



VIU
PhD
academy
wandering
across
sustainable
terrains and
environments

**Wandering Across Sustainable Terrains
and Environments**

July 7-12, 2025

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



VIU International PhD Academy

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Venice International
University

Scientific Coordinator:

Susanne Franco,
Ca' Foscari University of
Venice

The performing arts contribute to the environmental humanities, foregrounding their role in understanding and tackling the environmental crisis. In this PhD Academy, this relation will be interrogated from the viewpoint of the city of Venice.

The Academy includes a program of problem-based learning activities consisting of seminars and workshops, concluding in show-and-tell and dissemination activities. As self-documentation will form part of the learning process, students will be encouraged to create archivable resources that will be available to VIU students further afield as well as future VIU students.

The seminars and workshops aim to transfer skills and methods to students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds. The broader field of study, environmental humanities, will underpin all activities which will focus on the impact of environmental crisis and climate change on the city of Venice, looking, specifically, at the role of waste in society and the ways in which theorists and artists have engaged with this concept and related labour practices in Venice and beyond.

The focus is deliberately placed on the performing arts, though methods and scholarship will draw, characteristically for the performing arts, from a range of disciplines, empowering students to use innovative practices and explore strategies for knowledge production. The seminars and workshops will be interdisciplinary in both theory and practice. The aim is to inquire and understand how the current environmental crisis has been impacting Venice, and what a sustainable future in Venice may look like in the near future. More specifically, through practical experience, students will grow their understanding of community-based performance and will explore how collaborative performance can address local issues, spark community dialogue, and encourage civic participation. Grounded in readings and discussions with a specific focus on waste and the work of the people who collect and manage Venice's trash, students will apply their learning to their own research projects and participate in a preliminary research phase for a performance project by choreographer Allison Orr (Venice 2026).

This PhD Academy is led by:

- Duke University
- Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- Exeter University
- Luav University of Venice

Faculty

Susanne Franco, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Gabiella Giannachi, Exeter University
Annalisa Sacchi, Luav University of Venice
Katya Wesolowski, Duke University

Invited Speakers

Ilenia Caleo, Researcher and performer
Piersandra Di Matteo, Researcher and curator
Allison Orr, Researcher and choreographer
Francesca Tarocco, Director of Niche, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Methodology and topics

The program will focus on the environmental humanities with an interdisciplinary approach in theory and practice. Specifically, the Academy will be constructed around seminars, workshops, and practical experiences, with readings and discussions, exploring the impact of environmental crisis and climate change on the city of Venice, with a particular view on performing arts.

Learning outcomes for participants

- A clear sense of the impact of environmental issues from a Venetian perspective
- A nuanced understanding of the skills and competences in environmental humanities (in theory and practice) that can help us to address the communication, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change
- An appreciation of the ways in which humanities, the performing arts in particular, can advance knowledge that addresses societal challenges.
- An understanding of how to work ethically, interdisciplinarily, collaboratively, and remotely with beneficiaries in Venice and beyond

Who can apply?

This international PhD Academy is offered to PhD students, post-docs, and junior researchers within all disciplines.

The module requires no prior knowledge or skills in ecological and environmental practice, performing arts or heritage studies and is open to anyone with an interest in addressing the challenge of climate change. It may be of particular interest to those students who are considering a career in environmental humanities.

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 1,250 (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

December 2, 2024 – March 10, 2025
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 15 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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