

ACUSAfrica Seminar Series
2021-2022



Concept Note

The [Advancing Critical University Studies Africa](#) (ACUSAfrica) network was born out of a need to move beyond the templates of Higher Education Studies and to address the limitations of Critical University Studies. The ACUSAfrica webinar series seeks to bring together scholars and practitioners with an interest in radical approaches to the study of the university with the goal of re-imagining the higher education sector and its scholarship, institutions and cultures in pursuit of socially just change.

Critique is a central tenet of this seminar series. This is not only in its deconstructive connotation, but also, as for Marx, involving “insightful assessment that can produce knowledge even in a society permeated by illusion and constrained by power, knowledge that can become part of the consciousness” and which should be useful for creating change ([Stillman 1983, 256](#)). Furthermore, the series aims to foster a critical self-reflexivity that eschews dogma, and to constantly interrogate its own complicity in structures of power. Ideally, the seminar series would be a flexible, evolving space capable of nurturing the capacity for “thinking plural forms of emancipatory higher education imaginations and futures” ([Keet & Belluigi 2019](#)).

The series encourages cross-border, transdisciplinary and inter-generational conversations and hopes to be able to provide a platform particularly for presentations from scholars from the global South and excluded North. Aware of the complexities and fraught power dynamics of neo-colonial globalisation, the series is unwilling to platform pathologizing narratives of peoples, countries and continents away from the centres of power. It seeks to emphasise the importance of context, nuance and care in analysing the challenges of these spaces and drawing on their resources.

Themes

Open to a plurality of ideas, the themes of the series are flexible, but some of interest are:

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| Imagining Differently | Academic Freedom | Critical University Studies |
| University Futures | Discourses of Excellence | Abolitionist University Studies |
| Mapping the Field(s) | Social Justice | Critical Higher Education Studies |
| Alternative Methodologies | Sustainability | Radical approaches to studying the university |
| Temporalities | Indigenous Knowledge Systems | Institutional Change |
| Critical Hope | Decolonisation & Decoloniality | Impact of Scholarship |
| Ethics | Africanisation | |

Seminar proposals

If you would be interested in collaborating with the ACUSAfrica network to organize a seminar in 2021/2022, please contact Qhama.Noveve@Mandela.ac.za and cc Jenny.DuPreez@Mandela.ac.za. Please include a title, short abstract (250 words), outline of the proposed format (e.g. single speaker, panel, respondents etc.), and names of speakers.

Seminars will be organized virtually, with Zoom Pro being the platform of choice for the network, and should not exceed 90 minutes. Seminars will be recorded and made publicly accessible on the ACUSAfrica website, partner sites and YouTube channels.

April 2021