

**Prof. Dr. Gillian Mathys** ([gillian.mathys@ugent.be](mailto:gillian.mathys@ugent.be))

Research areas: African history, colonial history, (post)colonial heritage and memory, everyday violence, borders, conflict, social history, identity, labour, independence and its immediate aftermath.

I am a social historian of the African Great Lakes region. I have worked on borders, mobility, labour and identity in the Great Lakes region; on how the past is mobilised within contemporary conflicts; on land conflicts; on large-scale post-independence uprisings; and I am now working on everyday (colonial) violence. Within all these projects, I am always interested in how the (colonial) past continues to shape the present.

All proposals related to the above broad thematic areas are welcome, but I can provide the most focused guidance on Congo, Rwanda and Burundi (in terms of both content and sources). I also welcome more methodological approaches (e.g. through critical explorations of colonial archives), and because of my experience in the Belgian parliamentary committee on Belgium's colonial past, I am also interested in topics that explore the way different actors within Belgian society do or do not deal with the colonial legacy.

You can also come to me (in collaboration with Tina De Gendt) for research on the Senegalese and Congolese diaspora in Ghent. Methodologically, I have experience with both archival research and oral history as well as ethnographically inspired research. I can supervise in Dutch, English and French. Most topics will require a sufficient passive knowledge of French, and certainly the oral history projects in Ghent will require a more active knowledge. I also encourage students to come up with their own proposals for thesis topics within and outside these thematic fields. I believe that, to the extent possible, students often write the best theses if they themselves come up with a topic that they are passionate about (and this can, of course, also be within the thematic fields outlined above).