

Call for Papers

**Attending Together: New Directions for South African Higher Education**

**Workshop at the Allan Gray Center for Leadership Ethics, Rhodes University**

**10 – 11 May 2024**

As our attention is increasingly divided between virtual and physical social spaces, maintaining collective focus during lectures has become a veritable challenge. How do attentional habits manifest themselves in the classroom? What are the challenges when classrooms become spaces of divided attention and how can these challenges be tackled? By considering attention not merely as an individual act of will, but as a social capacity to direct the mind, this workshop delves into the transformative potential of attention in higher education. Social aspects of attention will be discussed in the local university context and put into conversation with diverse perspectives on teaching and learning.

Thinking through a complex array of factors – epistemic, pedagogical, ethical, and ideological – involved in what could be described as the politics of attention in the classroom, this workshop aims to address the challenges faced when attempting to create constructive, inclusive educational spaces. How do varying beliefs, plans, and intentions steer our attention differently? How does living in a divided society shape one’s attention? And how can attention be productively pooled in the classroom? Zooming in on the transformation South African universities are undergoing and promoting dialogue between different learning and teaching experiences, this workshop addresses core issues of social ontology, including community building, social structures, collective intentionality, and learning.

**How to Apply**

This workshop is an opportunity to spell out fresh ideas, share your learning and teaching experiences, find new research partnerships, and get feedback for working papers. Group presentations by students are welcome. Submit your abstract (300 – 500 words) or intention to attend by 30 March 2024 to [**anna.bloom-christen@ru.ac.za**](mailto:anna.bloom-christen@ru.ac.za)**.** Accepted authors will be notified by 7 April 2024. Interdisciplinary contributions are strongly encouraged. We are particularly interested in contributions from educational philosophy and theory, phenomenology, literary studies, as well as applied perspectives. We aim to publish a collected volume of selected contributions. **This is an on-site event without remote attendance option.**

**Accessibility and Funding**

We will endeavour to secure suitable venues and technologies for everyone. Childcare will be provided where necessary. Please contact the workshop organisers as soon as possible if you have any specific needs, dietary restrictions, or other requests.

This workshop is hosted by the Allan Gray Center for Leadership Ethics (AGCLE) and co-funded by the International Social Ontology Society (ISOS) and the AGCLE. For more information about ISOS and how to become a member, visit <https://isosonline.org/>.

Confirmed speakers:

Laurence Bloom, Rhodes University

When Two Go Together: Friendship as a Paradigm for Teaching Philosophy

Michelle Brotherton, University of Fort Hare

Teaching Differing Views in Political Philosophy and Ethics: A Freirean Approach

Vanessa Freeks, Centre for Leadership Ethics in Africa

Attention in the Affective Digital Economy

Lindsay Kelland, Rhodes University

Practicing Attention

Lis Lange, University of Cape Town

In Search of a Pedagogy of Presence With and Against Technology

Jaco Louw, University of Stellenbosch

On Learning from the Student: Being Together as Porous Listening Bodies through the Cultivation of Classroom Conversationalism

Avuyile Mgudwla, Rhodes University

Attention Reimagined: The Role of Recursive Learning in Higher Education

Nonki Motahane, University of the Free State

Attending to Reading: A Literary Approach

Siphamandla Ruiters, Rhodes University,

Philosophy as a Way of Life: Reviving the Ancients' Approach to Philosophical Discourse and Practice

Jason Van Niekerk, University of Zululand

Teaching Presence: Applying Set, Setting, and Matrix to Higher Education Contexts

Siphosihle Wotshela, Rhodes University

The Role of Personal Relevance in Teaching and Learning

Mhlengi Zama, University of KwaZulu Natal

Art and Interactive Technologies as a Catalyst for Enhanced Learning