



SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES

BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & RESEARCH WRITING WORKSHOP, 2021

COVID-19, FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (4IR),
AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN AFRICA

RESEARCH WRITING WORKSHOP: 3-5 MAY 2021; CONFERENCE: 6-7 MAY 2021

Rationale:

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an unprecedented public health crisis. It has infected millions of people, left hundreds of thousands dead, and overwhelmed public health facilities in most industrialized nations. It heightened distrust among and within countries, and of certain international agencies. The pandemic has led to staggering losses in economic activities, endangering global economy and threatening the fabric of societies, and in some instances upturning political systems, with signs of resurgence of authoritarianism. The pandemic has also challenged the ingenuity of global scientific community leading to adoption and/or strengthening of innovative ways of collaborating to achieve results. All these are resulting in a 'new normal'; hence, the record-breaking invention of several vaccines within 11 months. There have therefore been suggestions that COVID-19 could actually hasten the uptake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) by boosting the use of uncommon technologies such as AI, drones, IoT, and online services and applications. This development demands instant response from the scientific cum intellectual community in Africa to enable appropriate policy responses towards Africa's adaptation to the emerging normal.

This international and interdisciplinary conference therefore aims to bring together researchers, academics, and industry practitioners from across the world to discuss frameworks and prospects of Africa's response to current global challenges and their solutions in the context of 4IR and interdisciplinary research. The conference is meant to be one of the urgently needed responses to guide adjustments to the new normal. To guide participants, we raise three questions: (i) How has COVID-19 accelerated the prospects and issues around 4IR? (ii) What questions do 4IR raise around essentialist ideas about life in general and human nature/life in particular? (iii) What lessons from COVID-19 can enhance predominant approaches to and application of 4IR to learning, climate crises, tourism, health research and delivery, transportation, etc.?

Well-researched papers and works in progress are therefore welcomed on any of the following sub-themes to aid responses in/from Africa:

Sub-Themes:

- 1 4IR, Language-Literary Teaching & Research
- 2 4IR, e-Resources, & Life-long Learning
- 3 4IR, COVID-19, Virtual-interactions, & Future of Work/Learning/Research
- 4 4IR, Bioengineering, & Essence of Human Nature
- 5 4IR, COVID-19 and Psychology of AI-Human Interaction
- 6 COVID-19, Trust & Conspiracy Theories
- 7 4IR, Religious Assumptions & Ethical Questions
- 8 COVID-19, Physical Distancing & Essence of Religious Practices
- 9 4IR, Bioengineering, Food Security & Climate Crises
- 10 COVID-19, Ecological Lessons & SDGs
- 11 4IR, Digital Technologies, Data Privacy, & Prospects/Challenges to Democracy
- 12 COVID-19, Democratic Elections, and Authoritarianism in Africa
- 12 COVID-19, Universality of Human Problems, & Identity Questions
- 14 4IR, Data Security & International Relations/Security/Laws
- 15 4IR, Global Security Architecture, & Peace-keeping
- 16 4IR, Future of Energy Creation & Conversion
- 17 4IR, Quantum Physics, Space Monitoring & Human Existence
- 18 COVID-19, Sociolinguistics, Socio-pragmatism, & Interdisciplinary Discourse
- 19 COVID-19, Semiotics, & Information Dissemination Strategies
- 20 4IR, COVID-19 & Theatrical Performance
- 21 COVID-19 & Death Management
- 22 COVID-19, Crime Trends, Domestic Violence, & Human Rights
- 23 4IR, COVID-19, Transportation Industry, Cultural-Event Tourism
- 24 COVID-19, Poverty, & Debt Burden in Africa
- 25 4IR & Development in Africa
- 26 COVID-19, Emerging Infectious Diseases, & Antibiotic Resistance
- 27 Medical Tourism, COVID-19 and Healthcare Research/Delivery in Africa
- 28 4IR, Machine Learning, Healthcare Delivery and Drug/Vaccine Development
- 29 4IR, History Preservations & Geological Studies

Workshop and Conference Mode: Hybrid (physical and virtual), preferably virtual.

Abstract submission guidelines:

- Language: All abstracts must be written and submitted in English.
- Authorship: An individual may be first or presenting author of not more than two abstracts.
- Affiliation and contact: Full name and affiliation(s) are mandatory for each author. Email address and phone number of Corresponding Author are required.
- Originality: Abstracts should contain new information and must not have been presented before. Review papers and project reports are also acceptable.
- Title: The title should not exceed 15 words.
- Body: Maximum of 250 words (authors, contacts and title not included).
- Abstract must be structured to reflect the article content including background (study objectives, hypothesis tested, or description of problem), methodology, results (in summarized form, must include substantial information about results, but do not include tables, graphs or pictures) and conclusion/recommendation. Do not include references.
- **Means of submission:** Submit via this link:
<https://forms.gle/5K51EmA2wv3eUVTD7>

Registration Fee:

Early Bird: NGN12,000; Regular Registration: NGN15,000

Account Details:

Account Name: School of General Studies Conference

Account Number: 6060373073

Bank: Fidelity Bank Plc.

NB: After payment, kindly forward a scanned copy of your teller or screenshot of your transaction (if using mobile Apps) and your contact details (name, phone number and affiliation) to sgs.conference@unn.edu.ng.

Dates/Contacts for Inquiries:

- Deadline for submission of Abstracts: 7 April 2021
- End of Early bird registration: 7 March 2021
- Inquiries about submission of Abstracts and payments: sgs.conference@unn.edu.ng
- Inquiries about accommodation: Ugochukwu Obieke [ugochukwu.obieke@unn.edu.ng | 0802-320-2753]

NB: Papers to be selected after the conference will be reviewed and published in the *Journal of Liberal Studies (JLS)*.

Speakers: Keynote:

Dr Mesfin Abayneh Kebede

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pretoria, South Africa

Lead Paper 1:

Prof. Chibueze Amamchukwu

Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering, University of Chicago, USA

Lead Paper 2:

Prof. Uchenna Okeja

Rhodes University, South Africa

Resource Persons for Research Writing Workshop:

Prof. Tracie Chima

*Department of Theatre & Film Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*

Prof. Uchenna Okeja

Rhodes University, South Africa

Prof Charles A. Igwe

Chief Host | Vice Chancellor, UNN

Prof. Bonaventure Echezona

*Host and Chairman, Organizing Committee
Dean, School of General Studies*

Anthony C. Ajah

Secretary, Organizing Committee