

Literary Journalism Colloquium

13 - 14 May 2022, Africa Media Matrix, Rhodes University, Makhanda

Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies and the Wits Centre for Journalism invite you to a two-day colloquium on literary journalism studies in South Africa.

Despite a surge in the production of non-fiction and journalism books in South Africa in recent years, there is very little formal teaching and research of literary journalism and/or narrative non-fiction in literature, media and journalism departments. Where scholarly work is taking place, it tends to approach these texts as literature, history or cultural forms; the study of nonfiction writing as a form of journalism has not had an established disciplinary place in South African universities.

However, a number of scholars and postgraduate students have started to research literary journalism, both contemporary developments, and as historical forms. This colloquium proposes to bring together scholars and students working in this area to discuss the ways in which literary journalism could potentially become a more established field of study in South Africa.

Globally, literary journalism studies is a relatively new area, with the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies spearheading discussion for just over a decade on whether this is a field or discipline, and bringing together scholars in an annual meeting. The organisation is still dominated by North American scholars, although South American and Australian scholars have come on board to represent the global South. Africa is largely unrepresented, with the exception of occasional scholars from South Africa participating in conferences and publishing projects. The interest in literary journalism and narrative non-fiction among South African students and scholars appears to be growing, and we think this is a good moment to take stock, build connections and consider further directions.

The colloquium will be held in person and via Zoom, and also constitutes a regional meeting for South African scholars of the IALJS conference, held in Chile and online.

The colloquium will consist of:

1. Opening workshop on the state of literary journalism scholarship in SA; (Friday 13 May)
2. Panel discussion as part of IALJS conference – the SA contribution – which will be open to attendees of the colloquium; (Friday 13 May 16:45 - 18:15)
3. Presentations by Wits, Rhodes and other universities' doctoral students and young scholars on their work in progress. (Friday 13 May & Saturday 14 May AM)

Please RSVP to colin.nass@ru.ac.za by 3 May 2022 and specify:

1. Attendance type – In-person or via Zoom.
2. Issues/contributions to the discussion on South African Literary Journalism. We will include these in the agenda for discussion in the opening workshop.
3. If you are participating as a student, please supply a brief description of work in progress.
4. Please include your full name, university & department, email address, and mobile number

Please note: Travel, airport transfers & accommodation is to be organised by you at your own expense. Teas and lunches will be supplied.