

Call for papers: Researching Africa Day 2018

African Studies Beyond the Binary: Critical Encounters at the Intersection

University of Oxford

Saturday 3 March 2018

Researching Africa Day is a conference for graduate students. Abstract submissions are welcome from doctoral and masters students only

For all their utility as an orienting device, the binaries we invoke in scholarship have their limitations. Ultimately, boundaries exist to the extent that they are enacted. Social, political and economic phenomena do not oblige us by aligning with convenient abstractions: as Africanists, our subject matter may spill over the borders of carved-out nation-states; show disregard for the discontinuity between colonial and postcolonial timelines; or challenge what we presuppose as “masculine” and “feminine”. Where these artificial frontiers are reproduced in research, they demand our critique. The gulf between theory and observation is widened when we pit as mutually exclusive the global and local; rural and urban; state and non-state; indigenous and foreign; subjugated and liberated; formal and informal; and elite and subaltern (for example). Our interpretations improve when we recognise and approach empirical phenomena as blended. The alternative is to risk overlooking and under-theorising the experience of being “in between”. At worst, critical encounters at the point of overlap are rendered invisible.

Researching Africa Day 2018 is about embracing layers of meaning, being and doing. By bringing together a multidisciplinary group of scholars, this one-day conference aims to stimulate a conversation around intersections of experience – and how we might go about engaging and theorising them. In doing so, we hope to develop collective appreciation for both the potentials and pitfalls of the dichotomised gaze.

We invite doctoral and other graduate students to submit papers on research that broadly engages this theme in an African context.

Abstract submissions are due by Friday 19 January 2018 at midnight. Abstracts may vary between 150 and 350 words, and be attached as a PDF or Microsoft Word document. The document should specify the applicant's full name, university and email address.

Please email submissions to RADOxford2018@gmail.com

Convenors

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The conference organisers are grateful to the African Studies Centre at Oxford University and St Anthony's College for their support. Regrettably, we are unable to cover the expenses of participants. Interested applicants are encouraged to seek funding within their own institutions and networks.