The conference theme is “De-centering international communication studies: African perspectives”.

The conference theme builds on the imperative to de-Westernize communication studies that has been a concern in global communication scholarship for over a decade. This imperative has intensified in recent years as a result of calls to ‘decolonize’ communication scholarship by engaging with historical and contemporary power asymmetries in knowledge production.

The theme invites contributions that will prompt participants to think through these imperatives from an African vantage point. The rationale is not to merely provide a platform for research on communication practices, norms and ideologies (as these are found on the African continent), but rather to use African viewpoints and experiences as a lens on global debates. Thus, the conference will seek to provide a platform from where global communication scholarship is interrogated and African scholars can ‘speak back’ to and disrupt the metropolitan centres of knowledge production.

The act of ‘looking back’ at the European and colonial is not only looking back at but also looking back into the past. How can African scholars reorient the idea of Africa being the ground of case studies to test European theories? How can historical materials – archival or ‘rediscovered’ texts – support future research and innovation, and how can the reflective align with the prospective? How can new theories and models from Africa and the diaspora influence global perspectives?

This reflection on African viewpoints on global issues takes place at the juncture of several contemporary moments of crisis. Africa and the rest of the Global South are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and pandemics. Geopolitical tensions reverberate through African economies while armed conflicts on the continent often go unnoticed or neglected in news media discourses. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the Global South disproportionately due to vaccine nationalism and maximalist approaches to intellectual property, while theoretical models seeking to explain the mitigation of disinformation and the development of health communication strategies often remain rooted in the contextual conditions of the Global North.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University (SU) are appropriate locations from which to interrogate questions of decoloniality in communication scholarship. UCT is the site of the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student protests, which sparked an international student protest movement calling for the decolonization of curricula and the broadening of access to higher education. Likewise, at SU the #OpenStellenbosch movement opened up debates about the role of public universities in a transforming democracy. A great deal of this activism was mediated. At Stellenbosch
University the fallist movement also generated a lot of support and helped to initiate change. However, racist human rights abuses that occurred on campus in 2022 opened up wounds and led to the constitution of a commission led by Justice Sisi Khampepe to conduct an independent enquiry into allegations of racism at Stellenbosch University (SU), serving as a reminder of the incomplete work of decolonisation at Higher Education institutions. The ICA in Africa regional conference offers opportunities for engagement with scholars, students and public intellectuals from around the continent to debate these important and topical issues.

Papers and panels could address the following themes:

- **Theories and praxis of decolonisation**
- **Decolonising pedagogy**
- **Political economy of knowledge production**
- **Intellectual property, platforms and access to knowledge**
- **African perspectives on internationalising communication studies**
- **The African archive**
- **Journalism in Africa**
- **Digital media ecologies & practices in Africa**
- **African screen cultures**
- **Streaming platforms and African audiences/texts**
- **Representations of Africa (including branding, marketing, etc)**
- **Social change communication, social justice and activism**
- **Africa and the climate crisis**
- **Freedom of expression**
- **Attacks on and threats to journalism**
- **Trolling, cyber misogyny and doxxing**
- **Disinformation, populism and xenophobia**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

**Deadline for submission of abstracts:** 30 APR 2023  
**Notification of abstract acceptance:** 15 JUN 2023

Abstract submission (250 words) **SUBMIT HERE**

**Enquiries:** Chair of LOC, **Herman Wasserman:** via roxanne.adams@uct.ac.za
PRECONFERENCE FOR EMERGING SCHOLARS

A pre-conference for emerging scholars will be held. Details will follow. For enquiries about this preconference, contact Brian Ekdale: brian-ekdale@uiowa.edu

REGISTRATION DATES

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CONFERENCE FEES

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