

College of Human Sciences

Research Focus Areas 2026

African Languages

- African Languages and the Macro-Environment
- African Languages Linguistics
- African Languages Literature (Traditional and Modern)
- Children's Literature
- Computational Morphology
- Folklore
- Language Planning and Language Policy
- Onomastics
- Terminology and Lexicography
- Translation and Interpretation

Afrikaans & Theory of Literature

- Afrikaans Literature
 - Afrikaans Prose
 - Afrikaans Poetry
 - Afrikaans Drama
 - The Fourth Genre: Literary Nonfiction
 - Literary Historiography
 - Afrikaans Gay Literature
 - Queer Studies
 - Cultural Studies
 - Women's studies
 - Critical Animal and Plant Studies
 - Ecocriticism
 - The Detective Novel/Crime Fiction
 - The Horror Genre
 - Ghost Literature
- Afrikaans Linguistics
 - Document Design
 - Behaviour Change Communication
 - Cognitive Semantics
 - Language and Law
 - Corpus Linguistics

- Discourse Analysis
- Semantics
- Pragmatics
- Sociolinguistics
- Forensic Linguistics
- Language Performance
- Translation Studies
- Theory of Literature
 - General Literary Theory
 - Critical Theory
 - Genre Theory
 - Narratology
 - Cultural Studies
 - Comparative Literature
 - South African and African Literary Studies
 - South African Drama and Theatre Studies
 - Soweto Theatre
 - African Humanism and Decoloniality
 - African Imaginary and Identities
 - Postcolonialism
 - Posthumanism
 - Animal Studies
 - Ecocriticism
 - Masculinities Studies
 - Creative Writing

Art History & Visual Arts & Musicology

- Musicology
 - Africanist Ethnomusicology
 - Composition (Classical, Instrumental, African & Popular Forms)
 - Contemporary Afrikaans Music
 - Critical Theory
 - Historical Musicology
 - Improvisation
 - Jazz Studies
 - Jewish Music in Twentieth Century South Africa
 - Learning Theory
 - Music Cognition and Perception
 - Music Education
 - Music in South Africa

- Phenomenology
- Phenomenology of Performance
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy, especially as related to Embodiment and Cognition
- Semiotics
- South African Art Music Composition and Practice
- Theory of Film Music
- Visual Arts
 - African Art and Cultural History
 - Animation and videoArt and sustainability/ eco-art
 - Art Education, Curriculum and Professional Development in Visual Art
 - Art in the Urban / Public Domain / Place / Site
 - Collaborative Community Art Projects
 - Comics Studies
 - Contemporary Painting, Drawing, Printmaking and Sculpture
 - Digital- , Internet-, New Media Art and digital manipulation
 - Esoteric Symbolism, rituals, and Greco-Roman Mythology
 - Evolution of Culture and Heritage
 - Installation Art
 - Intermedial and Transmedial Practice
 - Narratives, Framed Narratives and transmedia narratives
 - Post – and Altermodernism
 - Posthumanism
 - Practice-Led Research,
 - Site-Specific- and Performance Art Practices
 - The Aesthetics of the Sublime
 - Theory Of Mind and simulation
 - Trauma and Memory
- Art History
 - African Art
 - Art Acquisition Policies
 - Art as Social-Critical Practice
 - Art Education
 - Artistic Embodiment
 - Contemporary Art
 - Culture Industry and Production
 - Curatorship and Professional Exhibition Practice
 - Environmental Aesthetics and ecocritical perspectives in Art History
 - Feminist perspectives
 - Gender Studies
 - Hermeneutics
 - Landscape
 - Participatory practises
 - Phenomenological perspectives
 - Photography

- South African Art and Cultural History
- South African Art Collections
- Surveillance and the Gaze
- Trans-Humanism
- Urban and Consumer Culture
- Visual Culture
- Women, space & place

Communication Science

Focus areas in Media Studies

- Cultural studies
- Decolonisation
- Film studies
- Gender studies
- Health communication
- Indigenous language and media
- International communication
- Journalism and media genres
- Media (and) representation (this would include, for example, a sub-field of feminism or gender studies)
- Media and community
- Media and democracy
- Media and development
- Media and / in international communication
- Media audiences (media reception and use)
- Media management
- Media policy and regulation
- Media sociology (the media in/and society)
- Memorial (memory) and trauma studies
- New media and the new media environment
- ODeL-related media research
- Political communication
- Popular culture
- Telecommunications & Information Policy
- Television studies

- Media research methodology
- Broadcasting and Digital Technologies

Organisational Communication

- Concept of Learning Organisations and organisational learning
- Applied communication
- Corporate communication
- Internal communication/ intra-organisational communication / integrated organisational communication
- Knowledge Management
- Management communication
- Marketing communication and integrated marketing communication
- Organisational Communication (general)
- Organisational discourse
- Disruptive Digital Communication and Environment
- Political communication / public relations
- Public relations/image management
- Strategic communication
- Corporate Social Investment and Corporate Social Responsibility
- Corporate Governance
- Development Communication
- Online Communication/ Digital Communication
- Consumer Behaviour
- Public Health Communication
- Tourism Communication/Marketing
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Decoloniality
- Stakeholder relationship communication and management
- Leadership
- Crisis Communication
- Government and State Communication
- Stakeholder Engagement, Public Participation and Community Engagement
- Brand Communication
- Communication for Social Innovation, Change and Development
- Sustainability

English Studies

- Academic Literacy and Multidisciplinary Language Support
- African Literature
- African-American Literature
- African Women's Writing
- American Literature
- Autobiography (Self-Writing)
- Black Atlantic Studies and Revisionist Migrant Cultural Transnationalism in the Wake of Globalization
- Children's Literature
- Christianity / Religion and Literature
- Comparative Literature (English-French)
- Creative Writing
- Cultural Studies
- Development Education
- Diaspora and Literary-Historical Study of Representations of Genocide in African Literature
- Discourse Analysis
- Embodied Memory
- English as Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Societies
- English Language Studies
- English Language Teacher Education
- English Teaching / English in Education
- Female Writers of the Romantic and Victorian Period
- Feminist Speculative Fiction
- Feminist Theory
- Film, Media
- Folklore, Fairy Tales and Myth
- Gender and HIV / and Migration / and Language Impact
- Gender Studies and Women's Writing
- Gothic Fiction
- Harlem Renaissance
- Historiography and Literary History of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Natal; Iconography and Representation of the Irish Wolfhound in Text and Visual Media, c.1750-Present
- Language and Power
- Language Ideologies and Power
- Language, Literacies and Identity
- Language Socialisation
- Literacies in General
- Literacy in ESL
- Literature and Language
- Literature / Language Instruction
- Literary Representations of Terrorism & Racial Profiling in Popular Culture

- Literary Theory
- Modernism
- Multilingualism
- Nineteenth-Century Writing
- Old English and Middle English / Medieval Studies
- Online Learning (and Mobile Learning)
- Onomastics
- Poetry
- Popular Culture
- Postcolonialism
- Programme Evaluation
- Promoting Accuracy in Written English for the Work Environment
- Psychoanalytical Readings of Fantastic Fiction
- Queer Theory
- Reading and Writing Skills (Education)
- Renaissance Writing
- Representations of Violence in South African Literature
- Romantics
- Science Fiction
- Sociolinguistics
- South African Literature
- Systemic Functional Linguistics
- TEFL
- TESOL
- (Trans)Cultural Memory
- Trauma and Testimony
- Twentieth Century Literature
- Victorian Literature

Information Science

- Archival Science
- Archives and Records Management
- Diplomatics
- Digital Records Forensic
- Bibliometrics, Infometrics and Webometrics
- Social Informatics
- Information Sources
- Children's Literature and Services
- Library and Information Science Education and Training
- Current Trends in LIS (Library and Information Science)
- Library and Information Science
- e-Records and e-Government
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- Information Access, Information Use, Information Behaviour and Information Seeking
- User Studies and User Education
- Information for Development and Change
- Information and Society / Culture

- Information Society
- Information Literacy and Family Literacy
- Information Organisation, Representation and Retrieval
- Information Dissemination
- Information Law, Ethics and Philosophy
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Political Economy of Information
- Libraries and Information Centres or Agencies (School, Public, Academic, Private, National and Provincial Libraries)
- Research Trends in LIS
- Infopreneurship
- ICTs in Library and Information Science

Linguistics & Modern Languages

- General linguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Applied Linguistics (i.e. Second Language Learning and Teaching)
- Reading / Literacy
- Translation Studies
- French Literature and Language Portuguese Literature and Language

Anthropology

- African Epistemologies
- Critical Anthropology
- Cultural Heritage
- Decolonial Epistemologies
- Economic Anthropology
- Educational Anthropology
- Environmental Anthropology
- Feminist Anthropology
- Historical Anthropology
- Medical Anthropology
- Organisational Anthropology
- Ritual
- Sex and Gender
- The Anthropology of Development
- The Anthropology of Disability
- The Anthropology of Space and Place
- Urban Anthropology
- Urban Parks

Archaeology

- 19th- and 20th-Century Material Culture Studies
- Archaeological Heritage Management
- Archaeologies of Conflict
- Archaeologies of Identity
- Archaeologies of Slavery and the Slave Trade
- Archaeozoology / Archaeofaunal Studies
- The Archaeology of Food and Foodways
- Colonial Frontiers and Culture Contact Studies
- Historical Archaeology, with a focus on Southern and West Africa
- Landscape Archaeology
- Mission Archaeology
- Pre-Colonial (Iron Age) Farming Societies in Southern Africa
- Early State Formation in Southern Africa
- Textile Archaeology
- The Comparative Use of Written, Oral & Archaeological Source

Biblical & Ancient Studies

- Early Christianity: Origins of Early Christianity; Historical Jesus Research; The Jesus movement; Pauline Writings; Johannine Writings; Apocalypticism
- Aspects of Greek and Roman Culture with Specific Reference to Early Christianity; Greco-Roman Religions

Christian Spirituality

- Biblical Spirituality
- The Old Testament and Christian Spirituality
- Post-Secularism in the Third Millennium
- The Patriarchs and the Pentateuch
- Theory of Spirituality
- The Bible and Faith Trends in the Global 21st Century
- Sexuality, Spirituality and Song of Songs
- Early Christian Spirituality (New Testament and the Early Church)
- The Hermeneutics of Early Christian Spirituality
- Contemporary Christian Spirituality
- The Johannine Literature
- Socio-Rhetorical Criticism as Research Methodology
- Early Christian Experiences, Devotion and Discipleship
- The Bible and Faith Trends in Church Ministry
- Christian Spirituality in African Contexts
- Christian Spirituality in Catholic Context
- Christian Spirituality in Tshwane Contexts

Church History

- South African Church History
- Christianity in Africa
- South African Methodism

- South African Church History
- Early Church History
- Reformation
- Significance of Church History for the Modern Church and Society
- Influence of Christianity on the South African Society
- Christian Education
- Historiography
- Church State Relations
- Catholic History
- Mission, State and Land
- Historiography
- Early Church History
- South African Church History
- South African Baptist History
- Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Missiology

- Theology of Mission
- Ecumenical Missiology
- Contextualisation
- Models of Liberation Theology
- Intercultural Theology
- Mission and Transformation
- Missional Hermeneutics
- Missiological Theories
- Theology of Mission
- Women, Gender and Mission
- Women's Theologies
- Faith-Based Communities and Sustainable Development
- Urban Ministry
- African Renaissance and the Unity of Africa
- Evangelism and Mass Media / TV Broadcast
- Third Wave Movement / Christianity
- African Theology
- Intercultural Communication of the Gospel
- Missional Theology
- Urban Mission
- African Theology
- Children and Youth Movements
- Anti-Racism and Reconciliation
- Social Media
- Emerging and Missional Church
- Theology of Mission
- Mission and Power
- Mission and Unity
- Integral Mission
- Community Economic Development

- Urban Ministry
- Mission and Social Policy

History

- Various Relevant Aspects of the Economic, Social, Cultural and Political History of South Africa
- British History
- German History
- Select Themes from World History and Intellectual History

Practical Theology

- A Contextual Approach to Practical Theology
- Africanisation of Pastoral Care and Counselling
- Celebration and Worship
- Christian Care, Human Rights, African Women and Widowhood Rites and their Consequences
- Christian Faith and Moral Formation Educational Practices
- Church Leadership
- Community Development
- Contextual Practical Theology in Africa
- Digital Pastoral Care and Online Ministry
- Diversity Issues in Christian Communities
- Ecclesiology in African Christian Perspective
- Empirical Research in Theology
- Faith Formation and Spiritual Development in Adolescents
- Homiletics
- Homiletics and Hermeneutics
- Human Rights and Religion
- Hymnology and Church Music
- integration of Psychology and Theology
- Liberation – Contextual Practical Theology
- Life Narrative Research
- Liturgical Studies
- Management and Administration
- Marriage and Premarital Issues and Gender Studies in African Context (Particularly Women's Rights)
- Ministerial Training / Clergy Formation
- Ministry in the Context of Poverty
- Multicultural Teaching and Learning
- Pastoral Care
- Pastoral Care and Counselling
- Practical Theology and Action Theories
- Practical Theology and Mental Health
- Practical Theology and Public Theology
- Religious / Christian Education
- Religious Communication

- Religious Education
- Spiritual and Faith Development
- Spiritual and Moral Leadership
- Spirituality in the Workplace / Theological Education
- The Christian Ministry to the Sick in the African Context
- The Church's Diaconal Service
- The Impact of Faith and / or Spirituality on Youth Identity Formation and Development
- The Methodology of Practical Theology
- The Profession and / or State of Youth Work in South Africa
- The Role of Family, Culture and Youth Sub-Cultures in Youth Socialisation
- Theological Education in South Africa
- Unity and Injustices within Reformed Churches
- Worship and Identity
- Worship and Leadership
- Worship and Spiritual Formation
- Youth Ministry

Philosophy

- African Philosophy
- Critical Reasoning
- Philosophy of Culture
- Philosophy of Education
- Ethics
- Applied Ethics
- Bioethics
- Environmental Ethics
- Political Philosophy
- Social Philosophy
- Aesthetics
- Phenomenology
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Logic
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Cosmology
- Philosophy of Religion
- Medieval Philosophy
- Values and Philosophy

Religious Studies

- African Indigenous Religions and Human Rights
- Buddhism in South Africa
- Buddhist Meditation
- Buddhist Religious Ritual
- Critical Theories of Religion (Comparative and Historical, Colonial and Post-Colonial, Sociological

and Anthropological)

- Early Christianity within its Jewish and Greco-Roman Contexts
- Hindu Meditation
- Human Rights, Constitutional Law and Religion
- Madhyamaka Buddhist Philosophy
- Material Religion: Objects and Senses in Religions
- Metaphysical Thought
- Modern Buddhist history (c. 1850 – Current)
- Modernism and Religion
- New Religious Movements – 19th century
- New Religious Movements – 20th and 21st century
- Politics of Religion
- Postmodernism and Religion
- Religion and Education (Policy and Curriculum Design)
- Religion and Gender (Media representations and religious practices)
- Religion and Marriage Practices
- Religion Education, Human Rights and Values
- Religion, Civil Society and Technology
- Religion, Conflict and Politics (with Specialization in Gramsci Thought)
- Religion, Curriculum Development and Technology
- Religious Hermeneutics
- Religious nationalism and Violence
- Representations of Religion in Contemporary Literature
- Research Methodology in Religious Studies
- Ritual, Ideology and Power
- Western Philosophy of Religion

Arabic

- Arabic Syntax and Morphology
- Modern Arabic Poetry
- Teaching of Arabic in a Non-Native Environment
- Teaching of Arabic in a Non-Native Environment
- Translations of Arabic Religious Texts
- Translations of Classical Arabic Literary Texts
- Translations of Modern Arabic Religious Texts

Islamic Studies

- Biographies of Selected Muslims
- Classical Islamic History
- Classical Philosophy in Islam
- Contemporary Islamic Thought, Philosophy and Law
- Hadith – the Study of the Muslim Prophetic Tradition
- History of Islam in Southern Africa
- Islam in South Africa
- Islamic Banking and Finance

- Islamic Doctrinal Theology
- Islamic, modernity and Secularism
- Muslim Minorities in the West
- Qur'anic Commentary and Exegesis
- Qur'anic Hermeneutics
- Sufism (Islamic Mysticism)

Development Studies

- Development Debates and Issues
- Gender and Development
- Governance and Development
- Sustainability, Development Policy, Practice and Development
- Human Security and Development
- Rural development
- Energy studies
- Mining health and development
- Community development
- Environment and development
- Climate and development
- Education and development
- Public affairs
- Economic development
- Rural entrepreneurship
- Marine studies (Water focused)

Health Studies

- Scholarship Development in Nursing
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Youth and Adolescent Health
- HIV and AIDS
- Preventive and Promotive Healthcare
- Healthcare for Diverse Populations
- Public Health

Political Sciences

- African Politics
 - African Constitutions and Constitutionalism
 - Selected African Electoral Systems and Elections
 - Selected African Governing and Opposition Political Parties
 - Selected African Political Economy Issues
 - African Political, Regional and Economic Institutions

- African Political Thought
- African Politics In Comparative Perspective – Selected Countries
- African State Building, Political Leadership and Environmental Politics
- **Politics**
 - Black Consciousness
 - Civil Society
 - Constitutional Law and Politics
 - Democracy, Democratisation and Governance
 - Elections, Electoral Studies and Electoral Systems
 - Environmental Politics
 - Epistemology and Methodological Issues
 - Human Rights Issues
 - Human Security and Security Issues
 - Nationalism and Separatism
 - Political Conflict Resolution: Theories, Transitions and Constitutional Negotiations
 - Political Parties and Party Systems
 - South African Politics
 - Sovereignty
 - Sports and Politics
 - Transitional Justice
 - Separation of Powers
- **International Politics**
 - Foreign Policy
 - Foreign Policy of African States
 - Foreign Policy Decision-Making
 - Diplomacy
 - International Organisations
 - International Political Economy
 - International Relations Theory
 - Military Coups
 - Nuclear Energy
 - Environmental Politics
 - Political Leadership
 - Security
 - Disruptive Diplomacy and New Media

Psychology

- Psychology in Society
- Psychological Science
- Therapeutic Psychology
- Scholarly Development of Students in Psychology
- Social Justice and Inclusion
- Hidden Histories of Psychology
- Neuroscience and Neuropsychology
- Therapeutic Contexts and Lived Experiences
- African Psychologies and Epistemologies

- Health, Wellbeing and Developmental Psychology
- Forensic Psychology
- Cognitive and Experimental Psychology

Social Work

- Social Work
- Vulnerable, marginalised groups, populations at risk
- Social Issues / problems
- Social development
- The Social Work Profession – management, supervision and policy development
- Social Work Education and Training in the CODEL context
- Specific / Specialised Methods of Social Work Intervention
- Specialised Fields of Social Work (Adoption social work, Probation social work, Occupation social work, Clinical social work)
- Employee health and wellness/ employee assistance services/ employee wellbeing
- Social entrepreneurship, technology (digital/ AI) innovations and strategies in Social Work
- Research approaches and specialised research methods
- Quality management and enhancement of social services
- Social Work Services and adverse events
- Green Social Work

Sociology

- Industrial and economic sociology
- Labour processes, Marx's social theory, class analysis
- Social justice and economic rights
- Sociology of Developing countries
- Industrial restructuring
- Sociology of migration
- Social capital
- Social theory
- Globalisation studies
- Sociology of autobiography and biography
- Gender studies and gender-based violence
- Sociology of health and wellness
- Social behavioural aspects of HIV/AIDS
- Medical sociology and health
- Policy and programme evaluation
- Mn studies, manhood and well-being in Africa

- Decoloniality studies and indigenous knowledge systems
- Representation and leadership studies
- Fourth industrial revolution
- Student support
- Sociology of the media and information flows
- Political Journalism, News agencies

Institute for Gender Studies

- Gender And Health
 - HIV and gender
 - MSM; WSW
- Literary Genres
 - Science Fiction
 - Fantasy
 - Children's Literature
 - Gothic Literature
 - Literature of the Supernatural
 - Folklore
 - Fairy Tales
- Theoretical Approaches
 - Gender Theories: Feminist Theory, Masculinity Studies, Queer Theory
 - Postcolonial Theory, Including Theories of Hybridity, The Postcolonial Subject and Subalternity

Research Institute for Theology & Religion

- African Christian Cultures and Religious Philosophies
- Science and Religion
- Ecumenical and Public Theologies
- Religion, Development and Social Change
- Womanist, Feminist and Bosadi Theorisations