

The African Centre for Epistemology of Philosophy of Science ([ACEPS](#))
at the University of Johannesburg invites abstract submissions for:

Bearing Witness: Citizens and The Law in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Melville Community Centre Chiesa di Pazzo Lupi
19-21st June 2025



ACEPS
THE AFRICAN CENTRE
FOR EPISTEMOLOGY AND
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

The legacy of Apartheid in South Africa is defined by an oppressive, coercive, and violent dynamic between the state, citizenry and the law where both political power and epistemic authority were monopolised. In the post-apartheid context, this historical injustice has precipitated a multitude of epistemic wrongs, manifesting in the suppression of marginalised voices and the systematic erasure of entire knowledge systems and practices.

This workshop uses the framework of bearing witness to epistemic wrongs, pioneered by Jennifer Lackey, to reflect on such wrongs. The aim is to foster critical dialogue and explore avenues for epistemically reparative action, through an intergenerational and cross-disciplinary inquiry into the moral, epistemological, and practical imperatives for reforming and repairing the relationship between the people and the institutions that govern them. This involves not only confronting the enduring injustices inherited from apartheid but also examining additional wrongs that persist in contemporary society, thereby reimagining how practices might be reconfigured on a broader scale. Through the integration of historical analysis, philosophical and academic inquiry, dialogue with Freedom Fighters, Indigenous law experts, and artists, this event aspires to chart a course towards a more equitable and accountable society, ultimately restoring trust between the state, law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The workshop will feature academic presentations, discussion panels and spaces dedicated to artistic expression through poetry, painting, drumming and beadwork, thereby grounding the discussions in the tangible realities of people's lived experiences. ACEPS will also be collaborating with the Seth Mazibuko Foundation, who are organising an event for next year's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Youth Uprising. This partnership reinforces the commitment to historical memory and social justice and underscores the importance of linking past struggles with ongoing contemporary efforts to achieve reparative transformation towards the future.

Abstracts are invited for academic flash-talks on the following topics (this list is not exhaustive)

- The legacy of epistemic injustice in policing
- Historical antagonism between law enforcement and communities
- The role of traditional and new media in constructing legal narratives and public perceptions of criminality
- Decolonial responses to the marginalisation of African legal traditions and worldviews
- The incorporation of Indigenous epistemologies in judicial practices within and beyond customary law
- Feminist and queer perspectives of the legal and justice systems
- Bearing witness to untold stories and silenced narratives
- Potential avenues and opportunities for community reparations and the future of justice in South Africa
- Student Protests and The Law
- Impacts of disproportionality in sentencing on marginalised communities

Abstract length: 300-500 words

Submission deadline: 15 April 2025

Notification of acceptance: 30 April 2025

Email abstracts: shened@uj.ac.za

Email queries: diphom@uj.ac.za

Postgrad funding: Accepted postgraduate students will be at least partially funded.

All accepted presenters will be expected to submit a written piece to be collected and provided to attendees and participants as well as published on the ACEPS platform. Authors will then present a 10-minute 'flash' talk at the event followed by 10 minutes of Q&A. While we expect the written piece to be richly representative of the author's discipline, the presentation should strive to be as accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Funding

This event is a part of the [Epistemic Reparations Global Working Group](#) supported by the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs at Northwestern University. It is also the fourth event of a three-year collaboration on *Epistemic Wrongs, Blame, and Reparations* between Jennifer Lackey (Northwestern University), Cameron Boulton (Brandon University), and Veli Mitova (University of Johannesburg).

Organisers: Dimpho Moletsane, Shené de Rijk, Paige Benton, Nomaswazi Kubeka, Harry Wilson Kapatika, Veli Mitova



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Epistemic Reparations
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