

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences



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Research Clusters

LETTERS EN SOSIALE WETENSKAPPE



Arts and Social Sciences
EyeAkhisiyoobuGcisa! neNzukulwazi ngeN
Lectore en Sosiale Wetenskappe



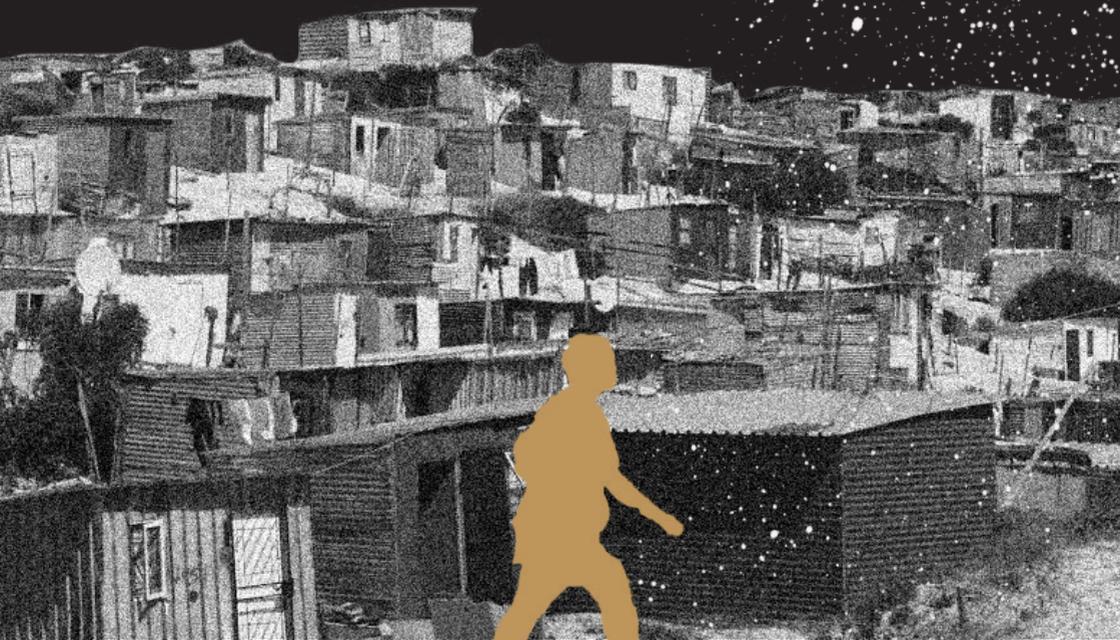
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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University strives to produce research that is interdisciplinary yet retains disciplinary integrity. The research activities of the Faculty loosely fall into the following research clusters. The names of researchers working in a particular field can be viewed by scanning the QR codes.

Poverty,, Inequality,, and, Development.



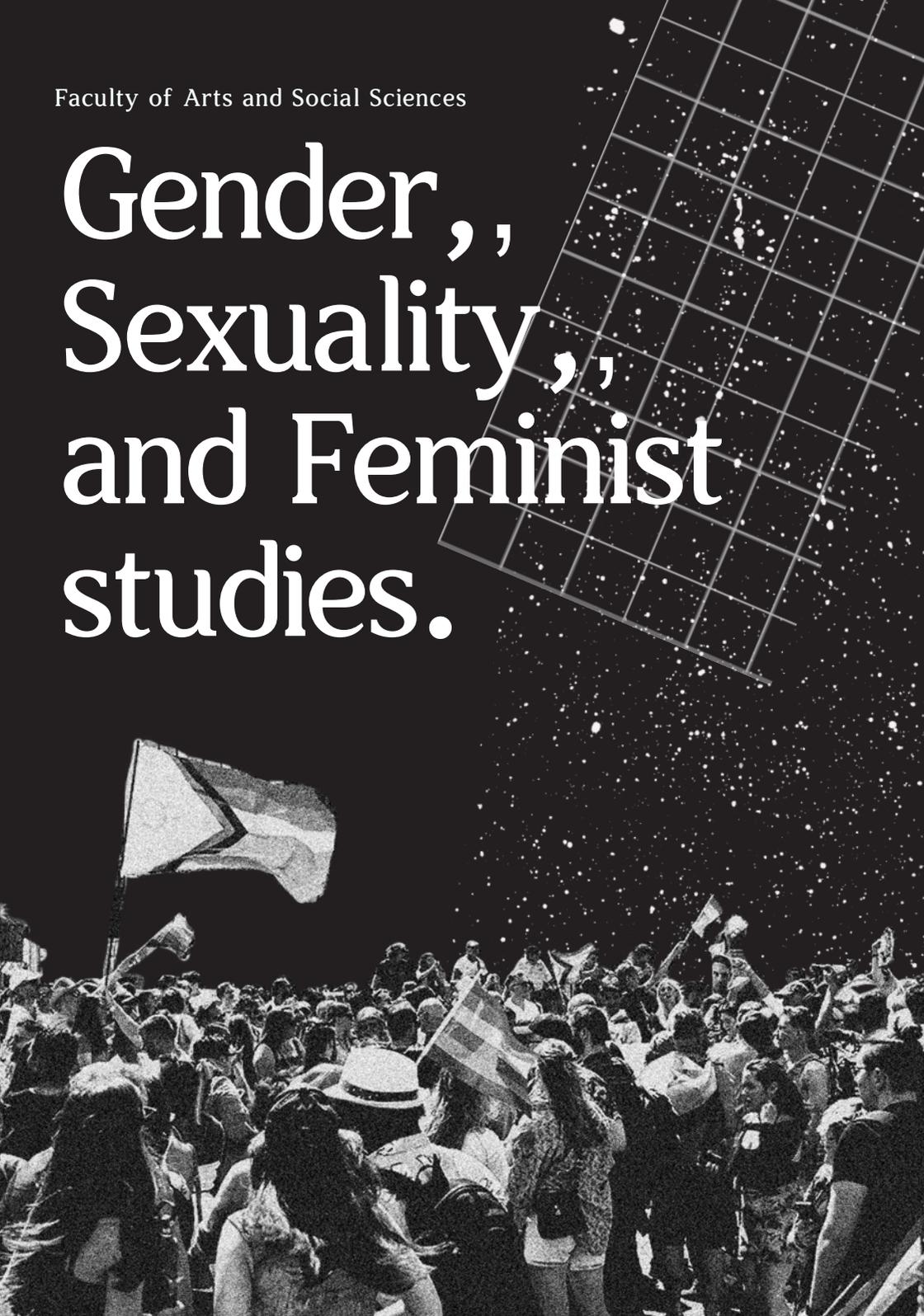
Our Research Focus

Researchers working in this cluster, examine how histories of dispossession and structural injustice intersect to sustain inequality and how alternative pathways for development can be forged.

Our work spans social, political and economic structures. We interrogate contemporary policies about migration, labour markets and cultural narratives of inequality. Researchers collaborate across disciplines to understand how power and resources are distributed. They reimagine models of development that prioritize equity and sustainability. This research informs local and global conversations on justice and development while moving towards more inclusive futures.



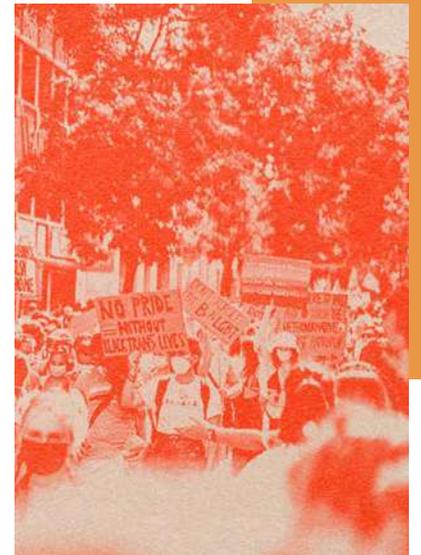
Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist studies.



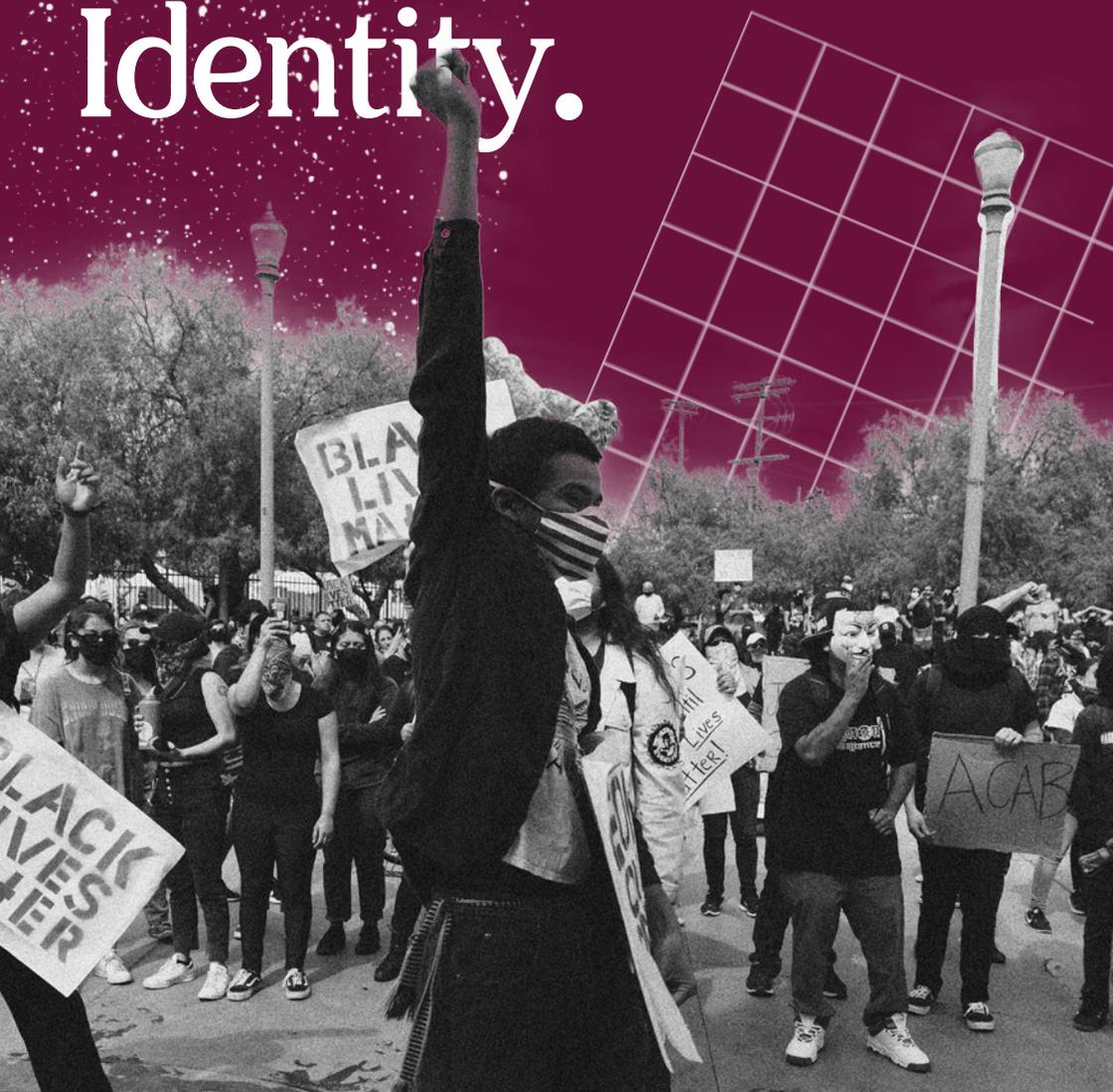
Our Research Focus

At FASS, researchers challenge entrenched power relations, troubling how gender and sexuality are constructed. From intimate life to institutional structures we question how gender is lived and resisted.

Our work explores how identities are formed and regulated. We ask, How does gender intersect with race, class, disability and other structures of power? We attempt to answer these questions by focusing on the lived experiences of marginalised communities. Our scholarship is both analytical and activist, contributing to a more just and inclusive world.



Race, Culture, and Identity.



Our Research Focus

Race and culture are not static categories. They are made and remade through histories and everyday encounters. This cluster investigates how identities are shaped by cultural meanings, power dynamics and political struggles.

Our research spans media representations, cultural practices, and social formations. We explore how race, culture and identity intersect with other hierarchies. We examine how histories of colonialism and apartheid continue to shape lived realities. By centring both critical theory and lived experience, we highlight how communities resist and reimagine identity



Language and Society.



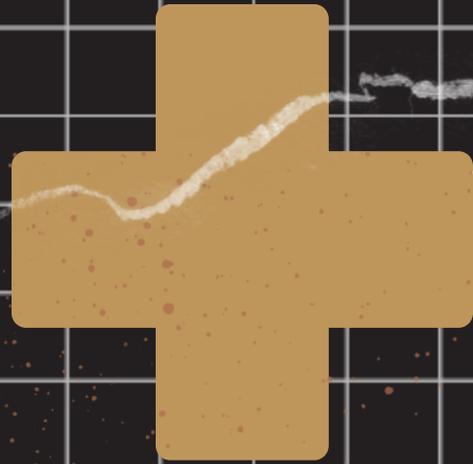
Our Research Focus

Language is more than communication. It is a powerful social force. Our researchers explore intricate relationships between language, culture and society in multilingual contexts.

We work across theoretical and applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, language acquisition, literary studies and creative writing to examine how language both reflects and shapes social realities. This cluster's research highlights language as a site of power and transformation.



Health, Welfare, and Human Security.



Our Research Focus

What makes a society safe, healthy and just? This cluster explores how health and well-being are shaped by intersecting social, cultural, political and economic forces.

Researchers investigate social determinants of health, early childhood development, illness and care practices, structural inequalities and the politics of health policy. We examine how health is lived, governed and contested. Our research informs more equitable approaches to health systems, welfare and human security.



Politics, Governance, and Citizenship.



Our Research Focus

This cluster examines how governance systems, political movements and civic actors influence structures of authority and participation.

Research ranges from comparative political systems and state formation to the role of civil society in advancing democratic futures. We interrogate how power operates and how it can be contested to build more just and inclusive societies. Our work is grounded in historical depth and contemporary political realities.



Ethics, Social Justice, and Human Rights.



Our Research Focus

This cluster investigates how moral reasoning, human rights and social justice shape political and social worlds.

Our researchers address issues from AI ethics to medical decision-making, law, governance, and military contexts. We examine how rights are protected, violated and reimagined in different societies. And how ethical frameworks can inform transformative action. Our goal is to deepen understanding of justice while shaping policies and practices.



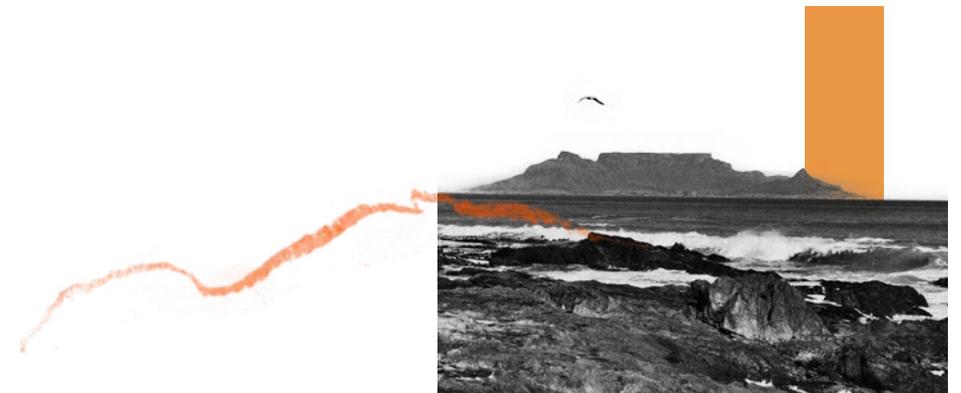
Land, Environment, and Sustainable Development.



Our Research Focus

Land and environment are at the heart of struggles for justice. This cluster investigates how human societies shape, and are shaped by, the natural world. Research spans land use, natural resource management, climate change, and environmental humanities.

We engage with the Anthropocene as both a planetary condition and a cultural challenge, exploring how art, literature, and philosophy respond to environmental crises. Our work connects ecological questions with social and political dynamics, supporting pathways to sustainable futures.



Conflict, Violence, and Reconciliation.



Our Research Focus

From personal relationships to national histories, conflict and violence leave deep marks on individuals and communities.

This cluster examines the causes, consequences, and transformations of conflict.

Our researchers explore historical trauma, conflict resolution, reconciliation and everyday forms of violence – from war and terrorism to gender-based violence. Rooted in South Africa's history and global contexts, this research seeks to understand and repair the legacies or after lives of violence. This cluster's work informs peacebuilding, justice initiatives, and community healing.



Science, Technology, and Communication.

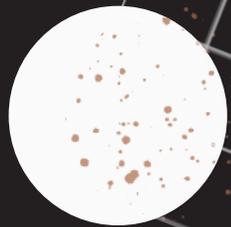
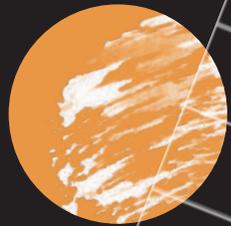


Our Research Focus

We examine how innovation shapes communication and, socio-political life and equality. From AI and digital media to biotechnology and public health. Our research also considers how knowledge is produced, mediated, and contested. By bridging technology studies and critical social inquiry, we help shape responsible and just technological futures.



Performance and Visual Arts.



Our Research Focus

Art is a powerful way of seeing, feeling, and imagining the world. This cluster explores how performance and visual culture – from theatre to film, music, and public art – express and contest social realities.

Researchers examine artistic production, spectatorship, and meaning-making, asking how art reflects histories, shapes identities, and intervenes in power relations. We analyse the representation of race, gender, and politics in artistic practices while celebrating creativity as a form of critical inquiry. This work affirms the arts as vital spaces of resistance, imagination, and transformation.



Digital Futures.



Our Research Focus

This interdisciplinary cluster explores the intersections of digital technologies with culture, society, and knowledge production.

We engage with computational approaches, such as text mining, data visualisation, and machine learning, to reimagine literary, historical, and social inquiry. Researchers analyse how digital platforms shape power, discourse, and behaviour while interrogating their ethical and political implications. Digital Futures bridges disciplinary boundaries and opens new pathways for critical, creative engagement with technology.





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