

CALL FOR PAPERS
Conference to be held at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein
20-21 August 2019

Health, healthcare and urban spaces: perspectives from the law and medical humanities



Philip Badenhorst
Images of Human Rights Clause 19: Healthcare, food, water, and social security
'Peace of mind' 398 x 307, linocut

Healthcare in South Africa is unequally distributed between the country's geographic regions, and between public and private health sectors. There is a concentration of healthcare facilities in cities with great variations in the quality of services provided between rural and urban settings, and in different urban centres. This is a direct product of South Africa's colonial and Apartheid spatial history and urban planning legislation. The distinction between private and public healthcare facilities also significantly impacts on the unequal allocation of resources, and the realisation of the Constitutional human right to healthcare. The boundaries between public and private space, state and citizen take on a particular configuration in South Africa where formations of the social and the ways in which the social is spatialised are shaped by a history of racialised segregation through law, and a persistence of inequalities that endure today. This conference returns to 'the clinic' - not simply a physical space, but also an idea or a practice or mode of power that can be enacted across multiple sites - to consider the following questions:

1. What is the impact of spatiality and conceptions of spatial justice on healthcare experiences, and what does this mean for rights to health as taken up in the South African Constitution?
2. How might we decentre our perspectives on spaces of health, healthcare and global health?
3. The architecture and design of medical care facilities also impact their spirit of place. This ranges from colonial-style hospitals to modern structures resembling the hospitality industry. What might intersections between architecture, design, anthropology, medicine and the law have to offer to re-imagining spaces of health and healthcare?
4. What might be the pedagogical opportunities of drawing healthcare students' attention to the spatiality of healthcare?

The two-day conference, hosted at the Free State Centre for Human Rights, will include a spatial justice tour of some of Bloemfontein's healthcare facilities.

The organisers invite papers, poster presentations, artworks, or performances that address any of the questions or related themes. We envisage a generative interdisciplinary conversation between scholars working across a range of disciplines, which may include medicine, law, architecture, urban planning, social sciences and medical humanities, and we encourage contributions in a range of formats, from traditional academic papers, to visual art and performance pieces.

Postgraduate students are encouraged to participate.

Abstracts of 300 words must reach the organisers by Friday 12 July 2019.

For any further information, please contact Michelle Pentecost (michelle.pentecost@kcl.ac.uk) or Isolde de Villiers (devilliersi@ufs.ac.za)