

Call for Papers

INAUGURAL UBUNTU CONFERENCE

UBUNTU IN THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Conference Date: 9-11 October 2024

Venue: Africa University (AU), Mutare, Zimbabwe

Host: AU College of Social Sciences, Social Work Theology, Humanities and Education (CSSTHE)

We invite papers, panel proposals and poster presentations from academics, scholars, students, and practitioners for the inaugural multi-disciplinary conference on Ubuntu (Hunhu/Botho/Wutu) in the 4th Industrial Revolution. This inaugural theory- and praxis-focused conference on Ubuntu and related Indigenous concepts will be co-hosted by [Africa University's College of Social Sciences, Humanities, Theology, and Education](#) (CSSTHE), [Howard University's Center for African Studies](#), and [Michigan State University's](#) Institute of Ubuntu Thought and Practice from 9-11 October 2024. It will be held in one of Africa's best kept touristic secrets: the picturesque city of Mutare, nestled in the majestic Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe.

Leading and emerging heritage studies scholars, scientists, political scientists, cultural anthropologists, cultural artists, linguists, archaeologists, economists, historians, theologians, philosophers, social scientists, community leaders, and activists will explore the indigenous Black African worldview known as Isintu/Chivanhu/Setso/Mila, which has now been reduced to a simplistic (mis-)understanding of Ubuntu as universal human decency or humaneness and interconnectedness (*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*). The more holistic and multi-pronged conceptualisation of Ubuntu that will emerge from this conference will help establish how best the concept and worldview salient in it can be deployed as the foundation shaping relationships, knowledge, values, practices, and meaning-making among people of African descent. Doing so provides the much-needed space to capture, process, represent, and preserve both the experiences and ongoing struggles for self-determination and self-expression among Black African and other Indigenous communities.

THEME: UBUNTU IN THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (4IR)

Whereas the globalised world has now entered the 4IR, it has been argued that much of Black Africa is yet to fully experience, let alone benefit from, any of the other previous industrial revolutions. Paradoxically, however, dominant and hegemonic notions of that 4IR routinely refer to 'Ubuntu' as the spirit in which that revolution is being conducted. The fact that Ubuntu is a (A)Bantu/Vanhu/Batho/Watu word suggests that Black Africa is a (co-) leader of the 4IR responsible for ensuring that it is human-centered,

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‘humane,’ and humanizing. Alternatively, it suggests Black African complicity in and approval of that revolution.

Further, in this 4IR age, the emergence of dynamic tech-driven productivity, the digitalization of life, and the prioritization of capital accumulation have given rise to social problems peculiar to the 21st century. As economic rationality takes precedence over social and human rationality, the wealth gap between producers and consumers in the contemporary goods/services market has widened. Economic choices have induced and normalised dehumanizing discourses, policies, and practices at both micro and macro levels of society, including but not limited to labour market relations, administration of politics within and across borders, migration patterns and human settlements, family structures, and spirituality. Now more than ever, humanity must find solutions to the existential threat caused by the increasing isolationism and individualism of unchecked profiteering.

We invite you to join us in exploring the (A)Bantu/Vanhu/Batho/Watu concept and praxis of Ubuntu/Hunhu/Botho/Wutu as a possible response and check to these local and global crises. This conference seeks to establish the true meaning and essence of Ubuntu, compare it to how it is being currently used, and chart out ways in which the concept can be better mobilised for the benefit of the Black African and other indigenous peoples, the Pan-African community of nations, and the world at large.

Delegates are therefore particularly encouraged to engage with the overarching theme of the conference.

Kindly note that this will be a blended conference. Delegates can attend physically or present papers online, although physical attendance is highly recommended.

CONFERENCE SUBTHEMES

Sub-themes include (but are not limited to) the following areas:

1. Theorising Ubuntu

- Ubuntu (Hunhu/Botho/Wutu)
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila as matrix of Ubuntu/Hunhu/Setso/Wutu
- Humanising Black Africa and the Black African race-nations
- Ubuntu and decoloniality
- Ubuntu and knowledge
- Ubuntu and indigeneity
- Ubuntu as a geopolitical concept
- Ubuntu and Digitising the Humanities
- Ubuntu and STEM/STEAM

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2. Ubuntu and contemporary African identities

- Ubuntu and being (A)Bantu/Vanhu/Batho/Watu
- Ubuntu and racial, ethnic, national, religious, and linguistic identities
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila, feminism, and LGBTQI+ agenda
- Ubuntu and the Decolonisation agenda
- Ubuntu and human sexuality
- Resolving the Black African identity crisis
- Ubuntu as a geopolitical tool of the (A)Bantu/Vanhu/Batho/Watu
- Ubuntu, globalisation, and internationalisation
- Ubuntu, Pan-Africanism, and Afrocentricity

3. Getting Black Africa out of bondage and into dominion

- Ubuntu and the Black African condition
- Ubuntu and hegemonic discourses of development
- Ubuntu and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila innovation, science and technology
- Social protection and inclusion for the Black African peoples in the digital era
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila and climate change

4. Ubuntu and holistic well-being in the 4IR era

- Ubuntu counselling models
- Ubuntu and Restorative Justice
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila inspired Social Programs and Mental Health and Well-being solutions
- Ubuntu and AI-driven Social Work interventions
- Behavioural finance, coping and stress management

5. Ubuntu, religion and spirituality in a digital age

- Ubuntu and Indigenous/traditional religion
- African Christian anthropology in a digital age
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila spirituality and religiosity
- Reimagining Ubuntu theology in the digital era
- Ubuntu as a spirituality of liberation
- Ubuntu and Pastoral Care in a digital age

6. Politics and governance in the light of Ubuntu philosophy

- Humane migrant management regimes
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila vs hegemonic discourses of human rights, child rights, and animal rights
- Chivanhu/Setso/Isintu/Mila and 'living for democracy'
- Decolonising International Relations and Diplomacy
- Ubuntu and African politics

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- Defining and affirming interests of the Black African race-nations for a new geopolitical dispensation

CONFERENCE TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	DATE
Deadline for submission of paper abstracts	30 June 2024
Submission of panel abstracts	20 June 2024
Notification of abstract acceptance & feedback	20 July 2024
Conference registration opens	30 July 2024
Submission of full papers for presentation	20 August 2024
Submission of PowerPoint presentations	30 September 2024
Conference	9-11 October 2024
Final paper submissions for edited and peer-reviewed Book of Proceedings	15 November 2024
Submission of papers chosen for edited and peer-reviewed book on Ubuntu.	30 November 2024

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS OF ABSTRACTS

Abstracts of 250-300 words (for papers) and 300-400 words (for panels*) should be submitted by e-mail as MS Word files to:

All Abstracts should be accompanied by the following information:

- Title, full name(s), and surname(s) of author(s)
- Institutional affiliation (i.e., position of the delegate, institution's name, faculty/school, department, and location) of corresponding author/panellist
- E-mail address of corresponding author/panellist
- Mobile and/or office number of corresponding author/panellist
- Full title of the paper
- Abstract
- Up to five (5) key words
- Preferred conference sub-theme

* A panel is an opportunity for a group of interested delegates to explore a topic and share innovative research on an aspect of the Conference theme. A panel should have at least four (4) authors.

Kindly note that the language of the conference will be English.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE: USD250

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Virtual attendance: USD150

***Students: USD100**

* For the purposes of the conference, a student is a person who is registered for a degree at a recognised institution of higher learning in 2024, but is not employed by an institution of higher learning. Proof of registration will be required.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Delegates will be requested to fill in electronic registration forms after acceptance of their abstracts. An invoice will be created and sent to individual delegates with personal details, registration amount and banking details. It is only after this process that delegates will be able to deposit registration fee into the University account that will be provided for that purpose.
