

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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

Doctor of Philosophy

ASARE, Samuel

Education

THESIS: Exploring enacted and espoused ICT practices of tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education: Implications for ICT professional development

The candidate investigated the enacted and espoused ICT practices of tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education, to inform tutor professional development. The findings highlight the need for consistent and structured professional development to enhance and standardise tutors' competencies in integrating ICT into classroom practice. The study further proposes a context-responsive training model for colleges of education that promotes autonomous utilisation of ICTs in different lecture rooms which should be shared and enhanced in tutor collaboration activities.

Supervisor: Dr N Ndlovu

CHIZUWA, Miriro

English

THESIS: White Writing and Childhood: a critical analysis of the representation of voice and identity in Zimbabwean literature

This thesis probes White writing in Zimbabwe, focusing on how the trope of childhood is deployed as a device to question, articulate and represent a variety of imaginaries, ideologies, politics and aesthetic predilections. Situating her rigorous interrogations of texts and genres within a broad intellectual community invested in the trajectories and particularities of Zimbabwean post-colonial identities, Miriro Chizuwa deftly demonstrates that in such a place/time (suffocated with too much history and bedeviled with violent but little progress) only new transversal politics inspired by storytelling enterprises that emphasize fluidity and multivocality might represent the much-needed historical redemption and renovation.

Supervisor: Professor R Muponde

DE VRIES, Lee-Ann Delarise

Interdisciplinary

THESIS: The (South) African Dream: A multidisciplinary study of notions of difference and self-presentation through an interrogation of South African soft power at the Grammys

Spanning sixty years of South African music in the U.S. market, this thesis investigates how South African artists navigate and present cultural identity within a commercially dominant industry. Centred on the Grammy Awards, it analyses the ways in which African music is framed for Western consumption, theorises the 'co-sign' as a mechanism of market access, and advocates for legislative and diplomatic interventions securing Africa's epistemic freedom within global culture industries.

Supervisor: Dr C Duncan

DLAMINI, Sizakele Delight

Psychology

THESIS: Mental Health of Adolescents in Rural Areas in Manzini, Eswatini

The candidate explored adolescent mental health in rural Eswatini. Using a mixed-methods approach, a 47.5% prevalence of psychological distress was found. Social support, resilience, and social capital emerged as key protective factors. The findings offer vital insights into psychosocial vulnerabilities faced by youth in low-resource settings and advocate for contextually relevant mental health interventions. This work makes a significant contribution to global adolescent mental health research, informing future policy and intervention development in similar contexts.

Supervisors: Associate Professor D Pillay and Professor M Marchetti-Mercer

DLODLO, Buhlebenkosi

African Literature

THESIS: Liquid Violence in African and Afro-Diasporic Imaginaries

This dissertation explores the nexus of hydro-capitalist violence and artistic representation in Africa and its diasporas. It argues that artistic imaginaries make the disposability of Black lives across timelines framed by a capitalist continuum legible. Grounded in hydrocolonial frameworks, the dissertation interrogates the weaponization of water to produce harm for precarious communities. Artistic commentaries on such weaponization contest such liquid violence by crafting counter-archives that propose liveable lifeworlds, attentive to postcolonial, oceanic and environmental concerns across spatial and temporal scales.

Supervisor: Associate Professor G Musila

DUH, Florence Iwih

Education

THESIS: Investigating the Determinants of WhatsApp Adoption and Usage for Educational Continuity during Crises: The Case of Displaced Students in Cameroon

This study advances educational technology adoption research by developing and validating an integrated model combining DOI, TAM, UTAUT, and TOE within the under-researched context of disadvantaged and displaced populations during crises. The findings show that social and people-related factors most strongly influence attitudes towards WhatsApp adoption, followed by technological and environmental factors, while organisational factors are least influential. Attitude significantly predicts WhatsApp adoption, offering practical insights for inclusive, low-cost distance learning strategies in emergency contexts.

Supervisor: Associate Professor R Dlamini

EARLE, Katarina

Education

THESIS: Pre-service teachers' perceptions of the importance and use of Picture Storybooks in the Foundation Phase

Drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory; Gee and Bourdieu's concepts of Discourse and Habitus, this study investigated undergraduate student-teachers' perceptions of the importance and use of Picture Storybooks in the Foundation Phase. The study contributed necessary knowledge in the field to understand future teachers' positionality to the teaching of Picture Storybooks. Interaction with the student teachers revealed the importance of understanding students' background to reading, to address continuing inequity to reading skills in Foundation Phase. Important findings for teacher training institutions and early childhood education.

Supervisor: Associate Professor T Nkambule

GABANTESE, Kamogelo Alecia

Diversity Studies

THESIS: The Coloniality of Gender: A decolonial examination of the effects of gender-based violence on women's reproductive health and sexual rights

The candidate deployed decoloniality as a theoretical framework to examine how gender-based violence consigns women to the status of colonised and exploited beings. Qualitative methodology was employed as a science to examine the lived experiences of violated women who are domiciled in selected shelters in Johannesburg. The study makes compelling contributions to Decoloniality, Critical Diversity studies, and the social justice cause for the liberation of women from the enduring coloniality of gender and patriarchy in the Global South.

Supervisor: Dr J Mpofu

GANI, Salma

Psychology

THESIS: Exploring the relationships between adjustment to university, coping and mental health among first-year students at a South African university

This study demonstrates that first-year adjustment is shaped not only by academic stress, but by the interplay of mental health, coping, and support systems. It highlights the role of self-belief and social support in reducing stress, fostering healthy coping, and enabling adjustment. While academic demands can undermine mental health, these effects are not inevitable. With effective coping strategies and support, students can adapt and succeed. This PhD offers an evidence-based framework to inform more responsive and equitable university policies and practices.

Supervisors: Professor S Laher and Dr T Hassem

HANSA, Sameera

Education

THESIS: Intermediate Phase Learners' Calculation Approaches to Multiplicative Tasks: Insights from Grades 4 and 6

The candidate's doctoral study examines how Grade 4 and 6 learners in South Africa approach multiplicative tasks, with attention to the efficiency of their calculation strategies. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research moves beyond correctness to analyse learners' underlying reasoning across symbolic and contextual tasks. The thesis introduces a refined Efficiency Framework that makes a substantive contribution to understanding multiplicative reasoning in the Intermediate Phase. Examiners praised the work for its originality and strong potential to inform curriculum and teaching practice.

Supervisors: Professor H Venkatakrishnan, Associate Professor A Essien and Professor M Askew

HASS, Atrimecia Bernadete

Education

THESIS: Assessing the Commitment of Writing Centre Stakeholders at Macro, Meso and Micro Levels: A Social Realist Sustainable Approach

This study examines the role of writing centres in South African higher education, focusing on their integration within universities. Using a qualitative approach and social realist framework, it explores stakeholder commitment at macro, meso, and micro levels to ensure academic literacy development. The findings indicate that structural and cultural constraints hinder their integration. Although lecturers and students exercise agency to promote a sustainable model, institutional change remains constrained, resulting largely in morphostasis, with some evidence of morphogenesis through collaborative practices.

Supervisors: Associate Professor L Dison and Associate Professor I Fouche

HAYNES-ROLANDO, Hayley Lisa

Psychology

THESIS: Affecting Change: A Psychosocial Study of Community Psychology Praxis and Youth Belonging in YOTS, Dobsonville Soweto

Grounded in critical community psychology, affect theory, and psychosocial perspectives, this study explored the emotional and relational experiences of youth participating in the Youth of the South (YOTS) project, a participatory action research (PAR) initiative with adolescents in Dobsonville, Soweto. Findings show that the YOTS group model fosters an environment of reflective dialogue, mutual care, and communal belonging, enabling youth to articulate concerns often unheard in formal structures and to develop a shared sense of agency amidst precarity.

Supervisor: Associate Professor P Kiguwa

KHAN, Jamil Farouk

Critical Diversity Studies

THESIS: Quilted Consciousness of Creolised South Africans: A comparative narrative analysis of Coloured lived experiences across South Africa

This qualitative study explores the life history narratives of Coloured people across South Africa to understand how location, as a function of apartheid spatial planning, impacts how people make sense of their racialisation. Dr Khan's findings show that in each location, Colouredness was defined and expressed through different material and social markers. However, fundamental overlaps in histories and experiences produce a fragmented, but shared sense of racial consciousness, which this research names Quilted Consciousness.

Supervisor: Professor M Steyn

KHOZA, Sibongile Ethel

Translation and Interpreting

THESIS: Translating medical borrowed words and eponyms for lay users: Strategies, acceptability, and suggestions
This study is in the intersection of translation studies and terminology development and assesses the acceptability – from the perspective of lay-users – of translated eponyms and borrowed words (chiefly from Latin and Greek).

Medical terminology from English into Siswati is in the spotlight in this project, with a special focus on the opinions of lay-users vis-a-vis those of professional translators in terms of the most acceptable translations from the point of view of target-audience adequacy.

Supervisors: Professor A Leal and Dr C Dladla

LOON, Maya

Media Studies

THESIS: Into the Woods: Mothering and anxiety in middle-class Johannesburg

This thesis examines anxiety among middle-class mothers in Johannesburg, exploring whether their concerns are uniquely South African or globally shared. Framed by class, race, neoliberal capitalism and persistent gender inequality, it investigates how mothering anxiety is both visible and concealed. The study analyses two landscapes: digital spaces, focusing on Instagram and Facebook representations, and physical, family-oriented urban spaces shaped by notions of self and Other. It argues that mothering anxiety is ultimately about identity, belonging and neoliberal pressures.

Supervisor: Professor N Falkof

MAKUYANA, Luck

African Literature

THESIS: The Politics and Poetics of Dams in Southern African Texts

This thesis maps the imprint of dams on the southern African imaginative terrain, arguing that creative works provide deep insight into the paradoxes of hydro-modernization. Using the approach of hydrocolonialism, the thesis directs attention to the material, embodied and affective investments associated with dams across species and temporalities in a range of films and novels. Combined, these creative works avail a test-tube environment for surfacing the politics and poetics of dams in southern Africa.

Supervisor: Professor C Hofmeyr

MALESWENA, Tshepiso

History

THESIS: Beyond the Shadow: Reclaiming Women's Voices in the Black Consciousness Movement

The thesis critically examines the exclusion of Black women in liberation historiography, specifically in the dominant narratives of the Black Consciousness Movement from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. Drawing on extensive archival research and interviews, and framed in Black Feminist Theory, the thesis reconstructs the biographies of three generations of Black women activists whose leadership and intellectual contributions shaped Black Consciousness organisations. By placing underrepresented Black women at the centre of her analysis, Maleswena challenges conventional male-centric narratives and provides original interpretations of South Africa's liberation historiography.

Supervisor: Professor M Niefertgodien

MARSHAL, Treasa Mary

English

THESIS: Anti-Bildungs Potentials in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions Trilogy: Women, Trauma, Place

The candidate's doctoral research examines Tsitsi Dangarembga's trilogy through the lens of the anti-Bildungsroman. Her work explores how colonialism, gender, trauma, and ideas of unhu shape belonging, identity, and personal development in contemporary African literature.

Supervisor: Dr K Van Wyk

MOKOLOPENG, Boitumelo Canady

Education

THESIS: Re-conceptualizing Drama-in-Education as a therapeutic pedagogy: A collaborative inquiry with young people into matters of mental health and well-being in a classroom

This study explored the interconnection between Drama-in-Education and Mental Health Education through the perspectives of posthumanism. A post-qualitative participatory inquiry conducted with young people at a secondary school revealed how Drama-in-Education as a therapeutic pedagogy can nurture collective and mutual care to support learners' emotional well-being. Grounded in the ethics of care, the study's findings were translated into a newly developed pedagogical framework that connects creativity, imagination, spontaneity and embodiment.

Supervisors: Dr S Bhebhe and Dr T Giorza

MOLETSANE, Otshepeng Edmond

African Languages and Linguistics

THESIS: A Linguistic Deconstruction of Plaatjes Setswana Proverbs and Literal Translations

Otshepeng Edmond Moletsane used a Critical Discourse Analysis, with a specific focus on Historical Discourse Analysis. The qualitative research design was used, and a purposive sample of 60 proverbs was selected for detailed analysis. The investigation explored the orthography, translations, classification, functions, structural patterns, meanings, gender representations, and cultural contexts embedded in the selected proverbs. The findings demonstrate that Plaatje's collection was not merely a compilation of traditional sayings but a deliberate effort to document and validate Setswana intellectual traditions.

Supervisor: Dr K Theledi

MOTLHAMME, Mojuta Steven

History

THESIS: Ethnicity, Nationhood and Chieftaincy in a Rural World: The Story of Kgosi Lucas Manyane Mangope of Bophuthatswana, 1923-1994

This doctoral thesis offers a richly researched and conceptually nuanced political biography of Kgosi Lucas Mangope, tracing his rise, rule, and eventual overthrow within the broader history of Bophuthatswana. Drawing on oral and archival sources, the thesis moves beyond reductive representations to illuminate Mangope's agency, political vision, and contradictions, while critically engaging the politics of ethnicity, development, and power under apartheid. This study makes an important contribution to scholarship and the historiography of Bantustans and African leadership.

Supervisors: Associate Professor S Lekgoathi and Associate Professor N Ramoupi

MOTSAMAI-BOTHASITSE, Mabel K

Education

THESIS: Exploring the functionality of the Botswana Open University Internal Quality Assurance System in adopting Open Distance and e-Learning

This study examined the effect of Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) on the adoption of Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) at Botswana Open University. Using a convergent parallel mixed methods design, the study found that traditional quality assurance mechanisms alone do not guarantee effective e-learning implementation; success depends on responsive policies, resource allocation and pedagogical alignment to e-learning delivery. It recommends an adaptive IQAS, strengthened digital learner support, continuous capacity building, evidence-based decision-making, ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms for ODEL.

Supervisor: Dr N Ndlovu

MOYO, Clayton

Media Studies

THESIS: Mediating the Sexual Identity of a 'Nation' in Zimbabwe: Mainstream and Social Media Discourses on Queer Sexualities

This study examines how sexuality operates as a political site within postcolonial nation-building in Zimbabwe. Analysing representations in The Herald newspaper and on Twitter (2010-2020), it explores how queer identities are framed within national discourse. Using discourse analysis and queer theory, the study reveals enduring narratives of cultural nativism and heteronormative nationalism alongside emergent queer subjectivities. It shows how media both reinforce and destabilise hegemonic national imaginaries, exposing tensions over citizenship, legitimacy and belonging in Zimbabwe.

Supervisor: Professor N Falkof

NGOH, Doris Nzole Sone

Education

THESIS: The experiences of African immigrant learners learning an indigenous South African language in three public schools in Gauteng province

This thesis by the candidate presents qualitative findings on the experiences of 12 African immigrant learners learning an indigenous South African language, in this case isiZulu First Additional Language, in three public schools in Gauteng. The findings reveal structural, cultural, linguistic, academic and social challenges to immigrant learning but also highlight learners' agencies and identity reconstruction strategies. Based on the findings, the study proposes an Immigrant Responsive Pedagogy (IRP) framework for indigenous language education in multilingual contexts.

Supervisors: Associate Professor N Nkealah and Associate Professor I Fouche

PETROCCHI-BARTAL, Luisa

Audiology

THESIS: Early Intervention for Children who are Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing in the South African Context – From Policy to Practice

Through a comprehensive examination of policy-to-practice translation, Luisa Petrocchi-Bartal's study offers critical insights into early intervention for deaf and hard of hearing children. Her work identifies systemic gaps, informs policy reform, and strengthens the evidence base for equitable service delivery in LMIC contexts. Demonstrating academic excellence and methodological rigour, Luisa's research was commended by examiners for its scholarly depth and national significance. She impressively produced five manuscripts, including published peer-reviewed articles, as part of her PhD.

Supervisors: Professor K Khoza-Shangase and Associate Professor A Kanji

Psychology

RACHAMOSE, Ngokwana Claudit

THESIS: The mental health of maternal primary caregivers of children living with cerebral palsy in rural communities of the Limpopo Province, South Africa

This qualitative exploratory contextual study interviewed ten maternal primary caregivers on their experiences of mental health related to caregiving for children living with cerebral palsy in rural areas in South Africa. It was found that these caregivers endure significant mental health challenges due to various interconnected factors-physical, financial, social, emotional, and spiritual. Caregivers were found to have access to informal support systems from family, community, and faith networks that facilitate their caregiving experiences. These support systems, however, need to be strengthened and maintained. The PhD produced four peer-reviewed journal publications.

Supervisor: Associate Professor C Harvey

ROE-BERNING, Shelley Erin

Psychology

THESIS: Personal Constructions of Recovery in Rape Survivors: A study of meaning-making and recovery in the subjective accounts of adult female survivors of rape

Using a mixed methods approach, an investigation was conducted into a group of South African women survivors' experiences in relation to recovery from rape and gender-based violence. With the main emphasis on narrative analysis of interview data from six participants, a framework for understanding what enabled longer term recovery was generated. Various dimensions of rape impact require distinct, if inter-linked, recovery tasks, centering around identity work and meaning making. Recovery requires conscious effortful engagement and validating, interpersonal support.

Supervisors: Professor G Eagle and Dr Y Esprey

SEFOLOSHE, Lerato

Linguistics

THESIS: The Morphosyntactic Development of Agreement Patterns in L1 Setswana Speaking Children and 3rd Person Marking in L2 English Speaking Sequential Bilinguals

This study explores the morphosyntactic development of Setswana-English bilinguals, providing valuable insights into bilingual language acquisition. Her research offers a deeper understanding of how indigenous languages interact with English in South Africa, highlighting the complexities and strengths of bilingual learners. The study's rigorous methodology and thoughtful analysis set a new standard for work in this field, and its findings have significant implications for linguistics and education.

Supervisor: Associate Professor R Kunene Nicolas

SHAIKJEE, Fazel

Education

THESIS: Exploring Digital Teaching and Learning Strategies for Bridging the Digital Divide in Less Resourced Secondary Schools in South Africa

This qualitative thesis explores digital teaching and learning strategies to bridge inequalities between less resourced and affluent secondary schools in South Africa. Guided by the Resources and Appropriation Theory, it examines how under-resourced schools can leverage digital tools to enhance teaching and learning and reduce the digital disparities. The study contributes to empirical research on ICT in education by identifying practical strategies that disadvantaged schools can adopt to promote more equitable digital access and meaningful pedagogical integration.

Supervisor: Associate Professor R Dlamini

SHUPING, Reoikantse Lucrucia

African Languages and Linguistics

THESIS: Phetogo ya kalego e e tsweletseng ya borutapuo mo Aforikaborwa mo ngwagakgolong wa 21

In her thesis, Shuping R.L. used qualitative method to qualify data collected from the 1st year students' activities and sociolinguistics approach to investigate the ongoing changes of Setswana orthography that cause instability and inconsistency between communities, as standardized orthography can sometimes be perceived as an imposition of one dialect over another. The findings is that students confuse spoken and written language when they write their assessments. Hence, achieving orthographic stability will require continued collaboration between language experts, and Setswana-speaking community.

Supervisor: Dr K Theledi

SIBANDA, Nyamadzawo

Migration and Displacement

THESIS: Infrapolitics of Migrant Integration within South African Urban Socio-economic Spaces

This phenomenographic doctoral study examines how migrants and non-migrants perceive, negotiate, and sustain everyday cohabitation in urban socio-economic spaces. Findings distinguish restrictive public discourse from resilient lived realities, and reveal evolving, context-bound strategies and social-spatial transformations forging coexistence and belonging. The study extends integration debates with new lenses and foregrounds South Africa's urban histories, institutions, and trajectories shaping incorporation.

Supervisor: Dr J Misago

TSHIDI, Mashite

Education

THESIS: Optimising personalised learning through learning analytics for student engagement and performance in South African higher education

This study explores how learning analytics and personalised learning can be used to improve student engagement and academic performance in South African higher education. Using student learning data and interviews with educational practitioners, the research examined how data-informed teaching approaches can better support diverse student needs. The study resulted in the development of the Data-informed Personalised Engagement Model (DiPEM), a framework designed to help institutions use learning analytics to support student success, timely intervention, and more equitable learning experiences.

Supervisor: Dr A Dewa

TUSINGWIRE, Peace

Interdisciplinary Digital Knowledge Economy Studies

THESIS: The Role of Higher Education Technology Shaping in Academics' Pedagogical Practices

The thesis examines how social shaping of technology influences academic pedagogical practices, highlighting challenges like digitized control and tech complexities in higher education. It recommends reframing innovations through accountability, participatory governance, and building localized innovation ecosystems. The study advances the social shaping of technology perspective by proposing higher education technologies shaping (HETS), viewing educational technologies as active, contested participants shaping routines and knowledge, not neutral tools. The complementary higher education technologies shaping knowledge model (HETSKM) can contribute to decolonizing tech adoption and guide equitable digitalisation of higher education in African contexts.

Supervisors: Associate Professor L Abrahams and Dr N Hoosen

VILANCULOS, Esmeralda

Psychology

THESIS: Prolonged Father–Son Separation and Subsequent Reunion: Exploring the Experiences of Black Fathers and Sons in Gauteng Province, South Africa

Father absence is widespread among Black South African families, yet little is known about father–son reunions after prolonged separations. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of eleven Black fathers and their adult sons in Gauteng, focusing on separation, searching, reunion and reconciliation. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis, the study reveals that sons long for paternal emotional connection, while fathers strive to repair past absence. Reunions were emotionally charged, highlighting the need for accountability, dialogue and culturally sensitive healing spaces.

Supervisors: Professor C Langa and Dr P Gerrand

WADEE, Faaizah

Psychology

THESIS: Organisational culture, remote working and employee wellbeing

This thesis presents a rigorous and original investigation into how pandemic-driven remote working reshapes organisational culture and employee well-being in South Africa. Through a carefully executed mixed-methods design, it highlights organisational trust as a central mechanism shaping employee experience. The study makes a significant contribution to organisational psychology, offering both conceptual insight and practical relevance for organisations navigating the future of work.

Supervisor: Associate Professor K Milner

YINGWANA, Ntokozo Sibahle

Migration and Displacement

THESIS: Queering Sex Work and Mobility in South Africa: How Does Migration and Mobility Influence Gendered Sexualities in Sex Work?

Ntokozo Yingwana's doctoral research offers an original and groundbreaking exploration of the intersections of sex work, migration, mobility, gender, sexuality, and citizenship in South Africa. Drawing on the lived experiences of migrant and mobile sex workers, this study advances new understandings of how movement shapes gendered sexualities and belonging. By queering conventional approaches to sex work and citizenship, the thesis makes a significant contribution to migration studies, sexuality studies, and African scholarship.

Supervisors: Professor L Nunez Carrasco

ZONDI, Mpumelelo Faith

Education

THESIS: Examining the translation of science pre-service teachers' pck from one pck realm to another in an online teaching and learning environment

This study demonstrated effective approaches for preparing teachers to design digital lessons, particularly instructional videos, that transform scientific content pedagogically to support learner understanding while maintaining the epistemological integrity of the discipline. The research makes a significant contribution to science teacher education by advancing understanding of digital-Topic Specific Pedagogical Content Knowledge (digital-TSPCK). It further presents an innovative framework for developing digitally competent science teachers, with important implications for contemporary teacher education in South Africa and internationally.

Supervisors: Professor M Mavhunga