



ON BEING HUMAN

GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

GOVERNANCE

UCT's approach to promoting a better understanding of what it means to be human involves exploring a range of issues related to social justice, human rights, diversity and cultural expression. Central to these conversations is the importance of engaging with the diverse experiences, cultures and histories that make us human – and promoting respect and empathy for all.



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GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

Research at UCT explores how gender and sexuality intersect with other social and cultural categories in Africa, such as race, class and ethnicity, as well as how the complex interplay of these contexts creates dynamics and challenges that are unique to our continent.



GENDER, HEALTH AND JUSTICE RESEARCH UNIT (GHJRU)

The **GHJRU** is an interdisciplinary research unit. It unites scholars, NGOs and practitioners to develop and implement innovative, interdisciplinary research and social interventions. These are focused on social exclusion and violence in a range of social, political and institutional settings. They have a proven history of empirical, evaluation and monitoring projects, many of which are foundational studies in the areas of gender-based violence, sexual and gender minority rights and reproductive rights. The unit uses its empirical research to develop well-informed, evidence-based advocacy positions to support legal and policy reform in South Africa and similarly situated countries.



AFRICAN GENDER INSTITUTE (AGI)

The **AGI** is a feminist research institute located within the Department of African Feminist Studies. They are committed to connecting with African women who identify as feminist thinkers and activists across disciplinary, institutional and geographic borders. AGI has led research projects on gender justice, sexuality and human rights; peace and conflict studies; religion and sexuality; and capacity building in relation to gender and women's studies.



CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

UCT research in this field encompasses the study of democratic governance, political participation and the protection of human rights – not only for citizens but also for migrants and refugees. This research aids in shaping public policies that advance the principles of democracy, equality and commitment to inclusive and equitable societies.



INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY IN AFRICA (IDCPA)

The **IDCPA** was founded in 2017 with the primary goal of conducting research aimed at strengthening and sustaining democracy throughout the continent. The institute's research is centred around three main areas of focus. Firstly, the effectiveness and predictability of political institutions, including the judiciary. Secondly, the elements that promote an engaged and critical citizenry. Lastly, the impact of public policies on various dimensions of citizenship, encompassing social and economic aspects as well as political and civil dimensions. Their approach is rooted in rigorous empirical research. It has a focus on Africa and a critical engagement with global scholarship, contributing to the ongoing re-evaluation of democracy in the African context while developing theory specific to the continent.



REFUGEE RIGHTS UNIT

The **Refugee Rights Unit** is one of the Law Faculty's critical areas of work in terms of community engagement, social responsiveness and direct application of theory to practice. The research unit and community law clinic conducts applied research in refugee law and related topics. It undertakes a significant amount of targeted advocacy and training of government officials, the judiciary, civil society partners and refugee communities. The unit is also participating in global discussions on legislative frameworks and policies around refugee status in various jurisdictions.



HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

The exploration of heritage and history takes on particular significance in the South African and African context. UCT's research delves into the historical narratives, the lasting impact of colonialism and the intricate dynamics of identity and race across the continent. This research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to be human in Africa and provides a roadmap to what is required for true reconciliation, inclusivity and social justice.



INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES IN AFRICA (HUMA)

Research at **HUMA** is informed by the theme, 'On Being Human'. HUMA aims to contribute to resurgent scholarly interest in questions of what we humans share – even if in recognition of profound differences – as the basis for grappling with the contours of 'a good and dignified life'. HUMA's research is organised around four key clusters: humanity and its limits; human vs non-human; humane vs inhumane; and humanist vs anti-humanist. These clusters are the basis for thoroughly interdisciplinary research and debate, along with worldly readings of the distinctive and generic aspects of politics and ways of being social in contemporary Africa.



CENTRE FOR CURATING THE ARCHIVE (CCA)

The **CCA** works actively with many kinds of collections, developing curatorship as a creative site of knowledge. Projects, publications and courses aim, through practice, to open novel combinations of the historically separated domains of the creative arts and the truth-claiming discourses of history and the social and natural sciences. The CCA recognises the need to both conserve collections and make them accessible to artists, scholars and students. At the heart of the centre is the understanding of collections and archives as important sites of knowledge, as products of traditions of art, ideas and values, and of the social and political circumstances of both their making and reception. The CCA works with several institutions in the realisation of its projects and curates exhibitions in South Africa and abroad.



FIVE-HUNDRED YEAR ARCHIVE (FHYA)

The **FHYA** project involves close collaboration with several museums, libraries, national archives and other institutions locally, on the continent and abroad, to explore the history of colonialism and empire in southern Africa. Through digital innovation it aims to stimulate engagement with the neglected eras of the southern African past before the advent of European colonialism. The project seeks to address a gap in the historical record by focusing on archival materials that have not been systematically digitised or made available to researchers. The project's team is digitising a wide range of materials including handwritten documents, photographs and audio recordings, to create a digital archive that can be accessed by scholars around the world.





GOVERNANCE

Effective governance is essential for safeguarding human rights, ensuring social justice and upholding the principles of democracy. Research at UCT seeks to actively contribute to addressing the complex challenges related to governance, accountability and political stability that are prevalent in many African countries.



DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND RIGHTS UNIT (DGRU)

The **DGRU** is one of Africa's leading research centres in judicial governance. Their solution-driven research is aimed at providing policy and practice recommendations. The DGRU's mission is to strengthen judiciaries in Africa through research, judicial training and providing free access to the law. A key project includes Judges Matter, which researches and monitors the judiciaries in Africa.



LAND AND ACCOUNTABILITY RESEARCH CENTRE (LARC)

LARC forms part of a collaborative network constituted as the Alliance for Rural Democracy. It provides strategic support to struggles for the recognition and protection of rights and living customary law in the former homeland areas of South Africa. The centre is particularly interested in the ways in which laws and policies frame power relations within these areas and threaten ongoing initiatives for democratic change and accountability at the local level. LARC helps rural communities defend and assert their land rights, confront oppression and hold power to account.



LABOUR, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE (LDG)

With a presence in both commercial law and the Department of Sociology, the **LDG** research unit conducts research in South Africa and increasingly in countries in the sub-Saharan African region in the fields of labour, development and governance and the interfaces between them.

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