



## **ANTHROPOLOGY SOUTHERN AFRICA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**30 September to 2 October 2016**

**Hosted by the School of Human and Social Sciences, University of Venda**

**Conference Theme: Rethinking Anthropology in the “negative” moment**

### **Call for papers and panel proposals**

“Twenty one years after freedom, we have now fully entered what looks like a *negative moment*. This is a moment most African postcolonial societies have experienced. Like theirs in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, ours is grey and almost murky. It lacks clarity...A negative moment is a moment when new antagonisms emerge while old ones remain unresolved.” Achille Mbembe, 2015, in *Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive*, a document produced and which formed the basis of a series of public lectures given at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg). This radical moment of change has been witnessed in higher education recently with the hashtag movements, the #rhodesmustfall, #openstellenbosch, #endoutsourcing and the #feesmustfall.

In this conference, we would like to engage with the notion of the “negative” moment, where clarity is lacking in the struggles of this postcolonial era. The lack of clarity is not limited to higher education only, as indicated above, but has been observed in numerous other contexts through protests. These struggles are contestations to representations in various planes. This leads to pointed questions as to the relevance of Anthropology in these moments, as well as the social concerns these movements and protests point to on the subcontinent. How can southern African anthropologists engage positively and thoughtfully with renewed calls for the decolonisation of the humanities in African universities? This year's Anthropology Southern Africa annual conference, to be held at the University of Venda from 30 September to 2 October 2016, invites papers and panels that engage with this theme from ethnographic, theoretical, or pedagogical angles. How can southern African anthropologists engage positively and thoughtfully with renewed calls for the

decolonisation of the humanities in African universities? In part we are inspired here by the need to bring southern African voices to bear in global conversations about the decolonization of knowledge and the relativization of 'Western' canons of thought about the subjects of humanistic scholarship.

The themes for the conference would therefore attempt to address the relevance of Anthropology in moments like these while focused on though not limited to the following:

- The state of the discipline since its introduction in the subcontinent
- New challenges emerging in the discipline
- Anthropology and the postcolonial public
- Anthropological research in the postcolonial moment
- Decolonization of theory and method
- The place and relevance of Anthropology in the postcolonial era
- Anthropology and the curriculum in African universities

Please send proposals for panels to the organisers by 31 May 2016. The deadline for abstracts is 30 June 2016. The organisers are particularly interested in receiving panel proposals. Proposals should include abstracts of no more than 250 words. For panel proposals, please include a list of prospective participants and their institutional affiliations if these have already been identified.

Send your abstracts and panel proposals electronically to Dolphin Mabale: [dolphin.mabale@univen.ac.za](mailto:dolphin.mabale@univen.ac.za)

Should you have any queries about the conference, please contact us at: 015 962 8131 or 015 962 8342

We look forward to welcoming you to the University of Venda