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Humanities research focuses on prenatal alcohol exposure and feminist activism

- In June 2016, the University of Cape Town graduated five doctoral students whose research focused on, among others, the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure, social capital formation as a public sector approach, and black feminist intellectual activism. A summary of each thesis is presented below.

(To schedule an interview: please call Sino Mdunjeni on (021) 650 4976)

Name	Thesis Title	Details
Nadine Lindinger	The effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on social cognition in South African children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders	Nadine Lindinger's thesis aims to investigate social cognition in children with FASD following evidence that prenatal alcohol exposure impacts social cognitive development, resulting in significant social deficits and poor adaptive behaviours in affected individuals. Her work was based on research that examined potential deficits within aspects of Social Information Processing and Affective Social Competency frameworks, work which may help to explain the social cognitive deficits seen in children with FASD.
Virginia Petersen	Social Capital formation as a Public Sector Approach: Emphasis on the Youth	Virginia Petersen's thesis focuses on the measurement of stocks of social capital among youth in six key development areas of the country. Using a theoretical framework set out by Michael Woolcock, her thesis distinguishes between bonding, bridging and linking social capital - and follows the principle that social capital is central to development among youth. Methodologically, the thesis combines qualitative and quantitative methods, carefully constructing a practical way in which various forms of social capital can be measured.
Mary Hames	Black feminist intellectual activism: A transformative pedagogy at a South African university	Mary Hames' thesis argues that it is possible to realize the potential of black feminist theories through pedagogic strategies operative beyond the academic curriculum but still within university institutional borders. Drawing on Freire's theories of pedagogy, she re-reads black feminist theory to suggest that the design of programmes generated as part of students' political, social, and cultural lives on campus should draw on this theory to imagine transformative pedagogic opportunities. Her exposition reveals carefully the power of programmes to revolutionize notions of 'learner,' teacher' and "knowledge' itself.

Glenda Cox	Explaining the relations between culture, structure and agency in lecturers' contribution and non-contribution to Open Educational Resources in Higher Education	Glenda Cox's thesis aims to explain the choices UCT lecturers make regarding whether or not they decide to release selections of their teaching materials for use as open educational resources. Open educational resources can potentially extend the use of teaching materials beyond the classroom to a global audience yet in practice few lecturers make their lectures available. The result is a framework for explaining lecturers' understanding of sharing within the Higher Education sector. Cox's model offers means for achieving a unique understanding of the relations between culture, structure and agency within an institution - where the balance of power is held in a system and, in this case, how a culture of academic autonomy grants lecturers the power of choice as individual agents.
Ian Edelstein	Measuring pathways to youth violence and the possible effects of a sports-based development intervention on youth in South Africa	Ian Edelstein's thesis assesses the impact of a sports programme in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, on male adolescents' and young adults' attitudes towards and participation in violence. In response to the methodological difficulties of collecting data on actual violent behaviour, a violence-potential 'scorecard' was developed and tested. This combined sub-scales of association with deviant or criminal individuals and attitudes toward gangs and the use of interpersonal violence, together with a measure of actual physical violence. Structural equation modelling with the longitudinal data revealed pathways from the home environment to parenting practices, to negative attitudes to school, to substance abuse, and to deepening adolescent violence.

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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