



Venice International University International PhD Academy

Rethinking Rural Futures in an Age of Climate Change: Migration, Adaptation, and Sustainability Transitions

Venice International University
12-17 May 2025

Faculty

- Dr. Kerilyn Schewel, **Duke University**, Sanford School of Public Policy & Center on Modernity in Transition (Scientific Coordinator)
- Lee Miller, JD, MEM, **Duke University**, Duke Law School & Center on Modernity in Transition
- Prof. Neil Adger, **Exeter University**, Geography Department
- Dr. Ricardo Safra de Campos, **Exeter University**, Geography Department
- Prof. Rika Preiser, **Stellenbosch University**, Center for Sustainable Transitions

Agenda

Monday, 12 May 2025

Day 1 - *Rethinking Rural Futures in an Age of Climate Change*

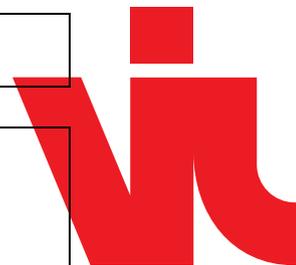
Kerilyn Schewel and Lee Miller, Faculty Leads

9:00-9.15	<i>Welcome coffee and registration</i>
9.15-9.45	Opening and Orientation to Program (Kerilyn Schewel)
9:45-10:45	Student & Faculty Introductions: Myself in 5 minutes
11-12.30	Presentation: <i>The Logics of Rural Transformation</i> Kerilyn Schewel <i>This presentation covers global, historical trends in rural transformation and their relationship with patterns of rural out-migration. It then reviews the state</i>

	<i>of thinking and practice of 'rural development' and identifies several (often competing) development logics reshaping rural places today.</i>
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Lunch

13.45-15.00	<p>Presentation: <i>Agri-Food Systems</i> Lee Miller <i>This presentation focuses on the vital role of agri-food systems in rural sustainability transitions. Participants will learn about the spectrum of farm-level adaptation, exploring how industrial agriculture's high-input, high-output models contrast with the resilient, diversified practices of small-scale agroecological farms. We will delve into how these varied approaches impact environmental sustainability, economic viability, and social equity on a global scale, highlighting innovative strategies and challenges in both large-scale and small-scale farming systems.</i></p>
15.30-17.30	<p>Small Group Workshops--"Expertise Mapping and Future Visioning" <i>Workshop participants will divide into small groups to explore and visualize how their individual expertise intersects with the theme of rural futures. In response to a fictional scenario about rural futures, each member shares their background and how they can contribute, which are mapped out on a large sheet of paper to highlight overlaps and connections. The group then brainstorms how their collective skills can address challenges posed by the prompt.</i></p>



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Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Day 2 – Systems Thinking, World Views, and Sustainability Transitions

Rika Preiser, Faculty Lead

9.15-12.30	<p>Systems Thinking, World Views, and Sustainability Transitions <i>The focus of the day will reflect on the history of scientific worldviews and their influence on validating different knowledge systems. Participants will gain an understanding of systems thinking and how they inform a worldview that values complexity. The day will also focus on applying systems thinking to real-world cases and trends in sustainability transitions, providing new normative and practical perspectives for acting in a socially and ecologically interconnected world. Embracing relational perspectives and practices aims to equip participants with critical insights and practical skills for addressing complex challenges in their research and beyond.</i></p>
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Lunch

14.00-16.00	Transversal Skills Workshop: Participatory Scenarios towards more just sustainability transitions
16.30-18.00	<i>Student Presentations</i>

Wednesday, 14 May 2025

Day 3 – Multi-dimensional well-being in rural futures

Neil Adger and Ricardo Campos, Faculty Leads



<p>9.15-12.30</p>	<p>Multi-dimensional well-being in rural futures</p> <p><i>This session introduces participants to theory and practice in measuring multiple dimensions of well-being as a key objective of interventions for sustainability. Well-being involves material and non-material dimensions that together represent meaningful and dignified lives for rural populations. The session introduces diverse conceptualisations of well-being including objective, subjective, and relational dimensions. It explores diverse methods from observations, elicited perceptions, and indepth intensive methods to reveal multi-dimensional well-being. These methods will be explored in relation to place, identity and mobility and illustrated with real-world research on measuring well-being for diverse populations. It will focus on migration to illustrate issues such as intra-household dynamics, experience of place and place attachment, and well-being in trans-local livelihoods. These will draw on data across Asia and Africa to explore relations between well-being, equity, and sustainability in migration as an adaptation strategy for sustainable rural futures.</i></p>
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Lunch

<p>14.00-16.00</p>	<p>Transversal Skills Workshop: Measuring well-being outcomes for evaluating migration as successful adaptation.</p>
<p>16.30-18.00</p>	<p><i>Student Presentations</i></p>
<p>18.30-21.00</p>	<p>Social Dinner in Venice (tbc)</p>

Thursday, 15 May 2025

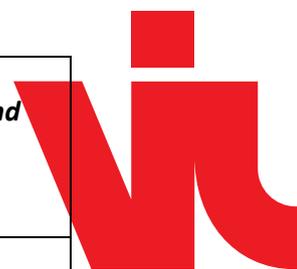
Day 4 – Enacting rural futures through participatory approaches

Neil Adger and Ricardo Campos, Faculty Leads

<p>9.15-12.30</p>	<p>Enacting rural futures through participatory approaches</p> <p><i>The focus of the day is on visual participatory methods and action research approaches to investigate rural futures and mobility. These sessions introduce the philosophy and practicality of relevant techniques, focussing specifically on photovoice approach, exploring its fundamental nature, utility, and potential limitations. The objective is to introduce participants to using photovoice and related participatory techniques by offering a clear definition and elucidating both its advantages and constraints. It will demonstrate these based on real world studies conducted in Bangladesh. Participants will be provided with practical guidance and a detailed strategy for designing and implementing photovoice within the context of rural sustainability. The session will examine three interconnected stages critical to the successful execution of photovoice: 1) designing and planning the photovoice approach, 2) implementing the technique in the field, and 3) analysing and presenting photovoice data.</i></p>
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Lunch

14.00-16.00	<i>Transversal Skills Workshop: Visual participatory techniques including hand on simulations of being a research participant and strategies for effective engagement with migrant communities.</i>
16.30-18.00	<i>Student Presentations</i>



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Friday, 16 May 2025

Day 5 – Field Trip to Local Farm

Lee Miller, Faculty Lead

9.00-16.00	Field Trip to local agroecological farm Participants will visit a local farm near Venice. They will learn about the opportunities and challenges of small-scale, sustainable agriculture in this social context and spend time volunteering on the farm.
16.00 onwards	Free time

Saturday, 17 May 2025

Day 6 – Wrap up

Kerilyn Schewel, Faculty Lead

9.15-10.45	<i>Student Presentations</i>
11.00-12.00	Wrap Up/ Closing Thoughts (Kerilyn Schewel)

Lunch

13.30 onwards	Visit to Venice Architecture Biennale 2025
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Kerilyn Schewel is co-director of the Duke Program on Climate-Related Migration and a Lecturing Fellow at the Duke Center for International Development. Trained as a sociologist, her research examines the root causes of human migration and immobility, with an emphasis on the themes of gender, youth, education, rural development, and climate change. Her book, *Moved by Modernity: How Development Shapes Migration in Rural Ethiopia*, is forthcoming with Oxford University Press. At the Duke Center for International Development, Kerilyn teaches on migration policy and development and leads the *Resilient Communities Built on Farmer Flourishing* project. She also collaborates with the Center on Modernity in Transition's Coherent Development Lab to explore ideas, movements, policies, and projects that advance a more coherent vision of collective prosperity, and alternative approaches to achieving it.



Neil Adger is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Exeter. He has a PhD in environmental and ecological economics and has thirty years of teaching experience in the social challenges of global environmental change. Neil is an experienced social scientist researching economic and social dynamics of climate change, resilience and vulnerability, with work published across the social and natural sciences on adaptation to climate change, political economy, human security, public health and demography. He collaborates with social and natural scientists globally and currently co-leads a major investigation of migration as adaptation to climate change.



Lee Miller is Lecturing Fellow of Law at Duke Law School, specializing in Food, Agriculture, and the Environment. His expertise spans environmental advocacy, food and agriculture law, and policy innovation, with a focus on climate change mitigation, regenerative agriculture, and environmental justice. Lee's recent work at the Center on Modernity in Transition's Coherent Development Lab examines barriers to sustainable small-scale farming and advocates for integrating urban and rural interests to enhance food systems and climate resilience. Previously, at Harvard Law School, he led a multi-institutional project on farm bill reform and rural resilience. He has published widely and serves as Board Chair of the Academy of Food Law and Policy. He and his spouse manage a small farm in Hillsborough, raising sheep, bees, and vegetables.



Rika Preiser is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Sustainability Transitions at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and UNESCO Co-Chair in Complexity and Transformative African Futures. She earned her PhD in Philosophy from Stellenbosch University in 2012, focusing on critique in addressing complexity, and holds two MPhils in Organisational Change & Public Culture and Media & Ethics. Prof. Preiser's research integrates philosophical inquiry with complex adaptive systems studies, environmental philosophy, and ethics, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to social-ecological challenges. Her work highlights the transformative potential of engaged philosophy and experimental transdisciplinary research methods in understanding human-nature interactions, particularly in sustainability transitions and complex systems. She is an expert in participatory foresight methods applied to realizing more just sustainability transitions.



Ricardo Safra de Campos is Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Exeter. He is a population geographer working on the spatial mobility dimensions of human interaction with environmental change, with a focus on migration, sustainability and wellbeing. His work has been published in interdisciplinary journals including *Nature Climate Change*, *Global Environmental Change*, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, and discipline-specific such as *Population*, *Space and Place*. He is a contributing author on Chapter 4: Sea Level Rise and Implications for Low-Lying Islands, Coasts and Communities of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. Ricardo has given expert oral and written evidence on migration and climate change to the UK's House of

Lords and House of Commons. He serves on the advisory board of international research and policy initiatives on climate-related displacement in Africa and Asia, and the Caribbean. Ricardo is on the editorial board for the journals *Climatic Change*, Springer; and *PLOSClimate*, *PLOS*, and *Climate Mobilities*, *Frontiers in Climate*. He is also a member of the UK Young Academy.