



VIU summer SCHOOL organizing For sustainable Futures: micro and macro- Institutional conditions of Transformation

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

June 22-25, 2026

**Venice International University
Isola di San Servolo, Venice**

VIU Summer School

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

Venice International
University

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Scientific Coordinators:

Guido Palazzo
Faculty of Business and
Economics (HEC),
University of Lausanne

Ruth Sealy
University of Exeter Business
School

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Venice School of
Management (VSM),
Ca' Foscari University of
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In its 10th edition, the Summer School aims at the development of ideas that promote a more sustainable future by bringing together early career 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. The school gives early career scholars the opportunity to test their ideas with eminent scholars in management theory and to present their own 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 the grand challenges of sustainability, equality and democracy. Participants may also learn from leading scholars the ways in which business can undermine democratic principles, processes and values, or contribute to them through new business models.

Who is it for?

The Summer School is addressed to mainly PhD students and early career 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
Johanne Grosvold, University of Bath
Anette Mikes, University of Oxford
Guido Palazzo, University of Lausanne
Juliane Reinecke, University of Oxford
Francesco Rullani, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Ruth Sealy, University of Exeter
Christine Vallaster, University of Salzburg
Francesco Zirpoli, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Indicative Topics

Gaia against Homo Deus (G. Palazzo) |

This session will discuss the current crisis as a storytelling crisis. The dominating narrative of neoliberalism is about to collapse and two emerging proto-narratives try to replace it: Silicon Valley's transhumanist and libertarian vision and Gaia, the attempt to reembed human agency in a web of other nonhuman actors.

Doing Responsible Leadership Research

Responsibly (R. Sealy) | Responsible leadership (RL) research can be defined as moving away

from individualistic or purely economic approaches, to consider organisational decision-making that reflects “all constituents and thus the common good in mind too.” Responsible leaders are expected to engage with environmental, social and governance (ESG) challenges within and outside of their organisations. Using leadership diversity research as a case, we will consider whether current academic approaches might hamper our understanding and thus our ability to improve the world. Looking forward we will consider our responsibility as academics and how RL research can address deficiencies in current leadership theories and frameworks.

Management in the age of climate crisis: capitalism, “optopia” and the politics of hope (A. Mikes) | The goals of this session are to build a provocation and develop some propositions about the direction of capitalism and the purpose of management research in an age of climate crisis. Against the backdrop of dread and greed and the spectre of plutocratic capitalism, we offer a politics of hope. We envision a green capitalism in which corporations are held accountable for environmental and social stewardship. Rather than falling back on government or the corporation as an “either/or” choice, we urge a “both/and” approach and call for the active inclusion of communities and citizens in climate response through democratic, polycentric governance structures. Within this agenda, we envision a new role for the academy as “Ministry”; namely, giving voice to future generations and the silent (or silenced) victims of the present and, by embracing pragmatic realism, inspiring a liveable future—an optopia—that we can still forge from where we are.

The "Impact - Sustainability - Profit" Nexus (F. Rullani) | This session will focus on the relationship between social impact, environmental sustainability, and economic gains. The lecture will first identify alternative configurations that allow for complementarity among these three elements, and second, delineate the boundary conditions for these complementary models, providing the perimeters of applicability.

Business and human rights (J. Groszold) | This session will look at the broad principles of human rights and some of the approaches business has taken to address (or ignore!) human rights issues. We will delve into some detail on the issue of

modern slavery and supply chain based labour rights abuses and contextualize the challenges around labour exploitation against the backdrop of business rules, practices and governance with a view to identify what the obstacles are to addressing the issue and where the opportunities may lie.

Transforming into a circular economy: The role of cross-sectoral collaboration and challenges to overcome (C. Vallaster) | This session will explore what challenges come with cross-sectoral collaboration, how multi-sided platforms reshape collaboration in circular ecosystems, and the tensions that emerge and what mechanisms are needed to make such cooperation work.

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, defined as the large scale social challenges caught 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.

Irresponsible decision making in the network firm (F. Zirpoli) | 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 a 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.

Itinerant Workshop through Venice (G. Favero) | Walking through the city, we will discuss how Venice became Venice during the 20th century.

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 feedback.

Credits

Number of ECTS credits allocated: 2

A Certificate of attendance will be issued at the end of the course.

Application procedure

The Program will admit **15** student participants.

Applications

December 2, 2025 – February 25, 2026
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, a photo, and a short video presentation (2-3 minutes).

Students will be notified of their application status shortly after the application deadline and, if selected, asked to pay the tuition fee and accommodation fee (if requested) within ten days.

Fees

Students of VIU member universities:

€ 300 incl. VAT.

Students of other universities:

€ 600 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 (breakfast included).

Venice International University is a consortium of 23 institutions, 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.

Location



Venice International University

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