



The UKZN Teaching & Learning Office (UTLO)

Cordially invites you to a Seminar

on

DE-CONSTRUCTING 'DECOLONISATION'



By

Professor Bert Olivier

Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy,
University of the Free State

SEMINAR DETAILS

DATE:	Wednesday, 7 December 2016
TIME:	13h30 - 16h00
VENUE:	UNITE Lecture Room, UNITE Building, Gate 8, Rick Turner Road, Howard College Campus, UKZN

RSVP Essential

RSVP to:	http://utlo.ukzn.ac.za/rsvp
By:	Monday, 5 December 2016

SEMINAR OVERVIEW

The most difficult question facing educators at universities in South Africa today is undoubtedly that of 'decolonisation' – what does it mean when students and some academic staff call for the decolonisation of the curriculum?

In this seminar, we pose some crucial questions: Is the call justified? What are its implications? Who can participate in the debate? Does the 'incommensurability thesis' hold, namely, that individuals working within a certain 'paradigmatically distinct' theory or within an identifiable discourse, cannot understand those working within other theoretical paradigms?

Considering that no matter what our culture, or race, or gender, we are all human subjects and linguistic beings. One cannot step outside of language to adjudicate linguistically articulated claims to knowledge the other from a culture-free perspective; The sciences afford us the opportunity, however, to step away from our involvement in this life-world, with its cultural prejudices, to meet one another through a shared terminology and conceptual/theoretical apparatus that enable one to understand the (natural and social) world in such a manner that one can talk about it. The test for something being scientific (or 'rational') is whether any human being is able to 'test' or examine, or simply enter into a dialogue about it.

Unless this is kept in mind, one cannot even begin to discuss the merits of the demand for decolonisation. This is not to deny that there are 'knowledges' that have been 'disqualified' by western culture as being 'inadequate' in terms of 'scientific cognition'. Every scholar, scientist or philosopher must be willing to see beyond the confines of privileged western knowledge to acknowledge these 'excluded knowledges', to affirm that, for as long as they are not acknowledged as epistemic 'equals' of, albeit different from, western knowledge, the subjects of those knowledges have the dubious status of the "subaltern [who] cannot speak".

About Professor Bert Olivier

Bert Olivier is Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at the University of the Free State, South Africa, and adjunct professor in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He has published articles and books across a wide variety of disciplines, including philosophy, architecture, literature, psychoanalysis, cinema and social theory. Bert received the Stals Prize for Philosophy in 2004, and a Distinguished Professorship from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2012.