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UCT lecture to reflect on Africa, knowledge and the postcolonial university

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Professor Suren Pillay from the [Centre for African Studies](#) will present his lecture, "The Eye Crosses the River Before the Body: Being and Becoming African in the University", on Tuesday, 21 October 2025 at 17:30 SAST in the Mafeje Room, Bremner Building on lower campus.

Professor Pillay's lecture will reflect on the unresolved legacies of colonialism in South Africa and their implications for higher education. He will ask what it means to decolonise universities in a society that has often exceptionalised its experiences rather than placing them within broader African and global contexts.

Drawing on two decades of scholarship, he will consider the pitfalls and possibilities of Africanising apartheid universities, and how the humanities and social sciences may reinscribe colonial canons or contribute to new ways of thinking about the world.

Professor Pillay holds the AC Jordan Chair in African Studies and is the director of the [Centre for African Studies](#) at UCT. His research spans political violence, citizenship and justice, and the politics of knowledge production in postcolonial contexts. His publications include "Predicaments of Knowledge, Decolonization and Deracialization in Universities" and "On the Subject of Citizenship: Late Colonialism in the World Today". He is also the co-editor of "Truth vs Justice? The Dilemmas of Transitional Justice in Africa".

He holds an MPhil and PhD in Anthropology from Columbia University. He has held visiting positions at Columbia, the City University of New York, Makerere University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Sciences Po. He is a member of the editorial collective of Postcolonial Studies and MISR Review and serves on the board of the Program for African Social Research.

Professor Pillay's scholarship reflects a deep commitment to building intellectual networks across the global South while engaging South Africa's unfinished debates about decolonisation.

- Members of the media wishing to attend are requested to RSVP via [email](#).

Ends

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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