



# **VIU PhD academy THE STATE OF THE art OF area studies**

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**June 13-17, 2022**

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

# VIU International PhD Academy

## The State of the Art of Area Studies

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Scientific Coordinators:

*Giovanni Zanalda*

Duke University

*William Gallois*

University of Exeter

As a field, Area Studies would seem to possess an unusual number of advantages in the contemporary academy: it is inherently inter- or trans-disciplinary, it offers students cultural capital and linguistic skills which are valuable in the marketplace as well as in the university, and its enclaves serve as repositories of expert knowledge which are of value to state and commercial actors. Scholars working in the field are also often skilled communicators, well used to explaining *their* parts of the world to general publics as well as to expert audiences.

As generations of graduate students discover, however, Area Studies also seems to be perpetually riven by two tensions: firstly, that it seeks to critique power, whilst feeding off and aiding the institutions it critiques; and, secondly, that the broader academy sees Area Studies as an *un*-disciplinary field, in which scholars often lose the rigor and coherence of their disciplinary background.

This PhD Academy will be led by:

- University of Exeter, UK
- Duke University, USA
- Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

### **Faculty**

William Gallois, University of Exeter  
Matteo Legrenzi, Ca' Foscari University of Venice  
Gareth Stansfield, University of Exeter  
Giovanni Zanalda, Duke University

### **Methodology**

Drawing together experienced and emerging scholars who often work in isolated ways on, for instance, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East, the workshop will demand unusual levels of participatory learning as the group produce accounts of the methods, ethics, theoretical bases and purposes of the broader field of Area Studies. It is quite plausible that the workshop will in fact generate various reports to deal with different visions for the field.

The city of Venice itself will provide a perfect backdrop to the Academy, for its history, architecture and culture provide ample examples of tensions and intellectual opportunities which lie within Area Studies. The place of Venice as a city which was oriented towards the east as much as it was the west has been much explored in recent scholarship, while the remnants of

cultures of hybridity, exchange and interface between Areas would make for a brilliant environment for the academy.

Area Studies units themselves generally tend to be small, and do not therefore have the capacity to offer skills development in as concerted a fashion as is possible by pooling resources, nor the broader sense that graduate students need to acquire a sense of Area Studies *in toto*, as well as their specific fields of expertise. This PhD Academy explores, among other things, how Area Studies can improve our understanding and ability to tackle transnational social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, and health challenges.

### **Topics**

This PhD Academy directly confronts the risks and opportunities facing Area Studies in the twenty-first century, inviting graduate students, alongside leading figures in the field, and the use of new digital technologies to co-produce reports on the 'state of the art' of Area Studies as well as consider professional opportunities in academia as well in other fields.

### **Learning outcomes for participants**

Participants will gain a clear sense of the major issues at stake in working Area Studies and will acquire group-working skills as they themselves author reports which can be shared globally across sub- fields of the discipline.

Doctoral researchers will also be able to grow their own networks through mutual interaction and through the access which they will subsequently be afforded to research events at the participating institutions. In this sense, the PhD Academy will involve ongoing learning and a sense of career development which transcends the time spent in Venice.

### **Who can apply?**

This international PhD Academy is offered to PhD students, Post-docs, and young researchers working in Area Studies, broadly construed. The PhD Academy is primarily for candidates from VIU's member institutions, although applications from excellent external candidates will be considered and evaluated.

### **Fees & Grant Support**

Students from the VIU member institutions will pay no participation fees. Grant support is also available to support, partially or fully, the costs of international travel and accommodation. The participation fee for students of non-member institutions is Euro 1.100 incl. VAT. The fee is inclusive of tuition, course materials, accommodation, lunches, social events and taxes. Students from non-member institutions are not eligible for VIU grant support. VIU Alumni are eligible for a reduced fee.

Selected participants will be asked to present a Paper.

**The final program will be available on the VIU website**

### **Applications**

**December 1, 2021 – February 20, 2022**  
**via the VIU website**

Applicants must submit the (1) application form, (2) a letter of motivation – which should include a short bio and a brief description of the candidate's research project, (3) a paper abstract (4) a curriculum vitae and (5) a photo.

For further information: [phdacademy@univiu.org](mailto:phdacademy@univiu.org)

*As the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, VIU will continue to monitor the situation, and in the event that it is not possible to confirm the program on the VIU campus as scheduled, other practicable solutions will be evaluated. Applicants and confirmed participants will be informed of any changes.*

## **VIU International PhD Academies**

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.

Venice International University holds two/three International PhD Academies each year. They are intensive training opportunities open to PhD candidates from the member universities of VIU.

A PhD is the highest diploma awarded by universities in the world, and PhDs are naturally expected to take on major responsibilities in their professional life. Apart from the disciplinary scientific skills acquired during doctoral study and research, it is the ability to respond to the requirements of creativity, innovation and project management, that produce the significant added value of a doctoral degree.

Whether they will work within or outside academia, PhDs must be able to develop a forward-looking vision of the challenges they have to face. The interdisciplinary approach of all VIU activities is adopted also in the PhD Academy, where the participants have the opportunity to meet their peers from all over the world, and to tackle transversal topics.

[www.univiu.org/study/phd-academy](http://www.univiu.org/study/phd-academy)

### **Location**



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