

## **Panel Proposal for Ife Institute for Advanced Studies First Annual Conference (IIAS 2026)**

**Conference Theme:** Roots and Futures: Advancing the African Scholarly Imagination.

**Conference Date:** 30th-31st July, 2026

**Venue:** Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria (Hybrid)

### **Call for Panellists**

**Panel Title:** *Re-centring African/a Cultural Studies: Theories, Methodologies, Epistemologies*

#### **Panel Description:**

Cultural Studies has been a significant force in intellectual discourse for decades. However, it remains predominantly anchored in Western frameworks. Pioneers of the field, such as Hall, Hoggart, Thompson, and Williams, focused extensively on the realities of their respective societies, often neglecting the rich currents of African knowledge systems. To truly understand African culture, scholars must navigate and reconcile these Western narratives with indigenous perspectives. The conversation often prioritises Western theories, particularly when discussing concepts like gender, identity, and power relations, without adequately exploring the potential for African epistemologies to inform these discussions. As Wright and Xiao highlight, the politics of representation in African cultural studies have not been fully addressed. While recent efforts by scholars and institutions to engage with these gaps are commendable, further exploration of specific concepts and emergent identities is essential. This panel advocates for a re-centring of African thought systems, positioning African cultural studies and its Afro-centric theories, methodologies, and epistemologies as critical contributors to the global cultural studies discourse.

#### **Guiding Questions Include:**

- What should be the focus regarding the study, content, discipline, and pedagogy of African Cultural Studies?
- What should be the Epistemology itself? Should we base African Cultural Studies within the framework of Western and Eastern experiences?
- Should we continue to decolonise and maintain a focus on neocolonialism as a serious challenge to African Cultural Studies in the 21st century?
- How do we discuss, for instance, representation, power and agency in contemporary media such as film, fashion, social media, and AI within African Cultural Studies?

#### **Suggested Thematic Categories should include:**

- Epistemology and Theory
- Pedagogy and Practice
- Decolonial Critique
- Contemporary Cultural Forms
- Intersectionality and Identity
- Cultural Resistance and Agency
- Globalisation and Transnationalism
- Sexuality and Feminism

#### **Submission Guidelines:**

Abstracts of between 200 and 250 words, accompanied by a short bio of 100 words maximum, should be submitted via <https://ias-ife.com/ias-first-annual-hybrid-conference/> (indicating along your name in bracket “**ICS Panel**”); submit your proposal to: [owraheem@oauife.edu.ng](mailto:owraheem@oauife.edu.ng) by 13 April, 2026. All abstracts should please include the name of author(s), title of proposed paper, institutional affiliation(s) and email address.

#### **Panel Convener:**

Institute of Cultural Studies

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

+234-7035080096; +234-8181284595