

# **WORLD CINEMA AND COSMOPOLITICS RESEARCH GROUP**

## **SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES**

### **DURHAM UNIVERSITY**

**Professor Paul COOKE (University of Leeds)**  
**“Soft Power, Film and the BRICS: The Case of South Africa”**  
**Wednesday, 9 November, 4pm, ER205**

**The event is organised as part of the AHRC-funded  
Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) programme**



#### **Abstract:**

Part of a projects currently being led by the Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures (Leeds) investigating the relationship between non-state actors in the cultural industries of the BRICS countries and national “soft power” strategies, Professor Cooke’s presentation will examine ways in which the declared policy priorities of the South African government have seemed to work against the nation’s strategic aim to use film as a tool to leverage soft power in order to gain political influence across Africa, as well as to maximise the economic potential of globalisation. Unlike, for example, the Nigerian film industry, which is allowing the local expertise to develop, the success of the South African production infrastructure is to the detriment of the South African filmmakers. Professor Cooke investigates the extent to which the economic imperative to develop the industry is working against the soft power aim to project South African stories internationally, and with it, its ‘national strategic narrative’, considered to be the country’s prime soft power asset.

#### **Speaker Bio:**

Paul Cooke is Centenary Chair of World Cinemas at the University of Leeds. He is the author of *Representing East Germany: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (2005) and *Contemporary German Cinema* (2012). His edited volumes include *World Cinema’s ‘Dialogues; with Hollywood* (2007), *The Lives of Others and Contemporary German Film* (2013) and, with Marc Silberman, *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (2012). He is currently involved in an AHRC project exploring the role of film as a tool for the generation of ‘Soft Power’ across the BRICS group of emerging nations and a number of heritage-related community filmmaking projects in Germany, South Africa, India and Brazil.

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