



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
Where leaders learn

**diaspora** /dy-ass-puh-ruh/ noun **1 (the diaspora)** the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel, chiefly in the 8th to 6th centuries BC. **2** the dispersion of any people from their original homeland.  
- ORIGIN Greek.

The characteristics of our contemporary era of globalization and transnationalism are to a considerable extent constituted by the fact of mobility: mobility of information, of resources, and crucially, of people. Diaspora refers, in the words of the celebrated diaspora scholar Robin Cohen, to *“communities settled outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories, acknowledg[ing] that ‘the old country’ - a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore - always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions”*. The African diaspora is a determining aspect of Africa’s history, as well as of its present situation, and is a fundamental part of the way in which Africans have seen themselves, culturally, economically as well as in a range of other ways .

This University Teach In provides contemporary perspectives on the African Diaspora from internationally acclaimed scholars who are engaged in cutting edge research in rethinking Africa by rethinking the African diaspora.

**RETHINKING  
THE AFRICAN DIASPORA  
- RETHINKING AFRICA**

A University Teach In  
12-15 May

Showcasing current research and thinking  
on the African diaspora and its implications for Africa.

organised by Anthropology, in collaboration with the  
International Office

RETHINKING RETHINKING RETHINKING RETHINKING

## Four public lectures:

Monday 12 to Thursday 15 May 19h00-20h00

Arts Major

Lectures will last for 45 minutes, after which there will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

After the meeting, the audience is invited to the Senior Common Room for refreshments, and to meet the speaker.

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### MONDAY 12 MAY

**Professor Ajay Dubey** (Professor of African Studies, Centre for West Asian and African Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India)

#### **An Outside Perspective on the African Diaspora: Asian Perspectives on Migration, Identity and Linkages**

In spite of being spread across 105 countries, members of the Indian diaspora have maintained a distinct sense of Indian identity, which is nevertheless coloured by their interaction with the global system. Asian diasporas more widely have moved beyond the simple confines of cultural identity, needing to be understood in terms of wider developmental dynamics as well. This talk raises Asian perspectives relevant to Africa in seeking to understand and to tap its diaspora, reporting on recent discussions in this regard at the April 2008 India-Africa Forum Summit (of which Prof Dubey was one of the chief organisers) - in which India and Africa agreed to cooperate to "share experiences in harnessing resources from their diasporas".

### TUESDAY 13 MAY

**Dr Rose Boswell** (Department of Anthropology, Rhodes University)

#### **The African Diaspora: an Island Perspective**

Is there anything meaningfully distinctive about the African diaspora in island societies? In this lecture, Dr Rose Boswell offers us a tour of African Diaspora communities in the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, Seychelles,

Reunion and Zanzibar. How has the geographical remoteness of the islands from the mainland influenced the way in which African descendants on these islands have related to other groups on the islands politically and economically, and conceptualised their identities? And how has this influenced the way that they have come to situate themselves in, and participate in, the wider African diaspora? What conceptual and ethnographic purchase does a view from the 'margins' give us of the broader African diaspora?

### WEDNESDAY 14 MAY

**Dr Darshan Vigneswaran** (Forced Migration Studies Unit, University of the Witwatersrand)

#### **Making Itself at Home: The African Diaspora in Johannesburg**

This lecture considers the African diaspora, not as it situates itself outside of Africa, but as it is located within Africa, and specifically within South Africa and in Johannesburg, the economic powerhouse of southern Africa. How do diaspora migrant communities, many of whom are in South Africa on rather provisional legal and socio-political terms, situate themselves spatially, in terms of access to accommodation, services and other resources? The lecture provides current research on how diaspora communities organise themselves socially and spatially in the face of the wider, at times hostile, South African society, in order to protect themselves, locating the analysis within the wider anthropological literature on diasporas.

### THURSDAY 15 MAY

**Professor Paul Zeleza** (Professor of African American Studies and History, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA)

#### **The Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora: Beyond the Atlantic Model**

This lecture considers three interrelated sets of issues:  
First: what led to the rise of diaspora studies and the place of African diaspora studies within the diaspora studies framework ;  
Second: the predominance of and the problematic elements in the Atlantic diaspora model of the African Diaspora;  
Third: the challenges of constructing a historically rich and spatially diverse African diaspora studies model that captures the exceedingly complex dynamics of African dispersals, processes of diasporas, and engagements between Africa and its diasporas.