



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

MA African-European Cultural Relations



www.up.ac.za/study-europe

Decolonising knowledge
Rethinking identities



Interdisciplinarity: The Programme Co-ordinating Committee



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Overview

1. The Euro-centrism Trap

- The Post-Colonial Game
- **Solution:** Decolonizing the paradigms

2. The MA African-European Cultural Relations at UP

2.1 Curriculum

2.2 The role of languages in the curriculum

2.3 Exchange programmes and bursaries

3. Application Process

4. What our first Graduandi say



1. The Euro-centrism Trap

African Anthropology of Europe?

Achille Mbembe:

“The paradigms of Ethnicity, of Africanism and even culture are inherently European. In mirroring them back does not free us from them.”

Dipesh Chakrabarty:

“History is distorted by the Western-European perspective. We can only describe (Indian) history by indicating to the unsaid, undocumented and undiscoursed lacunae...”



1. The Euro-centrism Trap

served. We could look at one rule of the 'playing the Post-Colonial Game' which appears to be gaining immense popularity these days. We can agree to call it the rule of 'post-modernist injunction'. Briefly, it reads: we in the West are losing our flush of self-confidence, philosophy tells us we can no longer be canonical about our canons, all is flux, nothing is absolute, agreed? If you, the Calibanini, are to appeal to us in our state of mental fatigue, play the fool for our post-modern delight. Pick a card and proceed to make a choice. You can choose either of the following:

(a) to oppose us by giving us your most savage, pre-Prosperrian world-pictures, so that we may feel righteous about our estrangement from you;

(N. B. that pastime wearies us after a while - there's too much of you in it);

(b) to play undercover on our side by appearing to oppose us;

(N. B. you know you can never win, so do your damnest. Mock at our colonial enterprise, question the institutions we question, our Euro-centredness, the lot. We need you to hold the mirror for our reflections, we can, afterall, "only know ourselves through the assessment others have made of us."¹³)



1. The Euro-centrism Trap

The solution: Decolonizing the paradigms of knowledge

- Why is the postcolonial game a dead end?
- Constructivist and relativist approach
- “Entanglement”
- “Practice”
- We transform the paradigms of culture



2. The MA African-European Cultural Relations at UP

2.1 Curriculum

2.2 The role of languages in the curriculum

2.3 Exchange programmes and bursaries



2.1 Curriculum

Minimum credits required:	[180]
Research:	[90]
Coursework modules:	[90]

Curriculum	Credits
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<u>Research</u>	
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AKV 895: Mini-dissertation: African-European cultural relations	[90]
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<u>Core modules*</u>	
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AKV 801 Cultural theory	[20]
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AKV 802 History of African-European cultural relations	[20]
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AKV 803 Lekgotla	[10]
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AKV 804 Applied additional module**	[20]
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AKV 805 Inter-disciplinary studies of African-European relations (in the selected field of specialisation)	[20]
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2. Curriculum

Core modules*

AKV 801	Cultural theory	[20]
AKV 802	History of African-European cultural relations	[20]
AKV 803	Lekgotla	[10]
AKV 804	Applied additional module**	[20]
AKV 805	Inter-disciplinary studies of African-European relations (in the selected field of specialisation)	[20]

Note:

*Two of the 20-credit modules may be obtained at a university in Europe.

**If a student does not have a European language other than English at second-year level, such a module should be taken; otherwise a project/practical could be done in the selected field of specialisation in consultation with the 'field mentor'.

Duration: The programme must be completed in two years.



2. Curriculum

1st year:

AKV 801

AKV 802

L e k g o t l a

2nd year:

AKV 804

AKV 805

AKV 895



2. Curriculum

Fields of specialization

Field 1: Narratives, visual worlds, symbolic spaces.

This field deals with stories people tell themselves to make sense of their existence, as well as with symbols and imaginary reality constructions. It leads to a critical re-evaluation of truth granting processes.

Field 2: Socio-historical dynamics

This field deals with the chronology and dynamics of (power) relations, encounters, counter-encounters and its effects. This can include sociological, political, historical or other approaches towards such dynamics.

Field 3: African-European relations underlining our beliefs and values.

This can include studies of the history of human rights in Africa, of gender, class or race driven norms, of how such norms and traditions change, what we imagine as “our” norms, how norms are codified or what we take for granted.



2. Curriculum

Fields of specialization contd.

Field 4: Political constructions.

This refers to political constructions in public, private and market institutions on communal, national or inter- and transnational levels. It refers to the cultural practices and habits of agency, to how people make things happen, how to negotiate habits and social actions, how power or representation is created, organised, distributed and subverted.

Field 5: Languages, cultures, translations.

This refers to specific language-oriented approaches on the dynamics of African-European relations and refers to “language” as meaning making mechanism beyond mere communicative competences.



2.2 The role of languages in the curriculum

Admission requirements:

- An approved honours degree from any field in the humanities, social sciences, public administration, education or law, obtained with an average of at least 70%.
- At least one European language other than English completed at a university first-year level.

Curriculum note for AKV 804:

If a student does not have a European language other than English at second-year level, such a module should be taken; otherwise a project/practical could be done in the selected field of specialisation in consultation with the 'field mentor'.



2.2 The role of languages in the curriculum

Why study a European language at a University in Africa ?

- Globalisation = multilingualism
- Entanglement between languages and cultures
- **Soft skill** versus hard skill. “A language to live by.”
- Languages are “trivial”.



Language is more than Communication



Decolonising knowledge
Rethinking identities



2.3 Exchange programme and bursaries

University of Konstanz: Erasmus Plus

University of Porto: Erasmus Plus

University of Nijmegen

University of Vienna

Humboldt Universität Berlin

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3. What our Graduandi say:

Asked what was of particular value in the programme, **Pamela Ganyi** referred to the diversity of the students: 'Different backgrounds, different countries ... We not only "shared ideas" but also argued about true issues.' Pamela is employed at Fragomen Worldwide but is considering doing a PhD.

For **Sikho Siyotula** the most concrete result of the experience was learning 'what postcolonial studies is all about ... And now I see it everywhere: exactly what postcolonial studies is.' With her background in fine arts, she particularly appreciated 'meeting other students from all over the world ... Seeing that other people are also concerned about what concerns us ... It helped me in terms of academia, being a researcher and working in a peer group.' She is now doing a PhD in Hamburg or Berlin.

For **Chané Rama Dahya** the critical reading of Derek Hook's text on Homi Bhabha was an unforgettable experience: 'It is constantly on my mind.' Furthermore, she appreciated that she 'was not stuck in one discipline, [but instead was able] to think ... right across the board.'