

Intl scholars to debate media in Africa

Up to 70 international media scholars are expected to attend a conference at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa on 27-29 February 2012, themed 'Beyond Normative Approaches: Everyday Media Culture in Africa'

The conference, hosted by the Wits Department of Media studies in the Faculty of Humanities along with international partners, the Department of Communication Studies and the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan, with support from the University of Westminster in the United Kingdom, will engage robust discussions to interrogate various dimensions of media in sub-Saharan Africa.

How Africa interacts with media

With the theme 'Beyond Normative Approaches: Everyday Media Culture in Africa', conference papers will address the everyday lived experiences of Africans in their interaction with different kinds of media: old and new, state and private, elite and popular, global and national.

"Sub-topics and questions that the conference will address include asking how we can research and theorise media cultures in today's Africa, and exploring what roles different forms of media play in the everyday lives of Africans", says Dr Wendy Willems, a senior lecturer in the department and member of the organising committee.

Willems says that the conference will also contribute towards knowledge production on the continent. "Research and discussions help to shape our understanding and practice, and allow academics to remain abreast of current issues, which feed into our teaching and output," she says.

The keynote address will be delivered by Prof. Tawana Kupe, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and is entitled 'Betwixt the normative and the emergent critical in understanding African media cultures'.

Day two of the conference will see the launch of the book *Radio in Africa: Publics, Cultures, Communities* a collaboration of Wits academics published by Wits University Press.

The final session on day three includes a discussion by a prolific scholar whose work has been read by nearly every South African media student at some stage of their academic career. Keyan Tomaselli from the University of KwaZulu-Natal joins in a panel discussion with scholars Gado Alzouma from the American University of Nigeria and Winston Mano from the University of Westminster in the United Kingdom.

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