

CREDO

Centre for Research on Democracy



RIKSBANKENS
JUBILEUMSFOND
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

African Democracy Essay Prize

2022

To further our mission of growing the study of democracy by African students and academics, the Centre for Research on Democracy (CREDO) at Stellenbosch University has decided to launch an annual essay competition - the African Democracy Essay Prize – aimed at undergraduate students attending a South African university. Eligible students are invited to submit an essay that makes use of the resources offered by the African Data Hub for the Study of Democracy to address a key issue or topic relevant to democracy on the African continent.

An online platform, the African Data Hub for the Study of Democracy was created to promote the study of democracy by African students and young academics by guiding students as to how and why we should study democracy, with an emphasis on using data to inform research. To this end, the Hub offers a directory of sources for democracy data, an index of important research questions, and an extensive list of recommended readings.

Students who participate in this national competition will not only involve themselves in crucial debates and ideas at the heart of contemporary democracies, but will have the opportunity to improve their research and writing skills and, in the process, produce examples of quality academic work that they can showcase to potential employers and graduate schools. Participating in the African Democracy Essay Prize will thus be particularly beneficial to students considering further studies, or a career in academia, policymaking, governance, development, or law.

Prize

The winner of the African Democracy Essay Prize will receive R5,000 in cash as well as the privilege of having their essay featured in Democracy in Africa, an influential online publication widely read by academics, policymakers, and Africa specialists. A condensed version of the winning essay will also be featured in The Continent, an award-winning African newspaper.

The top 10 essays will be featured in a special CREDO publication, to be promoted on our social media and by our global network of academic scholars and research institutions.

Eligibility

The African Democracy Essay Prize is open to undergraduate students attending any South African university, studying in the faculties of the Humanities, Social Sciences (including economics), or Law. This includes foreign nationals, provided they are attending a South African university.

If you are at all uncertain as to your eligibility, please do contact us (details below).

Topics

Your essay should, at its core, be an attempt to explore an issue or topic relevant to democracy on the African continent. Example research questions can be found on the African Data Hub for the Study of Democracy, split between those focused on political institutions and those on political culture.

Ideally, you should adopt one of these pre-formulated research questions as the focus of your essay. However, if you can provide a clear motivation as to why you want to address a different, though still democracy-related, topic, you can do so by emailing Damien du Preez at 19778368@sun.ac.za, with the subject line "CREDO Essay Motivation 2022".

Essay Requirements

All essays submitted to the competition must meet certain requirements:

- All essays should be written in English.
- Each essay must be structured around a clear research question and a logical argument which addresses this question.
- A written length of between 2,000 – 4,000 words is required, excluding cover page, table of contents, and references.
- A cover page, table of contents, reference list, and page numbers should be included.
- The cover page should include the essay title, student's name, email address, phone number, university they attend, year of study, and field of study.
- The various sections of the essay should be separated using numbered headings. These headings would then make up your table of contents.
- Essays should be formatted in 12-point font, Times New Roman, with justified text and 1.5 line spacing.
- All essays should be properly referenced as per academic norms, according to the Harvard Referencing Style.

Submissions

Essay submissions open on the 15th of August 2022 and close on the 15th of January 2023.

Completed essays, adhering to all the requirements as set out above, should be emailed as a PDF file to Damien du Preez at 19778368@sun.ac.za, with the subject line "CREDO Essay Submission 2022".

Queries

Any further questions or concern you have can be emailed to Damien du Preez at 19778368@sun.ac.za, with the subject line "CREDO Essay Question 2022".

Key Resources

- CREDO's African Data Hub for the Study of Democracy (for topics, recommended readings, data sources, and how-to's)
- Our World in Data's Democracy Data Explorer (for data sources and visualisations)
- Trilingual Glossary of Political Science Terms (for English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa translations)
- Stellenbosch University's Political Science Referencing Guide (Harvard Style)