



## **THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES PRESENTS: “Commitment, Crisis, Capture: Analyzing the Evolution of South Africa’s Refugee Policy”**



**With  
Heather David, Masters Student, Political  
Science, Carleton University**

**Wednesday, January 3rd, 1:00- 2:30 pm  
MacOdrum Library Discovery Centre Room 482,  
Carleton University\***

**Heather Davis:** I am a Master’s student in the Political Science Department at Carleton University. I recently returned from a trip to South Africa where I was conducting field research for my Masters thesis. I initially became interested in the study of forced migration and refugees in a course I took last year, in the first year of my program. For that class, I wrote a paper exploring the nature of the global refugee regime in a country like India, whose history with colonialism, division, and the mass movement of people across borders, contradicts many of the international community’s ideas and definitions surrounding forced migration. My interest and passion for these kinds of issues grew – so much that I am here today to discuss my thesis project, on an idea that stemmed from these initial explorations. South Africa, like India, had a unique experience with colonialism – in fact, unlike any other on the planet. Institutionalized and social racism in the form Apartheid plagued the country for many years, only ending in 1994. It is at this moment that the country had an opportunity to move forward in a positive way – to reconsider its legal foundations and start anew. It is at this moment that my research begins, looking at the evolution of refugee policy in South Africa since the end of Apartheid. I highlight particular ‘moments’ in this evolution, analysing them in detail, to explore whether the motivations and actors involved can speak to a larger trend. Do moments matter? Or are they unable to explain larger trends – retaining momentary significance, but otherwise distracted from a 25-year history? These are the questions I hope to answer in my thesis, and which I will be discussing with you today.

**This is part of the African Studies Brownbag Seminar Series**

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For more information, please contact the Institute of African Studies at  
613-520-2600 ext. 2220 or [African\\_Studies@carleton.ca](mailto:African_Studies@carleton.ca)

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