

CFP for the NSU Ad hoc Symposium 2019

“Response-ability and Creativity at the Time of the Environmental Crises”

07 - 08 November 2019

University of Jyväskylä, in Jyväskylä, Finland.

While human beings may always be tempted to define challenging events as crisis, the present moment is particularly infested with crisis talk. Many identify the globally ongoing ecological, economic and socio-cultural transitions as interconnected aspects of a broader systemic or civilizational crisis. The global scale of the transformations and the already massive influence of humans on Earth are reflected in the names suggested for the current era: Anthropocene, Capitalocene or Plutocene, the latter two pointing directly to centrality of capitalism as the shaper of the world as we know it. At the same time, it is widely acknowledged that the ecological crisis, which also the climate change manifests, may risk human and other forms of life on Earth, and that systemic alternatives and a thorough sustainability transition are urgently needed. Yet, putting the transition into practice is painstakingly slow. Instead of embracing radical enough changes, much energy is still being consumed into attempts to keep the world as it used to be. Unsustainability, rather than sustainability, lies deep in contemporary consumerist lifestyles, and many feel no obligation to live more ecologically. In addition to the technological and structural challenges required, the sustainability transition presents a massive social and cultural challenge.

How to maintain our hopefulness, response-ability and creativity in the changing world, and how to rebuild our lives, care for others and the Planet in so doing? Applying Donna Haraway's (2016) point that neither over optimism nor crippling pessimism help us forward, and building on Sarah Amsler's (2010) notion that for the transition to occur, people have to be able to believe that change is possible, the Ad Hoc Symposium focuses on the sustainability transition, its hindrances, and the possible ways ahead.

The NSU Ad hoc welcomes participants to address and discuss questions such as: What hinders us from combating climate change? What kind of consequences do our present choices and thinking have in the future and beyond our immediate sphere of influence? How are we responsible toward future generations of human and other life forms, and how to relate to them politically, ethically and aesthetically? How to construct more optimistic, yet plausible narratives about being human?

Kai Vaara, who is long-term bio and permaculture, future workshop specialist, ecovillage, and global justice activist, will deliver the keynote speech of the symposium. Further, we invite practitioners, environmental activists, artists as well as academics from relevant fields (e.g. social sciences, philosophy, political science, environmental sciences, etc.) to apply for the NSU Ad hoc symposium and join the conversation.

The NSU Ad hoc symposium will be organized in collaboration with the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy (<https://www.jyu.fi/hytk/fi/laitokset/yfi/en/>), particularly the disciplines of social policy and social work, and in connection to the transdisciplinary Wisdom community (<https://www.jyu.fi/en/research/wisdom>) of the University of Jyväskylä.

Application requirements:

Both traditional and non-traditional presentations are welcome, however we strongly encourage giving a free oral presentation, small performances, or presentations that engages audience rather than reading a paper. We wish to facilitate open debates for sharing and ask for presentations creating platforms for debate.

To apply, please send the following via email to the coordinators Satu Ranta-Tyrkkö, satu.ranta-tyrkkö(at)jyu.fi and Corinna Casi, corinna.casi(at)helsinki.fi:

1. A written proposal (max. 350 words) with a title and its format.
2. A short bio (max. 100 words).

The deadline to submit proposals is 14.06.2019. Accepted applicants will be informed by e-mail and a preliminary program will be announced on 30.06.2019. After deadline, we will keep submission open until we reach the maximum of participants. If you would like to attend the symposium without presenting, please email a short bio (no fees will apply in this case). Participants with presentations will be given priority.

Registration and fee:

Professors, lecturers and other professional scholars associated with institutions: 30€

Students, unemployed, freelancers: 10 €

This cost includes coffee breaks. Moreover, participants should apply to their institutions, Art Councils, local foundations or sponsors to have their travel cost covered. NSU will organize and pay for basic accommodation for Thu. 07.11 for all non-local participants who present and are not funded by their institutions on the understanding they will share a double room.

About the Nordic Summer University

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Nordic network for research and inter-disciplinary studies. NSU is a nomadic, academic institution, which organizes workshop-seminars across disciplinary and national borders. Since its establishment in 1950, Nordic Summer University has organized forums for cultural and intellectual debate in the Nordic and Baltic region, involving students, academics, politicians, and intellectuals from this region and beyond.

Decisions about the content and the organizational form of the NSU lay with its participants. The backbone of the activities in the NSU consists of its thematic study circles. In the study circles researchers, students and professionals from different backgrounds collaborate in scholarly investigations distributed regularly in summer and winter symposia during a three-year period.

For more information www.nordic.university