



Venice International University Summer School

Global Mental Health and Human Rights: Confronting 21st-Century Authoritarianism and Racial Supremacy

July 06-10, 2026

Faculty

Guido Veronese, University of Milano-Bicocca (Scientific Coordinator)

Chiara Fiscone, University of Milano-Bicocca (tutor)

Alex L. Pieterse, Boston College

Ashraf Kagee, Stellenbosch University

Guest speakers

Urmitapa Dutta, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Other contributing faculty tbc

Program

Day 1 | Monday, July 21

9:00-9:30	Registration, group division and Summer School Presentation
9:30-11:00	Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
<i>11:00-11:30</i>	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:30-13:00	Keynote lecture 1 (Urmitapa Dutta)
<i>13:00-14:00</i>	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00-15:00	Project work
15:00-16:00	Group Feedback

Day 2 | Tuesday, July 22

- 9:00-9:30 Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
- 9:30-11:00 Theories: Lecture 1
Epistemology and its discontents (Ashraf Kagee)
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30-13:00 Project work
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break*
- 14:00-15:00 Group Feedback
- 20.30-22.30 In-depth evening session

Day 3 | Wednesday, July 23

- 9:00-9:30 Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
- 9:30-11:00 Practices: Lecture 2
Biopowers of control and surveillance, and spaces of resistance:
autoethnographies in Venice (Guido Veronese)
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30-13:00 Project work
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break*
- 14:00-17:00 Walk along experience through autoethnography
- Evening: Social dinner (tbc)*

Day 4 | Thursday, July 24

- 9:00-11:00 Walk along experience and autoethnography presentation
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30-13:00 Methods: Lecture 3
Research as Resistance: Methodological Considerations for Investigating
the Impacts of Structural Violence (Alex Pieterse)
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break*
- 14:00-14:30 Reflective group
- 14:30-15:00 Group feedback
- 20.30-22.30 In-depth evening session

Day 5 | Friday, July 25

- 9:00-9:30 Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
- 9:30-11:00 Keynote lecture 2 (tbc)
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30-13:00 Finalising Project work
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break*
- 14:00-16:00 Project Work presentations
- 16:00-17:00 Conclusion and Final Remarks - Farwell Ceremon

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Morning meetings 9.00-9.30	Registration, group division and school presentation	Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)	Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)	Walk along experience and autoethnography presentation	Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
Morning program 9.30 - 11.00	Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)	Theories: Lecture 1 Epistemology and its discontents <i>Ashraf Kagee</i>	Practices: Lecture 2 Biopowers of control and surveillance, and spaces of resistance: autoethnographies in Venice <i>Guido Veronese</i>		Keynote lecture 2: (tbd)
Coffee break 11.00-11:30					
Morning program 11.30- 13.00	Title Keynote lecture 1 <i>Urmitapa Dutta (tbc)</i>	Project work	Project work	Methods: Lecture 3 Research as Resistance: Methodological Considerations for Investigating the Impacts of Structural Violence <i>Alex Pieterse</i>	Finalising Project work
Lunch 13.00-14.00					
Afternoon program 14.00-15.00	Project work	Group Feedback	Walk along experience and autoethnography (3h)	Reflective group (30') Group feedback (30')	Project Work presentations
15.00-16.00	Group Feedback	\		\	
16.00-17.00	\	\		\	Conclusion Final Remarks Farewell Ceremony
20.30-22.30		In-depth evening session (Open and informal co-constructed session)		In-depth evening session (Open and informal co-constructed session)	

EXTENDED PROGRAM

The format of the summer school is structured around the following modules:

Keynote Lectures

The two keynote lectures will be focused on two case studies—one focused on the Palestinian context and the other on the South African context—exploring the Summer School themes.

Lectures

The three lectures will offer in-depth insights into key topics providing participants with advanced perspectives that stimulate critical thinking and discussion around theories, practices, and methodologies

Project Work

Participants will collaborate in small groups (ideally of 4 people) on specific projects related to the themes of the summer school. This hands-on experience allows them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. Each group will develop a project proposal, which will be presented to the rest of the participants at the end of the summer school.

Reflective Group

In these sessions, participants will gather in smaller groups to reflect on their emotions and experiences throughout the summer school. The reflective group promotes a deeper understanding through self-reflection and open dialogue, encouraging critical consciousness.

Group Feedback

This session focuses on sharing constructive feedback within the group. Participants will offer their insights throughout the summer school, helping to refine the sessions and enhance the learning experience through collaborative input and support.

In-depth evening session

In-depth explorations of a topic elaborated during the day and of interest for the class.



LECTURES



1) Lecture 1 (Day 2)

Title: Epistemology and its discontents

Description: The session will be interactive and will seek to engage with the Eurocentric biases in traditional research methods. Realist, phenomenological and social constructionist approaches will be discussed. Participants will be asked to engage with several questions, including: (1) How they would describe their own epistemological stance as a researcher; (2) How colonisation has influenced our thinking as researchers and scholars; and (4) How this problem can be negotiated. The points of departure are that data are not neutral and should be interrogated for their role in serving dominant group interests; categories are neither 'natural' nor given and thus the units and forms of analysis should be critically evaluated; voice and insight are vital as data cannot 'speak for itself'. As such, critical analyses should be informed by the experiential knowledge of marginalized groups.

Speaker Ashraf Kagee, Stellenbosch University

Readings

Holtz, P., & Odağ, Ö. (2020). Popper was not a positivist: Why critical rationalism could be an epistemology for qualitative as well as quantitative social scientific research. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 17(4), 541-564.

Bowleg, L. (2017). Towards a critical health equity research stance: Why epistemology and methodology matter more than qualitative methods. *Health Education & Behavior*, 44(5), 677-684.

Au, W. (2007). Epistemology of the oppressed: The dialectics of Paulo Freire's theory of knowledge. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 5(2), 1-18.

Le Grange, L. (2019). A comment on critiques of the article Age-and education-related effects on cognitive functioning in Colored South African women. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(4), 9-19.

Strunk, K. K. (2023). Critical approaches to quantitative research: Review, critique, and applications. *Handbook of Critical Education Research*, 56-74.

Fraschetti, M. S. (2024). Whose 'truth' matters? Problematizing the epistemological underpinnings of social policy research. *Critical Policy Studies*, 18(2), 324-342.

López, N., Erwin, C., Binder, M., & Chavez, M. J. (2023). Making the invisible visible: Advancing quantitative methods in higher education using critical race theory and intersectionality. In *QuantCrit* (pp. 32-59). Routledge.

Goss, A. (Ed.). (2021). *The Routledge handbook of science and empire*. Routledge.

2) Lecture 2 (Day 3)

Title Biopowers of control and surveillance, and spaces of resistance: autoethnographies in Venice

Description Oppression and resistance are enacted through embodied experiences and biopolitical mechanisms of power. As a result, strategies of domination and practices of liberation constantly interact, reshaping both human and non-human ecologies and ecosystems. This lecture will guide participants in a critical reflection, using case studies to examine agentic practices of resistance and survival in the face of extreme violence and war. Additionally, we will explore and engage in "Schizocartography," a practice of rhizomatic mapping that involves a lived experience of walking through both dominated and liberated spaces, aimed at subverting hegemonic narratives. Schizocartography is a practice of mapping that challenges dominant, linear representations of space by emphasizing subjective, lived experiences. It draws on Deleuzian and Guattarian philosophy, using the concept of the *rhizome* to capture the complexity, fluidity, and interconnectedness of environments. In human sciences and the psychology of violence, schizocartography is applied to explore how individuals and groups navigate oppressive structures and reclaim spaces. It helps analyze the psychological impact of violence and domination, while also highlighting practices of resistance, survival, and subversion of power in both physical and symbolic territories.

Speaker Guido Veronese, University of Milano-Bicocca

Readings

Almeida, V. S. (2022). Representing the Perception of Violence in São Paulo, Brazil in Mental Maps: Queer Cartography as a Theoretical and Methodological Approach. In *Mapping LGBTQ Spaces and Places: A Changing World* (pp. 31-44). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Degen, J. L., Smart, G. L., Quinnell, R., O'Doherty, K. C., & Rhodes, P. (2023). Remaining human in COVID-19: Dialogues on psychogeography. *Human Arenas*, 6(3), 499-520.

Emerson, R. G. (2023). Counter-maps of body-territory: gender-based violence in Mexico. *Political geography*, 106, 102956.

Marshall, D. J. (2016). 'All the Beautiful Things': Trauma, Aesthetics and the Politics of Palestinian Childhood. In *The Beginning of Politics* (pp. 53-73). Routledge.

Moro, S. (2020). Mapping practices and the cartographic imagination. *Subjectivity*, 13, 298-314.

Veronese, G., Sousa, C., Cavazzoni, F., & Shoman, H. (2020). Spatial agency as a source of resistance and resilience among Palestinian children living in Dheisheh refugee camp, Palestine. *Health & Place*, 62, 102304.

Suggested reading

Anti-Oedipus; Capitalism and schizophrenia: by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, London, The Athlone Press, 1984.

Mbembe, A. (2020). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.

hooks, bell. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Pluto Press, 2000.

hooks, b. (1989). Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness: from Yearnings: Race. *Gender and Cultural Politics*.

3) Lecture 3 (Day 4)

Title Research as Resistance: Methodological Considerations for Investigating the Impacts of Structural Violence

Description Employing Galtung's approach to structural violence as the power to own and decide the distribution of resources, this presentation will examine colonial violence as representative of intersectional oppression, and will consider research methodologies as important points of resistance and repair. The presentation will draw on contemporary approaches to the integration of critical theory in quantitative methodologies and will review qualitative methodologies that apply the lens of indigeneity and community informed praxis. These approaches are viewed as vehicles that confront and counter sources of epistemic violence. In addition, the presentation will highlight the role of research in both shedding light on the ongoing psychological impacts of structural violence, and emphasizing cultural approaches to knowledge production. In doing so the presentation will seek to honor the voices of Indigenous scholars and will highlight the role of critical methodology in the project of creating a more equitable and just society.

Speaker Alex L. Pieterse, Boston College

Readings

Dutta, U., Sonn, C. C., & Lykes, M. B. (2016). Situating and contesting structural violence in community-based research and action. *Community Psychology in Global Perspective*, 2(2), 1-20.

Maddison, S. (2013). Indigenous identity, 'authenticity' and the structural violence of settler colonialism. *Identities*, 20(3), 288–303.

Fine, M. (2006). Bearing witness: Methods for researching oppression and resistance—A textbook for critical research. *Social Justice Research*, 19, 83-108.

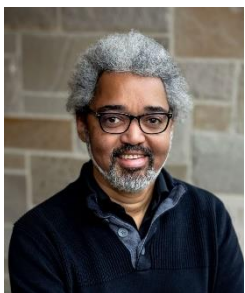
Faculty's short bio



Guido Veronese is an Italian Associate Professor at the Department of Human Sciences & Education, Milano-Bicocca State University. He graduated from Padova University in Clinical and Community Psychology and earned a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Milano-Bicocca. Additionally, he holds a Psy.D. in individual, couple, and family psychotherapy, counseling, and family mediation. His research employs mixed-methods designs to explore domains and dimensions of well-being in war-affected populations, focusing on psychological functioning, sources of agency, and culture-informed coping strategies. Guido has conducted research in diverse global contexts, particularly in regions experiencing ongoing crises such as the Gaza Strip, the Middle East, and Niger, Sub-Saharan Africa. He adopts a postcolonial, liberatory, and decolonial psychology stance, emphasizing scholarship that challenges traditional paradigms and amplifies marginalized voices. In recognition of his contributions, Guido received the NCFR (National Council on Family Relations) Jan Trost Award in 2022, the International Society of Critical Health Psychology (ISCHP) mid-career researcher award in 2023, and the Ignacio Martín-Baró Lifetime Peace Practitioner Award in 2023. The latter, presented by the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology Division (APA Division 48), honors his lifetime achievements as a peace practitioner.



Chiara Fiscione is an Italian psychologist and PhD candidate in Migration and Intercultural Processes at the University of Genoa and a research Fellow at the Psychology Department of Stellenbosch University. In the University of Milano-Bicocca she is collaborating with Health Conflicts Psychology Lab as a research assistant. Her research focuses on forced migration scenarios, with a deep commitment to making a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by forced migration and human rights violations. Her work also delves into issues of interculturality, aiming to explore the complexities of interactions within diverse cultural contexts from an intersectional perspective. Her recent fieldwork has focused on the survival strategies employed by individuals confronting forced migration in Italy, Niger, and Palestine. Guided by the principles of liberation psychology, she is committed to research and action that fosters social change grounded in the needs of communities working to create counter-narratives that resist the mainstream portrayal of these communities as passive victims.



Alex Pieterse is a licensed psychologist and an associate professor of Counseling Psychology at Boston College. He earned his doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and maintains a psychotherapy practice alongside his research, working with individuals and couples. Currently, Dr. Pieterse serves as the director of the Institute for the Study of Race and Culture at Boston College, and is a member of its research lab RESIST (Racial Empowerment, Self-Awareness and Investigations of Systemic Transformation). Additionally, he holds the role of Editor-Elect for The Counseling Psychologist. Dr. Pieterse's research is dedicated to exploring health and psychosocial aspects associated with racial identity and experiences of racism, racial trauma, and anti-racism advocacy. He bridges his interests in race-related themes and psychotherapeutic practice by investigating the role of anti-racism in counseling psychology training, methods for addressing racial trauma in clinical supervision, and the impact of self-awareness on the psychotherapy process.



Ashraf Kagee is a psychologist, academic, and writer. He is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University and co-Director of the Alan Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health. He earned his doctorate in Counselling Psychology from Ball State University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He teaches cognitive psychotherapy and research methods at Stellenbosch University. Professor Kagee is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture in Cape Town and does capacity building work at the Gaza Community Mental Health Centre in Gaza. He conducts research on various topics related to health psychology and public mental health. He has an interest in mental health conditions among persons living with a chronic illness; medication adherence and health behaviours in the context of chronic illness; stress and trauma among persons living under conditions of precarity including; and structural barriers to health promotion. His research has focused on common mental disorders among persons living with HIV and the psychological and structural factors influencing adherence to antiretroviral therapy.

