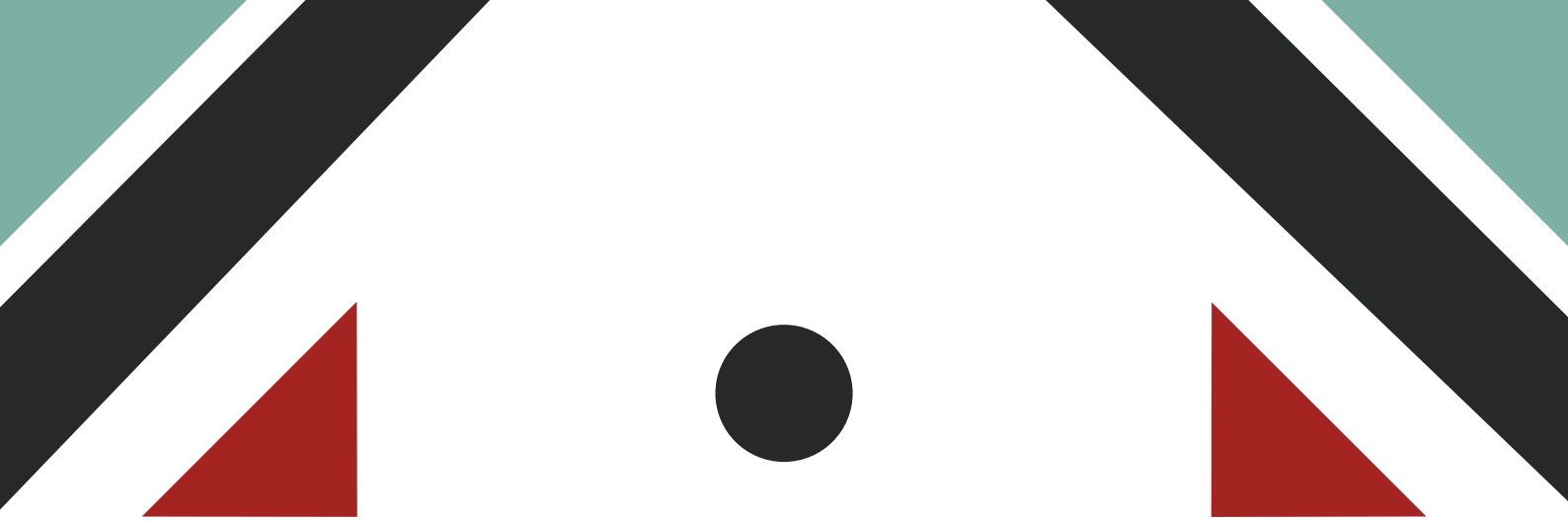




UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



5 July 2027



Preconference Workshops

The pre-conference workshops explore timely topics and novel approaches with the spirit of collective exploration of research possibilities in EMCA. Consequently, these workshops are suitable for beginner to established scholars with or without experience in these domains.

Three Pre-conference Workshops take place the day before the conference. Workshops run in parallel, so you will only be able to attend one workshop.

Date: 5 July 2027

Time: 09h30 – 15h30

Venue: Commerce, Law and Management Faculty Building, Braamfontein Campus West, Wits University

Booking: The workshop is an additional charge on registration. Spaces are limited. Once spaces are sold out you may contact us to be put on a waiting list for potential cancellations: sibongile.horo@wits.ac.za

Registration: Look out for more information on registration on the conference website: www.iiemca27.org

An Introduction to Critical Praxeological Analysis

with Phil Hutchinson

Description: Critical Praxeological Analysis (CPA) is a new qualitative methodology for investigating how meanings, norms and social structures are produced, maintained, challenged, repaired and sometimes overcome in situated human action and interaction. This interactive workshop will provide participants with practical experience of carrying out CPA. However, rather than presenting CPA simply as a set of analytic techniques, the workshop will show how its practical procedures emerge from a distinctive set of philosophical foundations. We will begin with a series of accessible examples drawn from Gestalt psychology, using them to explore a simple but consequential idea: the meaning of a constituent cannot be understood independently of the whole of which it is a constituent. We will then follow the development of this idea into praxeological Gestalts in Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and linguistic Gestalts or language-games in Ludwig Wittgenstein's later philosophy. This provides the basis for introducing Wittgensteinian grammatical investigation: an approach which seeks clarification not through theoretical explanation or definition, but through careful attention to how words and actions have sense within human practices. These philosophical foundations lead directly to the methodological orientation of CPA. Instead of asking an analyst to begin with a theory of racism, stigma, inequality, identity or power and then use that theory to interpret interaction, CPA asks us to turn to the sites of production: the situations in which people themselves make discrimination, exclusion, categorisation, degradation, resistance, disagreement and repair visible and intelligible. The workshop will move from philosophical foundations to sustained practical analysis of how apparently simple words and actions can do very different things within different situations. The final part of the workshop will consider how participants might use CPA within their own research. The emphasis throughout will be on learning the method by doing it, while showing why the analysis takes the form that it does.

No previous familiarity with CPA or with its philosophical foundations is required. The workshop is intended for researchers, postgraduate students and practitioners interested in qualitative research, EM/CA, psychology, sociology, health, education, linguistics and related fields. It may be particularly useful for:

- EM/CA researchers interested in engaging with critical questions while retaining an analysis grounded in participants' situated practices;
- critical qualitative researchers interested in approaches that investigate how social structures and inequalities are accomplished in everyday interaction;
- researchers interested in Wittgenstein, Gestalt psychology, ethnomethodology or ordinary language philosophy and how these traditions can inform a practical qualitative methodology.

Facilitator:

Phil Hutchinson is a philosopher and qualitative methodologist in the School of Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is co-developer, with Khadijah Diskin, of Critical Praxeological Analysis, and, with Doug Hardman, of Praxeological Analysis. His work brings together Wittgensteinian philosophy, Gestalt psychology, ordinary language philosophy and ethnomethodology/conversation analysis in the development of qualitative methodologies for investigating situated social and psychological phenomena. Recent applications of this work have focused particularly on stigma, health inequalities, categorisation, coercion and institutional practices.

How To Study Ideology in Social Interaction

with Emma Tennent and Elle Henderson

Description: Too often, analysing ideology is presented as antithetical to robust data-driven EMCA. We believe this is a mistake. In our own work, we are trying to speak about ideology while maintaining rigorous EMCA analyses. This workshop is for those who are interested in studying ideology empirically (or any related 'big picture issues' often deemed off limits). Our objectives are to explore some of the ways ideology is relevant in different aspects of social interaction; and how different analytic tools (e.g. domains of organisation; epistemic, deontic, affective orders; etc.) can be 'keys' to explicate them.

We are not going to offer a singular tidy definition of what ideology is or how to study it. Instead, we want to explore alongside workshop attendees the utility of these different EMCA 'keys' in helping us ground discussions of ideology in specific interactional practices. In this full-day workshop, we will work collaboratively to explore the different ways we can study ideology in social interaction.

We'll start with a brief overview of some of the key concepts and debates. Ideology is a term used in many different fields in many different ways. As we work through some of these different definitions, we'll discuss how different analytic concepts commonly deployed within EMCA can render aspects of ideology visible.

We will work through a range of data extracts unpacking different conceptualisations of ideology as they are manifest in observable practices of interaction.

Facilitators:

Emma Tennent is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at Te Herenga Waka and Elle Henderson is an academic staff member at Open Polytechnic. We both have PhDs in Discursive Psychology from Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington and have been working together for many years. Our research has explored ideology in different forms (although not always using that term explicitly) and we are grappling with how to make sense of this slippery concept in our empirical materials.

Talking With, Around, and About Machines

with **Jakub Mlynář & Victoria Williams**

Description: What do people do when they talk to machines, around or about them? How does “AI” become consequential and recognizable in social activities? This workshop takes an Ethnomethodological and Conversation Analytic (EMCA) approach to examine interactions in which “social AI” becomes relevant to participants. The focus is not simply on what a robot or chatbot can do, but on how people respond to it in practice: how they take turns, deal with “misunderstandings”, adjust their own actions, and decide what kind of “participant” the technology is. EMCA approaches are brought into conversation with the fields of neuroscience, psychology and ICT-framed human–robot interaction for an exploration of social AI research possibilities. Through data sessions and direct experiences of interacting with agentive machines, the workshop aims to spark possibilities for cross-disciplinary research agendas.

The workshop begins with a data session on recorded interactions with Pepper, a humanoid social robot, filmed at the Origins Centre museum at Wits. Pepper guides visitors through selected exhibits, speaking in both isiZulu and English and switching between the two during the tour. This data provides an opportunity to examine participants’ indexical meaning-making practices with, around and about human–robot interaction. The workshop will also include a visit to the Wits Robotics Museum, giving participants the opportunity to interact with different robots and reflect on how their design, movement and responsiveness shape interactional possibilities and the kind of interactional research questions one might explore. The final experience shifts from physically embodied robots to companion AI through a live voice conversation with Replika. Unlike the robot encounters, this interaction depends less on physical presence and more on how well the conversation is sustained through relevant responses, appropriate timing and continuity across turns. Across the workshop, the different encounters are connected by a central question: how are social activities organized when a technology is an active participant in conversation, and what follows from that?

This workshop is for those curious about or involved in studying “social AI” and the affordances of EMCA for investigating it along with an interest in what cross-disciplinary research could make possible. Previous knowledge of EMCA or AI is not required for this experiential and cross-disciplinary workshop. The facilitators bring their disciplinary backgrounds to this discussion and participants are encouraged to do the same.

Facilitators:

Jakub Mlynář is a sociologist studying social aspects of digital technology and AI in a variety of settings – in educational and medical contexts as well as automated mobility. His overarching interest is in the situated orderliness of social activities in which agentive technologies are embedded and involved. He aims to contribute to a conception of AI that does not rely on cognitivist or technologist assumptions, developing the view that AI is not inside machines but constituted in and through publicly observable organization of conduct.

Victoria Williams is an interdisciplinary neuroscientist whose research brings together psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, and artificial intelligence. Her work explores empathy, social cognition and interaction across humans, other animals and AI systems. She is particularly interested in how people communicate with language models, companion AI and embodied robots, and how features such as language, timing, emotional responses and embodiment shape these interactions.