



Institute of  
**African Studies**  
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, INSTITUTE OF  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES/DISABILITY  
STUDIES AND THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN  
STUDIES PRESENTS**

**"Dark Continent, Dark Remedy? Is There a  
History of Thalidomide in Africa?"**

**WITH**



**Julie Parle**  
**(Honorary) Associate Professor in History**  
**School of Social Sciences**  
**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**Wednesday, September 24, 1:00- 2:30 pm**  
**433 Paterson Hall, Carleton University\***

It is difficult to underestimate the extent to which thalidomide has shaped the last half-century. From both advances and reforms in pharmaceutical science and medicine; to reframing the laws of contempt; in debates about women's reproductive rights; in the moral imperatives and ethics of investigative journalism; in disability rights and more, thalidomide and its survivors have had a strong presence across the much of the English-speaking world. It has however become conventional wisdom that there are no histories of "this dark remedy" of thalidomide in "the dark continent" of Africa. This paper questions this view and suggests that a new story of thalidomide in Africa may just be beginning.

**Julie Parle PhD** is an Honorary Associate Professor of History in the School of Social Sciences at UKZN. She has researched, taught, talked and published on the histories of mental health, psychiatry, hospitals, medicine, hysteria, witchcraft, seduction, and divers other topics. She is a former President of the Southern African Historical Society; serves on the board of several archives, research bodies and journals; and has a keen interest in the ethical use of archived documents.

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

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