DISCIPLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY

**Research Interests and Topics for 2025**

**To contact staff to discuss possible project supervision: Email staff members on** [**name.surname@wits.ac.za**](about:blank)

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| **Name & Position** | **Research Interests / Areas of Expertise** | **Suggested Topics for Research in 2025**  **For example “The Relationship between organisational justice perceptions and workplace deviance behaviours”** |
| Bernstein, Colleen (Prof)  Associate Professor  U305 **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | Androgyny/Gender; Stress; Social Support, Workplace Bullying/Violence/Intimidation and their Impact on Individual Well being; and Workplace Variables of Job Satisfaction; Turnover and Productivity (Also Androgyny and Leadership) |  |
| Booth, Lyndall  Associate lecturer U225 | Critical social psychology, specifically the role of social media in expressing/enabling social tensions and failures  Power and prejudice | Social media, disproportionate outrage and the expression of prejudice  Global warming denialism and reactions to ‘woke’ social media content |
| Bowman, Brett (Prof)  Professor  U223 | Violence, Racism, Foucault | Open topics: Intersections of violence and/or race/racism and/or inequality    I am interested in supervising projects on violence, but particularly focused on linking how risks for violence translate into violence itself. This involves exploring the distribution, uses and meanings of various types of violent enactments through a range of approaches including analyses of big datasets, interviews with perpetrators and victims, and most significantly, videos of violence-in-action. As part of my focus on 'race', violence and inequality, I examine different definitions and values of South African life through the prism of material inequality:    I am also interested in supervising projects that ask critical questions about what kinds of actions constitute violence and for whom at particular periods of history and in the present.    I have access to a number of significant datasets, but specifically the latest homicide data in South Africa which contains important situational variables. |
| Bradbury, Jill  (Prof)  Associate Professor U219 | Jill Bradbury works at the intersection of narrative psychology, identity theory and cultural-historical psychology. She is interested in intergenerational processes of learning and change, particularly in contexts of socio-political transformation and global demands for social justice. She is a lead researcher on the NEST (Narrative Enquiry for Social Transformation) research network. | Professor Bradbury would be interested to supervise qualitative research projects exploring questions related to:  1) Narrative, representation and life histories;  2) Educational transformation and Social justice;  3) Intergenerational family histories, childhood and youth;  4) Vygotskian theory, Consciousness, memory & imagination.  5) Diversity and Identity Construction.  (Students may choose to work with existing NEST data sets: older generation narrative interviews, and survey data and material generated through action research with youth.) |
| Cockcroft, Kate (Prof)  Professor  U313 | Broadly: Cognitive neuroscience; cognitive psychology; neuropsychology. Specifically: The cognitive processes that underpin learning such as working memory, language proficiency, and executive functions. I am interested in how cognitive processes that underpin learning such as working memory, language proficiency, and executive functions develop in typical bilingual and multilingual children, as well as in children with neurodevelopmental disorders, and also how they are represented in the mature, adult cognitive system. Related to this is an interest in the fair assessment of cognitive abilities, ways of boosting working memory, creativity and executive functioning, and how executive functioning may be related to resilience.  Reasonably flexible with regard to topics that fit in with my research interests. Potential students must be comfortable with quantitative research and design techniques. | Specific projects:  An exploration of the relationship between working memory and creativity – related or unrelated processes?  How early can we assess executive functions? An exploration of cognitive flexibility in 3-year-olds.  How ecologically valid are standardised tests of working memory?  How creative are large language models in AI? |
| Donald, Fiona  (Prof)  Associate Professor U306A  **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | Informal interactions in the workplace, e.g., workplace friendships, authenticity, inclusivity at work.  Women in the workplace  Human factors, e.g., sustained attention. | Review of workplace friendships as multiplex relationships;  Review of methods of reducing facades of conformity;  Review of career shock literature;  Review of remote working and loneliness / isolation;  Review of remote work, organisational socialisation and organisational identification. |
| Esprey Yvette (Dr) | Areas of interest:  The intersection of identity in psychoanalytic psychotherapy – race, gender, class, sexual orientation  Relational psychoanalytic psychotherapy and the identity/presence of the therapist  A focus on juvenile diabetes (T1D) - the psychological/psychosocial impact on parenting and on children  Qualitative transgender studies    Methodological leanings:  Autoethnography, qualitative research, reflexivity |  |
| Ferreira-Correia, Aline  (Dr)  Senior Lecturer  U220 | Sabbatical leave January to December 2025 | Not Available for supervision in 2025 |
| Gering, Milton (Mr) Tutor U332 | Current work is in stress and eyewitness memory. Interested more generally in cognitive neuroscience and particularly in experimental work. There is a new stress experimental induction procedure that we have recently validated which has so far only been applied to an eyewitness memory project but which could be applied to other questions about memory, problem solving, decision making etc.  Would also supervise projects with a method focus on experimental designs or psychometrics. | A range of questions possible around: “what is the effect of acute stress on\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” which ask about stress and cognition.  Stress and meta-cognition: how do we think about our own thinking when stressed.  Open to project suggestions within the indicated domains. |
| Goldschmidt,Lynne  Associate Lecturer  U230 | Community Psychology / Critical Psychology Theory   * Systemic / Structural Violence ---> Trauma / Intergenerational trauma * Power / Marginalisation * African centred   Gender Studies   * Gender based violence   Attachment Theory  Telepsychology | I am interested in qualitative projects that explores the mentioned research topics. Examples may include:   * Exploring the role of silence among … (link to GBV / Intergenerational trauma) * Exploring conceptualisations of GBV |
| Graham, Tanya (Prof)  Associate Professor  U227 | Critical perspectives on child and youth development  Intersections of social asymmetries and psychosocial issues affecting health and wellbeing in communities  Critical community psychology theory, practice, pedagogy and knowledge production  Intersections of critical community psychology, developmental psychology and psychoanalytic theory | Specific topics for 2024:   1. Diversity, race and gender in knowledge production 2. Contemporary topic trends in published work in community psychology 3. Scoping review of approaches to community practical supervision 4. Perspectives on community psychology curricula in professional graduates 5. Supervisor’s experiences of community supervision in professional training |
| Hassem, Tasneem (Dr)  Lecturer | I am interested in digital mental health more specifically:   1. Enhancing public mental health access and care through the digital space 2. Online psychological assessments 3. The use of mental health blogs and online support groups | Specific topics for 2025:  1.Systematic review of online general mental health screening tools for SA  2. Exploring emerging adults mental health in Africa  3. Exploring the use of online mental health blogs and support groups  4. Exploring perceptions of anxiety within South African population |
| Harvey, Clare  (Dr)  Senior Lecturer  U308 | Disability studies   * Psychological and critical theory on disability. * Social, psychological, physical experiences of disabled individuals. * Meaning making that disabled and able-bodied people attach to disability labels.   Motherhood   * Motherhood identities and experiences. * Identities and experiences for mothers who have a sick or disabled child. * The process of attachment to a child with a disability or illness (physical and/or psychological).   Gender studies   * Particularly around marginalised gender identities and experiences.   Marginalised identities   * Including, but not limited to, the areas of disability; mothers; psychologists; gender.   Sibling relationships   * Particularly when one sibling has been given a medical and/or psychological diagnosis or is disabled.   Psychosocial theory | **Suggested Topics**  I am interested in supervising qualitative research projects, discourse analyses and systematic literature reviews.  Possible projects:   1. Psychosocial aspects of disabled motherhood experience. 2. How is disability understood in various cultures and race groups in South Africa? (Students could limit this to one specific group) 3. A discourse analysis of existing public data (blogs, websites, art etc.) on the experience of disability. How disabled people write about themselves. 4. A discourse analysis of existing public data (blogs, websites, art etc.) on disabled mothers. What is said about this group of mothers? 5. Studies in which students collect data by conducting individual interviews in one of my areas of interest. |  |
| Ndimande-Khoza, Nomhle Tutor | HIV prevention, mental health, gender inequality, youth, psychosocial interventions in health community and health psychology, community based-participatory research | Specific topics for 2025 (these can be adapted to suit student interest/needs): psychosocial support Interventions to address HIV and sexual stigma to improve PrEP adherence  - mapping out mental issues as barriers to accessing health services.  -Gather perceptions of the general community about the new injectable HIV prevention methods. |
| Kiguwa, Peace  (Prof)  Associate Professor  U206B | 1. Race and racialization, critical studies 2. Critical gender and critical masculinity studies 3. Spatial geographies and lived identities (e.g. Township studies) 4. Affect Studies 5. Discourse Studies 6. African feminist psychology studies 7. Critical Psychology | I currently supervise qualitative research Projects on:   1. Violence (and its intersection with social identities such as race, class, gender and sexuality). 2. Project: African Futures project focusing on ‘People’ - researching people’s lives across different contexts, focused on world-making practices, intersectionality, and affective and discursive formations. 3. Theoretically and conceptually, I work across range of feminist, affect, discourse and critical psychological approaches. |
| Laher, Sumaya (Prof)  Professor  U306B | Personality theory and assessment; assessment issues in general; cultural conceptualisations of health and illness; public mental health issues | Some specific topics include:   1. Exploring adolescent mental health in South Africa (Quantitative – data already collected) 2. Exploring the relationship between climate change/food security/employment/SES and mental health (scoping review or quantitative study) 3. Exploring the use of the Panga Munthu Test with children in South Africa 4. Exploring conceptualisations of mental illness in African cultures amongst healthcare professionals (gp’s, psychologists, psychiatrists, traditional healers, priests, volunteer counsellors) or amongst students or community members – Qualitative and quantitative topics available 5. Exploring the efficacy of the NEO-PI-R in individuals from the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (quantitative – data already collected) |
| Makongoza, Matamela (Dr)  Tutor U332 | Intimate partner violence  Young people and substance abuse  Gender, race, and sexuality  African feminists and psychology | Qualitative research projects that focus on gender studies, mental health and lived experiences of young people or women.    A recent interest in developmental language disorder. |
| Sonia Mbowa,  u332 | Media & social media, learning difficulties, parental involvement in children’s schooling, access to mental health services, African Psychology and IKS, knowledge creation | Qualitative research that focuses on the listed research interests |
| Marchetti-Mercer, Maria  (Prof)  Professor  U333 | 1. Emigration/immigration especially related to family life 2. Training of psychologists/family therapists 3. Use of genograms in professional training and psychotherapy 4. Psychotherapy especially Family therapy 5. qualitative approaches 6. Mental health issues 7. Italian diaspora | Migration and the care of aging parents  The role of technology in maintaining family ties in migrant populations (national, international and transnational)  Impact of migration on families  Transnationalism  Mental health impact on adults who migrated as children  The impact of loadshedding on mental health (ongoing project)  Second/third generation migrants & diasporas  HALF LOAD IN 2025 |
| Mathebula Mpho (Dr)  Lecturer | I am interested in the areas of   1. Gender studies: Gender based violence, resistance to oppression, 2. Affect Studies 3. Women and protests 4. Health Psychology 5. Intersectionality 6. African feminist psychology studies | I would be interested in supervising projects on:  Experiences of helpers/maids as one of the marginalised groups  Affect Studies  Intersectionality Studies |
| McMahon-Panther, Gail  Lecturer  U210 | Broad area of interest:  Societal inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities with a focus on the interaction between biological, psychological and social elements, and the effect it has on the functioning of the individual with a disability; barriers and facilitators to participation in various social systems, including religious communities; inclusive education | I am open to suggestions for qualitative research projects within in the identified area of interest |
| Milner, Karen (Prof)  Associate Professor  **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | Employee well-being; workplace health promotion; stress; psycho-social risk factors in the workplace; interventions to improve employee well-being; social innovation; | 1. Appreciative Inquiry’s role in empowering marginalized identities in organisations through strengths-based engagement. 2. The impact of Appreciative Inquiry I on social innovation and civic engagement. 3. The role of Appreciative Inquiry in fostering inclusion and belonging in the workplace 4. The role of Appreciative inquiry in fostering meaning at work |
| Molepo, Kgabe |  | Not supervising in 2025 |
| Mulaudzi, Mamakiri (Dr), lecturer  U318 | HIV prevention in young people  Mobile health(mHealth) in HIV prevention and depression among young people  Health related research (COVID-19 vaccine and prevention, TB, STIs, Substance use/abuse)  Sexuality | * I am interested in qualitative research methods in HIV prevention, mHealth, sexuality and health related research particularly among young people. |
| Munro, Nicholas (Dr), Senior Lecturer, U222 | * Higher education studies (student well-being; food insecurity among students; emotions in teaching and learning) * Health psychology (sport and health; vaccine confidence and communication studies; health communication strategies) | * Qualitative studies of coping strategies used by students to manage food insecurity. * Quantitative studies (via survey) of extent of students’ vulnerability to food insecurity, and related impacts on well-being and learning/academic achievement. * Thematic or discourse analyses of social media and online health communication strategies pertaining to vaccination programmes (e.g., school-based HPV vaccination programme, influenza). * Systematic reviews of (HPV) vaccine hesitancy (i.e., interrogating reasons for delays in acceptance or refusal of (HPV) vaccination). |
| Naidoo, Preven (Dr)  Lecturer  **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | * Human Behavioural Statistics in an Organisational Setting * Accident Analysis * Human Factors * Aviation Psychology * Airline Operations * Human Behaviour and Performance in the Transport Industry * Line Operations Safety Audit * Gender related biases | * An Exploration of Accident Victims’ Perceptions of Road Accidents in South Africa. * An Exploratory Analysis of Airline Pilot Instructor Simulator Syndrome * Airline Pilots' Perceptions of Automation After Transition * An Examination of Latent and Active Failures in Human Performance (Operating Machinery) * The Effect of Immersive Technology (VR) on Human Perception and Behaviour in Performance * An Exploratory Investigation into Long-Haul Truck Driver Fatigue * Perceptions of Gender Bias in Organisations: An Exploratory Analysis * Enhancing Safety in South African Airline Operations: An Exploration of Line Operations Safety Audit Factors |
| New ed psyc | * TBA | * TBA |
| New cog neuro | * TBA | * TBA |
| New cog neuro | * TBA | * TBA |
| Nkomo, Nkululeko (Dr)  Lecturer  U336B | * Critical affect studies * Race, racialisation and racism * Black public humanities * Health subjectivities and identities | * Affect, subjectivities and identities * Understanding everyday racism * Biographical research * Personhood and the body |
| Peral, Sergio  (Dr)  Lecturer  U305  **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | Research Interests:   * Predictors and outcomes of proactive employee behaviours (e.g., job crafting, playful work design) * Test construction and validation * Careers, career wellbeing, career agility, career choices, work trends | Specific Research Projects   * Conceptualising job crafting within the sporting context: Cape Town City FC case study (Qualitative, observational) * Understanding the relationship between job crafting and career well-being * Translation and validation of the Job Crafting Scale to isiZulu (would need to be an isiZulu speaking student preferably) |
| Pitman, Michael (Dr)  Senior Lecturer  U307 | I am especially interested in empirical (including experimental, online and/or ‘viral’) investigations in the following topic areas:  a. **MI**: Music Imagery (incl. earworms, effects of MI on cognitive performance, persistence of MI, experience sampling studies of MI)  b. **Music**: Uses & effects of music in academic/work settings  c. **Psychopathology**: Clinicians’ assumptions about mind and brain in psychopathology and clinical work.  d. **Consciousness**: the nature and variability of phenomenal conscious experience | In 2024, I am keen to supervise projects on:  i. **Consciousness**: evidence of variability in conscious experience in popular media/ social media, and the implications for accounts of consciousness/ phenomenal consciousness.  ii. **Music**: Use and impact of background music while studying/ working; interference and enhancement effects of music on cognitive performance.  iii. **MI**: Experience-sampling and/ or online/viral studies of musical imagery, such as musical imagery on waking (MIOW).  iv. I have listed two traffic-/ road-safety-related topic areas at the end of this document – students electing to conduct research on these topics may qualify for bursary assistance from a departmental endowment fund.    Please feel free to sample some of my published research on my [ResearchGate page](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Michael-Pitman-3). |
| Rafaely Daniella (Dr)  Lecturer | I am interested in the study of language and interaction. My focus is qualitative methodology that incorporates conversation analysis or discourse analysis. Conversation analysis is a highly technical method that studies the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction. Discourse analysis includes a variety of approaches, including Foucauldian DA and critical DA, that examine social structures and the ways they constitute reality. | I am interested in working in critical methodologies, including discourse analysis and conversation analysis.  Current project with existing data:  I am doing a study on Farm violence, land and dispossession (discourse analysis, using news reports from 1994 – present). I am open to other research ideas utilizing these methods.  I have access to a range of conversational data that can be inductively developed for various research topics. |
| Rogers Shawn (Dr) | I am interested in how Bi/multilingualism affects cognitive processing.  This includes a focus on language proficiency, Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), Executive functioning and working memory, in school aged children. | A more specific focus would include  The influence SES has on language proficiency and Cognitive functioning (executive functioning and working memory) in SA schools. |
| Haynes-Rolando, Hayley  Associate Lecturer U318C | Youth identity, childhood experiences, social justice, community psychology praxis, emotional interactions, psycho-social interventions and practitioners, experiences of schooling    Qualitative studies - Particularly, Participatory Action research (PAR) and Narrative inquiry | No specific topics for 2025 |
| Thatcher, Andrew  (Prof)  Professor  U304  **FOR ORG PSYC STUDENTS ONLY** | Professor Thatcher is currently researching the psychological factors around the adoption of sustainable technologies. This research looks at the combinatory effects of the affective qualities of the sustainable technology and the underlying psychological morals surrounding pro-environmental behaviour. Specific project details also include affect in the design of sustainable technologies, assessing wellbeing and productivity in green buildings, and the theoretical development of human factors and sustainable development. | Possible topics for 2024 (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method) include:  1. Perceptions of “decent” work in marginalised communities  2. Representing uncertainty in forecasting to small-scale farmers  3. Perceptions of a systematic approach to integrate ergonomics and sustainability into organisations  4. Choice experiments of water availability in AMD-affected communities  5. Eco-anxiety amongst specific groups |
|  | Traffic Psychology Project – may have associated bursaries that cover tuition fees | Specific topics & supervisors as follows:    Dr Michael Pitman – Quantitative/ observational studies of   1. Earphone/ headphone use and pedestrian safety 2. Modes of student transport, perceived accident risk/ safety, and stress/ university adjustment |
| Winnie Nkoana, lecturer | Neuropsychology, neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience-Neurodisabilities/neurodevelopmental disorders (TBI, LDs, FASD, ASD, etc) young people in conflict with the law (YCWL), education in custody, screening of neurodisabilities in custodial settings/criminal justice system, Rehabilitation of YCWL, People living with brain injuries.  Also interested in mental health and culture and neuropsychology of HIV | I am interested in Qualitative projects that explore;  Education for YCWL with NDs (from perspective of YCWL or prison educators)  Neurodisabilities and access to education in children and youth  Experience of prison stakeholders who work with YCWL, including those with NDs |