Organizing for Sustainable Futures: Micro and Macro-institutional Conditions of Transformation

June 27-30, 2022
Venice International University
Isola di San Servolo, Venice
VIU Summer School

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Scientific Coordinators:

Prof. Guido Palazzo
University of Lausanne

&

Prof. Francesco Zirpoli
Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

In its sixth edition, the summer school aims at the development of ideas that promote a more sustainable future by bringing together young scholars from all over the world to discuss their ideas on the Grand Transition of our society from the micro level of individual decision making to the organizational and the societal level. It gives young scholars the opportunity to discuss with eminent scholars in management theory and to test their ideas and present their work. Participants will become familiar with recent research from a broad set of disciplines. They will work on their ability to engage in the transdisciplinary discourse which is required for the development of innovative answers to grand sustainability challenges.

Who is it for?
The Summer School is addressed to mainly PhD students and young post-doc scholars in management, economics and finance, political science, philosophy, psychology and sociology. Moreover, high level policy makers and high level officials in public and private institutions will be admitted if their background is adequate.

Faculty
Giovanni Favero, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Elisa Giuliani, Università di Pisa
Guido Palazzo, University of Lausanne
Juliane Reinecke, King’s Business School
Francesco Rullani, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Francesco Zirpoli, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Program theme
Our society is facing a legitimacy crisis. The accelerating ecological crisis, the growing gap between the rich and the poor as well as the systemic risks provoked by disconnected financial markets make it necessary to profoundly rethink our routines of production and consumption. While there is a growing awareness for the importance and urgency of radical change, deep processes of transformation usually face numerous institutional and psychological barriers that have to be overcome. As Jared Diamond described in his book “Collapse”, civilizations often react to a crisis of which they do not understand the causalities by reinforcing the routines that might have created the crisis in the first place. The VIU Summer School in 2022 will go beyond those routines, to reimagine pathways for the Grand Transition on which we have embarked on a planetary scale, and to reflect upon the radical change, both in what economic actors do, and how organization scholars theorize
about it. We look forward to engaging in
discussion with the young scholars in the Summer School.

Topics

Contemporary Capitalism: Debunking ‘the
Greatest Good for the Greatest Number’
Rhetoric of Economic Development Processes (E.
Giuliani)
This session seeks to promote radical change to
theorizing and planning economic development
processes. There are two important wicked
problems characterizing contemporary
capitalism, which, if not properly addressed,
could result in social and political catastrophe.
The first is related to the burgeoning evidence of
business-related human rights (BHR) regressions;
the second is the increase (or persistence at
record levels) of within-country economic
inequality in many countries worldwide, and the
rise of extreme wealth. Most accounts consider
them two separate problems, requiring different
solutions. But what if they are connected, and
their nexus is crucial to the current functioning of
capitalism? How can both problems be solved
without undermining economic growth and its
related benefits? Addressing these questions
seems timely given that it has become
progressively more evident that growth alone
cannot lift people out of human misery.

Storytelling and Societal Change (Guido Palazzo)
This session will discuss the impact on language,
discourse and storytelling on human behaviour.
How does the way we make sense of the world
influence ethical and unethical decisions and how
can we use the insights on the narrativity of
human existence as a leverage for societal
change?

Taming Wicked Problems? Understanding the
Evolution of Transnational Governance and
Social Movements Dynamics (J. Reinecke)
This session will critically examine the role
of private power in developing transnational
governance solutions to wicked problems.
Wicked problems are large scale social challenges
captured in causal webs of interlinking variables
spanning national boundaries that complicate
both their diagnosis and prognosis, such as
poverty, inequality, climate change, deforestation
or conflict in global supply chains. To do so, we
will focus on the political dynamics of how
governance initiatives emerge and evolve out of
conflicts between social movement actors and
corporations. How do these dynamics shape
definitions of who is responsible and what is
sustainable or valuable? And given the
multiplicity of private regulatory regimes, does
the competition of social movement-led and
industry-led initiatives lead to a race to the
bottom or race to the top? Finally, we will discuss
the implications of these types of governance
dynamics to tame wicked problems.

The Evolution of Decision-making in Global
Organizations (F. Zirpoli & F. Rullani)
This session will give particular attention to the
implication of the fact that decision makers are often “multiply embedded” in organizations, in
places, in informal social networks, in more
formal associations, and so on. Interdependent
decisions and actions of multiple agents acting in
distributed environment are profoundly altering
both decision making and the strategy
implementation processes in ways that demand
some rethinking of the governance and
management conceptual toolkit. Sociological and
organization theories, including theories of
organizational politics, social movements,
relational embedding and cognitive framing will
be presented, discussed and applied to
understand the conditions under which
organizations -and organizational fields that they
constitute - confront with environmental, social
and governance decisions and evaluations.

Itinerant Workshop through Venice (G. Favero)
Walking through the city, we will discuss how
Venice became Venice during the 20th century.
The focus will be on the macro and micro
conditions of the modern transformation in the
perception of the historical urban centre into “a
city like no other” to be preserved as it is. The
tour will start from the San Giobbe Economics
campus of Ca’ Foscari University, formerly a
slaughterhouse, and will end at Zattere with the
view of an example of industrial architecture: the
Stucky Mills. We will visit the Frari Church and
the burial of Giuseppe Volpi, the founder of Porto
Marghera with a final glimpse to the last
surviving squero building gondolas at San
Trovaso, it provides a telling image of the
complex relationship with tradition of modern
Venice.

Methodology
During the Summer School, participants will
present and discuss their own research projects
in working groups to the professors and their
fellow participants and will receive valuable
feedbacks.
Credits
Number of ECTS credits allocated: 2
A Certificate of attendance will be issued at the end of the course.

Applications
December 6, 2021 – March 6, 2022
via the VIU website

Applicants must submit the application form, a letter of motivation – which should include a research statement (max.1500 words), a curriculum vitae and a photo.

Admitted candidates will be notified by March 15, and should pay the fee by March 22.

The Program will admit 15 student participants.

Fees
Students of VIU member universities: € 250 incl. VAT.
Students of other universities: € 500 incl. VAT.
VIU Alumni are eligible for a reduced fee.

The fee will cover tuition, teaching materials, lunches in the VIU cafeteria and social events. Student participants will be responsible for covering their own travel expenses to and from Venice, local transportation and accommodation. PhD Students in EU universities may be eligible for Erasmus+ funding. Refer to international offices in home universities or contact VIU Erasmus office: erasmus@univiu.org.

Accommodation costs on campus
The costs of accommodation on campus in shared room with other participants (triple or quadruple) is 260 € for 5 nights (b&b). Further information will be available in the Application form.

Venice International University is a consortium of 20 universities, representing 14 countries throughout the world. The mission of VIU is to foster cooperation among VIU member institutions while facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas, by developing, promoting and organizing joint academic, research and training/capacity-building program. Students from non-member universities may participate in selected academic programs. The academic programs at VIU are distinguished by a markedly interdisciplinary approach to the topics, and by the international perspectives that the participants contribute to the discussions. The VIU campus is on the island of San Servolo in Venice, Italy.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, VIU will continue to monitor the situation; should it prevent international travel or the confirmation of the program on campus as scheduled, other practicable solutions will be evaluated. Applicants and confirmed participants will be informed of any changes.

Location

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