

EXPERIENCING NATURE OUTSIDE!

International school of excellence

The International School of Excellence: Experiencing Nature Outside! will bring together 10 international professors and 20 international students to explore green and thriving urban spaces through a multidisciplinary lens. The participants will be involved in a multi-disciplinary approach for exploring, collecting, recognizing, elaborating, and providing solutions for climate conditions and perceived heat stresses. The program combines lectures, short pitches, and hands-on experiential activities, including urban walks and climate data collection around Campus Leonardo at Politecnico di Milano.

29 June-3 July 2026

CRAFT, Building 11B, ground floor,
Politecnico di Milano, Leonardo Campus

CORE ORGANIZING TEAM



Israa Mahmoud
Assistant Professor of Urban and regional planning, Laboratorio di Simulazione Urbana Fausto Curti, DASTU, Polimi

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Eugenio Morello
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Barbara E.A. Piga
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DAY 1 - JUNE 29 Aula Magna - Building 1, Piazza Leonardo Da Vinci

09.00-11.30

WELCOME AND ON-BOARDING SESSION WITHIN THE SUMMER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Israa Mahmoud, Eugenio Morello & Barbara Piga - Laboratorio di Simulazione Urbana Fausto Curti, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano

WELCOME SPEECH TO DASTU POLIMI (ONLINE)

Carolina Pacchi - Head of department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH CENTER CRAFT (ONLINE)

Valeria Fedeli — CRAFT - Competence Centre on Anti-Fragile Territories & Dept. of Architecture and Urban Studies

OPENING SESSION (ONLINE)

Eleonora Martinello — Project Officer - European Commission (EACEA)

12.00-12.30

Fabiano Lemes de Oliveira — DASTU POLIMI, Italy

ECO-CENTRIC FUTURES: URBAN DESIGN, CITIES AND NATURE

The talk begins with an overview of the contemporary polycrisis, before turning to the question of desirable futures, and the roles ecological urbanism can play in their envisioning and realization. The lecture concludes by exploring how nature-based urbanism can evolve as a crucial framework for navigating uncertainty while envisioning urban environments that foster the flourishing of humans and non-humans alike.

LUNCH BREAK

14.00-14.30

Aude Zingraff-Hamed — TU Dortmund, Germany

URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE – ARE WE SABOTAGING OUR BEST ALLY?

Urban green infrastructure is widely recognized as one of our best solutions for tackling urban heat, surface flooding, biodiversity loss, and negative impacts on human health. But are we forgetting that trees are not streetlamps—and that they, too, are living organisms struggling in a hostile urban environment?

14.45-15.15

Husam AlWaer — Dundee University, Scotland

HOW ARE LOCAL VOICES SHAPING THE FUTURE OF GREEN CITIES IN THE EU AND UK? INSIGHTS AND STORIES FROM URBAN RELEAF

Urban ReLeaf brings together local communities and public authorities to improve urban climate resilience by filling critical gaps in air-quality, heat-stress, and greenspace data across six European pilot cities. By integrating citizen-generated insights—such as tree registries and greenspace perception studies—into official planning, it ensures residents' lived experiences shape more just, resilient, and nature-rich urban environments.

15.30-16.00

Arjan van Timmeren — TU Delft, Netherlands

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL URBANISM: DESIGNING PATHWAYS FOR REGENERATION

Socio ecological urbanism is presented as an emerging approach to regeneration that treats liminal, in between spaces as opportunities for experimentation, adaptive reuse, and inclusive transformation toward more resilient futures. By expanding concepts of urban belonging to include ecological needs alongside human ones, the lecture illustrates how cities can foster shared stewardship, ecological justice, and regenerative socio ecological relationships across species.

16.00 GROUPS FORMATION AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Project Partners

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Graphical design by Anastasiya Sushkova

DAY 2 - JUNE 30

Experiential Walk Day

Barbara E. A. Piga — LABSIMURB, DASTU, Polimi, Italy

EXPERIENCING CITTÀ STUDI: FROM THE CITIZEN'S PERSPECTIVE TO DESIGN STRATEGIES

The activity introduces an Experiential Walk in the Città Studi neighborhood as a tool for exploring and interpreting the urban context from a design perspective. Participants are invited to engage with the space first from the citizen's perspective, observing perceptions, atmospheres, and everyday challenges, and subsequently as architects, translating these insights into interpretations and potential design directions. The multisensory walk is followed by the preparation of an individual reflective diary and a brief collective sharing session, transforming lived impressions into initial design insights. The session concludes with a reflection on the results of previous walks conducted in Città Studi and with the presentation of the volume Experiential Walk, situating the activity

09.00-13.00

DAY 3 - JULY 1

Climate walk Day

Eugenio Morello, Doruntina Zendeli, Rachele Radaelli — DASTU, Polimi, Italy

ADAPTING THE CAMPUS TO CLIMATE CHANGE: EXPLORING CO-CREATED SOLUTIONS

Starting from the Climate Change Adaptation Plan of Politecnico di Milano, this half-day course introduces a shared governance model aimed at co-creating adaptation solutions with the active involvement of the entire campus community. The initiative is grounded in a decision-making approach that responds to community needs and integrates technical assessment with participatory processes. A specific protocol for on-site measurement campaigns, combined with a structured co-creation framework, has been developed and will be tested during the workshop. The programme includes: (i) an overview of the Adaptation Plan; (ii) guidance on the co-creation methodology; (iii) a live climate measurement campaign through a campus climate walk; and (iv) the drafting of adaptation proposals to be further developed within the framework of the School's main design brief.

DAY 4 - JULY 2

Finding Solutions day

Israa Mahmoud — LABSIMURB, DASTU POLIMI, Italy

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN DESIGN (CO-GREENING HANDBOOK AND KIT)

This lecture helps the participants at identifying the possible design solutions at the architectural and urban design scale for the identified problems and challenges at the local scale.

Nevin Gharib — Alexandria University, Egypt

URBAN ACUPUNCTURE A CROSS-REGIONAL EXPLORATION OF COMMUNITY-LED PARTICIPATION

A cross-regional session examining how Urban Acupuncture can strengthen community-led participation in urban development, drawing lessons from Germany and Egypt. Using the Al-Mahmoudeya Axis as a case study, it highlights how localized engagement can drive healthier, more sustainable urban transformations.

13.00-14.00 LUNCH BREAK

Frank Eckardt — Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR URBAN REVITALISATION

This input will show some examples how local Initiatives in Germany are changing the paradigm of urban regeneration in urban planning from below. Key issues of climate adaptation are thereby embedded into a large thematic approach of urban transformation.

14.00-14.30

Doruntina Zendeli — LABSIMURB, DASTU, Polimi, Italy

HEAT, HEALTH AND EQUITY: FROM MEASUREMENT TO CLIMATE-RESILIENT URBAN DESIGN

This lecture explores the links between urban heat, health, and socio-spatial inequality. It presents methods to measure thermal stress and to analyse the relationship between urban form and health outcomes. Through case studies and project examples, it highlights design strategies for climate-resilient and equitable cities.

15.00-17.00 Giulia Campodonico (closed session)
ENoLL – European Network of Living Labs ivzw, Brussels, BE

LIVING LABS FOR IMPACTFUL CO-CREATION: THE ENOLL HARMONISED APPROACH

This session introduces the fundamentals of Living Labs, providing participants with a shared understanding of their core principles, key characteristics, and role in user-driven innovation. It presents the ENoLL harmonised approach, combining methodologies, practical examples, and insights into how multi-stakeholder engagement enables impactful co-creation in real-life contexts.

Walter Unterrainer — Chalmers University, Sweden

COMPETING AND CONFLICTING LOGICS OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The lecture addresses sustainable design as a wicked problem, which is always incomplete, contradictory and changing. In contrast to green-talking and greenwashing, it argues and visualizes along built examples for a holistic approach, without cherry-picking specific topics at the expenses of others.

Husam AlWaer — University of Dundee, Scotland

REASSESSING THE 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD: CAN WE REALLY LIVE WELL LOCALLY?

The presentation examines whether the 20Minute Neighbourhood model is an effective framework for organizing urban life, focusing on how its goals are defined and pursued by planners and decisionmakers. It highlights the importance of aligning desired outcomes, the mechanisms required to achieve them, and the behavioural and systemic changes needed for successful implementation.

14.30-15.00

Malena Rottwinkel — Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany

SENSING THE CITY: OBSERVING AND EXPERIENCING PUBLIC SPACE

This session introduces students to qualitative methods for observing and experiencing urban space around the Leonardo Campus, with a focus on how climate and environmental conditions are perceived. Through go-alongs, participatory observation, and mental maps, participants explore how heat, shade, movement, and social accessibility shape everyday use and experience of public spaces.

16.00-19.00 GROUP WORK

DAY 5 - JULY 3

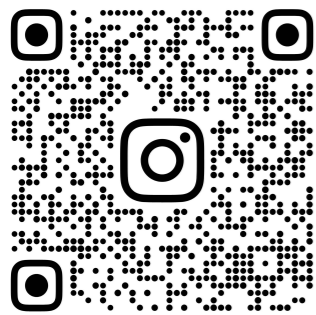
Open discussion
and summer school conclusion

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

- REFLECTIONS: ALL FACULTY MEMBERS AND INVITED EXPERTS SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES FROM THE PROGRAM
- COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: SMALL GROUP SESSIONS TO OUTLINE ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR APPLYING THE PROGRAM'S LEARNINGS AND EVALUATION METHODS
- QUALITY ASSURANCE: CONDUCTING PGL EVALUATION FORMS
- CLOSING REMARKS: SUMMARY OF KEY TAKEAWAYS AND DISTRIBUTION OF CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION
- FRIDAY PRAYERS

LUNCH BREAK

- PRO-GREEN-LABS CONSORTIUM MEETING (CLOSED MEETING)



GREENING_CITIES



Pro-GREEN-LABS
EVENT EVALUATION FORM



LABSIMURB



Pro-GREEN-LABS

Experiencing nature outside!

CRAFT, Building 11B, ground floor- the Politecnico di Milano, Leonardo Campus

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof. Aude Zingraff-Hamed

Head of the Chair of Landscape Planning,
TU Dortmund, Germany
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(1987) is Professor at Dortmund University and head of the chair for Landscape Planning. She is a leading expert in transformative landscape planning, socio-ecological governance, and ecosystem climate resilience, recognized for her interdisciplinary work at the nexus of natural science, policy, and technologies. As a scholar and practitioner, she has built her expertise advancing the design and implementation of nature-based solutions for sustainable and resilient landscapes.



Prof. Husam AlWaer

Chair of Urban Design, University of Dundee,
School of Art and Design
(Architecture & Urban Planning), Scotland
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Husam is an 'urbanist', with a background in architecture, urban planning and sustainability. He is currently Chair of Urban Design at the University of Dundee, having previously researched and taught at Reading and Liverpool universities. He has a focused interest in the past and future of sustainable places, towns and cities (including the 20-minute Neighbourhoods), and in particular the development of new approaches to sustainable urbanism. Husam is an award-winning author with published work on a wide range of subjects from architecture, urbanism, sustainability, and healthy neighbourhoods to the specifics of placemaking facilitation and performance evaluation. Bringing insight into research, teaching, community stakeholder engagement and professional practice at the intersection between theoretical and contemporary policy and practice.



Prof.dr.ir. Arjan. van Timmeren

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Professor at TUDelft, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Department Urbanism, Environmental Technology & Design. He is Academic Portfolio Director 'Sustainable Cities' for the TUD Extension School, and Section Head Urban Design, Dept. Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft. His work focuses on sustainable development in the built environment, with emphasis on Environmental Technology and NBS, Urban Metabolism, Circular and Biobased Economy, Urban Microclimate, Biophilic environmental design. He leads several (inter)national projects and has seats in (inter)national steering groups, quality teams and scientific boards.



Prof. Fabiano Lemes de Oliveira

Associate Professor in Urbanism
Department of Architecture and Urban Studies
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Fabiano is an Associate Professor in Urbanism, his research focuses on urban and landscape planning, particularly green space systems, nature-based solutions, and sustainable, resilient cities. Author of Green Wedge Urbanism: History, Theory and Contemporary Practice (2017) and has co-authored and co-edited several books on nature-based solutions and sustainable urban planning. Lemes leads and participates in international research projects on urban sustainability, including Biodiversa+ NatureScape, and teaches urban and environmental design while supervising PhD candidates in the PhD programme in Urban Planning, Design and Policy. He has held visiting academic positions at Tongji University, Harvard Graduate School of Design.

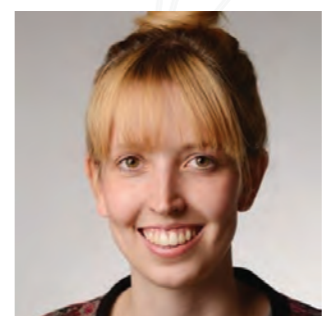


Prof. Dr. Frank Eckardt

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Frank is a professor for Urban Studies and Social Research at the Institute for European Urban Studies, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. His main fields of research are social inequalities and cultural diversities in cities. Most recently, his book on anti-asylum protests in East-Germany (Ungeliebte Nachbarn: Anti-Asyl-Proteste in Thüringen) has been published by transcript publishers, Bielefeld (2018).



Malena Rottwinkel

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Malena studied European Studies at Maastricht University and Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University from 2008 to 2011. She focused her studies on critical geography, urban studies, and sustainable development within the framework of the international Master's program in Sustainable Development at the University of Leipzig, the University of Graz, and Stellenbosch University. Alongside her studies, she worked as a research assistant at the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL) and wrote her Master's thesis on the spatial perception of refugees in Leipzig. Since May 2017, Malena has been a research assistant at the Bauhaus University Weimar, holding the Chair of Social Science Urban Research.



Dr. Doruntina Zendeli

Architect and urban researcher with interdisciplinary expertise in urban planning, climate adaptation, and urban health
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Doruntina Zendeli is an architect and urban researcher with interdisciplinary expertise in urban planning, climate adaptation, and urban health. She holds an MSc cum laude in Urban Studies, and a PhD cum laude in Urban Planning, Design and Policy from Politecnico di Milano. Her research focuses on the interactions between urban form, climate and health, with particular attention to urban heat stress and socio-spatial inequities. She works at the intersection of urban climate science, geospatial analysis and urban planning, integrating climate modelling, remote sensing, urban morphology and health data to support heat-resilient and equitable urban planning and design.



Arch. Rachele Radaelli

Architect with a specialization in Territorial and Environmental Planning
CCRR-Lab, DAStU, Polimi
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Rachele is an architect specialized in Territorial and Environmental Planning, with a Master's degree in Construction of Complex Territorial Systems. She is a member of the Climate Change, Risk and Resilience Laboratory (CCRR-Lab) at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DAStU) at Politecnico di Milano. Her work focuses on climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience, and sustainable urban and regional planning. She contributes to research, consulting, and training activities, including the development of Climate Transition Strategies, the Sponge City Project of the Metropolitan City of Milan, and first Climate Change Adaptation Plan of Polimi.



Giulia Campodonico

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Senior EU research & innovation professional with 15+ years of experience in Horizon Europe, Living Labs, and innovation ecosystems. Proven track record in coordinating large-scale EU proposals, managing multi-stakeholder consortia, and translating research into policy-relevant and scalable solutions. Strong expertise in proposal writing, evaluation, IP/IPR, and training delivery.



Prof. Walter Unterrainer

Artistic Professor, Building Design,
Architecture and Civil Engineering
Chalmers University, Sweden



Walter Unterrainer is a Professor in Architecture and Resources with a focus on economy at Chalmers University of Technology since 2019. He previously held professorships in sustainable architecture at Aarhus School of Architecture and Umeå University. Before academia, he spent 30 years as a practicing architect in Vorarlberg, Austria, designing experimental and innovative buildings, often focusing on timber architecture, cost-efficient design, and participatory building methods. His recent research explores the relationship between architecture, social and environmental challenges, and the changing role of architects. He is currently working on the book Architectures without Clients.



Prof. Nevin Gharib

Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts, Alexandria
University, Pro-GREEN-LABs Erasmus+ Project



Nevin Gharib is a Professor of Architecture and Heritage Preservation and currently the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University. She obtained her MSc and PhD from Alexandria University, with her doctoral research conducted through a collaborative data-collection program with the University of Rome I – La Sapienza. Since establishing the City Transformation Lab, she has led its work on urban innovation, sustainability, and community-driven development. She has directed and participated in numerous international cooperation projects—particularly Erasmus+ and DAAD—in partnership with universities across the EU and the SEMED region. She has also organized and led a wide range of workshops across multiple Egyptian, Arab, and European cities. Professor Gharib also serves as a member of the Alexandria Heritage Preservation Committee, formed by the Alexandria Governorate to safeguard the city's architectural and urban heritage.

scope

The summer school introduces shared environmental concepts and methods — such as thermal comfort, heat islands, microclimate awareness, Milan's policies and applied nature-based solutions, as well as an overview of sensing tools and the general workflow we will later simulate. This will help students and staff build a common framework before the practical sessions.

The school focusing on the capacity building of students and staff engaged in assessing the climate conditions in the surrounding areas of Campus Leonardo in Politecnico di Milano, Italy then replicating the experience of using sensors and climate data collection in arid and hot climate such as Jordan and North Egypt. The Experiencing Nature outside! school will use a mixed methods approach which will mix short pitches, frontal lectures for the initial part of the school week with experiential walking activities to mature a more hands-on experience and let the participant develop a simulated project during the workshop days. 10 International students will be recruited from the Erasmus+ Network of Pro-GREEN-Labs project (funded under GA #101129466) and the Politecnico di Milano students will be accredited 4 CFU based on the participation in the activities, while also passion in action call will be carried out.

The international school will adopt a mixed frontal pitch (or short lectures of 30 mins each) with the invited international professors (Scotland, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands), also from public administration of the metropolitan city of Milan and communal local authorities; as well as collaborative workshops throughout the whole week which will be dedicated to the topic of urban planning- sensitive design and the environmental impact of climate adaptation solutions. The lectures will introduce shared environmental concepts and methods — such as thermal comfort, heat islands, microclimate awareness, Milan's policies and applied nature-based solutions, in synergy with the Polimi Climate Adaptation Plan (PDA) as well as an overview of sensing tools (CRAFT Climate sensing equipment- cart) and the general workflow that will be later simulated.