

Call for Papers

Postgraduate Student Conference

23 – 24 May 2024



Faculty of Law
Fakulteit Regsgeleerdheid
Lefapha la Molao

Make today matter

The Departments of Jurisprudence and Public Law in the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria (UP) will be hosting a Postgraduate Student Conference in 2024.

We hereby extend a **call for papers** to **all UP postgraduate students**.

Date: 23 – 24 May 2024

Location: Plant Sciences Complex Auditorium, Room 3-50, Hatfield Campus, University of Pretoria

Call for Papers: Power, transformation and sustainability

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a 'blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future'. At the core of the 2030 Agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as an urgent call for action by, and for, all 'developed' and 'developing' countries.

In recent years, there has been a growing demand for public institutions, such as universities, to actively contribute towards the realisation of the SDGs through research. Within the interconnected spheres of Public Law and Jurisprudence, the discourse on sustainability necessitates an engagement with the challenges and tensions brought on by exponential technological advancement, the flood of fast fashion and overconsumption, unrelenting poverty, devastating health disparities and unprecedented ecological destruction. These challenges and tensions grow out of historical and contemporary formations of colonial power and capitalism, punctuated by powerful racialised and gendered dynamics. In this context, the question of sustainability – sustainable societies, and sustainable planetary life – raises critical questions linked to power and transformation.

According to the National Framework for Sustainable Development in South Africa, the main focus of the SDGs is to enhance human well-being and quality of life, especially for those affected by inequality and poverty, with intergenerational equity and resource use efficiency at its core. However, instances of homelessness and landlessness are pressing reminders of how structures of power (the state, corporations, dominant social groups, etc.) resist and undermine genuine and fundamental social transformation. The call for decent work and economic growth further accentuates the ever-growing abyssal line between those who have access to these goals and those who remain on the margins of society, without a voice and without recourse. The interdependence between the planet, people and prosperity are evident from the SDGs, but the actual impact of this interconnectedness on the labour force, private spheres and the state demand serious interrogation. Similarly, the relationship between the Global South and the Global North, historically shaped by imperial hierarchy and extractive practices, calls for interrogation.

The Departments of Jurisprudence and Public Law hereby extend a call for papers to **postgraduate students from all faculties at UP**, whose research in various fields speaks to the challenges and tensions of sustainability.

Postgraduate students from all faculties at UP are encouraged to share perspectives on the theme of ***Power, transformation and sustainability***. In particular, students are urged to critically reflect on, and interrogate, the many cross-cutting dimensions of sustainable development, and how they link to questions of power and transformation.

Possible themes for reflection include:

- Defining and contesting conceptions of, and alternatives to, sustainability.
- The relationship between socio-economic justice and sustainability.
- The relevance, possibilities and failures of discourses of development and sustainable development.
- Critical perspectives on the UN and/or the international legal order.
- Contested issues of public power and state governance.
- The limits and potential of transformation in public law matters.
- The relationship between law and technology, the digital age, 4IR and artificial intelligence.
- The legal and economic effects of overproduction, fast fashion and/or overconsumption.
- Legal perspectives on poverty, gender inequality, racism and systems of power.
- The relationship between education, power and transformation.
- Historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives on sustainability.
- Sustainability and animal rights/welfare.
- Sustainable development in cities/communities, and in relation to land/property.

This list of themes is not exhaustive. Postgraduate students are also welcome to reflect on their existing research problems, through the lens of the conference theme of ***Power, transformation and sustainability***.

Abstracts

Interested **postgraduate students from all faculties at UP** are encouraged to submit a titled abstract of 200 words, describing the topic to be discussed or problem to be examined, and the approach which the presentation will adopt.

Abstracts must be submitted via email to postgraduateconference@up.ac.za **by Monday, 1 April 2024**.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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