FINAL GRADUATION LIST

GRADAUTION DATE: 07 December 2026
TIME: 09:30

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEAN: PROFESSOR M MUSEMWA BA Hons (Zimbabwe) MA (Cape Town) PhD (Minnesota, USA) MASSAf

Doctor of Philosophy

AACA, Lisa Rebecca *Social Work*
THESIS: Developing a social intervention to enhance refugee women's skills to navigate barriers to digital entrepreneurship: A case of Jesuit Refugee Services, South Africa
The candidate's PhD offers an innovative contribution to social work by developing practical guidelines that position digital entrepreneurship as vital to social development among refugee populations. Her work highlights the Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurial Capital framework, enabling social workers and communities to drive transformative change. These globally applicable guidelines, especially relevant in the Global South, advocate for integrating digital entrepreneurship into practice, policy, and education, with the potential for broad international impact amid rapid digital advancements.
Supervisors: Dr N Dube and Associate Professor R Pillay

ANIL, Dev Krishnan *Development Studies*
THESIS: Democracy in Practice: Collective Action, Social Solidarity and Local Development in Kerala, India
The research examines how collective farming initiatives in Kerala, India, contribute to the deepening of grassroots democracy and people-centred development. The study shows how collective action and state–society synergy can sustain agrarian livelihoods, strengthen social solidarity, expand democratic participation, and create locally embedded alternatives to market-led approaches to agrarian development.
Supervisor: Professor M Williams

APPOLIS, Alexander Julian *Fine Art*
THESIS: 'BLACK' Pan in Neo-Arcadia: A Re-imagining of the 'Black' 'Other' in Johannesburg's 'White' Suburbia
This creative PhD is a multi-disciplinary investigation into the image of the 'black' other in the imagination of post-apartheid South African 'white' suburbia, which is framed through a reading of the figure of Greek God 'Pan' as a Western 'black'. The thesis and creative practice (of paintings and sculptures) follow the psycho-sexual labour of maintaining 'white' distancing and proximity to 'black' bodies evidenced in various Western, and then South African, cultural productions including paintings, poetry and pornography.
Supervisor: Associate Professor S Khan

ASFOUR, Fouad-Martin *Fine Art*
THESIS: Un-drawing the Line through Spectography. Exploring trans-lingual aspects through visual writing
Walking with the reader across borders of abyssal knowledges, this creative research suggests multimodal avenues for the writing of visual creative praxes and how writing can mutate across different media. In writing groups, spaces of permission for writing are explored as translingual and multimodal studio praxis, inviting the reader to experiment with writing praxes outside of spaces shaped by grammar, monolingual habitus, and normative literacies.
Supervisor: Associate Professor D Andrew

BAHEMUKA, Joseph *Social Work*

THESIS: A Case Study of The Experience of Quarantine and Coping Mechanisms for Individuals Affected by Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Epidemic In Uganda

This case study examines quarantine as both a human social experience and public health intervention. Embracing an Interpretivist Paradigm and grounded in the Ethics of Care and of Justice frameworks, the research illuminates the lived experiences, coping mechanisms and care needs of affected individuals and professionals. Its contribution extends to social work theory and practice, strengthening the discipline's role in epidemic response and offering evidence-based recommendations for compassionate, ethical and culturally sensitive public health emergency preparedness, responsiveness and community participation.

Supervisor: Dr L Petersen

BANDA, Doris *Education*

THESIS: Lecturers' perceptions and approaches of decolonising their respective curriculum: Case study of Wits School of Education

Drawing on Decoloniality, Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this study explored Wits School of Education lecturers' pedagogical approaches and perceptions of decolonising their courses a decade after the #FeesMustFall Movement of 2015/2016. Although there were intentions to change, however, habitus shaped by colonial schooling and higher education unconsciously reproduced the knowledge hierarchies lecturers consciously sought to dismantle. Meaningful curriculum: Decolonisation demands more than the substitution of content.

Supervisors: Associate Professor N Laga Ramoupi and Associate Professor T Nkambule

BOOTH, Lyndall June *Psychology*

THESIS: Power and Pandemics: An Exploration of The Role of Conspiracy Theories in Maintaining Hegemonic Structures

Guided by Foucault and Gramsci, this study examined COVID-19 conspiracy theories as discursive struggles over power, knowledge, and legitimacy. A mixed methods analysis of Facebook posts showed that conspiracy narratives drew on existing social inequalities and competing truth claims to make sense of the pandemic. Rather than consistently resisting dominant institutions, these narratives often reproduced hegemonic relations. The findings highlight the complex relationship between crisis, trust, and the communication of public health information.

Supervisor: Dr V Jithoo

CHETWIN, Isabel Francesca *Psychology*

THESIS: Attachment Aware Schools South Africa: A PsychoSocial Case Study

This thesis presented a case study of the first known implementation of an Attachment Aware Schools programme in a South African school. The model seeks to foster relational safety and trauma awareness to promote learning. Examiners noted this as an intellectually complex research project that illuminates a major omission in the field: the failure to train educators to understand students' behavioural difficulties not through a punitive lens, but one grounded in empathy and psychological understanding.

Supervisor: Associate Professor K Bain

CHIRWA, Candice *Development Studies*

THESIS: Menstrual Rights are Human Rights: Understanding the Emergence of Menstrual Health Management as a Norm

This thesis examines how states adapt Menstrual Health Management (MHM) in the absence of global standards, comparing India, Scotland and South Africa. Drawing on feminist constructivism and norm theory, it shows that civil society drives norm emergence, but policy adoption does not guarantee internalisation, as product provision often eclipses dignity, education and stigma. Centring embodied, gendered experience, it extends International Relations and human rights scholarship, revealing menstrual health as a norm recognised in principle but contested in practice.

Supervisor: Associate Professor J De Matos Ala

DE FREITAS, Daniel Roberto *Psychology*
THESIS: Trauma Exposure and the role of Psychological Capital and Perceived Social Support in Ameliorating Trauma Related Outcomes
This study examined Lifetime Trauma Exposure Frequency among a large sample of South African adults. Associations and predictive relationships between Lifetime Trauma Exposure Frequency and Trauma Impact were also investigated, with Psychological Capital and Perceived Social Support as moderators. Elevated levels of multiple and cumulative trauma were reported. Increased Lifetime Trauma Exposure Frequency predicted increased Trauma Impact, and benefits of Psychological Capital and Perceived Social Support were through direct effects and as partial mediators rather than moderators.
Supervisors: Professor G Eagle and Associate Professor C Bernstein

DE KOCK, Yolanda *History of Art*
THESIS: Art Museums as Sites of Collected and Collective Memory: A Critical Analysis of National Art Museums' Founding Collections
This dissertation examines how South African national art museums might engage inherited colonial collections without defaulting to a binary choice between preservation and removal. Analysing case studies across national museums and contested public monuments, it argues that rigorous art historical research can challenge naturalised colonial hierarchies.
Supervisor: Dr N Cloete

EISEB, Juliet Magdalene *Education*
THESIS: A Bourdieusian investigation into the perceptions of TVET students on digital technological skill development at a Namibian higher institution of learning
The candidate's thesis applies Pierre Bourdieu's sociology to investigate ICT integration in vocational education at a Namibian higher institution. It makes a theoretical contribution by developing the concepts of informational habitus and technological capital in Global South contexts. The study also examines how institutional constraints shape educators' digital dispositions, confidence, and pedagogical use of ICTs. An external examiner described the thesis as a model for future doctoral research, highlighting its originality, clarity, and relevance to similar settings, including the South Pacific.
Supervisor: Professor I Moll

GANDURI, Tendai *Media Studies*
THESIS: Climate Narratives and Sociopolitical Contestations: The Zimbabwean and South African Twitterspheres
This thesis examines climate change communication and contestations on Twitter, now X, in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Using computational and qualitative analysis of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) events and localised natural disasters, it makes a novel methodological contribution, showing Global South discourse as scale-sensitive and shaped by perceptions of political legitimacy and geopolitical inequality.
Supervisor: Professor I Gagliardone

GINA, Thabo Dennis *Education*
THESIS: Exploring the Pedagogical Use of Digital Open Educational Resources by Seven Teachers in King Cetshwayo District, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
This study investigated how teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, use digital Open Educational Resources (OER) to enhance teaching. The findings revealed that teachers adapted available free digital resources to support learner engagement and meaningful learning experiences with limited knowledge of creative commons licenses. Connectivity challenges and resource constraints further affected their use of OER. The study proposes a design-oriented OER professional development strategy that supports contextually responsive and legally compliant integration of OER into teaching practice.
Supervisor: Associate Professor N Ndlovu

HAZAN, Erin Vicky *History*

THESIS: '…women practising immoral things': Reform, Rehabilitation, and Women's Criminality in South African Penology, 1910-1970s

This dissertation examines the changing approaches to reform and rehabilitation in South Africa's penal system from 1910 to the 1970s, focusing on the imprisonment of women. Drawing on archival and governmental sources, court records and media, it demonstrates that women's incarceration was shaped not only by criminality, but by patriarchal and racialised expectations of feminine behaviour. The study highlights the overlooked experiences of female imprisonment and situates South African penal practices within wider global debates on punishment, reform and rehabilitation.

Supervisors: Dr P Badassy and Dr A Devenish

HUMAN, Leonie *Psychology*

THESIS: A narrative inquiry of men's experiences of non-resident fatherhood in the context of post union dissolution, Johannesburg, South Africa

Biological fathers' absence in South African households is ever-increasing and knowledge about their subjective experiences is still growing. This study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of non-resident fathers' experiences by considering subjective and systemic dimensions in men's narratives of paternal identity and childcare. Findings revealed nuanced layers of social complexity and paternal agency exerting influence on fathering across multiple relational systems. The study highlights the importance of supporting fathers' mental health and involvement for children and families.

Supervisor: Professor C Langa

ISABOKE, Japheth Mandela *Digital Arts*

THESIS: Investigating the possibilities of using Artificial Intelligence in fostering collaboration in the animation pipeline in Kenya

This study investigates how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can enhance collaboration across Kenya's expanding animation pipeline. It explored how the utilization of AI tools impacted local studios and independent Kenyan animators share assets seamlessly and optimize remote workflows. The research also discovered Kenyan animation AI collaboration faces infrastructure, cost, and bias limitations. Ultimately, the research proposed a hybrid, co-creative framework where AI serves as a collaborative tool to scale local production while preserving human storytelling.

Supervisor: Dr O Randle

IYUKE, Patience Odiri *Education*

THESIS: Investigation of Authorial Voice in African International Undergraduate Students' Academic Writing in a South African University

The candidate's doctoral research addresses an important and under-explored dimension of higher education: how African international undergraduate students develop their authorial voice in academic writing. Introducing the framework of "triple alienation," she conceptualises how linguistic, sociocultural, and structural barriers can constrain student writers. Her longitudinal study shows how, through resilience and pedagogical support, students develop from early writing challenges towards more confident and authoritative academic voices. Her research challenges deficit-oriented approaches and contributes to more inclusive writing pedagogy in postcolonial universities.

Supervisors: Associate Professor A Ferreira and Associate Professor B Mendelowitz

KIMULI, Julius Peter *Education*

THESIS: Experiences of successful distance education university students in Uganda: The Makerere University case

The candidate's doctoral study reimagines success in distance education across sub-Saharan Africa. Rather than dwelling on deficits, he foregrounds the agency of high-achieving students at Makerere University, Uganda, showing how they strategically orchestrate technology and build parallel learning communities to thrive amid inequality. His original frameworks, notably Strategic Technology Orchestration, offer a significant and timely contribution to scholarship, policy and practice. His work will benefit learners and universities across the continent and beyond.

Supervisor: Associate Professor E Ojo

KOMANE, Joseph Papi *Education*
THESIS: Gender Transformation: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Black Women in Management Positions in the Selected Public High Schools of the Northwest Province, South Africa
The candidate's thesis uses a critical theory intersectionality framework to explore the lived experiences of Black women in management positions in the education department of the Northwest Province in South Africa.
Supervisors: Associate Professor N Carrim and Dr B Akala

LEMMENYANE, Gaokgakala Daniel *Education*
THESIS: Investigating African Epistemologies Through Elderly Storied Narratives For Decolonial Pedagogical Praxis
This thesis revealed that indigenous African knowledge systems, preserved through elderly storied narratives, constitute critical epistemic resources for rethinking literacy and pedagogy in higher education. Drawing on transnational fieldwork in Botswana and Ethiopia and employing thick description, the study advances a novel decolonial pedagogical framework that affirms African epistemologies as valid foundations for scholarly knowledge production and curriculum transformation.
Supervisor: Professor L Masinga

LESENYEHO, Lerato Lucy *Education*
THESIS: The impact of COVID-19 on Epistemological Access and Learning at a South African University.
The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted higher education, exposing existing inequalities in access to learning. This study examines its impact on students' learning and attainment of epistemological access at a South African university. Using a qualitative approach informed by social constructivist, social justice and ecological systems theories, findings reveal that technological access did not guarantee meaningful engagement with knowledge. Students' learning was shaped by socio-economic circumstances, prior educational experiences and digital competencies, highlighting the need for inclusive teaching and learning approaches.
Supervisors: Dr L Botha and Associate Professor D Griffiths

MACHINYA, Wilson *Education*
THESIS: Rekindling indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) through curriculum development and school reforms – A critique of post independence Botswana education policy
The candidate's doctoral study makes a significant contribution to scholarship on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and education in Botswana. His research critically examines the relationship between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in curriculum development and school reforms. Drawing on decolonial thought, sociocultural theory and knowledge brokering, the study offers a conceptual framework for advancing more contextually responsive educational practice and policy in Botswana. His work reflects sustained scholarly commitment to interrogating and transforming educational knowledge and practice.
Supervisors: Associate Professor T Mathebula and Dr L Botha

MAFUNGANYIKA-NDLOVU, Annie Tiny *Education*
THESIS: Grade 11 rural teachers' perceptions of and the teaching of Sepedi literature and English literature in Acornhoek, Mpumalanga province: A critical study
This critical study investigated Grade 11 rural teachers' perceptions of and the teaching of Sepedi literature and English literature. The study showed that Sepedi language literature continues to borrow from the English teaching structure. The teaching of both literatures was disempowering for the learners because of teachers' interpretations. Recommendations are for teacher education institutions and provincial and district departments to promote African language literatures.
Supervisor: Associate Professor T Nkambule

MALGAS, Antoinette Nolwandle *Education*
THESIS: Exploring Residential Peer Tutors' Academic Support Strategies and Their Role in First-Year Students' Learning in a South African Higher Education Institution
This study explored academic support strategies employed by Residential Peer Tutors (RPTs) to facilitate first-year students' learning, engagement, and transition within a South African university residence. Findings revealed that sociocultural, emotional, and relational factors contributed to first-year students' academic challenges. Thus, RPTs enacted their pedagogical roles through contextually situated practices, drawing on Ubuntu to foster belonging, mutual support and collective learning. Higher Education institutions should recognise RPTs' extended academic roles and use their insights to strengthen holistic first-year support.
Supervisor: Associate Professor N Ndlovu

MARNELL, John Richard *Migration and Displacement*
THESIS: Fugitive Subjects, Fractured Lives: Queer and Trans Displacements in Kenya and South Africa
Drawing on comparative ethnographic fieldwork, this thesis proposes a novel dyadic framework for analysing queer and trans displacement. Rather than conflate this term with static identity markers or rigid humanitarian categories, Marnell argues for it to be conceptualised as interlinked somatic and socio-spatial processes embedded within dynamic, adaptive and often chaotic assemblages. Anchored in the dual optics of fugitivity and fractures, this thesis reinterprets queer and trans displacement as ongoing, multi-scalar and contested, thereby opening new avenues for critical inquiry.
Supervisors: Professor J Vearey and Dr B Camminga

MAZALENI, Nosiphiwo Rachel *African Languages and Linguistics*
THESIS: Versioning of English Grade 12 Mathematics Examination Papers to isiXhosa: A case study of the Eastern Cape Province
The introduction of Grade 12 Mathematics trial examination papers versioned from English to isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa constitutes a policy initiative aimed at promoting linguistic inclusion and assessment equity in a multilingual country. However, limited empirical research has examined how versioning supports mathematical meaning-making in high-stakes assessments. Meaningful versioning requires qualified versioners, coordinated isiXhosa mathematics terminology development and stronger institutional embedding if African languages are to function as carriers of mathematical meaning in high-stakes examinations.
Supervisor: Dr L Tshuma

MCDOWALL, Estelle *History of Art*
THESIS: The quiet violence of home: Home, violence, and displacement in selected works by Jodi Bieber
This thesis examines how Jodi Bieber's photography challenges idealised notions of home as a place of safety and belonging. Using feminist geography, it explores how domestic spaces can also be sites of gendered violence and oppression. Through analyses of key photographic series, the study reveals how violence is represented not only through physical injury but also through the spatial and material traces embedded within the home, raising important questions about visibility, ethics, and representation.
Supervisor: Professor A Kearney

MDINGI, Isasiphinkosi *Education*
THESIS: Project-based learning as a potential pedagogical strategy to facilitate decolonisation of knowledge: an explorative study of Kwakhany'inkwenkwezi primary school
This thesis investigates pedagogical possibilities of project-based learning (PJBL) beyond its current framing as an employability intervention. Using decolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and a qualitative case study approach, this thesis revealed that PJBL provides students a classroom space where they can exercise agency. Teachers are empowered to negotiate classroom practices, disrupting power dynamics. Through PJBL, working-class communities are reimagined as the classroom extends into the community, and communities integrated into the classroom. The communities become a resource for inquiry-based learning.
Supervisors: Dr S Godsell and Dr R Lepere

MDLULI, Balungile Vennessia *Education*
THESIS: An investigation into factors that constrain or enable the decolonization of the curriculum for Geography in the curriculum and assessment policy statement
The candidate's doctoral study explored structural barriers to decolonising South African geography classrooms, drawing on data from Gauteng-based geography teachers and district officials. Despite CAPS policy's aims for social justice and Indigenous knowledge oriented teaching, classroom realities reveal a disjuncture: English-medium instruction, Eurocentric textbooks, and rigid assessments which constrain decolonial intentions. The proposed Decolonial Geography Policy Framework (DGPF) and curriculum model integrate translanguaging, place-based fieldwork, and pluriversal dialogue, closing the gap between policy intentions and classroom practice through educators' agency.
Supervisors: Associate Professor N Laga Ramoupi and Dr N Ndumeya and

MKANDAWIRE, Thandiwe *Sociology*
THESIS: Coping with history: Capturing national and local responses to Covid-19 in Malawi
This thesis explores how Malawi's colonial and post-colonial history, including dictatorships, pluralistic democracies, and recurring disease outbreaks, remains intertwined with COVID-19 coping strategies, creating a complex, layered process at both national and community levels.
Supervisors: Professor L Nunez Carrasco and Dr V Igreja

MKONE, Charity Nkateko Lisa *Psychology*
THESIS: Navigating Intersubjectivity: Black Female Therapists' Experiences of Therapy with Black Female Patients in South Africa
This study explored the complexities of being a Black female psychotherapist doing therapy with Black female patients. The study held a dual lens on therapists' identity politics in post-apartheid South Africa and on race and gender in the therapeutic relationship. The researcher offers a deeply reflexive account of experienced tensions around strength and vulnerability, sisterhood and motherhood, and race and gender. The study also offers a compelling and moving exploration of the dynamics between researcher and participants, and how these dynamics illuminate understandings of Black female subjectivity.
Supervisor: Associate Professor C Long

MOOLLA, Fatima *Political Studies*
THESIS: Digital Developmentalism: Land Registration and Digital Public Infrastructure in Rwanda
This dissertation examines how Rwanda's digitised land administration system became a foundation for digital governance before the consolidation of a national digital identity system. Drawing on fieldwork across Rwanda, it analyses the Land Administration Information System (LAIS), Irembo, and the role of bureaucratic intermediaries in implementing digital governance. The study argues that land functioned as political infrastructure prior to digitisation, enabling the expansion of state authority and digital coordination. It contributes to debates on Infrastructure and governance formation in Africa.
Supervisors: Professor K Breckenridge and Dr L Phillips

MTHOMBENI, Nomaswazi Mandisa *General Sociology*
THESIS: "We call this the fight between the hungry and the greedy!": An ethnographic study of the women who zama-zama at Beefmaster, Kimberley
This pathbreaking thesis examined how poor working-class women who live, work, and zama-zama on the grounds of a decommissioned mine called Beefmaster, sustain their everyday lives within the cyclical epiphenomenal temporality of the crisis of social reproduction. Through drawing on feminist political economy and hauntology; it situates the women's struggles over social reproduction within capitalism, patriarchy, and the afterlives of colonial industrial mining capitalism. The study makes significant contributions to understanding contemporary class struggles, work, and the afterlives of extraction.
Supervisor: Professor M Williams

MTSAKA, Zwelakhe Julius *English*

THESIS: Unchaining Shakespeare: Translation, adaptation and citation by black South African writers in the early apartheid era

This doctoral research draws attention to the ways in which Shakespeare's plays were translated, adapted and cited by black South Africans in the early decades of the apartheid era. The candidate's thesis was praised by his examiners as "a compelling work" offering insights not only into well-known figures like the Drum writers but also intellectuals like the isiXhosa translator B.B. Mdledle, "locating them within their socio-historical contexts" and inviting readers to consider Shakespeare “beyond an association with the colonial enterprise”.

Supervisor: Professor C Thurman

MUDZONGA, Traver *Cultural Policy and Management*

THESIS: South African music of African heritage travelling online and live: a constructionist consideration of the music business and intellectual property within the Creative Economy

The inquiry focuses on the global interactions of music business processes, cultural policy and intellectual property within the context of the Creative Economy. In the thesis, travelling is positioned as an economic concept for music of African heritage. This perspective led to findings that advocate for responsive cultural policy thinking, music business as a service industry, the role of GenAI in music business process optimisation, and legislated elective copyright registration. These findings advance cultural policy scholarship for music business.

Supervisor: Dr A Ndzuta

NCUBE, Sindile Bertha *Education*

THESIS: Investigating Oral Home Language Development in Multilingual Grade 1 Classrooms in South Africa: Insights for Enhancing Early Literacy Skills

The candidate’s study examined how Grade 1 teachers in selected township schools in Gauteng, South Africa, support or hinder learners’ oral home language (OHL) development during early literacy learning. Guided by Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), a qualitative case study used classroom observations, document analysis, and teacher interviews. Findings show teachers employ multilingual strategies such as code-switching and translanguaging, but policy-practice tensions, limited training, and resource constraints restrict effective OHL integration, highlighting the need for stronger systemic and policy support.

Supervisor: Dr A Nkomo

NDLOVU, Million *Critical Diversity Studies*

THESIS: Decolonising peacekeeping and conflict resolution in Africa: The role of SADC in peacekeeping in Southern Africa with specific reference to the democratic Republic of Congo and Lesotho

The research deployed decoloniality as a theoretical framework to examine how coloniality is imbricated in SADC's peacekeeping and conflict resolution projects and processes in Southern Africa. Qualitative methodology was employed to examine how peacekeeping and conflict resolution projects and colonial knowledges and practices that were used. Dr Ndlovu asks for African and indigenous definitions of conflict, peace and conflict resolutions.

Supervisor: Dr J Mpofu

OKUNOYE, Babatunde Olayiwola *Political Studies*

THESIS: Engineering or Undermining Trust? Biometric IDs and Digital Credit in Nigeria

"Engineering or Undermining Trust? Biometric IDs and Digital Credit in Nigeria", asks whether Nigeria's biometric identity register, framed as "trust infrastructure", is building a culture of credit. Using prebendalism as its lens, it examines the National Identity Management Commission, credit bureaus, MTN and the Central Bank. It is informed by ten months' Lagos fieldwork, interviews with 50 experts and digital-loan users, participant observation, and documentary sources. It finds trust partly strengthened, but the outlook dependent on regulatory governance.

Supervisors: Professor K Breckenridge and Dr L Phillips

OLDERT, David Anthony *English*

THESIS: Authenticity in Robert Lowell, Derek Walcott, and Geoffrey Hill

The thesis interrogates the validity of authenticity as a measure of poetic achievement through close readings of Robert Lowell, Derek Walcott, and Geoffrey Hill. It argues that personal authenticity compromises a poem’s formal integrity, and proposes technical accomplishment and historical sensitivity as more reliable criteria. The examiners were unanimous in praising the thesis for elegance of style, critical acumen and philosophical sophistication, as well as deep knowledge of the poets’ work and intellectual milieu.

Supervisor: Professor Emeritus V Houliston

OTIENO, Clifford Derrick *Film and Television*
THESIS: Holy Sh#t: Navigating the Process of Amplifying Marginalised Voices through a Decolonial Docu-Web Series
This creative practice-led thesis examines the epistemic silencing of amasangoma as spiritual-ecological custodians of Lekoa, arguing, pollution reflects infrastructural collapse and epistemic injustice. Through a decolonial, relational documentary methodology, it co-creates Holy Sh#t, a five-episode docu-web series that centres participant authorship, narrative sovereignty and a negotiated gaze. The study identifies material refusal and adaptive practices under altered ecological conditions, proposing epistemic restitution through the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and custodial authority in environmental discourse, water justice and participatory governance.
Supervisor: Associate Professor T Sakota

PETRICK, Gerhard *Interdisciplinary Digital Knowledge Economy Studies*
THESIS: Governance and spectrum demands for broadcast and mobile services in the ultra-high-frequency band in the Southern African Development Community
This research tracks a 4-year International Telecommunication Union study cycle on spectrum needs for mobile and broadcast services. It translates a naïve understanding of radio frequency spectrum allocation and the application of structural and statistical analysis within isolated disciplines into a rich interdisciplinary interpretation of international spectrum governance. The work contributes a SADC perspective and a contextual capture theory of international spectrum governance, that postulates the need for a paradigm shift in practice and thinking on international spectrum allocation.
Supervisor: Associate Professor L Abrahams

RISIMATI, Ripfumelo *Anthropology*
THESIS: Labouring Respectability: Gendered survival and intergenerational work in Dobsonville, Soweto
This thesis explores how Black working-class women in Dobsonville, Soweto, navigate work, dignity, and social status across generations. Focusing on domestic work, retail employment, and informal self-employment, it examines how women use labour to build respectable lives despite ongoing inequality, economic hardship, and limited opportunities. The study highlights how respectability can provide both a sense of agency and belonging, while also reflecting the burdens and constraints women continue to face in post-apartheid South Africa.
Supervisors: Associate Professor J Hornberger and Professor M Nieftagodien

SCHUITEMA, Muhammad Assadallah *Philosophy*
THESIS: Philosophical Exploration of Virtue and Happiness
A Philosophical Exploration of Virtue and Happiness challenges the common view that happiness and moral virtue are distinct goods capable of existing independently of one another. This view can be traced to a subjectivist conception of happiness, according to which prudential value depends on desire. However, since subjectivism cannot account for the goodness and sustainability of happiness, virtue and happiness are not, in fact, separate. Happiness is therefore an internal good: it is an activity of excellence, not an outcome.
Supervisor: Professor D Futter

SIBIYA, Nkululeko *Media Studies*
THESIS: Anti-migrant mobilisation in the Digital Age: A Study of Operation Dudula through WhatsApp
This thesis examines how Operation Dudula (OD), one of South Africa's leading anti-migrant movements, uses WhatsApp to sustain exclusionary mobilisation. Drawing on the extreme speech framework, computational trace analysis, ethnographic content analysis, and semi-structured interviews, it analyses 32,282 WhatsApp messages and 183 newspaper articles. The study makes an original methodological and theoretical contribution by showing how WhatsApp functions as an organisational and discursive infrastructure that enables digitally mediated exclusionary mobilisation in the postcolonial Global.
Supervisor: Professor I Gagliardone

SITHOLE, Irving *Education*
THESIS: The Influence of the Sustainability Starts with Teachers (SST) Programme on Teacher Educators' Competences for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
In the context of critical global challenges including climate change, poverty, and environmental degradation, Education for Sustainable Development, is pivotal. The candidate investigated UNESCO's 'Sustainability Starts with Teachers', a programme for 11 SADC countries. Grounded in the Transformative Learning Theory, this qualitative multiple-site case study illuminated how course-mediated professional development enhances educators' foundational transformative competences that enabled transformative shifts for ESD.
Supervisor: Dr C Mandikonza

SMITH, Ross James *English*
THESIS: Apocalyptic Vision, Time, and Allegory in Dante's Commedia
This thesis explores apocalypse in Dante's Divine Comedy as both a stylistic method and a central narratological device. Drawing on Frank Kermode's understanding of apocalypse as a narrative framework for experience in medias res, it argues that the reader's experience of time in the poem is shaped by Dante's incorporation of biblical apocalyptic traditions, affecting both the poem's narrative form and its allegory. It offers a new approach that brings formal and allegorical readings of the Divine Comedy into dialogue.
Supervisor: Dr S Fanucchi

THURTELL, Sean Christopher *Media Studies*
THESIS: They Did What at the Mall? Emotion, Disruption, and the Discursive Politics of Retail Space in Post-Pandemic South Africa
This thesis is a bold, interdisciplinary study of consumption and retail space in South Africa, considering crucial questions of race, class, inclusivity and justice in the post-apartheid nation. The thesis uses social and mainstream media material and ethnographic observation to offer incisive analyses of four key moments in recent shopping history: pandemic-era panic buying, EFF retail protests about racist advertising, public defence of malls during the so-called insurrection in 2021, and Black Friday sales at one of SA's largest malls.
Supervisor: Professor N Falkof

TZANAKAKIS, Angelique *Linguistics*
THESIS: Graffiti, Groove, and Games: Playfulness in the Semiotic Landscape of Braamfontein, Johannesburg
This dissertation offers an analysis of the linguistic landscape of Braamfontein through the lens of play theory. Indeed, the neighbourhood is curated as an urban playground by developers, which, as argued, encourages playful semiotic practices from students, partygoers and graffiti artists. In turn, these are part of a governance strategy producing aesthetic and spatial value. The final argument is that such politics lead to uneven access to these spaces, as play becomes commodified into a spatial instrument for urban development.
Supervisor: Dr G Baro

VAN ROY, Caitlin Ammy *African Literature*
THESIS: Writing Coloured Otherwise: Nostalgia, Shame and Respectability in Contemporary South African Life Writing
In her thesis, the candidate reconceptualises Coloured identity in South Africa by shifting focus from rigid racial categorisation to the deeply felt dimensions of lived experience. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's concept of "orientation," she uses a phenomenological reading of contemporary life writing to explore how precarity is actively inhabited, felt, and negotiated in everyday life. By analysing nostalgia, respectability, and shame, the study highlights self-narration as a vital framework for understanding how subjects navigate belonging and selfhood.
Supervisors: Dr E Hugo and Associate Professor D Ojwang

VIRANNA, Pavithra Kanchana *Education*
THESIS: Teachers' understandings of being a professional in Early Childhood Education: A case in South Africa
Despite efforts to professionalise South Africa's Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce, many teachers remain unqualified. This case study explored how eight Gauteng ECE teachers understand themselves as professionals. Pavithra developed an original conceptual framework, the Three P's (professional, professionalisation, professionalism), to analyse these understandings. Self-understandings emerged from converging internal convictions, relational and structural factors, and enacted practice. New knowledge shows that positive self-understandings sustain quality care despite systemic constraints, supporting recognition of experiential knowledge alongside qualifications in defining the ECE professional.
Supervisor: Dr C Martin

WU, Ting *English*
THESIS: Transcorporeal Evolution: Green Hope in Jeff VanderMeer's Southern Reach Tetralogy
This doctoral thesis argues that Jeff VanderMeer's Southern Reach tetralogy imagines ecological reform and a green ecological future. Through the figure of an ancient yet advanced extraterrestrial intelligence adapting to Earth, the series develops an ecological logic of adaptation, symbiosis, and coevolution, envisioning transcorporeal evolution as the continual emergence of life through material interaction with its environment.
Supervisor: Professor M Titlestad

YOUNG, Alexa Nasya *Psychology*
THESIS: The Art of Holding and Letting Go: Containment, Reflection, and Maternal Experience of Failure
This thesis makes an original contribution to psychodynamic research by examining the relationship between containment and reflective functioning in mothers of young children. Using a mixed-methods design, 14 mothers were interviewed using the Psychodynamic Interview technique and scored for reflective functioning. The findings demonstrate that while failures of containment and reflective functioning often co-occur, mothers' reflective functioning may remain partially intact, suggesting a compensatory role in supporting maternal caregiving under emotional strain.
Supervisor: Associate Professor T Graham

ZIKALALA, Nhlakanipho Macmillan *Political Studies*
THESIS: Democratic Consolidation in South Africa
This important thesis questions the heavy reliance on universal benchmarks, particularly the Two-Turnover Test, which is grounded in a procedural conception of democracy. Drawing on David Beetham's substantive conceptualisation of democratic consolidation, the thesis examines the conditions that shape South Africa's democratic resilience, including the process of democratic transition, the economic system, political culture, and the institutional foundations of democracy.
Supervisor: Professor L Hamilton

ZIMMERMAN, Gwyneth Jean *Education*
THESIS: Evaluating the Implementation of a Project-Based Learning Programme at a South African High School
This PhD examined the impact of a project-based learning programme, on school culture, student success, and teacher practices. A design-based research methodology was used. Findings from 470 surveys; focus groups; and semi-structured interviews, indicate that PBL supported developing students' collaboration, communication, digital competencies and other skills, but challenged teacher identities. The significance for PBL scholarship, which customarily focusses on students' experiences, is the importance of attending to teacher identity as part of change management when introducing PBL programmes in schools.
Supervisors: Associate Professor A Kearney