

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Dr. Josien de Klerk
Title of clinic:	Witnessing Motherhood
Number of students:	1
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	All
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	Affinity with Storytelling Knowledge on how to search anthropological articles are an advantage, but no prerequisite

Research context

The Ububele Educational and Psychotherapy Trust is an NGO located in Alexandra township, Johannesburg which provides mental health services for mothers and newborn babies. Their programme is grounded in responsive parenting, one of the pillars of the WHO Nurturing Care Framework but is continuously adapted to fit the context of parenthood in Alexandra. One of the Ububele programmes is the Home Visiting Programme where parents of newborns are visited by a trained salaried lay counselors, themselves women and mothers living in Alexandra. They are titled Early Childhood Community Practitioners (ECCP) and are trained in the LOFT model, Listen, Observe, Think, Feel and write home-visit reports after each visit in which they write down observations and signal signs of mental health distress or threats to the newborn's survival.

LUC has received full access to these home visit reports and over the past 5 years Dr. Josien de Klerk has worked with the lay mental health counselors to collaboratively compile and analyse the reports. The idea to develop a joint book with the working title 'witnessing motherhood', has floated in a meeting in September 2024. This book would consist of vignettes based on the home visit reports framed by a meta-story of the work of witnessing by ECCP.

Students' tasks and activities

Tasks

- Review the original reports (currently in excel and also containing pictures of handwritten reports and voicenotes) and compile 10-20 full transcripts.
- Complete the research database for the book project (overview of all the compiled transcripts so far)
- Work closely with one of the ECCP who will write several extensive case-studies that will function as in-between chapters. Through WhatsApp and Videocall . Join in live conversations (online) with the ECCP to deepen the case-studies.
- Review the collected articles on the concept of witnessing in anthropology and search for more articles. Write an annotated bibliography drawing out the main uses of the concept.
- Assist in the development of a book proposal for the envisioned press.

Learning aims:

- Develop interview skills, research organizational skills
- Develop literature search skills, including comparing and contrasting literature around 'witnessing'
- Acquire knowledge on Early childhood development interventions in the majority world, reproductive health and the 1000 days of life.

Timeline:

Start February 2025 with case compilation and review of 5 articles

March 2025: Finalise research database + annotated bibliography of 5 articles + one collaborative casestudy

April -May 2025 – extend compiled transcript database, collaborative cases and literature