



# Futuring for Sustainability Summer School 5 – 9 July 2021



**APPLY NOW!**



Utrecht University

Urban Futures Studio  
Pathways to Sustainability program



## — *What we do in the present is profoundly influenced by our expectations of the future.*

### Join the 'Futuring for Sustainability Summer School'.

The annual 'Futuring for Sustainability Summer School' is an interactive course, held from 5- 9 July 2021. During this one week course we teach students to understand how Techniques of Futuring contribute to realizing societal transformations towards sustainability: living well equitably within ecological means. But what does a sustainable world look like? In what type of sustainable future would you want to live? How can we prepare and collaboratively create a sustainable world? In the Futuring for Sustainability summer school, these are central questions.

Our expectations about the future, and our dreams and imaginations for it, profoundly influence the way we act in the present. Visions of plausible, possible, or desirable futures are fundamentally important in shaping our social and environmental futures.

For example, think about the effects novels such as George Orwell's 1984, films such as Back to the Future, and artistic styles such as Afrofuturism and steampunk have had on the way people feel about and prepare for the future. So too do unexpected downturns like 9/11, the financial crisis, and the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Technological and societal developments always rely on images of the future, on people acting based on their imaginations and expectations. Expectations and visions are what makes people act.

The most important challenge of the coming decades is the need to craft a sustainable future. A sustainable future that is also just, desirable, and democratic. In this summer school, the [Urban Futures Studio](#) and the [Pathways to Sustainability program](#) collaborate to connect technical and environmental questions around sustainability to social questions around equality, democracy, and participation. The summer school offers the Urban Futures Studio-approach to creating visions of desirable sustainable futures. This approach draws on a wide variety of literature ranging from political science to urban planning and integrated assessment models. It also offers our interpretation of how to give those visions a social life, our take on making them affect processes in the real world.

### Participants

This course is designed for graduate students from all disciplinary backgrounds, particularly advanced Masters and Doctoral students. We also consider Masters students, Postdoctoral students, and select practitioners who are interested in futuring and sustainability.

### Contact

For any questions, please contact course coordinator Jeroen Oomen ([j.j.oomen@uu.nl](mailto:j.j.oomen@uu.nl))

### What to expect

Join us for an interactive course to learn to:

- understand how Techniques of Futuring contribute to realizing societal transformations towards sustainability
- imagine positive futures and mobilize to achieve them in a democratic and participatory fashion.
- understand futuring techniques including scenario planning, modelling, back casting, experiential futuring, arts-based approaches, science fiction, and design.
- understand where our current sustainability discourse comes from - and how 'the future' became an object of study.

We invite lecturers from various disciplines to introduce what they deem to be crucial insights for building a more sustainable future. You will try out these techniques and insights by experimenting in a real-world setting in work studio sessions. And this course will build your capacity to develop new visions and imaginations of possible futures and alternative sustainability pathways.

### Application and selection process

We encourage you to apply as soon as possible but no later than **1 May 2021** (final deadline). Please send us your motivation letter or alternatively another creative approach to express your interest in this course (e.g., slides, video, storyboard). Also include your c.v. Learn more and apply via this link: <https://utrechtsummerschool.nl/courses/social-sciences/futuring-for-sustainability>

We will start accepting suitable candidates well ahead of the final deadline. Unlike most other Utrecht Summer Schools, we do not strictly work with a *'first come, first serve'* system. We will periodically make a selection based on the applications. Final decisions about acceptance may take up to two weeks. A limited number of scholarships is available.

**Please Note:** Under pressure of the C19-pandemic, we have decided to move our summer school into the virtual sphere. As global mobility, especially between countries and continents, will likely still be severely impacted early July, we have decided to offer a fully virtual Summer School. We are aware that a virtual format brings its own challenges (including time zone differences) and will do our best to address these challenges.