

# Call for Papers

## Postgraduate Student Conference

6-7 November 2023



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The Departments of Jurisprudence and Public Law in the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria (UP) hereby extend a call for papers to all UP postgraduate students.

**Date:** 6-7 November 2023

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

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### Power, transformation and sustainability

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to serve 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 change and remain uncommitted to a genuine and fundamental transformation from below. 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 and state profit 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 all UP postgraduate students, which speaks to the challenges and tensions of sustainability, as they find expression in their various fields of research. UP postgraduate students from all faculties 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 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.
- Poverty, gender inequality, racism and systems of power.
- Education, power and transformation.



Source: United Nations <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

## Abstracts

Interested postgraduate students registered at UP are encouraged to submit an 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](mailto:postgraduateconference@up.ac.za) **by Friday, 29 September 2023.**

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