



Guest Lecture

Religion and Society Research Cluster (RSRC)
School of Social Sciences and Psychology

Spiritual and Class Insecurity among South Africa's Emerging Middle Class Christians

Speaker:

Dr Ibrahim Abraham (Hans Mol
Research Fellow in Religion and Social
Sciences - Australian National
University)

Sponsored by:

The *Religion and Society Research
Cluster* (RSRC) and the *School of Social
Sciences and Psychology* (SSAP) at
Western Sydney University

This guest lecture reflects on ethnographic research in Cape Town across several years, by engaging with the interrelated realities of “spiritual insecurity” and “class insecurity” in the lives of South African Christians of the emerging black middle class. The concept of spiritual insecurity, as developed by Adam Ashforth, theorizes responses to “unmanageable dangers, doubts, and fears” emerging from the spiritual realm in everyday life. In South Africa, these responses draw from an array of Christian and non-Christian resources, including local and global Pentecostalism, and increasingly politicized engagements with traditional African religion. However, members of South Africa’s new black middle class must also negotiate “unmanageable dangers, doubts, and fears” emerging from the economic realm in everyday life. High levels of unemployment, dysfunctional educational and welfare systems, financial obligations to family, and unclear pathways out of poverty, make the economic realm as difficult to decipher and negotiate as the spiritual realm. Drawing on additional insights from South African literary fiction and popular culture, this lecture develops ideas from the presenter’s work-in-progress, *Religion and Moral Ambition in South Africa: Race, Class, and Christianity*.

Ibrahim Abraham is the Hans Mol Research Fellow in Religion and the Social Sciences at the Australian National University. He is the author of *Evangelical Youth Culture: Alternative Music and Extreme Sports Subcultures* (Bloomsbury, 2017) and the editor of *Christian Punk: Identity and Performance* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

Date and Time

Wednesday, 8 May 2019: 10.30am – 12.00 pm

RSVP

Please RSVP to a.nixon@westernsydney.edu.au

Venue

Room LP-03.8.01, Liverpool Campus, Western
Sydney University