



Venice International University Summer School



Global Mental Health and Human Rights: Decolonial perspectives on Structural Violence and War

July 6-10, 2026

Faculty

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

Chiara Fiscione, University of Milano-Bicocca (Tutor)

Alex L. Pieterse, Boston College

Ashraf Kagee, Stellenbosch University

Guest speakers

Jasbir K Puar, University of British Columbia and University of the Western Cape

Urmitapa Dutta, University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA and University of South Africa

Yasser Abu Jamei, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and Verona University

Paul Rhodes, University of Sydney

Program

Day 1 | Monday, July 6

9:00-9:30 Registration, group division and Summer School Presentation

9:30-11:00 Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)

11:00-11:30 *Coffee Break*

11:30-13:00 Keynote lecture 1
(Jasbir Puar)

13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break*

14:00-15:00 Project work

15:00-16:00 Group Feedback

18.00-19.30 In-depth evening session 1- Anarchives of anti-fascism; art-based psychogeography in Exarchiea, Fitzroy and Firenze. (Paul Rhodes)

Day 2 | Tuesday, July 7

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 2- Mental Health in Gaza: Human Rights Violations and Mental Health Intervention Challenges. (Yasser Abu Jamei)

Day 3 | Wednesday, July 8

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 9

9:00-11:00 Walk along experience and autoethnography presentation
 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
 11:30-13:00 Methods: Lecture 3
 Witnessing Otherwise: Decolonial Methodologies of Resistance (Urmi Dutta)
 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 3

Day 5 | Friday, July 10

9:00-9:30 Reflective Group (divided into 2 subgroups)
 9:30-11:00 Keynote lecture 2
 (Urmi Dutta)
 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 Ceremony

Faculty's short bio



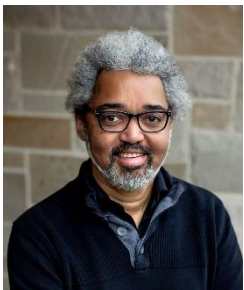
Guido Veronese is an Italian Associate Professor at the Department of Human Sciences & Education, Milano-Bicocca State University. He graduated from Padova University in Clinical and Community Psychology and earned a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Milano-Bicocca. Additionally, 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 Fiscone is an Italian psychologist holding a PhD in Migration and Intercultural Processes from the University of Genoa. She is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Milano-Bicocca and a Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. Her research is situated at the intersection of critical migration studies, community and liberation psychologies, feminist and decolonial scholarship. Focusing on contexts of forced migration and human rights violations, she examines how displacement is shaped by broader regimes of power, bordering practices, and intersecting forms of oppression, while exploring the ways individuals and communities negotiate, resist, and transform these conditions. Through

ethnographically informed and participatory approaches, her work engages with the lived experiences and situated knowledges of people on the move, challenging deficit-oriented and victimizing representations that often dominate migration discourses. Her recent fieldwork in Italy, Niger, Palestine and South Africa has investigated the everyday survival strategies, collective forms of care, and political practices developed in response to displacement, exclusion, and structural violence. Grounded in an ethical and political commitment to social justice, her research seeks not only to understand social realities but also to contribute to transformative processes that amplify marginalized voices, foster collective agency, and support the construction of alternative narratives and futures.



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.



Urmitapa Dutta is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Grounded in Global South feminist decolonial praxis, her work seeks to understand and disrupt normalized everyday violence (direct, structural, and symbolic) across the spaces she is rooted in, and those that she transgresses. Her decolonial praxis is profoundly shaped by her experiences growing up in the Northeastern borderlands of India, amidst complex and convoluted forms of belonging, marginality, and exclusions. Working transnationally, she uses critical qualitative methodologies to interrogate the linkages between epistemic violence and myriad forms of domination codified by (settler) colonial modes of knowledge production. She approaches decolonial praxis as a powerful mode of centering lived realities and voices of communities at the margins of national and global imaginaries. Her community-engaged activist scholarship (re)centers Global South and majority world peoples as epistemic subjects or knowledge producers. She engages in collaborative research, teaching, community action, and multivocal writing from relationally rooted places that contend with complex relationships to hegemonic power. Through this work, she seeks to denaturalize oppressive conditions and articulate experiences and knowledges silenced by officially sanctioned narratives. She is currently working in solidarity with Miya people in Northeast India to theorize “from below” and (co)create communities of resistance against coloniality and state violence.



Jasbir K. Puar is Distinguished Faculty of Arts Professor in the Social Justice Institute at the University of British Columbia, Extraordinary Professor in the Women’s and Gender Studies Department at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa, and Professor Emerita at Rutgers University where she was faculty in the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department for 23 years. Puar is the author of the award-winning books: *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (2017), which has been translated into Spanish and is forthcoming in Portuguese, and *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007), available in French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and re-issued as an expanded version for its 10th anniversary (2017). Her articles have been published in journals such as *Social Text* and *South Atlantic Quarterly*, mainstream venues such as *Al-Jazeera* and *The Guardian*, and translated into more than 20 languages. Dr. Puar is also co-author of exhibitions for the Sharjah Architecture Triennial (2019) and the Sharjah Art Biennial (2023). In 2019 she received the Kessler Award from the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies (CLAGS) at CUNY, which recognizes lifetime achievement in and impact on queer research and organizing.



Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei is a prominent Palestinian psychiatrist who, since 2014, has led the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), an independent organization providing mental health services and professional training in the strip. Under his leadership, GCMHP has continued to address mental health needs in a challenging environment. Dr. Abu Jamei contributed to the development of Palestine National Mental Health Strategy, co-led the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Technical Working Group in Gaza, and co-founded the

Palestine Global Mental Health Network, advancing access and support for mental health across the region. As an active research collaborator, he partners with top global institutions—including the WHO Collaborating Centre at the University of Verona, University College London (UCL), and Stellenbosch University. His current research interests include assessing the mental health conditions of the population and also implementing impactful, low-intensity psychosocial interventions in unstable emergency environments. Dr. Abu Jamei has authored or co-authored over twenty academic papers. His global impact has been recognized with prestigious honors, including the Said Foundation Best Alumnus Award (2015), the University of Birmingham Alumnus of the Year Award (2016), and the Rebuilding Alliance Community Resilience Award (2021). Since October 2023, despite personal and institutional adversity, he has sustained GCMHP's frontline mental healthcare, reaching children and adults in displacement zones and shelters.



Professor Paul Rhodes is a psychologist at the University of Sydney who has had a long career as a therapist, researcher and writer. He has published over 200 peer reviewed papers and is author of *A Practical Guide to Family Therapy* (2024), *A Psychogeography of Florence* (2025), *Beyond Psychology: How Else Can We Heal* (2020). Paul is also a fine artist who paints about trauma, recovery and redemption.