INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ETHICS

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INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMORARY ETHICS *Seminar Series*

SESSION 1 | ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

6 NOVEMBER 2025

14:00 - 17:00

VENUE: THE ROOTS

954 MC ROODE DRIVE, POTCHEFSTROOM

ONLINE: MICROSOFT TEAMS

MEETING ID: 318 863 396 745 2

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MEET OUR SPEAKERS

BUKONLA OLISA (PHD)

Bukonla Olisa holds a Doctoral Degree (PhD) from the Philosophy Department of Lagos State University, Ojo, earned in 2023. She earned a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Philosophy from the University of Lagos, Akoka, in 2008 and 2011, respectively. She also holds a National Certificate in Education (NCE) from Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin, Lagos, (2004). Her current research focuses on environmental philosophy, sustainability, ethics, and phenomenology. She has published academic papers, some of which are currently under publication in peer reviewed journals and book projects. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Philosophy at the North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SOLIDARITY WITH(IN) NATURE: AN AFRO-COMPLEMENTARIST APPROACH

The challenge of achieving environmental sustainability is at the forefront of global discussions today. The borderless nature of environmental crises necessitates a fresh, collaborative approach to sustainability, particularly one firmly rooted in solidarity. This work advances the concept of Afrocomplementarist solidarity as an approach to the discourse on environmental sustainability with(in) nature. Drawing from African environmental theories, especially from the Igbo tradition, with principles such as Ibuanyidanda (complementarity), Ndu Mmili Ndu Azu (Live and let live), and Ohanife (ecosystems: interdependence and complementarity), this work argues that Afro-complementarity demonstrates that entities complement one another by showing how the existence and thriving of one is connected to the survival of others within the overall ecosystem. This perspective establishes solidarity as an ethic that acknowledges the shared vulnerabilities, responsibilities, and interdependent roles humans and non-human entities play within the ecosystem. By underscoring the importance of peaceful co-existence amidst diversity and collaboration over exploitation, Afro-complementarist solidarity provides a foundational framework for redefining sustainability as not just the preservation of resources but as maintaining a relational equilibrium. This work concludes that ecological and sustainability challenges can be effectively tackled by fostering a sense of solidarity with(in) nature, informed by insights found within the African thought system.

SHAWN SIMPSON (PHD)

Shawn Simpson is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at North-West University. From 2022-2025, he was a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. He received his PhD in Philosophy from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. His interests are in aesthetics, ethics, philosophy of language, and biology.

ON THE CASE AGAINST REVOLUTION IN HOBBES'S LEVIATHAN: AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In Leviathan (1651), Thomas Hobbes offers several arguments against any form of revolution. In this paper, I identify and analyze what I see as three key lines of reasoning: (1) the logical argument, grounded in the nature of the social contract; (2) the representation argument, concerning who may properly negotiate on behalf of a group; and (3) the undue risk argument, a prudential argument emphasizing the inherent risks of any sort of revolution. I argue that the first two arguments fail due to unjustified and questionable assumptions about the nature of contracts and agency. I take the undue risk argument to be more compelling, but show that when recast as a decision problem it reveals scenarios in which Hobbes's own method renders some forms of revolution rational. I then show how these arguments apply to contemporary challenges posed by climate change and ecological collapse.