



VIU
PhD
academy
reTHINKING
rural Futures
In an age of
CLIMATE CHANGE

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

May 12 - 17, 2025

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



VIU International PhD
Academy

**Rethinking Rural Futures
in an Age of Climate
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Venice International
University

Scientific Coordinator:

Kerilyn Schewel,
Duke University

VIU Global Challenges
Initiative

Rural communities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, having long relied on farming, fishing, and the natural environment for their livelihoods. Strategies to enhance climate resilience and to support rural flourishing will need to be multi-pronged, including institutional support and investments in *in-situ* adaptation, 'migration as adaptation', and more sustainable agricultural practices and food systems. Transitioning to sustainable agri-food systems is critical to averting food insecurity and climate-driven social and ecological disasters, yet this transition requires more than technical solutions. It calls for a new vision of rural transformation and rural thriving.

This PhD Academy invites participants to learn from leading thinkers working in the fields of rural development, migration studies, climate adaptation, and sustainable food systems.

The Academy addresses three inter-related themes:

- rural transformation and sustainability transitions;
- migration, adaptation, and rural resilience;
- sustainable agri-food systems.

Participants will have the opportunity to workshop their research with peers and faculty, participate in field visits to small farms outside Venice, and benefit from faculty-led workshops strengthening transversal skills. Workshops will focus on participatory scenarios planning, measuring well-being outcomes, and visual methods (photo voice).

This PhD Academy is led by:

- Duke University
- Exeter University
- Stellenbosch University

This PhD Academy contributes directly to the VIU Global Challenges Initiative, which aims to stimulate knowledge, understanding, and skills related to major societal challenges faced by humankind today.

Faculty

Kerilyn Schewel, Duke University
Lee Miller, Duke University
Neil Adger, Exeter University
Ricardo Safra de Campos, Exeter University
Rika Preiser, Stellenbosch University

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 PhD Academy will include topics such as:

- A Research Agenda for Rural Transformation
- Systems Thinking, World Views, and Sustainability Transitions
- Migration, Adaptation, and Climate Change
- Agri-Food Systems
- A field trip

Learning outcomes for participants

- Enhanced interdisciplinary insight into the opportunities and challenges of sustainable rural transformation
- Learn to present their research to an interdisciplinary audience and to dialogue with scholars across disciplines
- Concrete ideas about how to improve a method, chapter, or article related to their own research (PhD presentation workshops)
- Enhanced quantitative and participatory visual research skills (methods workshop)
- Enhanced scientific writing skills (writing workshop)
- Access to a network of scholars across the VIU consortium for future research support and collaborations.

Who can apply?

This international PhD Academy is offered to PhD students, post-docs, and early career researchers working in the interdisciplinary fields of rural development, climate adaptation, sustainable food systems, and/or migration studies. This includes (but is not limited to) researchers from the natural and social sciences (e.g., geography, sociology, economics, anthropology, environmental sciences, agricultural sciences, health, regional planning among others).

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.

Call for applications

December 2, 2024 – January 31, 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.

Selected participants will be asked to present a research question, methods, or chapter for feedback from their peers and faculty (using PowerPoint or similar presentation mechanism)

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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