

VIU
PhD
academy
current issues
in environmental
peacebuilding

Current Issues in Environmental Peacebuilding

February 22-26, 2027

Venice International University
Isola di San Servolo, Venice

VIU International PhD Academy

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University

Scientific Coordinator

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Duke University

Global Challenges
Initiative

Environmental peacebuilding is an emerging and rapidly changing field. It engages a range of disciplines, ranging from political science, political economy, and geography to law and environmental sciences. It examines the environmental dimensions of peacebuilding and the peace dimensions of furthering sustainable development. The field of environmental peacebuilding has its origins in understanding the environmental consequences of the Vietnam War and the 1990-91 Gulf War. Many of the wars since the mid-20th century have had a link to the environment and natural resources. For example, high value resources such as diamonds, gold, and oil were used to finance armed conflict in states such as Colombia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As the field has matured, scholars have examined how the environment and natural resource management are central to rebuilding war-torn societies for a sustainable peace. Notably, the restoration of water services and cooperation over water resources is vital for addressing human needs and fostering trust among adversaries. Recent scholarship has pointed out that while earlier literature focused on international conflicts such as transboundary water conflicts, recent studies tend to examine more localized conflicts and bottom-up approaches. Topics within environmental peacebuilding cross different levels of scale from the local to the national to the international and in different conflict contexts, ranging from social disputes, protests and riots to armed conflict and war.

This PhD Academy is led by:

- Duke University
- Boston College
- Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Faculty

Erika Weinthal, Duke University
Lauren Honig, Boston College
Sara De Vido, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Patricio Barbirotto, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Luisa Bialasiewicz, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Eoghan Darbyshire, Conflict and Environment
Observatory (CEOBS)

Pietro Omodeo, UNESCO Chair on Water Heritage and Sustainable Development, Ca' Foscari University (TBC)

Ilda Mannino and Alessandra Fornetti, Venice International University

Other contributing faculty to be confirmed.

Topics

Each day will include lectures/workshops led by faculty as well as dedicated time for PhD students to workshop a question, method, or chapter.

The topics will cover a range of environmental issues, including:

- Conservation, Conflict and Environmental Peacebuilding
- Extractivism and Critical Minerals: Balancing the security-sustainability nexus
- War's impact on the environment and infrastructure
- Local Governance and conflict resolution
- Legal institutions for protecting the environment during armed conflict and managing conflict resources
- Gender and environmental peacebuilding

Learning outcomes for participants

_ gain knowledge about the role of natural resources/environment throughout the entire conflict cycle.

_ familiarity with theories of change pertaining to conflict and peacebuilding outcomes.

_ learn skills/tools that are useful for assessing environmental damage and for monitoring and evaluation.

_ gain an understanding of different systems of land/property rights and law in conflict-affected countries.

_ familiarity with the core legal instruments for the protection of the environment in armed conflict.

_ gain exposure to climate-sensitive and gender-sensitive interventions for mitigating conflict and promoting peace and sustainable development.

Who can apply?

The PhD Academy is addressed to students who have already completed at least one year of their PhD, post-docs and junior researchers in Political science, public policy, environmental sciences, law, economics, geography, gender studies.

Open to candidates from all the VIU Member Institutions; applications from excellent candidates from non-member institutions will be also considered and evaluated.

Fees & Grant Support

Full fee waiver scholarships are available for students from VIU member institutions. In addition, grant support is available to support partially or fully the costs of international travel. Accommodation is provided free of charge. The participation fee for students of non-member institutions is Euro 1.200 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.

Call for applications

September 1 – October 20, 2026

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 curriculum vitae and (4) a photo.

For further information: phdacademy@univiu.org

VIU International PhD Academies

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.

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

Location



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