

# Decolonising Systems of Knowledge

DATE ▪ 2 July 2024

TIME ▪ 09:00 – 16:35

LOCATION ▪ In-person and Online

ADDRESS ▪ Ground Floor Auditorium,  
UJ JBS Park, 69 Kingsway Avenue,  
Auckland Park, Johannesburg

The Decolonising Systems of Knowledge Symposium is a one-day event aimed at PhD candidates focusing on the critical examination and application of decolonial knowledge in research and academia.

This event is convened by Prof Kammila Naidoo (Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities), Prof Sadiyya Haffejee (Associate Professor, Centre for Social Development in Africa), and Prof Pragna Rugunanan (Vice Dean Research, Faculty of Humanities) at the University of Johannesburg as part of a University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) funded collaborative project involving six South African institutions; University of Johannesburg, North West University, University of Pretoria, Nelson Mandela University, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Durban University of Technology. The aim is to provide a platform for learning, discourse, and practical skills development that challenge and seek to transform the dominant, often Eurocentric paradigms in academic research and educational institutions.

Academic decolonisation challenges the narrow, exclusionary purpose of current knowledge systems, advocating for more expansive, accessible, and locally aligned knowledge creation. For scholars like Achille Mbembe, this involves critiquing Western epistemology and developing new models based on indigenous experiences and perspectives. It emphasises reclaiming the right to think and theorise from one's own geographic and socio-cultural context, choosing the focus of one's intellectual endeavours in line with one's own conceptual schemas, social identities, and interests (Veli, 2020).

In this symposium, we interrogate:

1. How African education systems can overcome the colonial legacy and foster inclusive, locally relevant knowledge production?
2. What research methods and strategies are effective in challenging Western epistemic dominance and developing new models based on indigenous experiences and perspectives?
3. As emerging scholars, how can we reclaim the right to theorise from our own socio-cultural contexts, and what impact does this have on our societies and global knowledge systems?

## OBJECTIVES

- To offer emerging scholars an overview of decolonial knowledge and its implications.
- To facilitate engagement with leading scholars, promoting the exchange of ideas and perspectives.
- To encourage critical thinking and dialogue around decolonial ideas and methods.
- To bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications in decolonial research.

## KEY THEMES

- Historical context of Decolonial Knowledge
- Methodologies of Decolonial Research
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices
- Decolonial theory and Social Justice
- Future directions in Decolonial research

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Enhanced understanding of decolonial knowledge among PhD candidates and emerging scholars.
- Development of critical and analytical skills in decolonial research.
- Strengthened academic network between students and leading scholars.
- Practical skills and methodologies applicable to students' own research projects.

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## PROGRAMME

TIME	SESSION FOCUS	SPEAKER
09:00 – 09:15	OPENING ADDRESS	Prof Pragna Rugunanan (UJ)
09:15 – 10:00	<b>Historical context of Decolonial theory in the Global South</b>	Prof Morgan Nkululeko Ndlovu (UJ)
10:00 – 10:45	<b>Decolonising' knowledge production in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts (HSSA)</b>	Dr Munyaradzi Mushonga (UFS)
10:45 – 11:00	TEA	
11:00 – 11:45	<b>Strategies for integrating decolonial perspectives into doctoral research</b>	Prof Siphamandla Zondi (UJ)
11:45 – 12:30	<b>Decolonising the Disciplines: Towards undisciplinatory Knowledge Futures in the Global South</b>	Prof William Mpofo (Wits)
12:30 – 13:15	LUNCH	
13:15 – 14:00	<b>Traditional Knowledge Systems</b>	Prof Nokuthula Hlabangane (UNISA)
14:00 – 14:45	<b>Epistemic Decolonisation and epistemic in/justice</b>	Prof Mitova Veli (UJ)
14:45 – 15:00	TEA	
15:00 – 15:45	<b>Decolonising systems of knowledge for social justice</b>	Dr Naiefa Rashied (UJ)
15:45 – 16:30	<b>Decolonial Research Methods</b>	Dr Tamlynn Jefferis (NWU)
16:30 – 16:35	CLOSE	Prof Sadiyya Haffejee (UJ)



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