



## Venice International University Summer School



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

June 22-25, 2026

#### Program

##### Faculty

Giovanni Favero, VSM, Ca' Foscari University of Venice  
Johanne Grosvold, University of Bath Business School  
Anette Mikes, University of Oxford  
Guido Palazzo, HEC, University of Lausanne  
Juliane Reinecke, University of Oxford  
Francesco Rullani, VSM, Ca' Foscari University of Venice  
Ruth Sealy, University of Exeter Business School  
Christine Vallaster, University of Salzburg  
Francesco Zirpoli, VSM, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

[Students' Presentation and discussion of research project format:](#)

20 minutes per student: 10-minute PowerPoint presentation and 10 minutes of feedback/discussion.

##### Sunday, June 21

18:20-20:00 *Welcome Cocktail*

**Please note, session topics are indicative and maybe subject to change**

##### **Day 1 | Monday, June 22**

9:30-11:00 **Guido Palazzo**, HEC Lausanne

##### **Gaia against Homo Deus**

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.

*Break*

11:30-13:00 **Student Presentations** and discussion of research projects  
(all available faculty)

13:00-14:30 *Lunch Break*

14:30-16:00 **Ruth Sealy**, University of Exeter Business School

### **Doing Responsible Leadership Research Responsibly**

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.” (Maak & Pless, 2022: 2). Responsible leaders are expected to engage with environmental, social and governance (ESG) challenges within and outside of their organisations. Researching gender inequalities in leadership (UNSDG 5.5) has gathered momentum in the past decade, yet creating inclusive and diverse leadership teams is a challenge many potentially responsible leaders struggle to understand why and how to achieve. 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; for example, by our limiting assumptions about firms’ shareholder primacy motivations; about diversity essentialism; and by using reductive research designs.

Looking forward we will consider our responsibility as academics and how RL research can address deficiencies in current leadership theories and frameworks, insisting not only on rigour but relevance for responsible leaders transforming business in society.

*Break*

16:30-17:30 **One-to-one talk to professors** (optional)

## **Day 2 | Tuesday, June 23**

9:30-11:00 **Francesco Zirpoli**, Venice School of Management, Ca’ Foscari University

### **Irresponsible decision making in the network firm**

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. 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 global firms and the network of their collaborators confront with environmental, social and governance decisions.

*Break*

11:30-13:00 **Student Presentations** and discussion of research projects  
(all available faculty)

*13:00-14:30 Lunch Break*

14:30-16:00 **Anette Mikes**, University of Oxford

### **Management in the age of climate crisis: capitalism, “optopia” and the politics of hope**

In this session, our goals 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.



### Break

16:15-17:15 **One-to-one talk to professors** (optional)

17:30 **Giovanni Favero**, Venice School of Management, Ca' Foscari University

### Itinerant workshop

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. Together with a final glimpse to the last surviving squero building gondolas at San Trovaso, this provides a telling image of the complex relationship with tradition of modern Venice.



## Day 3 | Wednesday, June 24

9:30-11:00 Juliane Reinecke, University of Oxford

### **Taming Wicked Problems? Understanding the Evolution of Transnational Governance and Social Movement Dynamics**

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 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. 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? 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 problem.

### Break

11:30-13:00 **Student Presentations** and discussion of research projects  
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*13:00-14:30 Lunch Break*

14:30-16:00 **Christine Vallaster**, University of Salzburg

### **Transforming into a circular economy: The role of cross-sectoral collaboration and challenges to overcome**

Linear economic thinking ("throwaway economy") based on unlimited growth is reaching its limits. Climate change, resource scarcity and biodiversity loss reflect fundamental coordination failures in how value is created across industries. The circular economy challenges this logic by promoting sharing, leasing, repair, reuse and recycling, all of which depend on intensive collaboration. Circular business models increasingly rely on multi-sided platforms that connect manufacturers, service providers, users, recyclers and public actors. These platforms transform competition into coordination: value creation becomes distributed, data is shared, and control over materials shifts from ownership to joint governance.

This shift increases the need for deep inter-organisational cooperation, while also creating tensions around power, trust, data ownership, fair value distribution and responsibility for end-of-life management. The success of circular systems depends primarily on the quality of

collaboration within these ecosystems. In this session, we 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.

*Break*

16:30-17:30 **One-to-one talk to professors** (optional)



#### **Day 4 | Thursday, June 25**

9:30-11:00 **Francesco Rullani**, Venice School of Management, Ca' Foscari University

##### **The "Impact - Sustainability - Profit" Nexus**

This session will focus on the relationship between social impact, environmental sustainability, and economic gains. Specifically, we will explore the various configurations in which these three elements can be combined, challenging the common assumption that the socio-environmental dimension is structurally incompatible with the economic dimension. While this conflict is certainly one of the most widespread and challenging equilibria —often leading to difficult trade-offs— it is surely not the only one. Thus, 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.

All these concepts will be substantiated through empirical settings able to demonstrate the actual reality of the different equilibria identified. We will examine cases within the same organization as well as those involving inter-organizational dynamics, from the simplest organizational structures up to large-scale institutional coalitions (involving governmental bodies, civil society, and for-profit entities). The ultimate goal of this session is to show that a balance among these different dimensions is achievable, supporting a broader perspective on economic problems and societal challenges that ultimately facilitates the transition toward a more social and sustainable economy.

*Break*

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13:00-14:30 *Lunch Break*

14:30-16:00 **Johanne Grosvold**, University of Bath Business School

##### **Business & Human Rights**

In this session we 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. Specifically, we will critically evaluate and discuss the role of corporate governance structures such as the corporate board of directors and CEO pay to understand how issues such as human motivation and institutional configurations can shape firms' commitment to addressing human rights abuses. We will discuss what some of the current issues in labour rights and human rights abuses are and discuss ways that society, collective action, and alternate forms of organisations

*Break*

16:30-17:30 **One-to-one talk to professors** (optional)

## Faculty short bios



**Giovanni Favero** is Professor in Economic history at the Venice School of Management of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He is delegate of the President for research in economics. His research interests focus on the historical construction and use of quantitative economic and social data in corporate and urban governance, the long-term dynamics of innovation in organisations and society and the contribution of historical methods to social sciences. He recently published in the journals *Enterprise and Society*, *Business History*, *Accounting History*, *Journal of Transport History*, *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*. Publications and a complete cv on [www.unive.it/persone/gfavero](http://www.unive.it/persone/gfavero).



**Johanne Grosvold** is an Associate Professor in the School of Management at the University of Bath (UK). Her work sits at the intersection of corporate governance, business & human rights. She has a particular focus on labour exploitation and modern slavery across global supply chains. She has taught corporate governance, sustainability, business and society for 20 years, and has successfully supervised several PhD students who work in this field too. Dr. Grosvold is currently a section editor at *Journal of Business Ethics*, and the Immediate Past President of the International Association of Business and Society. Her work has been published in *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *Corporate Governance an International Review* and *Business & Society* to name a few. She has won several awards for her teaching and research and is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



**Anette Mikes** is an Associate Professor of Accounting at Oxford Saïd and a Fellow at Hertford College. She is recognised as a Thought Leader by Harvard Business Publishing and has been awarded an honorary Fellowship at the Stockholm School of Economics' Mistra Center for Sustainable Markets. Anette was the 2017 laureate of the ACA Prize of the University of St-Gallen for her contributions to the field of risk management and financial governance. Between 2014-2019, she was a professor at HEC Lausanne, and beforehand, she was an Assistant Professor at Harvard Business School. Anette completed her PhD at the London School of Economics. She holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala.



**Guido Palazzo** is Professor of Business Ethics at HEC, University of Lausanne. His research deals with corporate responsibility in global supply chains, the mechanisms of (un)ethical decision making in organizations, storytelling and the fight against organized crime. His work has been published in journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Business Ethics Quarterly* and *Journal of Business Ethics*. He advised numerous corporations in Europe, Asia and the USA on ethics and compliance.



**Juliane Reinecke** is Professor of Management Studies, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford. Previously, she was Professor of International Management & Sustainability at King's Business School, and prior to that was a Professor at Warwick Business School. Juliane is a Fellow at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Research Fellow at the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, from where she received her PhD. Previously, she held professorships at King's College London and Warwick Business School. Her research interests include global governance, sustainability & human rights, multi-stakeholder collaboration in organizations and global value chains. Her work has been published in the Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Management Studies, Organization Science, Organization Studies, and Research Policy, among others. Juliane serves as Associate Editor of the Academy of Management Journal.



**Francesco Rullani** is a Full Professor and Job Market Officer for the PhD in Management at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (IT), where he is also the Director of the Impact Unit, Yunus Social Business Centre, in addition to having founded and directed Bliss - Digital Impact Lab. He was an Associate and Assistant Professor at LUISS University in Rome (IT) and is affiliated as Scientific Collaborator to CeSID, formerly ERSHub@luiss, which he founded and directed. He was a Visiting Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Post-Doc at Copenhagen Business School (DK), and visiting fellow at Stanford University (USA) and Bocconi University (IT). He received his PhD from Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (IT). His research focuses on self-organized digital innovation, social innovation and social entrepreneurship. His publications have appeared in Strategic Management Journal, Research Policy, Journal of Business Ethics, Industrial and Corporate Change.



**Ruth Sealy** is a Professor of Leadership at Henley Business School in the UK, and also an Honorary Professor at University of Exeter Business School, where she was formerly a Full Professor of Responsible Leadership and Director of Impact. With global academic expertise on women on corporate boards, Ruth's research areas include women in leadership; board composition; role models; board dynamics; non-financial narrative reporting; and various aspects of corporate governance. Her current work focuses on the responsabilization of diversifying boards and leadership teams and the incorporation of diversity in Environmental Social & Governance (ESG) measures. In the past, Ruth was the lead researcher of the annual UK Female FTSE Report, monitoring women on listed boards and executive committees, from 2007-2016, and co-authored similar reports in Hong Kong and India. She worked closely with the UK government on board policy 2010-2015, was a member of the NHS Advisory Board on board diversity 2015-2017, and has conducted several research projects with regulators (e.g. Financial Reporting Council, Solicitors Regulation Authority). Prior to becoming an academic, Ruth was the Managing Director of a start-up, which she grew and sold to a larger organisation. She retrained as an organisational psychologist and worked as a consultant before starting a PhD at Cranfield School of Management in 2004.





**Christine Vallaster** is head of the Marketing unit of the Department of Business Administration at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria. She was responsible for the Marketing & Relationship Management Department at the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Head of Research for the Business Administration course and most recently, Head of the Department of Business & Tourism. She obtained her PhD at the University of Innsbruck with a longer stay abroad for her empirical research in Hong Kong (China) on strategic decision-making processes in multicultural work groups. Christine gained work experience as an assistant professor in Buenos Aires (Argentina). These experiences contributed to her later habilitation topic on how companies have to design their internal work processes keeping their brand promises to their customers and stakeholders. During her habilitation phase, she was funded by the Alexander Humboldt Foundation and the German Research Society (DFG). Christine's research focuses evolves around Branding, Sustainability and Strategy.



**Francesco Zirpoli** is a Professor of Management at the Venice School of Management, Department of Management at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where he is also the Director of the PhD in Management, scientific director of CAMI - Center for Automotive and Mobility Innovation and Director of the Master in Mobility Innovation and Management. He is currently research associate of the Program on Vehicle and Mobility Innovation, Mack Institute for Innovation

Management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, USA and of Istituto di Ricerche sulle Innovazione e Servizi per lo Sviluppo (IRISS), Italian National Research Council (CNR). His research interests include organizational routines, network governance, business-government interactions, organization boundary decisions, and the organization of innovation processes. His work has been published in journals such Organization Studies, Organization Science, Research Policy, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Sloan Management Review, European Management Review, R&D Management, California Management Review, International Journal of Operations and Production Management. Francesco's research work has been mentioned in the Financial Times, The Washington Post, Business Week, Les Echos, The Detroit News and other international newspapers and magazines and in Italian media such as Radio24, Radio Rai1, the Sole24Ore, the Corriere della Sera, l'Inkiesta, il Fatto Quotidiano.

Francesco gained his M.Phil. and PhD in Management from the Judge Business School of the University of Cambridge, U.K. and his Doctorate in Business Administration from the University of Naples "Federico II".