London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership

Advanced Research Methods in Social Sciences

Course Code & Title	LISS377 Knowledge Production in and about Africa		
Convenor(s)	Dr Portia Roelofs, King's College London		
Institution	KCL	Department	DPE
Academic Year	2023-24	Term	Spring
Number of Sessions	3	Length of Session(s)	2 Hours
Day, Date	Start : End		Room Location
Monday 29th Jan 2024 Monday 12th Feb 2024 Monday 26th Feb 2024	1-3pm		MACADAM BLDG MB2.1
Enrolment Link:	Available to book on SkillsForge from **Tuesday 12th December 2023**. Click to log in and register: https://training.kcl.ac.uk/kcl/#he/dev/eventDetails,;em,providerCode=LISS,providerOrgAlias=kcl,number=377,; Questions? Visit our Training FAQ here: Frequently Asked Questions - LISS DTP (liss-dtp.ac.uk)		

Course Description:

The objective of this course is to both expand students' contextual knowledge of research and academia in and about Africa, but also to equip them to think both critically and constructively about their own agency as a researcher, with practical tools and pathways for building denser connections with scholars, activists and fellow students on the continent and in the diaspora. It is by no means comprehensive nor does it present final answers to the challenges raised. Rather, through engaging with a mix of more critical and more aspirational readings, it aims to support students to engage proactively with issues of positionality, partnership and hierarchical relations throughout their research careers.

This is not a theory course, in the sense that it does not provide an immersion in the anti-colonial and critical theorists whose ideas have motivated much of the decolonising agenda (i.e. Franz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Kwame Nkrumah). Instead, it draws on theoretically informed critiques and innovations within academia to help students critically reflect on their own research methodologies and wider academic practice. In this sense it focuses on the 'how to' of doing research in and about Africa, in a way that takes seriously ongoing debates about how different steps in the 'research supply chain' could be done in more ethical, egalitarian and effective ways.

Institutions that have long been critiqued by scholars as upholding and reproducing problematic North-South relations - including university ethics committees, research council funding boards, conference organisers and journal editors – are increasingly demanding that researchers demonstrate sensitivity to these issues and competence at navigating them. For example, the British Government's £1.5 bn Global Challenges Research Fund that ran from 2015-2021 required that applicants demonstrate how funding will result in 'meaningful and equitable relationships' between UK-based academics and partners in the Global South. The workshop will serve as a space for students to develop their skills and background knowledge, with an eye to meeting

these emerging demands, whilst critiquing their limitations and the pathologies these new incentives can create.

The course concludes by examining contemporary concrete examples of African-led knowledge production and initiatives for UK-based academics to engage productively with African scholars and Africa-based research institutions. These workshops will also allow students to build a network of like-minded students studying Africa across LISS DTP.

Course Outline:

Session 1: History and Theory

The course starts by situating today's research ecosystem within a longer trajectory of knowledge production in and about Africa. It offers students an opportunity to think about the history of their specific discipline's engagements with Africa, linking it to a wider understanding of the evolution of higher education in African countries and the origins of today's egregious inequalities of resources, access and prestige. It explores the agency of African scholars and their responses to major Western interventions such as colonialism, structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and overseas development aid, as well as domestic challenges such as authoritarianism. Students will get an introduction to key nodes of knowledge production on the continent such as CODESRIA and the re-establishment of the Makerere Institute of Social Research in Kampala (Mamdani 2018), and the way that these institutions connect past and future aspirations for the continent. Moreover, this historical review will furnish us with key conceptual tools: for example Tamale and Oloka-Onyango's (1997) idea of the 'export' of theory from the North to the South, and Paulin Hountondji's (1990) concept of the 'scientific dependency' of Africa on the Global North.

Session 2: Critically analysing the institutional landscape of knowledge production

For this session we will critically survey the institutional landscape of knowledge production through the different stages in the research supply chain: from 1) the emerging requirements that grants and funding should be applied for in partnership with global south institutions, to 2) the political economy of data collection and collaboration with 'locally-embedded' researchers, to the dissemination of research via 3) publication and 4) conferences and professional associations.

In preparation for the workshop students should sign up to focus on one of these four areas and work individually, in pairs or groups (depending on the size of the class) to prepare a short presentation on the key reading in that area and present critical reflections on how the issues raised play out in their particular discipline or thematic area of research. The students are free to choose the form, nature and argument of the presentation.

Session 3: New initiatives to re-centre Africa in the global knowledge production ecosystem

The final workshop of the course offers a survey of contemporary concrete examples of African-led knowledge production and initiatives for UK-based academics to engage productively with African scholars and Africa-based research institutions. We will think about how our current political-technological conjuncture opens up new possibilities for trans-national interactions, for example via hybrid events, whilst new challenges to international engagement are emerging in the form of increasingly restrictive visa regimes.

In preparation for this workshop students should do both of the following:

i) Attend and /or participate in an online seminar, workshop or lecture broadcast from an African-based institution. A shared online document will be created ahead of time for each student to share details of their event and a 100 word reflection.

ii) Research an example of a recent initiative which re-centres Africa in knowledge production, or seeks to restructure global knowledge hierarchies, and be ready to talk about it with the class. Examples can be taken from the list below or student can propose their own example within the broad categories.

Area	Examples
New Conferences and Associations	Lagos Studies Association African Studies Association of Africa
New Journals and Magazines	Republic Chimurenga Chronic [Available in print at British Library and Goldsmiths]
New Universities and Research Institutes on the continent	Angaza Institute, Eastern DRC [in French] GEC-SH, ISP-Bukavu, Eastern DRC [in French]
New Initiatives within British Universities	Africa Charter – PARC Bristol AfOx – Oxford British Academy Writing Workshops Centre for Pan-African Studies, SOAS

Reading list:

Session 1 – History and theory

Required readings:

Tamale, S., and J. Oloka-Onyango. "Bitches at the Academy: Gender and Academic Freedom at the African University." *Africa Development* XXII, no. 1 (1997): 13–38.

Hountondji, Paulin. "Scientific Dependence in Africa Today." Research in African Literatures 21, no. 3 (1990): 5–15.

Mamdani, Mahmood. "The African University." London Review of Books, July 19, 2018. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n14/mahmood-mamdani/the-african-university

Optional Readings:

Owomoyela, O. "With Friends like These... a Critique of Pervasive Anti-Africanisms in Current African Studies Epistemology and Methodology." *African Studies Review*, 1994, 77–101.

Obamba, Milton O. "Uncommon Knowledge: World Bank Policy and the Unmaking of the Knowledge Economy in Africa." Higher Education Policy 26, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 83–108. https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2012.20.

Ochwa-Echel, James R. "Neoliberalism and University Education in Sub-Saharan Africa." SAGE Open 3, no. 3 (July 1, 2013): 2158244013504933. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013504933.

Session 2 – Institutional landscape

Grants, Partnerships and Funding:

Required:

Grieve, Tigist, and Rafael Mitchell. "Promoting Meaningful and Equitable Relationships? Exploring the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Funding Criteria from the Perspectives of African Partners." *The European Journal of Development Research* 32, no. 3 (July 1, 2020): 514–28. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-020-00274-z.

Optional:

Axelby, Richard, Bethel Worku-Dix, and Emma Crewe. "Global Partnerships on Paper and in Practice: Critical Observations from inside a Global Challenge Research Fund Capacity-Development Project." *Journal of International Development* Early View, no. n/a (March 16, 2022): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3649.

Fransman, Jude, Budd Hall, Rachel Hayman, Pradeep Narayanan, Kate Newman, and Rajesh Tandon. "Beyond Partnerships: Embracing Complexity to Understand and Improve Research Collaboration for Global Development." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement* 42, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 326–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2021.1872507.

Bekele, Abebe, Kathryn Chu, Lucia D'Ambruoso, Justine I. Davies, Eduardo Ferriolli, Carolyn Greig, Semira Manaseki-Holland, Denis Regnier, and Sameen Siddiqi. "Global Health Research Funding Applications: Brain Drain under Another Name?" The Lancet Global Health 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): e22–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(21)00505-2.

Data Collection:

Required:

Marchais, Gauthier, Paulin Bazuzi, and Aimable Amani Lameke. "'The Data Is Gold, and We Are the Gold-Diggers': Whiteness, Race and Contemporary Academic Research in Eastern DRC." Critical African Studies 12, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 372–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2020.1724806.

Optional:

Omanga, Duncan, and Pamela C. Mainye. "North-South Collaborations as a Way of 'Not Knowing Africa': Researching Digital Technologies in Kenya." Journal of African Cultural Studies 31, no. 3 (September 2, 2019): 273–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1630262.

Bunting, Annie, Allen Kiconco, and Joel Quirk. Research As More Than Extraction: Knowledge Production and Gender-Based Violence in African Societies. Ohio University Press, 2020. [Anthology of very short methodological reflections from different positions]

The Bukavu Series: https://www.gicnetwork.be/silent-voices-blog-bukavu-series-eng/

Conferences, Associations and Journals

Required:

Olukoshi, Adebayo. "African Scholars and African Studies." Development in Practice 16, no. 6 (November 1, 2006): 533–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520600958116.

Optional:

Guesmi, Haythem. "The Gentrification of African Studies." *Africa Is a Country*, December 1, 2018. https://africasacountry.com/2018/12/the-gentrification-of-african-studies.

Nolte, Insa. "The Future of African Studies: What We Can Do to Keep Africa at the Heart of Our Research." Journal of African Cultural Studies 31, no. 3 (September 2, 2019): 296–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1584552.

Journals, citations and publishing

Required:

Medie, Peace A., and Alice J. Kang. "Power, Knowledge and the Politics of Gender in the Global South." European Journal of Politics and Gender 1, no. 1 (July 13, 2018): 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1332/251510818X15272520831157.

Optional:

Cummings, Sarah, and Paul Hoebink. "Representation of Academics from Developing Countries as Authors and Editorial Board Members in Scientific Journals: Does This Matter to the Field of Development Studies?" The European Journal of Development Research 29, no. 2 (April 1, 2017): 369–83. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-016-0002-2.

Hedding, David William, and Gregory Breetzke. "'Here Be Dragons!' The Gross under-Representation of the Global South on Editorial Boards in Geography." *The Geographical Journal* 187, no. 4 (2021): 331–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12405.

Briggs, Ryan C., and Scott Weathers. "Gender and Location in African Politics Scholarship: The Other White Man's Burden?" *African Affairs* 115, no. 460 (July 1, 2016): 466–89. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adw009.

Session 3 – New initiatives

No required readings for session 3, but see above for require preparation.

Pre-reading for the course as a whole

Students for whom a critical or decolonial to studying Africa is completely new, will benefit from reading the following as an entry into this broader discussion:

- Wainaina, Binyavanga. "How to Write About Africa." Granta 92 (blog), 2006. https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/
- Kang, Alice J., and Peace A. Medie. "Global South Scholars Are Missing from European and US Journals. What Can Be Done about It." The Conversation, July 29, 2018. http://theconversation.com/global-south-scholars-are-missing-from-european-and-us-journals-what-can-be-done-about-it-99570.
- Gebremariam, Eyob Balcha. "The Primacy of Epistemic Justice for a Transformed Knowledge Production Ecosystem in Africa." *Perivoli Arica Research Centre*, April 26, 2022. https://parc.bristol.ac.uk/2022/04/26/the-primacy-of-epistemic-justice/.

Blogs etc:

African Voices, African Arguments https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/african-voices-african-arguments-2/

Africa is a Country https://africasacountry.com/

Eligibility:

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This course is suitable for students at any stage of their PhD. It is aimed at students who are working on Africa in some way, whether through primary data collection or engagement with secondary sources.

The course is designed with a variety of student profiles in mind. For students who have little prior critical engagement with Africanist literatures, for instance who think of their work in thematic or disciplinary terms through which they 'just happen' to be engaging with African case studies, it will offer an introduction allowing student to situated their work in the broader sweep of epistemic relationships between Africa and the Western academy. For students who are already more familiar with various debates about the nature of colonial and post-colonial knowledge production the course will be an opportunity to engage close readings of some key texts and think constructively about options for meaningfully engaging African researchers and institutions in their research journey.

Students are also very welcome to join even if their specific project does not directly engage with African case studies or literatures.

It is aimed at social scientists (politics, anthropology, geography, law, sociology, security and conflict studies, history) but would be of interest to students from other disciplines who will be doing archival work or fieldwork with human participants in Africa. Please note, the course will often use debates which are explicitly anchored in 'African Studies' however, this does not mean that students must themselves identify as being 'in' African Studies, as we will explore the relevance of these debates for social science at large.

Standard LISS DTP stipulations:

You must be a PhD student at either King's College London, Queen Mary University of London, or Imperial College London, using social science methodologies, and be based in a department that does not already offer this training. If you are not a LISS ESRC funded student, you must register with us first before enrolling via SkillsForge.

Pre course preparation:
If you would like to attend this workshop you will be required to participate in all three sessions and read all essential texts in advance. Students should use Google Scholar and their University library search engines to access the readings. If your institution does not have access to a particular reading please e-mail the course convenor for PDFs. Students should be prepared to spend some time between sessions working independently and in groups as relevant.

Number of students:

Min: 6

Max: 18