoliberal order. Co-panellist with Prof Sarah Nuttal. The Body is Present: Rethinking the Afterlives of Violence and Legacies of Oppression, University of the Witwatersrand, 23-25 April 2025.

Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

Vhumbunu, C. 2025. *Exploring the role of BRICS-created institutions in fostering a New Science Diplomacy Architecture*. Paper presented at the 10th BRICS Young Scientist Forum and the 7th BRICS Young Innovator Prize, held from 15-17 September 2025 in Brasilia, Brazil, hosted and funded by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communications (MCTI)/*Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação*. Conference details available at: https://www.assaf.org.za/2025/09/18/south-african-delegation-participates-in-brics-young-scientists-forum-ysf-in-brazil/

Vhumbunu, C. 2025. *Will the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Break Africa's Industrialization Jinx? A Political Economy Analysis*. Paper presented at the Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) Annual Forum on *"The AfCFTA, regional integration and industrial development"* hosted and funded by ABSA/DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Industrial Development (SARChI), University of Johannesburg/Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance/Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa, 30-31 July 2025. Conference details and programme available at: http://forum.tips.org.za/

Vhumbunu, C. 2025. *Rethinking the role of sub-regional organisations in preventing and managing coups and Unconstitutional Change of Governments in Africa: Case of SADC*. Paper presented at the African Network of Constitutional Lawyers and the University of Free State (UFS) Faculty of Law Winter School Conference on "*Constitutionalism in Africa*", hosted at the University of Free State (UFS), Bloemfontein, South Africa, 28 July 2025. Conference details available at: https://ancl-radc.org.za/winter-school

Vhumbunu, C. 2025. *Drawing Lessons from the WTO for the effective implementation of special and differential treatment (SDT) provisions in the AfCFTA: Opportunities, challenges and possible solutions.* Paper presented at the 11th African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) Forum on *"International law, reform of the World Trade Organisation, and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area"* organised and funded by the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, (AU Headquarters, Small Conference Hall 2, 22-23 May 2025. Available at: https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250523/11th-annual-forum-african-union-commission-international-law-kicks

Vhumbunu, C. 2025. *The state of migration governance legal frameworks in African Regional Economic Communities (RECs): A comparative analysis of SADC, ECOWAS and EAC.* Paper presented at the 4th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Community Law Conference on '*Reflecting on the current state of regional integration in Africa's sub-regions: Comparative perspectives from the EAC, ECOWAS and SADC*' organised by the African Centre for Transnational Criminal Justice (University of the Western Cape, South Africa), UNESCO 'Oliver Tambo' Chair of Human Rights (University of Fort Hare, South Africa), National University of Lesotho (Lesotho), University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (Rwanda), and King Ceasor University (Uganda), at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, 8-9 May 2025. Reference website: https://www.uwc.ac.za/news-and-announcements/announcements/call-for-abstracts-4th-sadc-community-law-international-conference

Engaged Scholarship

Dr Eben Coetzee

Coetzee, E. "Magsverskuiwinge en risiko van konflik – waar staan Suid-Afrika?", *Vrystaat Landbouwerkswinkel*, 12 September 2025.

Coetzee, E. "Kernwapens en internasionale politiek – onderhoud met Freek Robinson", *LitNet,* 3 July 2025. Available at: https://www.litnet.co.za/kernwapens-en-internasionale-politiek/

Coetzee, E. "Die dwaasheid van Israel se aanval op Iran se kernaanlegte", *LitNet*, 17 June 2025. Available at: https://www.litnet.co.za/die-dwaasheid-van-israel-se-aanval-op-iran-se-kernaanlegte/

Coetzee, E. "The folly of a South Korean nuclear weapon", *LitNet*, 6 February 2025. Available at: https://www.litnet.co.za/the-folly-of-a-south-korean-nuclear-weapon/

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

University of Witwatersrand (WITS): External Examination of Master's thesis:

"Understanding the Nexus between Governance, Development, Conflict and Coups in Mali"

Prof Theo Neethling

Neethling, T. South Africa in 2025: 8 key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *The Conversation*, 19 January 2025.

The article was republished as/in:

- South Africa in 2025 – 8 Key Factors That Will Shape the Future and Test the Government. *allAfrica*, 19 January 2025.
- South Africa in 2025: Eight key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *The Media Online*, 20 January 2025.
- South Africa's unity government: A new era or a fragile experiment? *BizNews*, 20 January 2025.
- SA in 2025: Eight key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *TimesLive*, 21 January 2025.
- 8 key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *Tolerance.ca*, 21 January 2025.
- South Africa in 2025: Eight key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *The Media Online*, 20 January 2025.
- Key factors that will shape SA's trajectory, test the GNU. *SowetanLive*, 21 January 2025.
- SA in 2025: Eight key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *Africa Insider*, 21 January 2025.
- South Africa in 2025 – 8 Key Factors That Will Shape the Future and Test the Government. *allAfrica*, 19 January 2025.
- South Africa in 2025: 8 key factors that will shape the future and test the government. *Corruption Watch*, 24 January 2025.
- SA in 2025: 8 key factors that will shape the future and test the government. Moneyweb, 26 January 2025.

Neethling, T. Trump, die G20 en Suid-Afrika: Enkele notas oor Suid-Afrika se afnemende buitelandse aansien ("Trump, the G20, and South Africa: Some Notes on South Africa's Declining International Standing"), *LitNet Seminare en Essays*, 10 November 2025.

Sanet Solomon

Guest Speaker Invitations

Sanet Solomon. SALGA (Northern Cape and ACCORD Seminar. *Exploring the Architecture of Coalition Governance and Politics in Local Government in Northern Cape*, 30 October 2025.

Sanet Solomon. Eduvos East London, 14 August 2025. *Navigating Careers in Politics.*

Sanet Solomon. Eduvos Pretoria, October 2025. *The Politicisation of State Institutions in South Africa: Challenges for Democracy and Accountability*.

Television and Radio Interviews

- Solomon, S. 2 March 2025. Reconfiguration of the Gauteng leadership, Newzroom Afrika, https://x.com/Newzroom405/status/1896292454195921030
- Solomon, S on Panel Discussion. Newzroom Afrika's Big Stories of the Week, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wTn0CSl7Uk

- Solomon, S. 6 March 2025. Ramaphosa meets Gauteng Provincial Executive Committee, SABC, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH5XASMR6rM
- 11 March 2025: Major political developments, UNISA Radio
- 12 March 2025: Budget speech, eNCA
- 23 March: Panel Interview with Sandile Swana, Newzroom Afrika
- Solomon, S. 6 April 2025. Newzroom Afrika, "Political analyst Sanet Solomon says, should the DA leave the GNU, there are other parties that have expressed their willingness to join." https://www.facebook.com/newzroom405/videos/watch-political-analyst-sanet-solomon-says-should-the-da-leave-the-gnu-there-are/1160775475363545/
- Solomon, S. 6 April 2025. Panel Discussion, Newzroom Afrika https://www.facebook.com/newzroom405/videos/1649925722307793/
- Solomon, S. 6 April 2025. Big stories of the week, Newzroom Afrika, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udVtbxWVilo
- Solomon, S. 7 April 2025. VUKA online radio, The Circle with Mogale Mothale, joined by Sanet Solomon, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKNWHT1etzI
- Solomon, S. 1 June 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTeKmxYSwXU
- Solomon, S. 4 June 2025. eNCA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-fDD4Friqc
- Solomon, S. GNU, Newzroom Afrika, https://x.com/Newzroom405/status/1908972709327130699
- Solomon, S. 4 June 2025. Floyd Shivambu demoted from Secretary General of the MK Party, Voice of the Cape, https://vocfm.co.za/floyd-shivambu-demoted-from-secretary-general-of-the-mk-party/
- Solomon, S. 8 June 2025. Political Desk, PowerFM.
- Solomon, S. 3 June 2025. Umkhonto We Sizwe Party has announced the removal of Floyd Shivambu as its Secretary-General, ***eNCA***, https://www.facebook.com/eNCAnews/videos/umkhonto-we-sizwe-party-has-announced-the-removal-of-floyd-shivambu-as-its-secre/689284623730315/
- Solomon, S. 16 June 2025. GNU turning one, https://www.enca.com/videos/government-national-unity-turns-year-old
- Solomon, S. 17 June 2025. Government of national unity turns a year old, eNCA, https://www.enca.com/videos/government-national-unity-turns-year-old
- Solomon, S. MKP threatens to take action if President doesn't resign, eNCA, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r5-xhnWzAk
- Solomon, S. 2 July 2025. MK party denies infighting while leaked letters indicate otherwise, https://vocfm.co.za/mk-party-denies-infighting-while-leaked-letters-indicate-otherwise/
- Solomon, S. 19 June 2025. SA FM, https://omny.fm/shows/first-take-sa/former-mk-party-sg-to-hold-a-press-conference-amid-speculation-he-may-depart-from-the-party
- Solomon, S. 17 July 2025. Ramaphosa told to resign, https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMNNsklq5CR/?igsh=MXUwb3Vwd2V2cnE2Mg%3D%3D
- Solomon, S. 17 July 2025. MKP gives Ramaphosa deadline to step down, https://www.enca.com/news/mkp-gives-ramaphosa-deadline-step-down and https://x.com/eNCA/status/1945800479281172787
- Solomon, S. 17 July 2025. MKP threatens to take action if President doesn't resign, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r5-xhnWzAk
- Solomon, S. 21 July 2025. Government of national unity turns a year old, https://www.enca.com/videos/government-national-unity-turns-year-old
- Solomon, S. 11 August 2025. ANC pushes to expand GNU, eNCA, https://www.enca.com/videos/anc-pushes-expand-gnu
- Solomon, S. and Prof Gasa, S. Panel Discussion, 14 August 2025. Withdrawals of legacy foundation undermine National Convention build-up, eNCA, https://www.enca.com/opinion/withdrawals-legacy-foundation-undermine-national-convention-build
- Solomon, S. 18 August 2025. Power Desk with Tessa

- Solomon, S. 25 August 2025. Malema Calls for a United Africa, But Analysts Question Practicality, Voice of the Cape, https://vocfm.co.za/malema-calls-for-a-united-africa-but-analysts-question-practicality/
- Solomon, S. 8 September 2025. Political Desk with TT
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Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

Engaged and appointed as an external moderator by the University of Namibia (UNAM) in Namibia, and completed moderation work for the following modules between April 2025 and September 2025:

- External moderator for undergraduate degree in Political Science course on Conflict and Dispute Resolution (CPDR3872), University of Namibia (UNAM), Department of Public Management and Political Studies, Namibia, 23 September 2025.
- External moderator for undergraduate degree in Political Science course on Peace and Conflict Studies (G3752PC), University of Namibia (UNAM), Department of Public Management and Political Studies, Namibia, 23 September 2025.
- External moderator for undergraduate degree in Political Science course on Research Methodology (PAR5962), University of Namibia (UNAM), Department of Public Management and Political Studies, Namibia, 15 September 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Public Policy Analysis (T5841MP), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Namibia, 25 June 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Security Sector Policy Analysis (T6921MS), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Namibia, 29 May 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Strategic Studies and Management (T5831MS), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Namibia, 29 May 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Public Policy (PPP3771), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Namibia, 30 April 2025.
- External moderator for undergraduate degree in Political Science course on the State in Africa (PSA3771), University of Namibia (UNAM), Department of Public Management and Political Studies, Namibia, 22 April 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Organisational Development (G3611PB), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Windhoek, Namibia, 22 April 2025.
- External moderator for a master's of Security Studies (MSS) course on Contemporary World Politics (T5811MC), University of Namibia (UNAM), School of Military Science, Windhoek, Namibia, 17 April 2025.

Appointed as an external examiner and completed the following postgraduate examination for master's dissertations and doctoral theses between January 2025 and December 2025:

- Examined Master of Laws (LLM) dissertation for student LEO XOLANI DUBE (student number: 3946846), titled *An Evaluation of The Judicial Interpretation of the Term 'Exploitation' in the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking In Persons Act 7 of 2013*. African Centre for Transnational Criminal Justice (ACTCJ), Faculty of Law, University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa, November 2025.
- Examined master's dissertation (MA in Security and Strategic Studies) for student WILBARD KAPWEYA (student number: 9523553), titled *An Investigation into The Effectiveness of Border Security Control Measures in Combating Illegal Migration And Cross-Border Crime: A Case Study of The Namibia-Angola Border in Omusati Region*. School of Military Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences, University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia, October 2025.
- Examined Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis (PhD in Political Studies) for student ALBERTS MUNYANYA KULOBONE (student number: 9308261), titled *Analysing the Emerging Trends and Patterns of Political Competition in Namibia's Democratic Landscape: Political Party Systems and Political Elitism Perspectives, 1990-2024*. Department of Public Management and Political Studies, School of Business Management, Governance, and Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Management & Law, University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia, July 2025.
- Examined master's dissertation (MA in Security and Strategic Studies) for student GERHARD CLEMENS WIMMERTH (student number: 202025381), titled *The Use of Excessive Police Force and its Implications for Personal Security: A Case Study of The Wanaheda Police Jurisdiction, Windhoek*. School of Military Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences, University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia, June 2025.

National and International Collaboration

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Appointed as part of the Advisory Board of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) Research Committee 44 (Security, Conflict and Democratisation).

Member of the VOXPOL Network of Excellence, an academic research network on online extremism and terrorism.

Dr Bianca Naudé

Member of the *Narrative and Conflict Research Network*, led by Dr Hilde van Meegdenburg, Leiden University, Netherlands, and Dr Andrew Palmer, Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom.

Prof Theo Neethling

- Neethling, T. Editorial Advisory Board: Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies.
- Neethling, T. Academic Council: Ante Portas – Security Studies (Poland).
- Neethling, T. Editorial and Advisory Board: Athens Journal of Politics & International Affairs (Greece).

Postgraduate Students

Dr Clayton Vhumbunu

Successfully graduated a supervised master's student, Hilma Namwandi (student number: 221107142). Master's degree in Public Administration. Dissertation titled "*An Analysis of Factors Influencing the Delivery of Water and Sanitation Services in Windhoek Informal Settlements: The Case of Havana and Okahandja Park Informal Settlements*", Department of Public Management and Political Studies, University of Namibia (UNAM), Windhoek, Namibia, October 2025.

Successfully graduated a supervised Honours student, Esihle Nzwaki Mtshali (student number: 2021797739). Honours degree in International Relations. Dissertation titled *"Fifteen Years of BRICS membership: Exploring the Political and Economic Benefits and Challenges of South Africa's BRICS membership (2010-2025)"*, Department of Political Studies and Governance, University of Free State (UFS), Bloemfontein, South Africa, December 2025.

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Master's students:

- Marine Nortje
- Yolanda Roberts

PhD students:

- Dominic Pkalya
- Wico Janse van Rensburg

Dr Albert Schoeman

- Honours student Lerato Tswai passed their mini-thesis entitled "Carbon Tax and Just Energy Transition: Analysing South Africa's dual strategy towards reducing the effects of climate change in the coal-intensive economy".
- Supervisor for MA: Lerato Tswai (Study still in the planning stages.)

- Supervisor for PhD: Lumanyano Ncgayisa; thesis titled "An authoritarian rethinking of African statecraft: The architecture of transitional constructive authoritarianism" (in progress).

Other Activities

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

- Main adjudicator at ATKV "Dink of Sink" debating at Oranje Meisieskool in August 2025.
- Invited book discussion at the Flaureat reading group on "The Bitterness of Olives by Andrew Brown". Talk on "*Between fact and fiction: Understanding and contextualising the Gaza conflict in 2025".*

Dr Bianca Naudé

Service to the discipline:

- Elected at-large member of the ISA Women's Caucus of International Studies (WCIS) Executive Committee, 2025-2027.
- Served on the ISA Susan S. Northcutt Award Committee.
- Further training and professional development:
- Completed training in text analysis and large language models (LLMs) during the Oxford Spring School in Advanced Research Methods, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, UK, April 2025.
- Completed an awareness-based systems change course titled "u-Lab: Leading from the Emerging Future" as part of MITx u-Lab, Presencing Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, September 2024 to January 2025.

Prof Theo Neethling

- Neethling, T. Senate representative on the UFS Institutional Forum.
- Neethling, T. Faculty representative on the UFS Higher Degrees Committee.

Dr Albert Schoeman

- Member of the Subject Heads Committee (Faculty of Humanities, Qwaqwa Campus).
- Member of Library Senate Committee as representative of the Qwaqwa Campus.
- Member of the Faculty Management Committee (as Academic Head of Department).
- Faculty Research Committee (Qwaqwa Campus).
- Member of the Faculty Board.
- Member of Senate.
- Member of the University Readmissions Review Tribunal (URRT).
- Member of BSoc Sc Advisory Board.



Staff (2025)

Prof Eben Coetzee	Subject Head
Dr Mamokhosi Choane	Lecturer
Dr Alta Grobbelaar	Senior Lecturer
Mosibudi Motimele	Lecturer
Dr Bianca Naudé	Senior Lecturer
Prof Theo Neethling	Full Professor
Marichen Preller	Senior Assistant Officer
Sam-Maree Rooi	Junior Lecturer
Sanet Solomon	Lecturer
Dr Albert Schoeman	Academic Head of Department
Dr Clayton Hazvinei Vhumbunu	Senior Lecturer



Overview of 2025

Postgraduate

A total of 42 postgraduate diploma students, 41 master's degree students, and 7 PhD students were registered for 2025.

Pass Rates for 2025 (including the December graduation):

Postgraduate diploma	**29**
Master's degree	**19**
PhD	**4**

The total number of postgraduate students who have graduated to date:

Diplomandi	**372**
Graduandi	**389**
PhD	**18**

Undergraduate

There were **42** first-year students registered in 2025. A total of **83** students graduated in 2025.

A total of **4 445** students have obtained their **BA degrees** since 2002.

Achievements

Staff achievements

- Cathy de Lange was elected as the Chairperson of the UFS Institutional Forum for a term of two years.
- Juanita Potgieter presented a paper at the annual Learning and Teaching Conference. Her title was "Improving Service Delivery in Tertiary Institutions".
- Dr Ina Gouws and Cathy de Lange were part of the team that placed second in the Short Learning Programme division of the Learning and Teaching Awards. Their title was "Teaching Decorum – Doing the right things right, at the right time".
- Our part-time lecturer, Fhumi Maboho, registered as a PhD candidate.
- Dr Tania Coetzee was a promoter for four PhD students who graduated in 2025.
- Dr Ina Gouws was a promoter for one PhD student who graduated in 2025.

Student achievements

- B Manyara (2024884310) received the award for the Best Master's Student in 2025.
- E Fanteso (2020390429) received the award for the Best Postgraduate Diploma Student in 2025.

Teaching

The new undergraduate modules in the BA Governance and Political Transformation degree were successfully integrated and ran a full cycle in 2025.

Research Projects

Due to additional teaching load on staff because of the integration of new undergraduate modules, the focus on international or national collaboration was put on hold for 2026.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Magalefa, S., & Coetzee, T. (2025). Governance Leadership in the Public Service in South Africa: Reasons and Consequences. *African Journal of Governance and Development, 14(2), 61-76*. https://ajgd.journalofgovernance.com/index.php/ajgd/article/view/420

Accepted with revisions required (resubmission 7 April 2026): Gouws, C.M. "Public Governance Teaching: A Reflective Analysis of Curriculum Renewal". *Journal of Public Affairs Education.*

Conference papers/posters

Dr Ina Gouws

Community Development Conference 2025: 'Grounding the Future: Community voices and practice pathways for inclusive development', Clarens, Free State, South Africa,12-13 November 2025.

Title: "Wisdom in Community-Based Governance: Harnessing community voices through knowledge-based pathways."

Engaged Scholarship

Dr Ina Gouws

- NGK van die Vrystaat: Predikante Stilwordkans (Dutch Reformed Church of the Free State: Preachers' Chance to Be Still).

  Title: Grond, land, plant, brood en leef (Land, soil, plant, bread and live): A conversation about hope, despair, and hope again in the Free State, 10 June 2025, Amanzi Private Game Reserve.

- Vrystaat Landbou Werkswinkel (Free State Agriculture Workshop).

  Title: Tussen Hoop en Onsekerheid: Politieke Veranderinge en die Toekoms van Landbou in Suid-Afrika (Between hope and insecurity: Political Changes and the Future of Agriculture in South Africa), 12 September 2025, Bikers' Church, Bloemfontein.

National and International Collaboration

Due to additional teaching load on staff because of the integration of new undergraduate modules, the focus on international or national collaboration was put on hold for 2026.

Postgraduate Students

Dr Ina Gouws: Supervision 2025

MA dissertations:

- Finger, M.D. The effectiveness of E-governance in enhancing good governance in local government: A case of the Tshwane Municipality.
- Bambo, L.T. The influence of coalition politics on the future of public governance in South Africa: A post-2024 general election perspective.
- Mokgosi, K.E. Understanding the conundrum of the politics of coalition governance in South Africa: Case of Johannesburg, Pretoria and Nelson Mandela.

PhD promoter:

- Van Rooyen, J. *In progress*
- Matanga, M.H. *Graduated in 2025*

Dr Tania Coetzee: Supervision 2025

MA dissertations:

- Awusi, W. A critical analysis of the governance culture of South Africa.
- Jack, L. Evaluating the effectiveness of good governance values – accountability, transparency, and responsibility in enhancing the performance of state organisations in South Africa.
- Lekalake, L.K. Evaluating the effectiveness of governance leadership on service delivery performance in the context of the South African public sector.
- Macala, M.W. The analysis of the implementation of democracy and good governance in the South African perspectives.
- Masalesa, N. Improving service delivery capacity through strategic partnerships and collaborations: A case study of Park Road police station in Mangaung, South Africa.
- Mavundla, C. Exploring the aspect of leadership and influence on governance within technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges of KZN.
- Mawoyo, I.G. Gender and climate governance in South Africa.
- Meyer, J.C. Role of the state: Coordination and collaboration in the Northern Cape government – Dilemmas of common interests.
- Teise, J.L.A. Implementation of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 in South African higher education institutions.

PhD promoter:

- Alli, A. Graduated in 2025
- Bofelo, K. Graduated in 2025
- Harsant, A. *In progress*
- Joannou, N. *In progress*
- Kaloate, P. *In progress*
- Kruger, B. *In progress*
- Lipholo, M.T. Graduated in 2025
- Van Wyk, A.C. Graduated in 2025
- Vezi, N. *In progress*

Staff (2025)

Dr Ina Gouws	Programme Director, Senior Lecturer
Dr Tania Coetzee	Senior Lecturer
Juanita Potgiete	Officer
Cathy de Lange	Officer

Department of

Psychology

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Overview of 2025

The Department of Psychology has enjoyed another exceptional year in 2025. Despite managing a large cohort of undergraduate and postgraduate students, the Department continues to uphold its commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, and research.

Key highlights include the research achievements of the IDEaS Interdisciplinary Identity Research Hub under the leadership of Prof Luzelle Naudé, Prof Stephen Walker's research and teaching collaboration with the School of Psychology at University College Dublin, Dr Florence Tadi and Dr Ayanda Khanye's instrumental involvement in developing the Sesotho Psychology terminology list in collaboration with the Sesotho National Language Body (SNLB) of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), and Dr Pravani Naidoo's leadership in launching the Department's first Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project in partnership with the Department of Marketing at Matej Bel University.

Furthermore, international collaboration continued to strengthen through numerous research projects, publications, and engaged scholarship initiatives. The Department's research output continues to grow, with 89 journal articles and three book chapters published in 2025. The Department proudly conferred postgraduate degrees on 40 Honours students (19 of whom graduated with distinction), nine master's graduates, and one doctoral graduate.

In terms of staffing, the Department welcomed several new colleagues this year: Prof Michelle Engelbrecht, Dr Makhosazane Ndimande-Khoza, Tebello Mduduma, Anele Siswana, and Luyanda Jarana.

Achievements

Prof Jacques Jordaan

Prof Jordaan was awarded the Best Established Researcher Presentation Award at the 2025 Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA) Conference in August 2025.

Tebello Mduduma

Mduduma was accepted as an emerging scholar into the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) programme, which focuses on the systematic inquiry into teaching practices and student learning within higher education. Through her participation in this programme, she is engaging in evidence-based reflection on pedagogical approaches, with an emphasis on enhancing student learning experiences, academic engagement, and success.

Dr Mpho Ramarumo

Dr Ramarumo successfully completed her PG Diploma in Higher Education.

Prof Luzelle Naudé

The ***IDEaS*** **Interdisciplinary Identity Research Hub** (www.ufs.ac.za/ideas-hub), coordinated by Prof Luzelle Naudé in the Department of Psychology, and supported by task team members Prof Diana Breshears and Rentia du Plessis (Department of Communication Science), Dr Merlene Esau (Department of Social Work), and Dr Lindi Nel (Department of Psychology), had a highly productive year. *IDEaS* functions as a knowledge nexus that brings scholars together to examine how identities develop and are negotiated across the lifespan. The hub's research highlights the diverse pathways individuals take to seek meaning and belonging, with particular attention to the transformational journeys of self and society, as well as the challenges of constructing integrated identities in contexts of change and transition.

The **African Long Life Research Project** (with Prof Naudé as South African Principal Investigator) marked a significant milestone for the IDEAS Hub in 2025, consolidating its position as a flagship programme within the hub's focus on identity, meaning, and well-being across the life span. The project advanced contextually grounded knowledge in African contexts, foregrounding narratives of resilience, identity, and meaning-making among emerging adults. Through rigorous, collaborative scholarship, the project deepened theoretical and empirical insights into the relational, cultural, and developmental processes of emerging adults in Africa. Importantly, the work strengthened the hub's international visibility and laid a solid foundation for future comparative and interdisciplinary research on identity and flourishing in the Global South.

Prof Amber Thalmayer's scholarly visit in October 2025 (hosted by Prof Naudé) was a highlight of the *IDEaS* Hub calendar, exemplifying the hub's commitment to international engagement and dialogue. Her visit created rich spaces for scholarly exchange around personality, identity, and cultural context, particularly in relation to African and Global South perspectives. A central moment of the visit was the **premiere of *Namibia Up***, which offered a powerful, narrative-driven exploration of identity, aspiration, and culture. The film screening, followed by a critical discussion, fostered meaningful engagement among academics, students, and the broader community, demonstrating how creative methodologies can complement psychological research and public scholarship. The visit strengthened international research ties and reinforced the hub's emphasis on innovative, contextually sensitive knowledge production.



Dr Hilda du Plooy's scholarly visit from the University of Verona (July-December 2025, hosted by Prof Naudé) significantly advanced the IDEAS Hub's methodological, interdisciplinary, and community-engaged research agenda. The collaborative **Photovoice project** exemplified participatory and emancipatory research practices, using visual and narrative methods to explore how university students construct and express identity through lived experience and storytelling. Rooted in psychology, communication science (journalism), and social work, the project demonstrated the value of integrating creative and scientific approaches to produce research that is accessible, contextually grounded, and socially responsive. A Photovoice function held in October 2025 brought together student participants from the Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein campuses, scholars, and stakeholders in a reflective and dialogical space to engage with the findings. This initiative highlighted the hub's commitment to ethical, inclusive, and innovative research while strengthening capacity for visual, qualitative, and interdisciplinary methodologies within the Department and broader research community.





Prof Naudé's **collaboration with Utrecht University** gained strong momentum in 2025 through the successful acquisition and implementation of the Invigoration Grant for the project *Mapping the Future of Emerging Adults: Exploring Identity, Life Goals, and Well-Being Across Cultures* (PI: Dr Vinicius Coscioni). Embedded within Utrecht University's *Dynamics of Youth* programme, this interdisciplinary collaboration brings together researchers from psychology, human geography, data science, and computer science across South Africa and Europe. The project explores how identity and life-goal content relate to well-being among emerging adults across diverse cultural contexts, combining narrative and contextual perspectives from the Global South with innovative AI-supported tools for analysing inductive qualitative data. The grant enabled structured academic exchange, collaborative writing, and joint conceptual development, strengthening research capacity, mentorship, and high-quality scholarly output while enhancing the global visibility of contextually grounded identity research.

Student Achievements

Elenike Viljoen was awarded the Dean's medal as the student who achieved the best results in respect of a Bachelor's Honours degree in the Faculty of the Humanities.

The following students received prizes at the Prize-giving Ceremony held in April 2025:

- Best first-year student in 2024: P.C. Thabethe
- Best third-year student in 2024: D.P. Maloba
- Best Honours student in 2024: E.A. Viljoen
- Best Honours research project in 2024: Dr S. van der Merwe

Teaching

Prof Paul Fouché

The PSHC6804 Social and Community Psychology module, offered at the BPsych Honours level, has made a significant impact through its service-learning community outreach projects, namely the Study Buddy project at Bainsvlei Combined School and the well-being project at Lettie Fouché School. These initiatives not only supported community stakeholders and partner institutions at the two schools but also enabled students to translate theoretical knowledge into praxis through practical programme implementation and evaluation.

This approach represents a deliberate shift from predominantly knowledge-based training to hands-on experiential learning within community contexts. In addition, students were exposed to a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project facilitated by Dr Pravani Naidoo, which further enhanced their engagement with international community-based perspectives.

These service-learning initiatives align with the University's recently articulated fine-tuned graduate attributes, which emphasise the practical application of knowledge, community, industry, and institutional engagement, critical, systemic, and holistic thinking, social justice awareness, empowerment, sensitivity to power dynamics, and the development of global citizenship. Through this framework, the module curriculum has been transformed toward a more decolonised and post-WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic) orientation.

Dr Pravani Naidoo

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an innovative pedagogical approach that enables students from different countries to engage in structured, collaborative learning experiences through virtual engagement via online platforms (Haug & Jacobs, 2023; Rubin & Guth, 2023). This transformative educational practice supports curriculum internationalisation, preparing students for collaboration with peers from different nationalities, cultures, and disciplines, thereby fostering global-minded citizenship.

Piloted during the first semester of 2025, *Connecting Minds, Enhancing Lives: South Africa-Slovakia COIL Partnership* is facilitated by Dr Pravani Naidoo (COIL coordinator, Department of Psychology, UFS) and Ilzenè Douglas (COIL facilitator and Psychology master's student) in collaboration with COIL partners, Dr Janka Táborecká, Dr Filip Smutný and Dr Andrea Seberíni from the Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University. This collaborative initiative brought together Slovak Marketing and Economics undergraduate students and UFS Psychology Honours students in a shared virtual learning space. Our COIL aimed to foster intercultural competence, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving through synchronous and asynchronous online activities. Together with our COIL partners at Matej Bel University, we are currently revising and expanding the COIL curriculum for 2026, which indicates the sustainability of our initiative.

Prof Luzelle Naudé

- Prof Naudé continued as co-presenter at the *Forschungs Kolloquium/Research Study Group on Mental Health and Personality Research on Emerging Adulthood in Africa* with Prof Amber Thalmayer of the University of Zürich.
- Prof Naudé presented a course in "*Crafting Meaning: Qualitative Pathways in Psychological Research – Content analysis, thematic analysis and other methods of working with qualitative material*", Doctoral School of SWPS University, Poland.

Research Projects

Prof S.P. Walker

Prof S.P. Walker and Prof L. McHugh (University College Dublin) were awarded a research fellowship grant of €4 824.00 from the University College Dublin Africa Engagement Seed Fund. The grant was awarded for the development of an evidence-based, culturally competent psychological intervention to combat domestic violence in South Africa.

Prof Paul Fouche

The psychobiography research project has produced many research outputs in 2025. These appear below. However, no funding amount was raised. As a newly rated C1 researcher in 2024, his NRF researcher rating, however, led to him receiving a rated researcher grant from the NRF for R30 000 in March 2025, based on his rating as a specialist-rated researcher in psychobiography.

Prof Luzelle Naudé

Grants

- NRF grant in the Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers award programme, 2023-2025.
- Collaborative Research Grant (with Dr C.M. Shirima as the main applicant) from the European Association of Personality Psychology (EAPP).
- Dynamics of Youth (DoY) Invigoration Grant *"Mapping the future of emerging adults: Exploring Identity, Life Goals, and Well-Being Across Cultures"* (with Dr V. Coscioni as main applicant) from the Utrecht University.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

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Shirima, C.M., & **Naudé, L.** (2025). Thriving against all odds: Identity resilience experiences of South African adolescents living in under-resourced contexts. *Child and Youth Services, 46*,3, 561-578.

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Naudé, L. (2025). Thematic analysis: Generating patterns of meaning in emerging adult research. In A. Sorgente, R. Vosylis, S. Claxton, & J. Schwab (eds.). Flourishing as a scholar: Research methods for the study of emerging adulthood. Oxford Academic. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197677797.003.0017

Conference Papers/Posters

Breshears, D., & **Naudé, L.** (2025). *Identity Negotiations of First-generation University Students at a South African University*.The International Academic Forum, Kyoto, Japan, 4-8 November.

Du Plooy, H., **Naudé,** L., Nel, L., Breshears, D., Du Plessis, R., & Tommasi, F. (2025). *"Places and Spaces" in Higher Education: Systemic transformation to enhance well-being, identity, and inclusivity among students through the participatory action of photovoice*. Future of Work and Organisational Psychology: Global Perspectives in Critical Work and Organisational Psychology. Virtual Conference, 8-9 November 2025.

Duba, S.C.M., & **Jordaan, J.** (**2025**). *Coping, Perceived Social Support, Stress, and Age as Predictors of Correctional Adjustment amongst South African Incarcerated Female Offenders*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Virtual Conference, 29-30 March 2025.

Fouché, J.P. & Mathebula, N. (2025). The Voice of a Generation: An Adlerian Psychobiography of Whitney Houston. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Fouché, J.P., & Prince, C. (2025). *A psychobiography of Idi Amin: The primitive psychic mechanisms that propelled his lifespan development*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Jordaan, J., & Cronje, M. (2025). *Coping during Incarceration: A Confirmatory and Bifactor Analysis of the Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI) in a South African Correctional Context*. Paper presented at the Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August 2025.

Jordaan, J., & Cronje, M. (2025). *Investigating the Psychometric Properties of the Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI) in a South African Male Incarcerated Offender Sample*. Paper presented at the Annual Psychology Congress of the Psychology Society of South Africa, Durban, South Africa, 14-16 October.

Jordaan, J., Pretorius, S.E., & Esterhuyse, K.G.F. (2025). *Investigating the Psychometric Properties of the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ) amongst South African Male Incarcerated Offenders*. Paper presented at the Annual Psychology Congress of the Psychology Society of South Africa, Durban, South Africa, 14-16 October.

Jordaan, J., Pretorius, S.E., & Esterhuyse, K.G.F. (2025). *Understanding Offender Adjustment: A South African Validation of the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire*. Paper presented at the Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-22 August 2025.

Langenhoven, R., & **Jordaan, J.** (2025). *Coping, Adjustment, Perceived Social Support, and Age as Predictors of Depressed Mood among Male Maximum-security Incarcerated Offenders*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Virtual Conference, 29-30 March 2025.

Mabena, M., & **Ramarumo, M.** (2025). *Exploring bullying as a mental health priority for grade 10 learners at a local school in Bloemfontein, Free State*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Mahlako, G.M., **Jordaan, J.,** & Cronjé, M. (2025). *Perpetrator Trauma in Offenders: The Experiences of Juvenile Offenders Incarcerated for Violent Offences in South Africa*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Law and Social Sciences, Virtual Conference, 29-30 March 2025.

Mduduma, T. (2025). *The successful adaptation of first-year students: Guidelines to facilitating resilience and well-being through an experiential learning perspective*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Mgaya, A., Thalmayer, A.G., & **Naudé, L.** (2025). *Thriving to fulfilment: Positive youth development in relation to well-being in a context of emerging adults in Africa*. Annual South African Psychology Congress "Psychology in Society and Society in Psychology", Durban, South Africa, 14-16 October 2025.

Naidoo, P. (2025). *Connecting Minds, Enhancing Lives: A South Africa-Slovakia COIL partnership*. UFS Internationalisation Coordinators' Forum, 5 May 2025.

Naidoo, P. (2025). *From therapeutic horse riding to digital mental health: Evolving SLCE practices*. International Association for Research in Service Learning and Community Engagement Conference, Umhlanga. 14 August 2025.

Naudé, L. (2025 June). Invited panellist at the Presidential Session *"Namibia UP: Being 18 in Africa Today"* at the 12th Conference of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood, Charleston, South Carolina, USA.

Naudé, L., & Marais, K. (2025). *Identity in University Students: The Semiotic Work of Making Sense of Yourself*. 7th Global Mental Health Summit, 10-12 November 2025, Cape Town, South Africa.

Ndashe, T., & **Ramarumo, M.** (2025). *Time management: The pathway to academic success and well-being for Grade 10 learners in Bloemfontein*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Ngubo, L., & **Ramarumo, M.** (2025). *Unveiling the Mental Health Struggles of Grade 10 Learners within the community of Bainsvlei in Bloemfontein, Free State*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Ogbonna, Z., & **Ramarumo, M.** (2025). *The Impact of Substance Use as a Coping Strategy amongst University Students*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Tadi, N.F. (2025). *Self-esteem as a mediator between perceived parenting style and adolescent learners' aggression*. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference, 24-26 March 2025, Australia, Gold Coast, QLD.

Ramarumo, M. (2025). *Experiences of community psychology Honours students while doing their service-learning module at a local combined school with Grade 10 learners*. Globeheal Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 20-21 February 2025.

Ramarumo, M. (2025). *Application of the three-phase needs assessment framework to identify mental health priority issue areas for Grade 10 learners at a local school in Bloemfontein, Free State Province*. 29th PsySSA CONGRESS, Durban, RSA, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, 14-16 October.

Shirima, C.M., Haehner, P., Kura, M., Thalmayer, A.G., & **Naudé, L.** (2025). *Empowered Pathways and Shaping Futures: Exploring Individual Experiences of Personality and Well-Being in an African Context*. 7th Global Mental Health Summit, 10-12 November 2025, Cape Town, South Africa.

Shirima, C.M., **Naudé, L.,** & Thalmayer, A.G. (2025). *Conceptualising Positive Youth Development in the African Context: A Systematic Review of Theory and Practice*. Annual South African Psychology Congress "Psychology in Society and Society in Psychology", Durban, South Africa. 14-16 October 2025.

Uugwanga, S., & **Naudé, L.** (2025 June). *Markers of Adulthood in sub-Saharan Africa: Contextualised Findings*. 12th Conference of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood, Charleston, South Carolina, USA.

Engaged Scholarship

Prof S.P. Walker

Prof Walker was a research fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University College Dublin from 24 November to 5 December 2025. During this time, he investigated potential research collaborations and engaged with postgraduate students. Prof Walker also presented the preliminary results of a research project focused on combating gender-based violence in South Africa, titled "**The role of experiential avoidance in the association between masculine gender role stress and physical aggression among university students**", at the Adian P. Moran Memorial Research Day in the Department of Psychology at University College Dublin.

Prof J.P. Fouché

Prof Fouche contributed to the Magazine, ***The Science Matters***, on AI and psychology. His research, which was featured, is **"The legacy of Pierre Jaquet-Droz and his humanoid automata: a Jungian archetypal-interpretivist psychobiography of the writer, draughtsman and musician"**, an open-access publication.

Dr Ramarumo

Dr Ramarumo regularly participate in events hosted by communities outside the institution, and she is an active member of a professional society. She is also the coordinator of the Study Buddy community engagement project at the Honours level.

She has also contributed to non-academic discussions through interviews with the SABC and discussions on other forums regarding social justice. Furthermore, Dr Ramarumo was a guest speaker for examination preparation for students accommodated at the off-campus residence, *Phanziso*.

Dr Florence Tadi

Dr Tadi was involved in developing the Sesotho Psychology terminology list in collaboration with the Sesotho National Language Body (SNLB) of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). Dr Tadi was also involved in the Faculty of Humanities and the Lesotho project. The goal of this project was to assist the University of Lesotho in developing Psychology modules.

Dr Ayanda Khanye

Dr Khanye was involved in developing the Sesotho Psychology terminology list in collaboration with the Sesotho National Language Body (SNLB) of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB).

Anele Siswana

Invited guest speaker:

- Opening Plenary, 2nd South African Mental Health Conference. Theme: From Evidence to Action. Title: "Culturally Fluent Care: Towards a Mental Health System That Speaks the Language of Its People".
- Responsible Gambling (RG) Summit 2025. Title: Understanding Gambling Behaviour and Other Psychological Disorders.
- 2025 Inclusive Theological Education Convening from 24-27 November 2025 at the Seth Mokitmi Methodist Seminary, Pietermaritzburg.
- Queering African Theology: Intersections of queer sexualities and being queer in the life of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA).

Non-academic publications:

- The fight against GBV is not a women's issue; it's a human issue, 21 November 2025.
- Awakening the conscience: A call to action against Gender Based Violence, November 2025.

National and International Collaboration

Prof Jacques Jordaan

Prof Jordaan collaborated with Prof Wagdy Loza from the Department of Psychiatry at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. This collaboration enabled Prof Jordaan and UFS students under his supervision to use the Self-Appraisal Questionnaire (SAQ) (a psychometric test developed by Prof Wagdy Loza) to investigate the risk of violent and non-violent recidivism amongst South African incarcerated offenders.

Dr Pravani Naidoo

Dr Pravani Naidoo presented an online lecture, "*Designing and implementing Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Initiatives: Lessons from A South Africa-Slovakia COIL Partnership"*, as part of the EMERGE (Empowering the Margins of Europe through Regional and Global Engagement) Europe Alliance programme at Matej Bel University on 12 December 2025.

Prof S.P. Walker

Research collaboration with Prof Louise McHugh (University College Dublin).

- Collaboration on a large-scale research project aimed at addressing gender-based violence in South Africa.
- Prof McHugh is also supervising three PhD students in the Department of Psychology at the UFS.

Prof Paul Fouché

- International collaboration with various psychobiographers regarding special editions on psychobiography. These include Fordham University, the University of Warsaw, Pecs University, Eotvos Lorand University, the University of Texas-Dallas, the University of Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela University.
- **Invited as a co-guest editor of two special editions in psychobiography.** One for the ***International Review of Psychiatry*** on Psychobiography 4.0 about robots, AI and humanoids, International Review of Psychiatry, 37:5, 409-415, DOI: 10.1080/09540261.2025.2560779.
- The other was an invitation to be **co-guest editor** for ***Europe's Journal of Psychiatry*** on Existential Psychobiography: On Death and Dying Across the Life Span. Or How Extraordinary Individuals and Their Environments Deal with the End of Life. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *21*, Article e19961.

Prof Luzelle Naudé

Current Collaborations/Participation in International Multi-year Research Projects:

- *Emerging adults in a transitional society*: "Being born free": The third decade of life for a country and its emerging adults. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2017/0230)
- *The Africa Long Life Study: A longitudinal exploration of the psychological development of young adults in Africa*. Project collaboration between South Africa, Switzerland, Namibia, and Kenya. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2021/1906/21)
- *Sense of identity and basic personality traits as predictors of quality of life in early and middle adulthood: Cross-cultural comparisons*. Multinational project South Africa, USA, Israel, Poland, and Japan. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2021/2098/22)
- *Selves within Selves on a University Campus: The intersectionality of student identity development in a transitional society*. Interdisciplinary Research Project, UFS. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2022/1149/22)
- *Globalising Cultural Psychology: Ingroup commitment and competition in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Principal investigator: Shinobu Kitayama, University of Michigan. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2024/1579)
- *Life Projects: A cross-cultural perspective*. Principal investigator: Dr Vinicius Coscioni, Utrecht University. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2024/1841)
- *Cross-national study of identity, intrinsic motivation, and well-being*. Principal investigators: Seth J. Schwartz, UT-Austin University and Alan S. Waterman, College of New Jersey. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2024/2478)
- *Multi-nation study of partnered sexual and gender diverse individuals*. Principal investigator: Ashley Randall, Arizona State University. (Ethical approval pending.)

Coordination of Interdisciplinary Research Project

Selves within Selves on a University Campus: The intersectionality of student identity development in a transitional society. Interdisciplinary research project funded by the Vice-Rector: Research and Internationalisation, UFS. (Ethical approval: UFS-HSD2022/1149/22)

Memoranda of Understanding with the Department of Psychology, University of Zürich, and the Faculty of Psychology and Law, SWPS University, Poland.

Prof Naudé is an active member of **various academic societies**, including the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood, the International Society for Research on Identity, the European Association of Personality Psychology, and the South African Society for Psychology.

- Governing Council, Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood.
- (Co-)Chair of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood Membership.
- Chair of the Editor Search Committee for the new journal, *Applied Studies in Emerging Adulthood*.
- Member of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood Conference Organising Committee.
- Programme committee, International Society for Research on Identity.
- Nomination committee, International Society for Research on Identity.

Prof Naudé is on the following editorial boards:

- *Emerging Adulthood*
- *European Journal of Personality*
- *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 2020–.
- Guest editor of special issue "*Identity Interventions*" in *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* with Konrad Piotrowski and Oana Negru-Subtirica, published in 2025.

Anele Siswana

Current Fellow, Social Sciences Research Council, Next-Africa Generation for the pre-doctoral fellowship supporting PhD students developing a doctoral dissertation proposal.

Following the successful pilot of the Ministerial Special Award during the announcement of the National Senior Certificate examination results, the Department of Basic Education appointed Siswana as a resident panellist to adjudicate the 2025 Ministerial Special Award.

Postgraduate Students

In 2025, the Department enrolled 148 students (Honours to doctoral) in the various programmes offered:

B Psych Honours:	47
M Psych:	52
M.Soc.Sc. Clinical:	6
M.Soc.Sc. Counselling:	6
PhD:	31
DPsych (Child Psychology):	6

Forty (40) students obtained their Honours degrees in 2025, 19 of whom received their degree with distinction: L. Botha, E. Ketse, K. Kgasago, M. Mabena, Z. Mngomezulu, T. Ndashe, L. Ngubo, Z. Ogbonna, A. Pantshwa, C. Prince, B. Rikhotso, N. Strauss, M. Tlhame, B. Tsubane, L. Ubisi, T. van Lill, E. Viljoen, K. Visser, and C. Zaal.

Twelve (12) master's students obtained their degrees in 2025:

K. Bramley, I. Pillay, P. Ntlatlane, S. Galhenage, D. Bitalo, P. Kose, E. Labuscagne (with distinction), C. Marais, N. Mathebula (with distinction), Z. Goge, K. Senoge, and M. Tsoaeli.

The following doctoral candidate graduated in 2025:

Pretorius, Sheree (PhD)

Thesis: *Psychometric properties of the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ) amongst male and female incarcerated offenders in South African correctional centres.*

Supervisor: Prof J. Jordaan and Prof K.G.F. Esterhuyse (co-promoter)

Academic Committees

Prof Paul Fouché

- Executive Committee in the Department of Psychology, UFS
- Research Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities

Prof Jacques Jordaan

- BSocSci Advisory Board in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- Faculty Management Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- Faculty Bursary Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- Executive Committee in the Department of Psychology, UFS
- Departmental Bursary Committee in the Department of Psychology, UFS

Dr Pravani Naidoo

- Internationalisation Coordinator's Forum at the UFS
- Engaged Scholarship Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS

Dr Carla Nel

- Scientific Review Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- General and Human Research Ethics Committee at the UFS

Dr Lindi Nel

- Wellness Committee at the UFS
- Teaching and Learning Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS

Henry Taylor

- Representative for the Department of Psychology on the UNIBS Management Committee

Prof Stephen Walker

- Finance Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- Scientific Review Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities, UFS
- Executive Committee in the Department of Psychology, UFS

Prof Luzelle Naudé

- Executive Committee in the Department of Psychology, UFS
- Member of the Senate Research Ethics Committee
- HPCSA Professional Board of Psychology Examiner/Moderator (Research Psychology).

Staff (2025)

Academic Staff

Prof J Jordaan	Academic Head of Department (Associate Professor)
K de Villiers	Lecturer (Qwaqwa Campus)
Prof M Engelbrecht	Professor
Prof JP Fouché	Professor
L Jarana	Lecturer (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr AP Khanye	Lecturer and Subject Head (Qwaqwa Campus)
T Mduduma	Lecturer
Dr P Naidoo	Lecturer
Prof L Naudé	Professor
Dr NM Ndimande-Khoza	Senior Lecturer (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr C Nel	Lecturer
Dr L Nel	Senior Lecturer
Dr M Ramarumo	Lecturer
L Rossouw	Junior Lecturer
A Siswana	Lecturer
Dr NF Tadi	Senior Lecturer
HW Taylor	Lecturer
YE Venter	Lecturer
Prof SP Walker	Professor

Support Staff

A Diesel	Senior Assistant Officer
E du Plessis	Officer
Y Francis	Senior Assistant Officer
B Nel	Senior Assistant Officer

Service Workers

TJ Mhlathi	Service Worker
KJ Mtshali	Service Worker

Affiliated Staff

Prof K Oppong Asante	Research Fellow
Prof KF Peltzer	Research Fellow
Prof KGF Esterhuyse	Research Fellow
Prof A Thalmayer	Research Fellow



Department of

Social Work

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Overview of 2025

The Department of Social Work experienced a productive and impactful year in 2025, marked by significant achievements in academic leadership, research productivity, international engagement, and student success. The Department continued to strengthen its contributions to academic excellence, social impact, and the higher education transformation agenda. The Department is led by Prof Mpumelelo E. Ncube, Academic Head of Department, and Dr Carel van Wyk, Undergraduate Programme Director.

A major highlight of the year was the successful hosting of the first Transdisciplinary ASASWEI International Conference on campus, which attracted more than 600 delegates from across South Africa and internationally. The conference significantly enhanced the visibility and reputation of both the Department and the University on the global stage. During this conference, Prof Ncube was elected President of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) for a two-year term.

In collaboration with ASASWEI, the Department also hosted a webinar on the integration of Artificial Intelligence into social work education, presented by Prof Stephanie Speicher from Weber State University in the United States.

International scholarly engagement remained a priority. Prof Ncube attended an international conference in Sweden, which resulted in the publication of a research article in an international social work journal. Prof Roelf Reyneke participated in a national conference on School Social Work at North-West University and also contributed to an outreach workshop organised by the South African Teachers' Union, demonstrating the Department's commitment to engaged scholarship.

The Department maintained its long-standing partnership with Fulda University of Applied Sciences in Germany, enabling four students to participate in an exchange programme. The Department also hosted a delegation of staff and students from Northumbria University in the United Kingdom, during which a seminar was organised to facilitate scholarly exchange and presentations by both institutions.

Through ongoing staff development initiatives, curriculum transformation efforts, and the dedication of lecturers, facilitators, and field instructors, the Department continued to advance its mission of producing socially responsive graduates. These efforts align with the broader institutional goals articulated in Vision130.

Achievements

- Roelf Reyneke was promoted from Adjunct Professorship to Associate Professorship.
- Prof M.E. Ncube was invited as a keynote speaker on World Social Work Day at the University of the Witwatersrand.
- Prof M.E. Ncube was invited to write an editorial for the *Maatskaplike Werk / Social Work* Journal (summer issue).
- Prof R. Reyneke was appointed as a member of the Psychosocial Support Advisory Committee of the National Department of Basic Education within the Directorate of Inclusive Education.
- Prof R. Reyneke served as a guest panellist at the National Teachers' Union Conference held at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg. His paper was titled *Fostering Teacher Resilience: An Integrated Neuro-Informed and Trauma-Informed Approach*.
- Dr M. Esau was elected to the steering committee of the Institutional Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Substance Abuse.
- C. Gaitskill participated in a televised interview addressing the reintegration of South African soldiers returning from the Democratic Republic of Congo into their communities.

Student Achievements

The Department achieved a 100% throughput rate, with the entire class of 2024 successfully graduating in 2025.

Teaching

The Department continued to prioritise curriculum transformation and innovative teaching approaches aligned with contemporary social work practice and the principles of decolonial knowledge production. Teaching activities were supported by a strong team of lecturers, facilitators, and field instructors who ensured the integration of theory and practice in the professional training of social work students. Field education remained a central pedagogical component, strengthening students' practical competencies and community engagement.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

- Cader, Z., & Ncube, M.E. (2025). Supervision challenges in the training of community development work practitioners. *Applied Learning in Social Work Education*, 15(1).
- Engelbrecht, L.K., & Ncube, M.E. (2025). Interdisciplinary pathways for advancing social justice, peace, and sustainable development in social work education and professional practice. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 61(3), i-v.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). Harnessing Ubuntu as an organising force for social stability and welfare. In M.S. Harris (ed.). *Social Work Impacting Lives Around the World*. London: IntechOpen.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). Towards a decolonial higher education: Praxis and theoretical foundations. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 1-15.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). A culture of wanton violence: A social development perspective. In N. Ndangwa & M. Ncube (eds.), *The Protest Culture in South Africa: What Role for Social Sciences*, Paulo Freire Verlag.
- Nkosi, N.E., & Ncube, M.E. (2025). Understanding social work supervision in the context of social development practice. *International Social Work*.
- Noyoo, N., & Ncube, M.E. (eds.). (2025). *The Protest Culture in South Africa: What Role for Social Sciences*, Paulo Freire Verlag.
- Nyahunda, L., & Ncube, M.E. (2025). Positioning social work roles in disaster and climate resilience endeavours in South Africa. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*.
- Boer, O.S., & Esau, M.C. (2025). An assessment of service users' participation in community-based food and nutrition centres in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 61(4), 860-886.
- Esau, M.E. (2025). A community-based approach to improving the quality of life of child-headed households. *South African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*.
- Reyneke, R.P. (2025). Learners' experiences and expectations: Evaluating psychosocial support and safe parks in the Thari Programme. *South African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*.
- Van Wyk, C. (2025). 'n Jungiaanse en beskrywend-fenomenologiese ontleding van sinchronisiteite in perdondersteunde psigoterapie. *LitNet Akademies*.
- Lesenyeho, M.H., Nyam, Y.S., & Van Straaten, M.M. (2025). The impact of speed humps on out-of-hospital transported patients: The experience of Emergency Medical Services personnel. *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 14(3), 294-306.

Chapters in edited volumes

- Ncube, M.E. (2025). A culture of wanton violence: A social development perspective. In N. Ndangwa & M. Ncube (eds.). *The Protest Culture in South Africa: What Role for Social Sciences*, Paulo Freire Verlag.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). Harnessing Ubuntu as an organising force for social stability and welfare. In M.S. Harris (ed.). *Social Work Impacting Lives Around the World*, IntechOpen.

Books

- Noyoo, N., & Ncube, M.E. (eds.). (2025). *The Protest Culture in South Africa: What Role for Social Sciences*, Paulo Freire Verlag.

Conference Papers/Posters

- Dr M. Esau and Dr M. van Straaten presented papers at the ASASWEI Conference (10 September 2025) and the Teaching and Learning Conference (16 September 2025).
- Dr M. Van Straaten presented a webinar for the ASASWEI Green Social Work Special Interest Group on 28 August 2025, titled *"Introduction to the Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Social Work (IDRRSW) Framework."*
- Dr M. van Straaten presented at the National Prosecuting Authority training session on forensic assessments relating to children on the autism spectrum at Martie Du Plessis School (12 August 2025).
- Dr M. Esau presented on *Action Research in Social Work* at the fifth SAERA Action Research Special Interest Group webinar (15 May 2025).
- Prof R. Reyneke presented a paper titled "*The Social Worker's Interpretation of the Child's Best Interests*" at the Pestalozzi Trust National Homeschooling Conference (28 March 2025, Pretoria).

- Dr M. van Straaten presented a one-day workshop on trauma and trauma interventions for social workers and HIV counsellors at SCD on 3 March 2025.
- Dr Van Wyk continued to serve as a Trustee of the Alcoholics Anonymous Board and as a Senior Editor of the journal *The Qualitative Report*.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). Reinforcing Intergenerational Solidarity in African Societies: A Social Work Perspective on Tradition, Disruption, and Renewal. A paper presented at the Aging and Social Change: Fifteenth Interdisciplinary Conference, Linköping University, Sweden, 22-24 October.
- Ncube, M.E. (2025). Integrating environmental justice, peacebuilding, and sustainable development into social work education in southern Africa. A paper presented at the Biennial International ASASWEI Conference 2025, Bloemfontein, University of the Free State, 10-12 September.

Engaged Scholarship

- Prof R. Reyneke delivered a lecture on alternative dispute resolution for the Faculty of Law's Short Learning Programme.
- Prof R. Reyneke provided consultancy services to improve and develop disciplinary policies at Christiaan De Wet Combined School in Dewetsdorp (January 2025).
- Ncube, M.E. (2025, August 20). *National dialogue brings promise but SA's soaring violence demands more than words*. Retrieved from https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/2025-08-20-opinion--national-dialogue-brings-promise-but-sas-soaring-violence-demands-more-than-words/
- Ncube, M.E. (2025, June 6). *Understanding femicide in South Africa through social science and moral reckoning*. University of the Free State. Retrieved from https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item/campus-news/2025/june/understanding-femicide-in-south-africa-through-social-science-and-moral-reckoning
- Ncube, M.E. (2025, May 24). *Africa in the global arena: Strategic agency or continued marginalisation?* City Press (via News24 Voices). Retrieved from https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/mpumelelo-ncube-africa-in-the-global-arena-strategic-agency-or-continued-marginalisation-20250524-1158

National and International Collaboration

The Department maintained international academic collaborations with Fulda University of Applied Sciences (Germany) through a student exchange programme, enabling four students to participate in international study experiences.

In addition, the Department hosted a delegation of staff and students from Northumbria University (United Kingdom). During this visit, a seminar was organised to facilitate scholarly exchange, with presentations by both visiting students and departmental staff. This engagement led to the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions, strengthening future academic collaboration.

Other Activities

The Department signed an MoU with the Free State Department of Social Development to advance transdisciplinarity.

Staff (2025)

Prof Mpumelelo E. Ncube	Academic Head of Department and Associate Professor
Prof Roelf Reyneke	Associate Professor
Dr Carel Van Wyk	Undergraduate Programme Director | Lecturer
Dr Marlene Esau	Lecturer
Christene Gaitskill	Lecturer
Kubesh Gounder	Lecturer
Aisha Abrahams	Junior Lecturer
Randy N. Tiger	Senior Assistant Officer
Martha van Straaten	Placement Liaison Officer

Second-year facilitators

Gosego Parkie
Thabang Mahlape

Third-year facilitator

Lausanne Hugo

Fourth-year field instructors

Bianca Swart	Maggie Breytenbach
Bonolo Molwele	Marinique du Plessis
Carin Beukes	Marlize Ramsden
Debbie Rademeyer	Neo Ravhuhali
Elbie Conradie	Nnini Matolong
Faith Letseka	Nonceba Phike
Gosego Parkie	Precious Matsietsa
Ingrid Bengell	Tshebeletso Motshabi
Khumo Mosala	Viaan Lucas

Master's field instructors

Marinel Read
Lauren van Zyl





Department of

Sociology

Academic Head of Department

Prof Sethulego Matebesi

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Overview of 2025

The year in review saw the Department realising significant milestones in academic excellence, international collaboration, research, and community engagement. The Department proudly celebrates two staff members and three students who obtained their PhDs. Progress towards internationalisation was further marked by our active involvement in the Southern African Sociological Network, which fostered regional academic exchange and enhanced the Department's visibility within the broader sociological community. Our postgraduate enrolment continued to grow, reflecting the Department's appeal to emerging scholars and its commitment to fostering a vibrant academic community. Enhanced student recruitment and retention strategies contributed to a dynamic, diverse student cohort across our two campuses in line with the UFS's strategic plan.

Sociology continued to play a pivotal role in South African media, serving as a bridge between specialised knowledge and public discourse, thereby enhancing institutional reputation locally and globally. We remain committed to building on these outstanding achievements, and I thank my colleagues for their ongoing commitment to the Department and UFS.

New staff members

We were pleased to welcome new staff members who strengthen our team's expertise and commitment. Dr Nola Redelinghuys rejoined us, bringing valuable experience and continuity to our work. We also warmly welcomed Dr Lesedi Kgatla, who joined us from the University of Fort Hare, adding fresh perspectives and academic excellence to our community.



Dr Nola Redelinghuys.



Dr Lesedi Kgatla.

Achievements

Prof Sethulego Matebesi delivered his inaugural lecture titled *Breaking chains: overcoming tainted transactional pathways in community leadership, representation, and activism*, on 9 September.



Prof Matebesi's inaugural lecture.

Prof Sethulego Matebesi served as Chief Electoral Administrator for the 2025/2026 Campus Student Representative Council and Faculty Student Council elections.

Dr Khangelani Moyo was a research visiting fellow at the Research Unit 5183 Transborder Mobility and Institutional Dynamics, University of Siegen, Germany, September 2025.

Chandigarh University in India invited **Prof André Pelser** to deliver two specialist papers on social impact assessment and community-based conservation to the Faculty as part of the 9th International Faculty Development Programme, July 2025.

Prof André Pelser was awarded a C2 rating by the National Research Foundation.

Prof Albert Scherr delivered a keynote lecture at the conference "Human Rights in the Balance: Safeguarding Social and Environmental Sustainability" at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), Freiburg/Germany, 11 March.

Prof Albert Scherr delivered a keynote lecture at the conference "Loneliness as a societal problem" at the University of Applied Sciences, Olten/Switzerland, 14 May.

Prof Albert Scherr delivered a keynote lecture at the annual conference of the German Council on Migration in Berlin/Germany, on 12 November.

Dr Nontombi Lenah Velelo completed her PhD in Sociology with a thesis titled, *Masculinity and Fatherhood: A Narrative Study of South African Black Men Living in Mangaung.*

Dr Sello Sele completed his PhD in Sociology with a thesis titled, *The Perceptions of South Africans on the Impact of Digital Feminist Activism in the Context of Violence Against Women.*



Dr Nontombi Velelo.



Dr Sello Sele.

Student Achievements

Several opinion pieces emerged from the Honours Sociology of Social Movements and Collective Behaviour course (SOCS6808). The pieces were published across various mainstream media platforms and on the UFS website. These pieces form part of a SOCS6808 short assessment aimed in part at encouraging students to write, while also providing a platform for the best pieces to be showcased in important media platforms. This process has been running since 2023. Some of the media platforms that have published our students' work include News24, Sowetan, Mail & Guardian, and The Citizen. The course is taught and coordinated by **Dr Nombulelo Shange**.

Drs Siphelele Mahlaba (Qwaqwa) and Bongani Mathae obtained their doctoral degrees under the supervision of Prof Matebesi.

A colleague from the Criminology Department, Lindi Coetsee, obtained her master's degree, supervised by Prof Francois Steyn (Criminology) and Prof Katinka de Wet.



Drs Mahlaba and Mathae with Prof Matebesi.



Prof de Wet and Lindie Coetzee.

Teaching

The fourth edition of the Annual Departmental Curriculum Review Workshop was scheduled for 5 November 2025. The workshop plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality and relevance of the Department's programmes by fostering collaborative review, innovation, and alignment with educational standards. This year's workshop benefited significantly from the active involvement of Prof Marlize Rabe, Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning, whose leadership and expertise guided discussions, ensured strategic focus, and promoted best practices in curriculum development.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Brokensha, S.**, de Wet, K.**, Combrink, H., **Redelinghuys, N.**, Mathlhoko, K., & Scheltema-van Wyk, C. 2025. Developing an open educational resource (OER) for Generative AI in higher education. *Práxis Educacional*, 21. e17103. 10.22481/praxisedu.v21i52.17103

Daniel, A., & **Platzky Miller, J.** 2025. Must Fall' Movements globally: Transnational flows of South African student activism. *Third World Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2025.2419011

Hernandez, J., & **Shange, N.T**. 2025. Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Justice. *Environmental Justice*. DOI: 10.1177/19394071251407901

Kgatla, B.L. 2025. The mask and the stage: A dramaturgical analysis of online identity and depression. *Qualitative Health Research*. DOI: 10.1177/10497323251401824

Kgatla, B.L. 2025. Perspectives on depression among Black South African youths: A qualitative analysis. *Social and Health Sciences*, *23*(1): https://doi.org/10.25159/2957-3645/11358

Moyo, G., & **Nzima, D**. 2025. The Retreat of Academic Public Intellectuals in Zimbabwe: A Quest for the Renaissance of Engaged Scholarship. *African Renaissance*, *22*(4): 359-380.

Scherr, A. 2025. Which distinctions count: Why the Illusion of non-discriminatory education can lead to problematic consequences. On Education. *Journal for Research and Debate*, 8(21). https://doi.org/10.17899/on_ed.2025.21.2

Shange, N.T. 2025. Exploring ukuthunywa as African methodology: Decolonial research and ethical considerations. Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning. *CriSTaL*, 13(1): 53-73.

Shange, N.T. 2025. The trouble with policy development: A case for an indigenised Maputo Protocol. *Southern African Public Law*.

Shange, N.T. 2025. African Ubuntu humanness ontology and ecological connection. *Environmental Justice*, 18(4): 233-236.

Chapters in edited volumes

Maviza, G., **Nzima, D**., Gadu, S.E., & Ndlovu, N. 2025. *Implications of the climate crisis in Southern Africa* in *Global Storms and Africa in World Politics: Contemporary Challenges and Decolonial Responses* (pp. 151-166). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Nzima, D., Aliyu, M., Mba Aki, H., & Moyo, G. 2025. Resurgence of Coups and Anti-French Sentiments in West Africa: A Review of the "Unconstitutional" Change of Governments in Burkina Faso and Niger. *Global Storms and Africa in World Politics: Contemporary Challenges and Decolonial Responses*, 271-287.

Scherr, A. 2025. *Anhaltende Vertreibung und doppelte Prekarität. Forschungsbefunde zur Situation von Geflüchteten in Jordanien* in A. Scherr (Hrsg.): Jordanien: Einblicke und Analysen zur Situation von Geflüchteten in einem Partnerland der deutschen Flüchtlingspolitik und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Weinheim und München: Beltz Juventa ISBN 978-3-7799-8847-2. (Ongoing displacement and double precarity. Research findings on the situation of refugees in Jordan.)

Scherr, A. 2025. *Umstrittene Männlichkeiten* in G. Ehlert/K. Liebsch/A. Neuber (Hrsg.): Perspektivenwechsel: das Hinterfragen des Selbstverständlichen. Wiesbaden: Springer, S. 77-92. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-49227-4_7. (*Controversial masculinities* in G. Ehlert/K. Liebsch/A. Neuber (eds.). Change of perspective: The questioning of the self-evident. Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 77-92.)

Scherr, A. 2025. *Jordanien* in J. Oltmer et al. (Hrsg.): Report Globale Flucht 2025. Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, S. 213-224, ISBN: 978-3-596-71232-8.

Scherr, A. 2025. *Jordan* in J. Oltmer et al. (eds.): Report Flight and Forced Migration Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, pp. 213-224.

Scherr, A. 2025. *Welche interkulturelle Kompetenz benötigen Polizist:innen?* in S. Ellebrecht et al. (Hrsg.): Die Polizei in der offenen Gesellschaft. Bielefeld 2025, S. 175-190. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839468302-010. (*What intercultural competence do police officers need?* in S. Ellebrecht et al. (eds.). The Police in the Open Society. Bielefeld 2025, pp. 175-190)

Books

Scherr, A. 2025. *Jordanien: Einblicke und Analysen zur Situation von Geflüchteten in einem Partnerland der deutschen Flüchtlingspolitik und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.* Weinheim und München: *Beltz Juventa,*

Scherr, A. 2025. *Jordan: Insights and analyses on the situation of refugees in a partner country of German refugee policy and development cooperation.* Weinheim and Munich: *Beltz Juventa*

Scherr, A., & Müller, S. 2025. *Soziologische Basics. Eine Einführung für pädagogische und soziale Berufe.* 4. Auflage. Wiesbaden 2025 (325. S.) (Erstauflage 2006). DOI: 10.1007/978-3-658-48556-6.

Scherr, A., & Müller, S. 2025. *Sociological Basics. An Introduction for Pedagogical and Social Professions.* 4th edition. Wiesbaden 2025 (325 p.) (First edition 2006).

Conference Papers/Posters

Biaback Anong, D., & **Moyo, K.** "Wanted or Unwanted? Regionalism and the Categorization of Intra versus Extra-regional Migrants in ECOWAS and the SADC.

Categorizing People on the Move in Africa". Special Issue Author Workshop, 9-10 July 2025, Freiburg, Germany.

Matebesi, S.Z. The impact of municipal water governance challenges on local instability in South Africa. International e-Conference. Africa's Blue Gold: Water conflict, climate resilience, and transboundary cooperation. Wilberforce Island, Bloemfontein, Moscow, 24 September 2025.

Matebesi, S.Z. Tainted transactional pathways for social licensing in mining: A socio-political analysis of the Jagersfontein mine dam disaster. South African Sociological Association 31st Annual Congress, University of Mpumalanga, Mbombela, 23-26 June 2025.

Moyo, K. The potential and pitfalls of reciprocal research in decolonising migration and refugee studies research. South African Sociological Association 31st Annual Congress, University of Mpumalanga, Mbombela, 23-26 June 2025.

Nzima, D., & **Maviza, G**. A Peak into Zimbabwe's Refugee Regime: Dynamics of protection in a shrinking economy. 5th ISA Forum of Sociology in Rabat, Morocco, 6-11 July 2025.

Nzima, D., & **Maviza, G**. Leveraging on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for climate change crises in Southern Africa: A focus on the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC2025) at Champagne Sports Resort, South Africa, 17-20 March 2025.

Nzima, D. "Common early career challenges in the Social sciences and Humanities". Presented at the Early Career Summit during the 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC2025) at Champagne Sports Resort, South Africa, 17-20 March 2025.

Sele, S.J. Transportation challenges and interventions for students in African Universities: A Systematic Review. A research seminar held by the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus, entitled *Early Career Workshop on Post-colonial African Transportation and Mobility Research in Southern Africa: Bridging Gaps and Creating Links*, University of the Free State, Qwaqwa, October 2025.

Sele, S.J. Challenges and barriers affecting Digital Feminist Activism (DFA) and potential solutions: A South African case study. Congress held by The International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIIKM), Bangkok, Thailand, October 2025.

Sele, S.J. Counter-Discourses Towards Digital Feminist Activism in South Africa: A Case of #MenAreTrash. Congress of the International Sociological Association (ISA), Rabat, Morocco, 6-11 July 2025.

Engaged Scholarship

de Jager, A., Edler, H., Ndabaramiye, G.J., Jaji, R., Krause, U., **Moyo, K.**, Sebba, K.R., Segadlo, N., & Zanker, F. Compounding Impacts: Refugees during and after Covid-19 – a survey of 6 African countries. https://www.routedmagazine.com/post/compounding-impacts-refugees-during-and-after-covid-19-a-survey-of-6-african-countries

Matebesi, S.Z. SONA 2025: The imperative to assert authority. https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive/campus-news/2025/february/sona-2025--the-imperative-to-assert-authority-in-governance.

Prof Katinka de Wet is part of the task team creating UFS guidelines on artificial intelligence in assessment, learning, and research.

Prof Katinka de Wet and **Dr Nola Redelinghuys** were members of the advisory committee for the Co-Curricular hub at the UFS (2024-2025).

On 25 April 2025, **Prof Katinka de Wet** delivered a talk for postgraduates and staff at the UFS Chemistry Department titled, "Is your Chemistry Enchanted?"

Prof Matebesi delivered the keynote address at the Small Scale Mining Indaba: From a period of disaster to a new dawn. Jagersfontein, 9 May 2025.

Mcanda, L. Is South Africa's youth going down an alt-right pipeline? Available at https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive/campus-news/2025/november/is-south-africa-s-youth-going-down-an-alt-right-pipeline

Nyakeni, S. Academic assessments: Biases from historical inequalities undermine fairness. https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/2025-08-24-academic-assessments-biases-from-historical-inequalities-undermine-fairness/

Dr Nzima served on the Local Organising Committees of the 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC 2025) and the Inaugural UFS Postgraduate Conference, held at the Qwaqwa Campus in 2025.

Dr Nzima was a member of the South African Sociological Council during 2024-2025 and was involved in organising the 31st Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association at the University of Mpumalanga, Mbombela, 23-26 June 2025.

Dr Nzima is the convener of the South African Sociological Association working group on Family and Population Studies at the 31st Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association held at the University of Mpumalanga, Mbombela, 23-26 June 2025. Eight papers were submitted to the working group and all were successfully presented.

Shange, N.T. 2025. Xenophobia threatens Black South Africans the most. Mail & Guardian. https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/2025-08-26-xenophobia-threatens-black-south-africans-the-most/

Shange, N.T. 2025. 1st runner up for the Rahamon Bello Best PhD Thesis Award by The Institute of African and Diaspora Studies (IADS), University of Lagos (UNILAG). https://unilag.edu.ng/iads-unilag-honor-2025-rahamon-bello-best-phd-thesis-award-winner/

Shange, N.T. 2025. Discussant for the 2025 University of South Africa's Founders Lecture delivered by Prof Jeffery Sachs. https://www.youtube.com/live/qXphHyrwECk?si=wUsnWfl0dYxjLa08

Shange, N.T. 2025. Gender, Decolonisation and African Spirituality Public Lecture at the University of Limpopo.

Sele, S.J. Double standards, faith and religion: SA's absurd contradictions regarding GBV. Available at https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive/campus-news/2025/april/double-standards--faith-and-religion--sa-s-absurd-contradictions-regarding-gbv

Sele, S.J. Double standards, faith and religion: SA's absurd contradictions regarding GBV. Available at https://theafricanmirror.africa/thought-leadership/double-standards-faith-and-religion-sas-absurd-contradictions-regarding-gbv/

Vanda, Z. Beyond the colour line: When justice should be just. Available at https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive/campus-news/2025/june/beyond-the-colour-line--when-justice-should-be-just

Staff (2025)

Prof SZ Matebesi — Academic Head of Department, Professor

Academic Staff

L Ackermann	Lecturer
Prof K de Wet	Associate Professor
Dr L Kgatla	Lecturer
Dr B Malope	Lecturer
Dr K Moyo	Senior Lecturer (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr D Nzima	Senior Lecturer/Subject Head (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr S Sele	Lecturer (Qwaqwa Campus)
Dr NT Shange	Lecturer
Dr NL Velelo	Lecturer and Programme Director: BSocSci
M Mbhele	Academic Facilitator (Qwaqwa Campus)
D Jonker	Academic Facilitator
N Ndlovu	Lecturer (Contract)

Support Staff

M Hoeane	Senior Administrative Officer

Affiliated Staff

Prof A Membretti	Research Fellow
Prof A Pelser	Research Fellow
Dr PL Tanyi	Research Fellow
Dr G Moyo	Research Fellow
Dr G Maviza	Research Fellow
Prof A Scherr	Research Fellow



Department of

South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies

Academic Head of Department

Prof Annalene van Staden

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Overview of 2025



Beatrice Nelson
Senior Assistant Office

Departmental Mantra:

"Excellence in Teaching, Excellence in Research, Excellence in Impact."

The year 2025 has been another year of meaningful growth and accomplishment for our Department. As I reflect on my sixth year serving as Academic Head, I am proud of the sustained academic excellence demonstrated by our staff, postgraduate students, and research associates. Our work continues to be guided by the departmental mantra "*Excellence in Teaching, Excellence in Research, Excellence in Impact*." This principle shapes our approach to teaching, research, and community engagement, ensuring that our academic work contributes to both scholarly advancement and societal development.

Excellence in Teaching

Teaching remains central to the identity of our Department. During 2025, our academic staff once again demonstrated exceptional dedication to delivering high-quality, student-centred teaching across our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Through carefully structured curricula, innovative teaching methods, and a strong commitment to student support, lecturers continue to foster environments where students are encouraged to engage critically with knowledge and develop strong analytical skills.

Our teaching is characterised by intellectual rigour, inclusivity, and responsiveness to developments within the field. Staff members consistently provide mentorship and academic guidance that support student success and help cultivate the next generation of scholars and professionals.

Strength of the Postgraduate Programme

The Department's postgraduate programme remains one of our most significant achievements and continues to grow in strength and reputation. Our postgraduate environment is characterised by strong supervision, rigorous scholarship, and a vibrant research culture.

In 2025, several master's students successfully completed their research, producing high-quality dissertations that contribute meaningfully to the academic field. These successful completions reflect the dedication of our postgraduate students as well as the commitment of our academic staff to providing excellent supervision and mentorship.

Equally encouraging is the cohort of doctoral candidates currently registered in the Department. Our PhD students are actively engaged at various stages of their research projects, contributing to a dynamic, intellectually stimulating research environment. The continued growth of this doctoral cohort demonstrates the Department's capacity to sustain advanced scholarship and develop future academic leaders.

Short Learning Programmes and Third-Stream Income

The Department's Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) remain an important component of our academic activities. These programmes provide valuable opportunities for professional development and knowledge dissemination, allowing practitioners and educators to benefit from the Department's specialised expertise. In addition to their academic value, the SLPs generate significant third-stream income for both the Department and the university. This income supports the sustainability of various academic initiatives, including research and postgraduate development. The success of these programmes reflects the Department's ability to extend its impact beyond the traditional university environment and to engage meaningfully with professional communities.

Research Excellence and Scholarly Output

Research productivity remains a defining strength of the Department. During 2025, staff members continued to produce substantial scholarly outputs, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and academic books. Particularly noteworthy are the recent book publications authored by two of the research associates, Prof Du Plessis and Prof Moll, which represent important contributions to the field and further strengthen the Department's academic profile.

The Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies is also actively engaged in a range of research projects, frequently undertaken in collaboration with colleagues across institutions and interdisciplinary contexts. These initiatives contribute significantly to advancing knowledge in the field while simultaneously strengthening the Department's research profile. Importantly, these projects also provide valuable opportunities for postgraduate students to participate in scholarly inquiry, thereby enhancing their research training, academic development, and integration into broader scholarly networks.

The HEARTS Project: Research with Social Impact

One of the most meaningful initiatives within the Department is the HEARTS Project, which exemplifies our commitment to the principle of impact embedded in our departmental mantra. The HEARTS Project focuses on supporting deaf children in developing early reading skills while simultaneously empowering their parents to learn sign language. This dual approach addresses a critical challenge in deaf education: the lack of accessible language environments for many deaf children during their early developmental years. Through this initiative, the Department works directly with families to strengthen language acquisition, literacy development, and communication within the home environment. By teaching deaf children to read while equipping parents with the skills to communicate effectively through sign language, the project fosters stronger linguistic foundations and improves educational outcomes for these children.

The HEARTS Project also represents an important example of how research, teaching, and community engagement intersect within the Department. It allows academic expertise to translate into meaningful societal impact while simultaneously informing ongoing research and postgraduate training.

Reflecting on the above, the achievements of 2025 demonstrate the collective commitment, expertise, and scholarly dedication of all our staff, postgraduate students, and collaborators. Together, we continue to build a Department that is characterised by intellectual excellence, strong postgraduate mentorship, impactful research, and meaningful community engagement.

As we continue to grow and develop, our guiding principle remains clear: ***Excellence in Teaching, Excellence in Research, Excellence in Impact.***

The spirit of our work is perhaps best captured in the following reflection:

"Excellence is not a single act but a habit; it is the result of persistent effort and dedication to a higher purpose." **Aristotle**

Achievements

Student Achievements

Undergraduate Academic Achievers for 2025:

- **Top first-year student 2025**
  Thandolwethu Thwala (2020783003), average of 86,5%
- **Top second-year student 2025**
  Mienke Venter (2025711207), average of 78.5%
- **Top third-year student 2025**
  Nhlanhla Simelane (2023162064), average of 86.5%



Postgraduate students: Our pride

In 2025, seven students registered for the Honours qualification in South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies. At the master's level, eight students were enrolled, while three students are currently registered for the PhD qualification in South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies.

PhD Students:



Carmel Carne

Carmel Carne is a passionate researcher in the field of linguistics, specialising in deaf literacy education. Carmel was awarded her MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition at Oxford University in the UK and completed her BA Language and Culture and BHons General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University. Her Honours project focused on stereotypes of sign languages and deaf users in the South African press. The topic of her master's dissertation was young hearing children's perspectives on reading and learning to read. Her current doctoral research, entitled "A Qualitative Exploration of Reading Pedagogies in Written English for Deaf Learners in the Western Cape", under the supervision of Prof Van Staden at the University of the Free State, focuses on the methods used to teach deaf learners to read written English and Afrikaans. Last year, she completed her research proposal, ethics application, and extensive literature review, and this year, she is busy with data collection at deaf schools in the Western Cape. This term, she is interviewing teachers about their reading pedagogies, the challenges both teachers and learners face in reading instruction, and possible solutions to improve reading outcomes among deaf learners. Next term, she will conduct drawing activities and interviews with deaf learners in grades 6-8 to better understand their perspectives on reading instruction. Carne has shown excellent progress with her doctoral studies, resulting in her receiving both UFS and departmental bursaries to continue with her PhD research in 2026.



Jani de Lange

Jani Charlese de Lange is a lecturer and researcher within the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the University of the Free State (UFS), where she also earned her BA (2007), BA Honours (2008), and MA (2012) in Language Studies and Linguistics. Currently a PhD candidate (2021–present) at UFS, her doctoral research investigates the sociolinguistics of SASL, with a specific focus on the dynamic nature of signed place names and the challenges within the current administrative geographical names standardisation process. Her professional output is centred on the intersection of language policy, law, and the rights of the deaf community, featuring notable publications in the *South African Law Journal* (2022) regarding the legal vulnerabilities of deaf individuals, research on language-in-education planning in *Litnet Akademies* (2020) and the most recent contribution to urban naming conventions in SASL toponomastics (UJ Press 2025) and Zimbabwean Sign Language (UNISA, *in press*).

Our Master's students:



Kirsten De Villiers

Title: Exploring the Function of Rhetorical Questions in Information Structure: A Focus on South African Sign Language Place Names.

With her dissertation, entitled "Exploring the Function of Rhetorical Questions in Information Structure: A Focus on South African Sign Language Place Names", de Villiers explored how rhetorical questions function within the information structure of South African Sign Language (SASL), with a particular focus on the use of place names in discourse.

Using a qualitative mixed-methods approach, the study analyses sociolinguistic interview data that were annotated and examined in ELAN. The findings indicate that rhetorical WH-questions, especially those using WHERE, play a discourse-pragmatic role similar to that of declarative statements. These structures help organise information, shape syntactic patterns, and guide meaning in SASL communication, contributing to the broader linguistic documentation of the language. From 2026, de Villiers has been appointed as a junior lecturer (contract) and will be involved in co-teaching SASL Linguistics at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



Renatha Van Reenen

Title of dissertation: Variation in SASL Mouth Movement

Renatha van Reenen is a deaf South African academic and professional committed to advancing inclusive education and deaf studies. She completed her MA studies at the University of the Free State (UFS), where she specialised in linguistics and sign language research. Her academic journey reflects her dedication to strengthening scholarship in South African Sign Language (SASL) and promoting equitable access to higher education for deaf students.

Her master's research focuses on variation in SASL, particularly mouth movements as non-manual features of the language. A central question guiding her work examined how mouthing variation in SASL has changed over time. Article 1 quantified and measured patterns of variation, providing empirical evidence of generational differences. Article 2 explored the historical, educational, and social factors influencing these differences. Together, the findings demonstrate that changes in mouthing practices are closely linked to apartheid-era schooling systems, oralist and bilingual approaches to deaf education, language contact, and evolving deaf cultural identity.

Currently, she works at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), where she supports academic development, accessibility initiatives, and deaf awareness in higher education. Beyond her professional role, she is passionate about empowering the deaf community, mentoring emerging scholars, and promoting SASL as a language of research and identity. Inspired by George Veditz's powerful words, "*As long as we have deaf people on earth, we will have signs*", she is motivated to lead in the research field, ensuring the preservation, recognition, and continued development of SASL for future generations.



Anele Kotoyi

Title of dissertation: *The standardisation of South African Sign Language: Achievements and challenges (JdL Supervisor; LdP Co-supervisor)*

Anele Nomfundo Kotoyi is a master's student in the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies. Born and raised in Brandfort, a small town outside Bloemfontein, Anele was awarded a bursary by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture in recognition of academic excellence. Her master's research focuses on the standardisation of South African Sign Language: Challenges and achievements. In addition to her studies, she works as a SASL interpreter at a public college in the province, promoting accessibility and inclusivity. Through her academic and professional journey, Anele aims to advance SASL research and contribute meaningfully to deaf education in South Africa.



Gloria Motshoeneng

Title of dissertation: *Evaluating an annotation system: A comparative study of American Sign Language and South African Sign Language*

Gloria Motshoeneng was born and raised in Bloemfontein, where she attended Fauna Primary School for her primary education and later completed her secondary schooling at Dr Viljoen School. She pursued her tertiary education at the University of the Free State, where she completed a language degree

specialising in South African Sign Language (SASL) and English, with Spoken Linguistics as an elective and Language Practice as a minor. She subsequently obtained an Honours degree in South African Sign Language.

Motshoeneng submitted her master's dissertation in SASL in 2025, which focuses on analysing an annotation system through a comparative study of American Sign Language (ASL) and SASL. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative analysis of the Microsoft ASL dataset, while the qualitative component involved developing a SASL Sutton SignWriting corpus and examining the compatibility and applicability of Sutton SignWriting to SASL linguistic structures.



Mamotete Mapeshoane

Title of dissertation: *Signs of Change: Investigating the Dynamic Nature of Place Names in South African Sign Language*

Mamotete Lucia Mapeshoane is a master's candidate in the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies (DSASLDS). She aims to submit her dissertation in April 2026. Through a dual-article dissertation, Mapeshoane investigates how official place name changes in South Africa affect the corresponding place name signs in SASL within the deaf community. Her research further explores the adoption, dissemination and practical use of these signed place names within higher education, providing insights into language planning, accessibility, and cultural identity and heritage.

With a focus on addressing the gap between official place-name changes and the lived experiences of the deaf community, her research contributes significantly to the broader field of sign language toponymy and to the promotion of inclusive educational environments.



Tshilidzi Masinamela

Title of dissertation: *Mutual intelligibility between younger generation signers and older generation signers: The case of South African Sign Language Variation*

Tshilidzi Masinamela is a passionate scholar currently pursuing a master's degree in South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies. His academic journey began with a BA in Language Practice, completed in 2021, followed by an Honours degree in the same field. After a gap year in 2023, he returned to academia with renewed focus, earning an Honours degree in South African Sign Language in 2024, where he was the top achiever in the research module. His current master's research delves into the fascinating area of "South African Sign Language variation: Mutual intelligibility between younger signers and older signers," highlighting a deep commitment to linguistic understanding within the deaf community.

Alongside these academic pursuits, he has actively contributed to the university community as a tutor and teaching assistant between 2021 and 2025, and now serves as a research assistant in the Department of SASL and Deaf Studies. Masinamela is a polyglot, fluent in at least seven South African languages, and possesses a foundational grasp of French. He is enthusiastic about linguistic diversity, and he is aspiring to be a Sign Language Linguist. Quoting Masinamela, "he loves languages, because with languages, you are home everywhere".

Two other master's candidates who will continue their studies in 2026 are:



B Putsoa

Title of dissertation:
Understanding cross-border language contact: A comparison between the variation of South African and Lesotho sign place names



B Matasane

Title of dissertation:
Exploring challenges faced by Sign Language Interpreters: A case study at Mt. Royal High School in Lesotho

Honours in SASL and Deaf Studies: Top achievers of 2025

Our two top Honours research achievers of 2025 were Thubalethu Maseko and Tatenda Chimedza.



Thubalethu Maseko.

In Maseko's study, *Challenging Deaf Stereotypes: An analysis of the film CODA*, she analysed the 2021 film *CODA* to examine how it represents deaf culture and identity and whether it challenges common stereotypes about deaf people. Using a qualitative desktop analysis grounded in Deaf Studies and Film and Media Studies, she focused on the concept of Deaf Gain, which reframes deafness as a cultural and societal contribution rather than a disability.Through analysing the film's narrative, characters, and visual strategies, mainly its use of deaf actors in central roles, she found that *CODA* challenges stereotypes about deaf social norms, cultural expectations, and values. Overall, she argued that the film promotes a more authentic and inclusive understanding of the deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority rather than a group defined by disability.



Tatenda Chimedza.

Tatenda Chimedza's honours research essay, entitled "Cognitive and Linguistic Factors Influencing Reading Development in DHH Learners: Enhancing Literacy Interventions through the Working Memory Model," investigated how cognitive and linguistic factors influence the reading development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) learners. She focused on the roles of working memory, attention, executive functions, and linguistic elements, including early exposure to sign language, vocabulary development, phonological awareness, morphology, and syntax. Through a review of literature, she explored how these factors interact and how strategies such as bilingual-bicultural approaches, visualisation, and morphological instruction can enhance literacy outcomes. She concluded that reading difficulties among DHH learners are largely linked to language access rather than cognitive deficits, and that integrating cognitive and linguistic interventions can significantly improve reading development. The value of this study lies in highlighting evidence-based approaches that can inform more effective literacy interventions, particularly in inclusive South African educational contexts.

Teaching



Emily Matabane

Emily Matabane is responsible for teaching conversational classes for the following undergraduate modules: SASL 1514; SASL 1524; SASL 2614; SASL 2624; SASL3718; SASL3718 and SICL312. Matabane conducts weekly consultation sessions with students, which contribute significantly to the development of SASL among them.



Annemarie le Roux

In 2025, **Annemarie le Roux** was responsible for teaching Linguistics 1524, 2624, and 3728, modules that focus on South African Sign Language (SASL) as a fully developed language with its own grammatical structure. These modules address core linguistic components such as phonology, morphology, and syntax, while also introducing students to broader linguistic fields including neurolinguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. In addition, she taught the Acquisition modules (SASL 2614 and 2624), which focus on developing students' practical signing abilities and language proficiency.

In SASL 1524, students were introduced to the linguistic foundations of SASL, including the production of signs, the basic structure of the language, and how signed languages differ from spoken languages. Seventy-two students registered for the module. The pass rate was 87.5%, with a class average of 59.78%. In SASL 2624, the focus shifted to more complex linguistic features, including sentence types, non-manual markers, classifiers, and sign language transcription systems. Forty-four students registered, with a pass rate of 86.36% and a class average of 51.58%.

At the third-year level, SASL 3728 introduced students to advanced topics, including language use in space, glossing conventions, and the linguistic analysis of signed languages. Students also worked with ELAN, a specialised annotation software used in sign language research. The module included a strong practical component designed to help students apply their theoretical knowledge. Twenty-seven students registered, achieving a pass rate of 96.31% and a class average of 63.26%.

The Acquisition modules focused on strengthening students' signing proficiency and vocabulary development. In SASL 2614, 53 students registered, with a class average of 61.66% and a pass rate of 86.79%. In SASL 2624 Acquisition, the focus was on integrating linguistic knowledge with practical signing skills, particularly placement and role-shifting, which are central grammatical features of sign languages. Forty-four students registered, with a class average of 57.55% and a pass rate of 86.36%.

At the Honours level, Le Roux taught SASA 6808 Advanced Acquisition, which had five registered students in 2025, all of whom successfully completed the module. The class average was 57.8%, with the highest mark being 63%. The module was presented through contact sessions in the SASL laboratory, where students engaged with both theoretical and practical aspects of language acquisition. The practical component included collaboration with SASI (the interpreting module) and role-play assessments with deaf participants, providing valuable real-world communication experience.

Throughout the year, students also participated in continuous assessment activities, including tests, essays, and practical evaluations. In addition, students participated in the Reading Group initiative, assisting deaf learners in developing reading skills. These interactions provided students with valuable exposure to different SASL dialects while deepening their understanding of deaf culture and communication.

Through her teaching and mentorship, Le Roux continues to play an important role in developing students who are not only linguistically competent but also socially aware and committed to inclusive communication practices.



Jani De Lange

At the undergraduate level, **De Lange** taught SASL3718, focusing on Deaf Folklore and Sign Language stories.

My teaching philosophy is rooted in the belief that learning is a relational, narrative-driven process in which I act as a facilitator, bridging new academic concepts with students' existing lived experiences. By integrating storytelling into my lectures at the UFS, I transform theories into relatable narratives that enhance retention and engagement. I prioritise a "kind and supportive" classroom environment, deliberately creating a safe space where students feel empowered to draw on their own background knowledge, particularly within the diverse contexts of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies. This approach informs my greatest classroom highlights, which range from witnessing shy, silent students find their voice to seeing the real-world impact of our work through community initiatives such as the Deaf Awareness campaigns and the Philippolis Multilingual Speaking Competition.



Susan Lombaard

Teaching South African Sign Language at both the first- and third-year undergraduate levels has been one of the most rewarding and measurable successes of my academic career.

In my first-year module, 72 students enrolled, the majority with no prior knowledge of SASL. By the end of the academic year, 66 students passed, with 10 achieving distinctions. Watching students move from absolute beginners, struggling with basic handshapes and non-manual markers, to confident signers capable of structured dialogue is nothing short of remarkable. Their progress reflects a classroom culture built on high expectations, structured immersion, and consistent formative feedback.

At the third-year level, the outcomes are equally strong. Of the 27 enrolled students, 25 passed. Importantly, passing this module qualifies students to continue to postgraduate study, and I am proud that my classroom serves as that academic gateway. Thirteen third-year students achieved distinctions for the acquisition component, with marks reaching as high as 90.6%. These students are not merely passing; they are mastering advanced linguistic features, discourse structure, and formal presentation skills in SASL. What truly sets my classroom apart is transformation. I witness students evolve from hesitant first-years into polished third-year signers who can deliver formal academic presentations entirely in SASL with clarity, confidence, and cultural competence. That progression is deeply intentional.

My teaching philosophy is grounded in language acquisition theory, visual pedagogy, and authentic communicative practice. I believe language is embodied, social, and experiential. Therefore, my classroom prioritises immersive signing environments, peer interaction, performance-based assessment, and real-world application. I scaffold learning rigorously in the first year and gradually release responsibility so that by the third year, students own their linguistic competence.

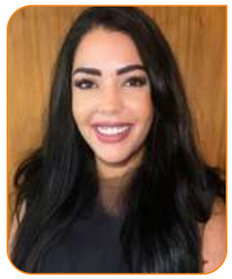
The results demonstrate that when high standards meet supportive pedagogy, excellence follows. I do not simply teach sign language, I develop competent, confident signers prepared for professional and postgraduate pathways.



Dr Patrick Sibanda

In my teaching, I adopt learner-centred, participatory methods in which learners are guided individually and then fully engaged through independent research and presentations to the rest of the class. I also use didactic approaches that simplify content to ensure that every individual learner benefits, coupled with mainly visual technologies via the use of visual and audio-visual technologies: PowerPoint presentations and video analysis. Continuous formative assessment is employed throughout the semester, complemented by a summative assessment at the end of the semester.

Short learning programmes offered



Carla Joubert is the Short Learning Programme Coordinator of our Department.

In 2025, the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the University of the Free State successfully delivered its Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) to a total of 139 participants through both online (89) and face-to-face (50) offerings. The programmes maintained a strong academic standard, with 113 participants successfully completing the courses, including 67 distinctions and 46 passes, while a small number either did not submit assessments or did not meet the minimum requirements. The diversity of participants, including university staff, educators, professionals, and community members, reflects the

growing demand for South African Sign Language (SASL) training. Importantly, the 2025 SLPs generated a total gross income of R889 500 before the splitting of profits and operational expenses, demonstrating the financial sustainability and strategic value of these offerings. Additional institutional support was secured through two allocations from the Language Development Fund, facilitated by Prof Rhoda, as well as funding from the University of the Free State Human Resources division, enabling UFS staff members to equip themselves with foundational SASL skills and further strengthening the University's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.

Celebrating our research

Our research associates and postdoctoral students:

Prof L.T. du Plessis

Prof du Plessis's *"From Technique to Official Language: The Emergence of South African Sign Language as a Twelfth Official Language* " investigates the language planning and policy (LPP) trajectory of South African Sign Language (SASL). While the 2023 constitutional recognition of SASL as South Africa's 12th official language marked a historic milestone, this monograph goes beyond the symbolic triumph to examine the persistent gap between de jure recognition and de facto implementation. It critically analyses SASL's position as a marginalised manual-visual language within a constitutional landscape dominated by spoken languages, the systemic pressures of English hegemony, and the ongoing struggle of Historically Marginalised Indigenous Languages (HMILs).

Employing a longitudinal historical-sociolinguistic approach, the research draws on archival documents, parliamentary minutes, and media reports, and is framed by both top-down legislative processes and bottom-up community activism. The narrative documents legal milestones from the pre-1994 context, through initial breakthroughs in the South African Schools Act (1996), to the focused campaign from 2007 to 2023 that culminated in officialisation. Using the tripartite model of status, corpus, and acquisition planning, the study shows that by 2014, SASL had already achieved legal and functional parity with the other 11 official languages, through inclusion in the PanSALB mandate, recognition in schools and government communication, official status of sign language texts, and a full Grade R to 12 curriculum.

The 2023 officialisation, while symbolically significant, did not fundamentally change these legal obligations. Instead, it underscores the state's broader failure to implement HMILs as fully functional official languages. The monograph identifies "non-implementation" as the primary hurdle, critiques the state's cautious approach, and provides evidence that legislation alone does not guarantee the effective use of language rights or their entrenchment. Moving beyond historical reporting, the work reflects on the future of language management in South Africa and contributes to the global discourse on sign language rights, arguing that SASL must transition from symbolic recognition to resource-backed, functional implementation. As a scholarly contribution, the book documents the resilience of the deaf community while providing a critical lens on South Africa's linguistic landscape.



Prof L.T. du Plessis



Prof Johan Moll

Prof Moll's "Ons laat tale werk" offers a rigorous historical and analytical account of the Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment at the University of the Free State. The book captures the intellectual leadership, policy engagement and practical interventions that shaped multilingualism, language rights and institutional transformation during a critical period in our country's history. It stands as an invaluable scholarly record of how language planning and implementation can influence higher education and society more broadly.

Dr Chrismi Loth

Dr Chrismi-Rinda Loth serves on the Board of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (2024 – 2027) and as Vice-Chair of the ICOS Working Group on Toponymy. Dr Loth also coordinates the South African Sign Language place names project on behalf of the Department of SASL and Deaf Studies.



Prof Moll's "Ons laat tale werk".



Dr Chrismi Loth.

Research Projects

Reading Project: HEARTS

The Hearts Project was established as an inclusive reading initiative aimed at addressing the early literacy gap within the deaf community. Rooted in the principles of engaged scholarship, the project promotes collaboration between academia and society to create meaningful social impact. It was conceptualised by a parent-academic in partnership with the University of the Free State's Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies and UFS Libraries.

Deaf children often experience delays in reading development due to limited language access in their early years. This motivated the establishment of a dedicated reading initiative to help learners build greater confidence and proficiency in reading. As language access is central to literacy development, South African Sign Language (SASL) is used as a bridge to support reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and engagement with texts.

The project commenced in February and is presented every Saturday. Several Honours students are actively involved in the initiative, providing support and working closely with the learners. In certain cases, individual reading sessions are offered to ensure personalised attention and targeted support where required.

Through this initiative, the project aims to strengthen learners' reading abilities while creating a positive and accessible learning environment that recognises and values their language and lived experiences.



Our 2025 Honours students were actively involved in the project.



One of our sponsors, Toyota, donated reading books to the project.



4 Gewoonskap • Community — Bloemfontein Courant • 12 February 2026

UFS programme empowers deaf families

Clement Matrooe

In an effort to raise awareness, improve literacy among deaf children, and teach parents South African Sign Language, lecturers at the University of the Free State have come together to form the Heart Programme, an initiative that brings parents and children together through education and inclusion.

Co-founders and UFS lecturers Kolobyoke Bolou and Annemarie le Roux describe the programme as a significant step towards creating a more inclusive environment for deaf children. Bolou, whose 10-year-old son is part of the programme, says she is proud of the impact it has had on the children's lives.

"We have a young girl who was struggling to read, she could not even finish a page. Months later, she can finish an entire book," Bolou said. "It is heart-warming to see that those lessons really make a difference in these children's lives."

Le Roux echoed Bolou's sentiments and encouraged more parents to get involved. "We want more parents with deaf children to join us. Everything is free, they just need to commit their time," she explained.

The Heart Programme was established last year with support from the UFS Library and the department of South African Sign Language. Classes are held every Saturday morning, offering parents and their children an opportunity to strengthen communication through shared learning and reading. While participation is growing steadily, the co-founders hope to reach even more families by the end of the year.

Bloemfontein Courant also spoke to parent Pinky Mogoma, who shared her experience in the programme. Mogoma revealed that although her 16-year-old son attends a school for the deaf and blind in Thaba Nchu, the Heart Programme has given him a sense of belonging.

"The teachers do their best, but this extra support is needed, especially from parents, because it strengthens the relationship between parents and children," she said.

Currently, the Heart Programme supports six deaf children and is calling on more parents to join the initiative to help raise awareness and improve communication within families. Those interested can contact vanasa1@ufs.ac.za or boloukp@ufs.ac.za.

Deaf children and parents attending a class at the UFS as part of the Heart Programme. PHOTO: CLEMENT MATROOS

Bloem Courant visited us to make more parents aware of the project.

Survey of South African Sign Language Place Names

https://www.ufs.ac.za/sasl/research/projects/survey-of-sasl-place-names

In 2021, the Department initiated this pioneering research project to address a research gap in signed toponomastics (place names in signed languages) by systematically collecting and documenting SASL place names. From 2022 to June 2025, the project was in a collaborative partnership (see below). The project is in its final stages of data processing, with a projected end date of June 2026. This is truly a departmental project, with staff members continuously assisting with translations, cultural insights, and practical matters.

The core team consists of Prof Annalene van Staden, the PI, and Dr Chrismi-Rinda Loth, the team lead. Expertise is provided by two postdoctoral research fellows, Dr Patrick Sibanda (Zimbabwe) and Dr Sara Siyavoshi (Iran). Several student assistants participated in the project throughout 2025: Kirsten de Villiers, Tshilidzi Masinamela, Gloria Motshoeneng, and Mamotete Mapeshoane as research assistants at the MA level, and Thubalethu Maseko at the Honours level, with Nhlanhla Simelane as a student assistant (third year). Through this initiative, our Department has established itself as the international leading entity in signed toponymic research.

Follow our evolving figshare collection for updated and new data items: https://ufs.figshare.com/collections/South_African_Sign_Language_SASL_Place_Names/7886741. This includes a preliminary research dataset on SASL place-name signs: https://ufs.figshare.com/articles/dataset/SASL_Place-Name_Signs_Research_Data_Collection/29376494. The rerecorded place-name signs are also available in the Our Places mobile app (see below).



DSASLDS fieldwork team.



Dr Loth presenting project results at ISPN 2025.

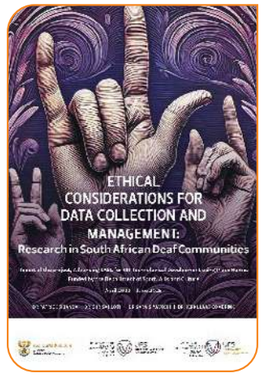
Advancing SASL for 4IR Technological Development Using Place Names (UFS-AGR22-000115)

https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item/campus-news/2025/june/ufs-project-paves-digital-path-for-south-african-sign-language

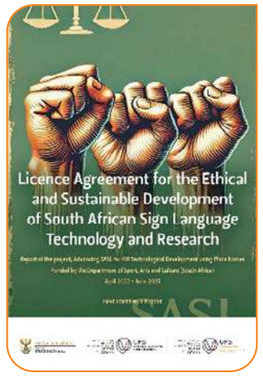
From April 2022 to June 2025, our Department collaborated with the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures (ICDF) in a collaborative project funded by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. Our Department was responsible for the sociolinguistic component, working from our survey project, while the ICDF managed the computational aspect.

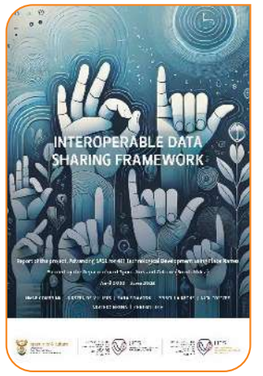
Some of our exciting collaborative products include the following:

- An Omeka S Archive, Variation in SASL Place Names, which presents a curated selection of SASL place names: https://pokello.ufs.ac.za/s/sasl/page/about.
- Its associated figshare repository: https://ufs.figshare.com/articles/dataset/Variation_in_South_African_Sign_Language_Place_Names/29456636.
- A research dataset on SASL place-name signs: https://ufs.figshare.com/articles/dataset/SASL_Place-Name_Signs_Research_Data_Collection/29376494.
- The project reports can be found at https://ufs.figshare.com/articles/report/Advancing_South_African_Sign_Language_for_4IR_Technological_Development/28847498.
  - Report: *Ethical Considerations for Data Collection and Management: Research in South African Deaf Communities*. The team from DSASLDS applied the lessons they learned during fieldwork to develop the framework for ethical considerations, with consideration of related data management by the ICDF. This was followed by a research article (Sibanda, P., Loth, C., & Siyavoshi, S. 2025. Ethical Practices for Gaining Access for Research with Deaf Communities in South Africa: A Case of South African Sign Language. Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics, 20(4): 222-232. https://doi.org/10.1177/15562646251353471). A related book is currently in development under the editorship of Dr Patrick Sibanda.
  - Report: *Interoperable Data Sharing: South African Sign Language Computer Readable Annotation for Artificial Intelligence*. Painstaking linguistic annotations by the DSASLDS contributed to the development of a computer-readable annotation by the ICDF, advancing HLT development for SASL.
  - Report: *Licence Agreement for the Ethical and Sustainable Development of South African Sign Language Technology and Research*. The Licensing Agreement (ICDF) report provides a critical overview of licensing options and their implications for SASL's technological developments.
  - Report: *Interoperable Data Sharing Framework*. The ICDF took the lead in creating a framework for interoperable data that considers the various challenges and solutions related to visual data inherent to SASL technological development.









Our Places mobile applications

https://www.ufs.ac.za/sasl/research/projects/our-places

Launched in September 2025, this mobile application offers an accessible way to explore the interesting background of place names, as well as variations in SASL. Etymological information is drawn from the Dictionary of Southern African Place Names (Raper, Möller & Du Plessis, 2014; Jonathan Ball Publishers). Place-name changes are regularly updated in the apps under the guidance of Dr Chrismi-Rinda Loth in consultation with Prof Theodorus du Plessis. Place names in SASL are being added as they become available through our research. The free version of the app (Our Places) contains 30% of the Dictionary's content, as well as our available corpus of SASL place-name signs. In the paid version (Our Places Pro), 75% of the Dictionary and all available SASL place-name signs are included.

Both versions are available for Android on the Google Play Store:

- Our Places (free): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=za.ac.ufs.ourplaces
- Our Places Pro (paid): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=za.ac.ufs.ourplacesproapp



Our Places announcement.

International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN)

https://www.ufs.ac.za/sasl/research/conferences--symposia--and-workshops/international-symposium-on-place-names-(ispn)

The ISPN aims to cultivate toponymic (place name) research in South Africa in collaboration with international partners. ISPN was initiated in 2011. Since 2015, it has been co-hosted with the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy. In 2024, the ICOS Working Group on Toponymy joined the partnership. Since the amalgamation of the Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment and DSASLDS, the ISPN has placed greater emphasis on signed toponomastics. In this regard, our Department plays an important role in bringing considerations of place names in signed languages to scholars and practitioners here and abroad.

Dr Chrismi-Rinda Loth serves as the main facilitator, with the rest of the Organising Committee comprised of Prof Annalene van Staden (DSASLDS), Prof Theodorus (DSASLDS), Prof Peter Jordan (DSASLDS and ICOS), and Dr Matjaž Geršič (ICA/IGU). Local and international experts serve on the Scientific Committee. Up to now, each symposium has been followed by an accredited publication.

ISPN 2025 was hosted from 26 to 29 November in Clarens (https://www.ufs.ac.za/conferences/conference/2025-ispn-home) with the theme "Harmonising toponymic heritage: Balancing standardisation and local diversity". The two keynote addresses were delivered by Prof Sambulo Ndlovu (University of Eswatini, Eswatini) and Bill Watt (Placenames Australia). Two workshops preceded the symposium:

- "Systematising participatory toponymic diagnostics during street addressing and settlement mapping operations" presented by Prof Frédéric Giraut (Geneva University, Switzerland), UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Toponymy "Naming the World".
- "Ethical principles of doing toponymic research with Deaf communities" presented by Dr Patrick Sibanda (DSASLDS).

Anyone interested in toponomastics in southern Africa is invited to join our official LinkedIn group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/10047495/.



ISPN 2025 group photo.

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Sibanda, P., Loth, C., & Siyavoshi, S. 2025. Ethical Practices for Gaining Access for Research with Deaf Communities in South Africa: A Case of South African Sign Language. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Ethics*.

Burgert, Senekal. 2025. Battery 9 as pioniers van industriele musiek binne die Afrikaanse rockmusiektoneel. *LitNet Akademies*, 22(2):160-186.

Burgert, Senekal. 2025. Mensveragtend, afstootlik en omstrede: ‚n Verkenning van Afrikaanse swartmetaal, *LitNet Akademies Geesteswetenskappe* 22(3).

Burgert, Senekal. 2025. Afskrikking in die konteks van hedendaagse strategiese mededinging: Lesse uit Oekraïne. Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe, 65(4):1040-1056.

Burgert, Senekal. 2025. Runic hashtags on Instagram: *Futhark*. *International Journal of Runic Studies* 14-15:171-191.

Sibanda, P., & Siyavoshi, S. 2025. (In review). The Phonological Structure of South African Sign Language Toponyms. *South African Journal of African Languages*.

Sibanda, P., & Tlale, L.D.N. 2025. Advancing Full Participation of Deaf Learners in Education in South Africa and Zimbabwe. *The International Journal of Educational Development in Africa*.

Magaracha, S., & Sibanda, P. 2025. Availability of Assistive Technologies (ATs) to Children with Disabilities in Bulawayo Central District (BCD) in Zimbabwe. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*. DOI: 10.1080/17483107.2025.2454241, Taylor & Francis.

Sibanda, P., & Siyavoshi, S. 2025. The Phonological Structure of South African Sign Language Toponyms. *South African Journal of African Languages*.

Yassaman Choubsaz, **Sara Siyavoshi** & **Farzaneh Soleimanbeigi. 2025.** Iranian Sign Language variant in Kermanshah and how it is different from Tehrani variant. *Journal of Language Science*.

Chapters in edited volumes

Du Plessis, T., & Loth, C-R. (2025). Transforming the Linguistic Landscape of South Africa – More of the same? In D. Gorter & J. Cenoz (eds.). *The Handbook of Linguistic Landscapes and Multilingualism*. Hoboken: Wiley.

Shah, S. 2025. World English in their Local Multilingual Ecologies. Hierarchies in the language ecology of Botswana.

Shah, S., & Brenzinger, M. 2025. HSK 45.2: Language Contact: An International Handbook. Volume 2. From language description to the collaborative documentation of multilingual settings on the African continent

Books

Du Plessis, T. 2025. Van tegniek tot amptelike taal. Die opkoms van Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal as 'n twaalfde amptelike taal van Suid-Afrika, 1977-2023. Johannesburg: UJ Press. https://doi.org/10.64449/9781997468875

Moll, J.C. 2025. "Ons maak tale werk". Geskiedenis van die Eenheid vir Taalfasilitering en Taalbemagtiging aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat, 1992-2018. Johannesburg: UJ Press. https://doi.org/10.64449/9781997468837

Conference Papers/Posters

Prof T. du Plessis, Dr C. Ellis and A. le Roux

"Afrikaans en Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal (SAGT): 'n Verkennernde vergelykende studie". ALV Congress. 10-12 September 2025. University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Conference theme: Kanon en Kantlyn in die Afrikaanse taal- en letterkunde.

Dr P. Sibanda, Dr C. Loth, S. Lombaard & Prof T. du Plessis

Standardisation of South African Sign Language Toponyms: Prospects and Challenges.

Conference presentation at the 8th International Symposium on Place Names, 26-29 November 2025, Clarens (South Africa).

Dr C. Loth, **Dr P. Sibanda**, **Dr S. Siyavoshi**, **S. Lombaard**, **E. Matabane**, **J. de Lange**, **K. de Villiers**, **Nhlanhla Simelane**, **Prof A. van Staden**, **M. Mapeshoane**, **G. Motshoeneng**, **A. Kotoyi**, **A. le Roux**, **Prof T. du Plessis**, **Dr H. Combrink**, **Lethabo Phalime**

Developing a research repository of SASL place names: Challenges and contributions.

Conference presentation at the 8th International Symposium on Place Names, 26-29 November 2025, Clarens (South Africa).

Conference Proceedings

De Lange, J.C., **Kotoyi, A.**, **Mapeshoane, M.**, **& Du Plessis, L.T.** Official language, official names? A case study of SASL place names. Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium on Place Names 2023.

Loth, C. (ed.) 2025. *The presence of minority and indigenous languages in urban naming*. Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium on Place Names 2023, Bloemfontein (South Africa), 26–29 September 2023. Johannesburg: UJ Press.

Jordan, P. 2025. Problems of commemorative naming in urban areas. In C. Loth (ed.), *The presence of minority and indigenous languages in urban naming*. Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium on Place Names 2023, Bloemfontein (South Africa), 26–29 September 2023. 1-18

Sibanda, P. & Loth, C. Workshop on Ethical Principles for Doing Toponymic Research with Deaf Communities 8th International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN); 26-28 November; Clarens, RSA 2025

Sibanda, P. Deaf Education Transformative Pedagogies: Perspectives of Teachers of the Deaf in Zimbabwe The ESwatini Educational Research Association (SERA), the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA), The Kingdom of Eswatini Academy of Science; 21-23 October 2025, University of Eswatini (UNESWA), Kwaluseni Campus 2025.

Sibanda, P. South African Sign Language as a Social Justice Imperative for Transforming Deaf Education in South Africa 4th World Conference on Transformative Education Conference, 2-4 July. University of Western Cape South Africa.

Siyavoshi, S., Sibanda, P., Loth, C. Exploring Signed Place Names in SASL: Documentation, Analysis, and Cultural Insights. Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research15th Conference (TISLR 15) Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia- January 14 – 17, 2025.

Sibanda, P., Magaracha, S. & Makombe, T. Rethinking the Teacher Training Curricular for Teachers of the Deaf in Zimbabwe, 13th Teacher Education & Interdisciplinary Research Conference 07-10 April. UNISA, Convention Centre, Sun City Resort, Northwest Province, South Africa. 2025

Engaged Scholarship

Philippolis Multilingual Public Speaking Competition, 9 September 2025



The annual Philippolis Multilingual Public Speaking Competition once again brought pride and inspiration to the rural town of Philippolis in the southern Free State. Hosted on 9 September 2025 at Bergmanshoogte Primary School, this vibrant event remains a key highlight for the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies and the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Now in its 12th successful year, the competition continues to grow in reach, inclusivity, and impact, celebrating the power of language, culture, and expression among young learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Partnerships and Collaboration

This year's competition was the result of strong collaboration and shared vision. The Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies, together with the ATKV Philippolis branch and Bergmanshoogte School, worked hand in hand to coordinate this meaningful event.

The project received generous financial support from the Committee for Engaged Scholarship at UFS, making it possible to host another memorable and empowering competition.

The Academy for Multilingualism at UFS continued its involvement in this event by sponsoring South African Sign Language (SASL) interpreters to ensure it was accessible and inclusive for all, truly reflecting the spirit of multilingualism and diversity.

Staff and Student Involvement



The competition also provided a valuable learning platform for university students. MA students from the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies played a vital role in planning, organising, and facilitating the event. One of our MA students took on the role of Master of Ceremonies, displaying outstanding leadership and confidence.

Beyond empowering school learners, the project also serves as a transformative experience for UFS students, helping them apply their academic knowledge in a community context while developing essential professional and interpersonal skills.

Participants and Programme Highlights

Schools from across the Xhariep District were invited to participate, including two schools for the Deaf, namely Bartimea School for the Deaf in Thaba Nchu and Re Tlameleng School for the Deaf in Kimberley. The participation of four blind/partially sighted learners marked another milestone for inclusivity. Languages used at the competition included South African Sign Language, Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, and Sesotho.

Approximately 50 learners took part in the competition, delivering heartfelt speeches on topics such as:

- How my heritage impacts who I am as a person
- Is Heritage Day still important today?
- I am a Sesotho/Afrikaans/IsiXhosa/Setswana child!

The enthusiasm of the learners was matched by the audience's admiration. Learners from Bergmanshoogte School entertained attendees with lively performances, adding warmth and joy to the day.

Winners and runners-up in each grade received stationery and certificates from the Department, while all participants received certificates of participation from the ATKV and the Department, ensuring that every learner felt celebrated and valued.

A well-balanced and knowledgeable panel evaluated the competition. Each participating school nominated one teacher to serve as a judge, joined by a SASL expert and a representative from the southern Free State ATKV branch. The panel's diverse expertise ensured fair, insightful, and culturally sensitive adjudication.

The 2025 Philippolis Multilingual Public Speaking Competition was a resounding success, marked by strong partnerships, enthusiastic participation, and an atmosphere of unity and pride. The inclusion of new schools infused the event with renewed energy and creativity.

The collaboration between schools, the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies, and community partners continues to demonstrate the profound impact of engaged scholarship and multilingual education.

This annual celebration of voice, language, and culture not only empowers young speakers to express themselves confidently but also inspires everyone involved to continue promoting inclusivity, linguistic diversity, and community development.








Deaf Awareness 2025

For Deaf Awareness 2025, the Sign Language and Deaf Studies Department and the Faculty of Health Sciences joined forces to create an unforgettable experience for the learners from Bartimea School for the Deaf. The aim was to celebrate deaf identity, promote understanding, and offer learners hands-on exposure to different health-related activities in an engaging, accessible, and fun way.

The Faculty of Health designed a variety of practical stations where learners could explore, experiment, and learn. They had the rare opportunity to experience an ambulance and an emergency response vehicle equipped with a *special vibrating siren,* a feature that makes emergency alerts accessible to deaf individuals. Learners also took part in basic wound care demonstrations and were fascinated to see germs on their hands, using special equipment that highlighted hygiene awareness.

To support physical development, the learners participated in balance-based activities and other interactive exercises that strengthened coordination and body awareness. Each station was created to be fully accessible, hands-on, and designed with deaf learners in mind.

After completing the activities, McDonald's kindly sponsored Happy Meals for every learner, adding excitement and joy to the day. Before heading back to school, Signals entertained the learners with games and fun interactions, wrapping up the event with laughter and great energy.

Deaf Awareness 2025 was a celebration of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared learning for both learners and staff.







UFS Security gave them whistles and talked about safety.

In 2025, the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the University of the Free State proudly advanced its Deaf Awareness initiatives through meaningful community engagement and student-led activities. In collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences, we hosted learners from Bartimea School for the Deaf for an interactive educational experience focused on health and well-being. The learners were introduced to various aspects of the medical field, including understanding germs and the importance of handwashing (with demonstrations under blue light to visualise bacteria), healthy eating habits, the value of physical activity, basic first aid such as managing nosebleeds and assisting someone experiencing a seizure, and foundational knowledge about eye health. They also had the opportunity to explore emergency response equipment, including an ambulance and the "jaws of life," which created both excitement and practical awareness. McDonald's generously sponsored meals for the learners on the day. In the afternoon, our student association, Signals, engaged the learners through games and interactive activities conducted in South African Sign Language, creating a joyful and affirming environment. Our interpreting Honours students also pitched in as interpreters for the day with the interpreters of the Multilingual Academy.



As part of broader advocacy efforts, the Department and Signals further collaborated with the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) and the Central University of Technology (CUT) to host a silent march in support of the deaf community and to promote SASL. Participants walked in silence from the UFS main gate to CUT, carrying banners to raise awareness and visibly demonstrate solidarity. We extend our sincere appreciation to the local traffic department for ensuring safety and assistance during the march.



Throughout the year, Signals also hosted various on-campus activities to encourage UFS students to learn and use Sign Language, engage meaningfully with deaf individuals, and foster a more inclusive, linguistically diverse university environment.



SASL Social Media

Our Department's online presence continues to grow from strength to strength, strengthening our sense of community while extending our reach beyond the university. Under the dedicated leadership of Joubert, our Instagram platform has become a dynamic, interactive space that actively engages and excites our students. Through creative posts, highlights of student achievements, snapshots of departmental activities, and timely updates, the platform fosters connection, pride, and a vibrant academic culture.

At the same time, De Villiers has successfully expanded and elevated our LinkedIn presence, resulting in tremendous growth and increased visibility. The platform now serves as a professional showcase of our outstanding staff members, their research achievements, publications, conference participation, awards, and innovative initiatives. It also shares wonderful news and impactful projects emerging from within our community, strengthening our professional network and positioning the Department as a space of excellence, collaboration, and forward-thinking scholarship. Together, these platforms reflect not only our achievements but also the energy, dedication, and shared vision that define our Department.

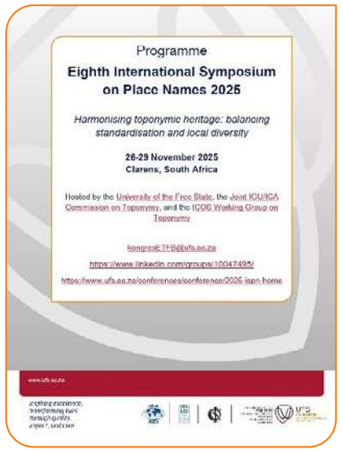
National and International Collaboration

Advancing SASL for 4IR Technological Development Using Place Names

This institutional collaborative partnership between DSASLDS and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures, funded by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, concluded on 30 June 2025. See more under "research projects". A related MoU with the National Institute for the Deaf concluded simultaneously.

International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN)

This biennial event has been co-hosted by the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy since 2015 and the ICOS Working Group on Toponymy since 2024. These partnerships elevate the symposium's visibility to international scholarship and facilitate access to world-class scholars and practitioners.



ISPN 2025 programme.

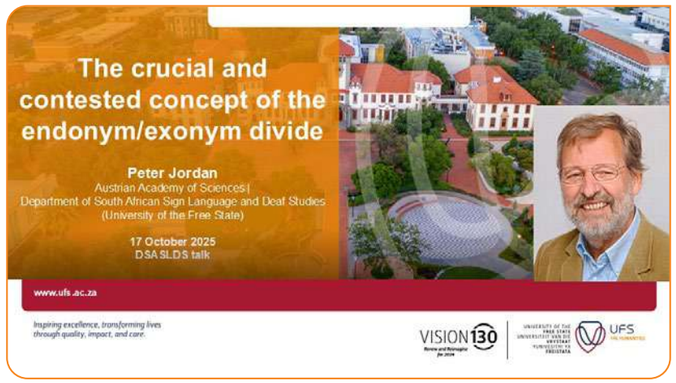
Departmental talk: Prof Peter Jordan

https://www.ufs.ac.za/sasl/research/focus-areas/toponomastics-(place-names)

On 17 October 2025, Prof Peter Jordan (Research Associate) introduced the debates around endonyms and exonyms: names used by communities located at the place being referenced, versus those used outside those communities. Access the recording (https://vimeo.com/1133420759/487a0064e3?fl=pl&fe=ti), and also read this accompanying article (http://dx.doi.org/10.17651/ONOMAST.65.1.1).

Departmental Guest Speaker: Prof M. Vermeerbergen

Prof Vermeerbergen from the Catholic University of Louvain, Campus Antwerpen, was invited by the Department to present a lecture titled "Translating Theatre into Sign Language." Prof Vermeerbergen is a well-known scholar in the fields of Deaf Studies and Sign Language Linguistics. The presentation was well attended by staff and students from the University of the Free State.



Departmental talk: Prof Peter Jordan.



Prof M. Vermeerbergen.

Other Activities



Staff members of the Department contributed to the publication of the conference proceedings, In Pursuit of Societal Harmony: Reviewing Experiences and Approaches in Officially Monolingual and Multilingual Countries, in 2016. This book is one of the top 10 books downloaded from Google Books in 2025.

The specific volume compiles selected papers on language legislation presented at the International Conference on Language Policy in Multicultural and Multilingual Settings, Mandalay, Myanmar, February 8-11, 2016. Edited by members of the International Academy of Language Law, the collection examines language legislation and practices across Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America.

Several papers highlight post-communist countries' efforts to eliminate the language and cultural legacy of previously dominant nations, linking societal harmonisation to population homogenisation and privileging the titular nation's culture. In contrast, some post-colonial states tolerate colonial languages but fail to promote indigenous languages institutionally. Other contributions show that the absence of clear legal frameworks often leads to communication gaps between governments and communities.

Overall, the proceedings challenge the populist idea of "one nation, one language," demonstrating that attempts to achieve unity through language alone can reinforce social inequalities, deepen divisions, and even provoke resistance. Scholars of language legislation, the sociology of language, and comparative studies will find this collection a valuable and insightful resource.

Top titles on Google Books for 2025

Title	Book Visits (BV)	Pages Viewed
A Biographical Dictionary of Contributors to the Natural History of the Free State and Lesotho	10 135	9 183
A Scientific Bibliography of the Far Northern Drakensberg	8 746	8 225
Compendium of Supply Chain Management Terms: Executive Insights Series	7 934	8 011
Public Administration and Governance in Democratic South Africa	3 761	4 729
A Field Guide to the Clarens Village Conservancy	3 340	2 818
Sesotho Plant and Animal Names and Plants used by the Basotho	2 977	3 988
Jihad	2 717	2 445
Insights into Strategic Sourcing: The inextricable link to Africa's long-term industrialisation, supply chain governance and economic development : Executive Insights Series	2 497	2 395
In pursuit of societal harmony	2 435	1 504
A Scientific Bibliography of the Far Northern Drakensberg	2 414	2 592
Triangle of One Hundred Years Wars	1 847	20 648

Staff (2025)

Prof A van Staden	Academic Head of Department, Associate Professor

Academic Staff

Permanent

JC de Lange	Lecturer
A le Roux	Lecturer
SC Lombaard	Lecturer

Contract

Prof LT du Plessis	Emeritus Professor, Senior Researcher and Research Fellow
Dr C Loth	Senior Researcher and Research Fellow
C Joubert	Facilitator (SLP)
NT Simelane	Student Assistant
G Motshoeneng	Research Assistant
K de Villiers	Research Assistant
T Maseko	Research Assistant
L Mapeshoane	Research Assistant

Support Staff

E Matabane	Teaching Assistant
B Nelson	Senior Assistant Officer

Research fellows and postdoctoral fellowships

Prof P Jordan	Research Fellow
Prof T du Plessis	Research Fellow
Prof PE Raper	Research Fellow
Prof T Reagan	Research Fellow
Prof J Moll	Research Fellow
Dr LA Möller	Research Fellow
Dr C Loth	Research Fellow
Dr M Schuster	Research Fellow
Dr B Senekal	Research Fellow
Dr M Stander	Research Fellow
Dr B Bruwer	Research Fellow
Dr S Shah	Research Fellow
Dr M Brenzinger	Research Fellow
Dr P Sibanda	Postdoctoral Fellow
Dr S Siyavoshi	Postdoctoral Fellow

Unit for the Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS)



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Overview of 2025

For UNIBS, 2025 was a year marked by significant transitions and built on the legacy and foundation of Prof Adelene Grobler. Following her retirement in 2024, UNIBS was left in the very capable hands of Isna Kruger, who endeavoured to maintain the high standards of training, research, and engaged scholarship set by Prof Grobler. During the year, significant training opportunities were presented to the UNIBS interns, including a two-day conference hosted by the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Association of South Africa (CBTASA) in Knysna and international training on identity formation from Prof Koen Luyckx of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) in Belgium. Prof Luyckx also contributed significantly to UNIBS's research achievements in his role as a research fellow. Regarding engaged scholarship, interns provided psychotherapeutic services at four local schools, St. Dominic's College in Welkom, and the Universitas Hospital Pain Clinic. Also, they engaged in community services for numerous individuals in Alicedale (Eastern Cape) and Newcastle (KwaZulu-Natal) through the Transnet Phelophepa Healthcare Train. Additional services were provided to teachers at a special needs school in Thaba Nchu, nurses at the paediatric cancer ward at Universitas Hospital, and UFS students. Two interns completed their dissertations and subsequently wrote and passed the HPCSA national board examination. UNIBS consistently aims to make a difference in the broader community and successfully ran two CPD groups: Confidential Coffees, where local psychologists were invited to share their expertise and an ACT reading group, where a group of psychologists with a special interest in ACT deepened their understanding of the approach through reading and group discussions. These groups enable knowledge sharing among Bloemfontein-based psychology professionals, strengthening the psychological services provided in the area. Despite various changes within UNIBS during 2025, we maintained the values of care, flexibility, and diligence instilled by Prof Grobler.



UNIBS staff. From left to right – Back row: Kobe Peeters, Jolanda Laubscher, Lize Wolmarans, Refiloe Bekani, Kyla du Plessis, Benice Schoeman, Skhumbuzo Maseko, Nicole Docherty, and Khanyisile Mqushulu. Front row: Ingrid Redelinghuys, Catho Aerts, Isna Kruger, Muhammad Coovadia, and Amanda Nguwata.

Achievements

Student Achievements

Benice Schoeman received the George Roux floating trophy and a cash prize as the most outstanding intern at UNIBS in 2025. Schoeman managed to complete her Master's dissertation, write the HPCSA board examination, and register as a counselling psychologist during her internship year. It should be noted that Schoeman did this while maintaining a high standard of client care and navigating immensely challenging personal circumstances.

In 2025, a second intern, Kyla du Plessis, also completed her dissertation, passed her board examination, and registered with the HPCSA. With Schoeman and du Plessis' positive results in the HPCSA board examination, UNIBS has continued to maintain a 100% pass rate for all interns since the examination's inception in 2003. We are truly proud of both interns and wish them the best for their professional careers moving forward.



Benice Schoeman



Kyla du Plessis

Learning and Teaching

UNIBS offers several counselling psychology internships annually. The internships run from the beginning of January to the end of December each year and serve to fulfil the internship requirements for registration as a counselling psychologist with the Professional Board for Psychology at the HPCSA. In 2025, counselling psychology intern positions were allocated to Benice Schoeman, Kyla du Plessis, Skhumbuzo Maseko, and Muhammad Coovadia. These interns joined the 2024/2025 KUL intern clinical psychologists, Catho Aerts and Kobe Peeters, who returned to Belgium in May. Amanda Nguwata, a UNIBS intern from 2022, also returned from March to May to complete an extension of her internship.

In addition to their usual rotations, UNIBS interns are exposed to a weekly training programme comprising didactic presentations, workshops, journal discussions, and intern case presentations. The training programme is purposefully multidisciplinary, with contributions from disciplines such as psychology, psychometry, social work, medicine, developmental paediatrics, and law. The programme covers a wide range of subjects as required by the HPCSA guidelines for the training of intern counselling psychologists, such as the following:

- Psychological assessment of children, adolescents, and adults.
- Counselling or psychotherapy with children, adolescents, and adults.
- Psychoeducation, community and public health interventions or advocacy.
- Ethical and professional conduct.
- Other professional activities.

UNIBS endeavours to provide interns with at least two training sessions by international presenters each year. In 2025, international training opportunities attended by the interns included a two-day CBTASA conference in Knysna in March. The conference speakers included several local and international experts in cognitive behavioural therapies, highlighting the quality of the training provided to interns at UNIBS. Further international training provided to interns included a one-day workshop on identity formation by Prof Koen Luyckx, a research fellow from the University of Leuven (KUL). This expert-level training session deepened the interns' conceptual understanding of children and adolescents and created new insights for application when working with these populations.



UNIBS interns at the CBTASA conference in Knysna. From left to right: Muhammad Coovadia, Kobe Peeters, Catho Aerts, Skhumbuzo Maseko, Benice Schoeman, and Kyla du Plessis.

Research Projects



Prof Koen Luyckx

The substantial role that Prof Koen Luyckx, a research fellow from the University of Leuven in Belgium, plays in generating research outputs for UNIBS cannot be disputed. Prof Luyckx's appointment was initially made in September 2018, and to date, he has produced 115 research articles in internationally accredited, peer-reviewed journals for UNIBS. During 2025, Prof Luyckx authored and co-authored 13 articles (12 of which have been captured on RIMS).

Isna Kruger is currently completing her PhD while co-supervising two postgraduate students in the Department of Psychology. She also acted as the external examiner for a Master's dissertation at the University of Stellenbosch and as an internal examiner for a Master's dissertation in the UFS Communication Sciences department. It is important to note that all postgraduate research students supervised by UNIBS staff members are registered in the Department of Psychology at the UFS. All international research engagements initiated, maintained, and financed by UNIBS, therefore, also result in a direct benefit for the Department of Psychology at the UFS and, as such, contribute to the larger stature of the discipline at this university. Kruger co-supervised the following research studies:

- L. Bock: A case study on the experiences of UFS students during the Covid-19 lockdown period
- B. Jooste: Community service learning and the development of psychological skills: Honours students' experiences

Research Outputs (accredited)

Articles

Online only (not yet published)

Campens, S., Vanderhaegen, J., Van Laere, E., Claes,L., Moons, P. & Luyckx, K. (2025). Identity and body in emerging adults with congenital heart disease: A qualitative exploration. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. (Received 9 May 2025, Revised 22 July 2025, Accepted 20 August 2025).

Publications 2025 (already published and captured on RIMS)

Claes, L., Aerts, H., Vanderhaegen, J., Vankerckhoven, L. & Luyckx, K. (2025). A multidimensional perspective on athletic identity in competitive athletes: Associations with sociodemographic and sport-specific variables and psychological symptoms. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 25(7), e70001, 1 – 16.

Claes, L., Bogaerts, A., Bastiaens, T., Kiekens, G., Dierckx, E., Schoevaerts, K. & Luyckx, K. (2025). The association between identity functioning and personality pathology in female patients with eating disorders. *Nutrients*, 17(14), 2329, 1 – 15.

Daelman, B., Tournoy, T. K., Morselli, D. & Luyckx, K. (2025). Mapping memories: Enhancing retrospective data with the life history calendar. *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, 24(8), 1377 – 1382.

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Engaged Scholarship

In 2025, UNIBS interns provided essential psychotherapeutic and assessment services to the following rotation sites:

- Four local schools (weekly)
- Walk-in clients at UNIBS (weekly)
- Universitas Hospital Pain Management Clinic (weekly)
- St. Dominic's College (annual rotation for subject-choice counselling)
- Transnet Phelophepa Healthcare Train (annual two-week rotation)

UNIBS provides these services at either significantly reduced rates or free of charge.

The Transnet Phelophepa Healthcare Train community outreach project is internationally recognised as an exemplary partnership between corporates, learning institutions, and the community. During the annual two-week rotation on the train, interns typically provide therapeutic and workshop services to hundreds or even thousands of people in dire need of healthcare services from the selected communities.



In 2025, two interns from UNIBS went on Phelophepa I and were sent to Alicedale (Eastern Cape), while the remaining four interns were on Phelophepa II and were stationed at Newcastle (KwaZulu-Natal). Nicole Docherty oriented and coordinated the process for all interns. Feedback received from interns upon returning from the train always alludes to a life-changing experience, both professionally and personally.

Interns on Phelophepa II. From left to right: Kyla du Plessis, Catho Aerts, Benice Schoeman, and Skhumbuzo Maseko.



Interns at the Grade 9 Open Day. From left to right: Muhammad Coovadia, Skhumbuzo Maseko, Kyla du Plessis, and Benice Schoeman.

UNIBS interns also facilitated short-term projects, including workshops and group counselling. In particular, the interns conducted a needs analysis at a special needs school (Boitumelong Special School) in Thaba Nchu and subsequently developed a workshop to assist teachers with healthy coping strategies to reduce burnout. The interns also developed a workshop for Christian Brothers College to help young children identify and regulate their emotions. At the Universitas Paediatric Cancer Unit, interns facilitated group debriefing and counselling sessions to assist nurses who were dealing with bereavement and overwhelm. UNIBS interns also provided services to the UFS community, including workshops for the Social Support Office on Cyberbullying and Rape Culture. In addition, UNIBS interns and staff attended the UFS Grade 9 Open Day to educate students about UNIBS's services, particularly those related to subject-choice counselling and study-skills development. These opportunities allowed interns to gain broad exposure to their training, from young children to working professionals, and allowed UNIBS to assist the local community by providing free support services for various psychological needs.

As of 2023, UNIBS facilitates monthly continued professional development (CPD) workshops for registered psychologists in the Bloemfontein community. These workshops, coined "Confidential Coffees", are presented by local psychology professionals with special interests in various psychological approaches and topics and include various ethics workshops as well. In 2025, UNIBS, and specifically Isna Kruger, added a new initiative in collaboration with Prof Stephen Walker and Eloise Venter from the UFS Psychology Department. An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy CPD reading group was opened for a small number of interested psychologists. The group read the book "ACT Made Simple, Second Edition" by Dr Russ Harris and used group discussions to provide depth and nuance to the application of the theory. These CPD groups enabled UNIBS to broaden its reach within the psychology community in Bloemfontein and to share expert knowledge among colleagues.

Interdepartmental and Local Collaboration

UNIBS has a multidisciplinary advisory board comprising members from the Faculty of Humanities, other related UFS faculties, and local businesses and schools. The advisory board serves to ensure that UNIBS not only facilitates training for interns which meets the requirements set out by the HPCSA but also facilitates the development of future psychologists capable of meeting the needs of the broader community. In 2025, the advisory board consisted of the following members:

I Kruger	Lecturer: UNIBS
J Laubscher	Secretary: UNIBS
Prof M Masoga	UFS Dean: Humanities
H Taylor	UFS Lecturer: Psychology
Dr L Bezuidenhoud	UFS Lecturer: Industrial Psychology
Prof R Reyneke	UFS Adjunct Professor: Social Work
Dr M Dunn-Coetzee	UFS Director: Student Counselling and Development
Dr R Seane	Counselling Psychologist: Private practice
Z Zweni	Head of Department: Dr Blok Secondary School
H Barlow	Regional Director: Barloworld Equipment (Retired)

Staff at UNIBS also assist other departments at the UFS with training for their students. In 2025, Nicole Docherty co-supervised a week-long practical training course on rational emotive behaviour therapy for the M1 Psychology students with Prof Stephen Walker (Psychology Department). Isna Kruger delivered lectures at the UFS Business School on managing personal stress.

National and International Collaboration



KUL interns 2024/2025. From left to right: Kobe Peeters and Catho Aerts.

UNIBS was instrumental in establishing a formal MoU between the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at KUL in Belgium and the UFS Faculty of Humanities in 2017 (renewed in 2022). This agreement facilitates the internship exchange programme, which is implemented annually and originally secured international accreditation for the Unit as an internship site for School Psychology interns at KUL. The internship was halted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in 2024. The 2024/2025 KUL intern rotation was therefore the first group of students from Leuven since the 2019/2020 rotation. This group was also the first group of clinical psychology interns since KUL restructured its Master's programme from School Psychology to Clinical Psychology, with a focus on children and adolescents. KUL interns, Catho Aerts and Kobe Peeters, joined the UNIBS team in September 2024 and made a substantial contribution to the department and the Bloemfontein community during their time here. Furthermore, their positive reflection on their experience ensured a strong contingent of applications for the 2025/2026 KUL intern rotation, from which Charlotte Vreven and Lotte Casaer were selected.

Staff (2025)

I Kruger	Acting Academic Head of Department, Counselling Psychologist: Internship Coordinator

Academic Staff

Contract

N Docherty	Counselling Psychologist: Internship Administration and Supervision (15hpw)
L Wolmarans	Counselling Psychologist: Ad Hoc Supervision

Support Staff

R Bekani	Service Worker
J Laubscher	Officer
K Mqushulu	Secretary (April onwards)
I Redelinghuys	Psychometrist/Officer
M Seboka	Interim Secretary (January – February)

Affiliated Staff

M Coovadia	Counselling Psychology Intern
K Du Plessis	Counselling Psychology Intern
Prof KGM Luyckx	Research Fellow
S Maseko	Counselling Psychology Intern
B Schoeman	Counselling Psychology Intern



