



Society & Organizations



## XIII Medici Summer School, June 14 - June 18, 2021

### Theme: Cooperation in organizing and innovating

We are pleased to announce the organization of the 13th edition of the Medici Summer School in Management Studies for doctoral students and young researchers **June 14 –18, 2021**. The school is organized and sponsored by **Bologna Business School (University of Bologna)** <https://www.bbs.unibo.eu/xiii-medici-summer-school/> **HEC Paris (Society and Organizations Institute)** <http://www.hec.edu/SnO/> and **MIT Sloan School of Management (Economic Sociology PhD Program)** <http://sociology.mit.edu/programs>

The Medici Summer School is hosted yearly, on a rotating basis, by the three founding institutions. The Bologna Business School is hosting the Medici Summer School of 2021. The school will be convened online. However, according to the evolution of the current sanitary situation, if it looks possible to convene at least some portion of the faculty and students in person, a blended approach could be contemplated (any in-person component would be in Bologna).

#### Mission and format

The mission of the Medici Summer School is to promote doctoral education and research in management studies and contribute to the development of exemplary scholarly-based practices in the management of organizations. The Medici Summer School advocates a special focus on cross-fertilizing research across North American and European traditions providing a unique educational program for qualified doctoral students interacting with thought leaders in the management field who share their knowledge and wisdom on frontier research topics.

The Medici Summer School is hosted yearly, on a rotating basis, by the three founding institutions. It combines lectures and research seminars by prominent international scholars with active engagement by participating students. Every day of the one-week program is scheduled to end with the presentation of students' research related to the topic of the School and with a panel of senior faculty providing feedback.

The School has also a tradition of hosting keynote speeches from leading practitioners as well as organizing short field trips to local places of intellectual interest, including companies, research labs, NGOs, museums, etc.

A typical day will feature a guest faculty member presenting on their research, an integrative session led by a host faculty member that explores links among the guest faculty research, and a workshop in which the host and guest faculty work with students to flesh out their own ideas, both theoretically and empirically.

Overall, students will advance in their own research via:

1. Exposure to the cutting edge of research in this area
2. Open discussion of key research challenges experienced by the faculty in their own research
3. Direct feedback on how to tackle complex questions of both theory and empirics

There is **no fee to participate**. Selected **candidates are fully covered in their accommodation expenses** provided that they stay the full week. However, transportation is not covered by the organizers. Students come from all over the world.

### **Theme**

Cooperation occurs when actors help one another to achieve their goals even when each could stand back and let others bear the burden. Sometimes, individuals and groups must cooperate in order to survive, such as in ancient societies based on hunting or farming, and in contemporary societies in confronting climate change and pandemics. To be sure, many cooperative ventures today arise because due to the benefits of developing a common opportunity, whether it be the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem or the creation of hobbyist and practitioner communities that foster innovation and entrepreneurship. Given the challenges associated with successful cooperation and the high stakes involved, cooperation is naturally the subject of deliberate strategizing and organizing, with much debate over the most effective strategies.

Developments in the shape of such discussion and debates may be discernible. One development are lessons from game theory that have sharpened our understanding of how coordination and cooperation challenges are distinct and intersect. Whereas cooperation is about eliciting contributions to public goods despite private incentives to withhold contribution, coordination is about eliciting adoption of shared standards when each party prefers that everyone adopt its own standard. Another development is discernible in economics; whereas in the 1970s and 1980s the field was highly atomistic and market-oriented, it has much greater appreciation today for social arrangements and institutions that foster coordination and cooperation. Other social sciences have also exhibited shifts in this area, including increased attention to prosocial behavior in psychology, morality in sociology, and citizenship behaviors in organizations.

Another important set of developments is in the environmental changes that have generated new opportunities and challenges for individuals and organizations that seek to cooperate and coordinate. Foremost here are technological changes that have dramatically decreased the cost of communication across organizational and spatial boundaries, enabling wider and more diverse collectives to come together and cooperate in pursuit of their shared goals. Such cooperative efforts not only occur within formal organizations, but increasingly cross formal and informal organizational boundaries to include interorganizational networks as well as geographical clusters, communities and crowds. Indeed, while various theories of the firm are essentially premised on the idea that the firm is a tool for facilitating cooperation, firms often struggle to elicit cooperative behavior, in part because they often resort to high-powered market-like incentives. Conversely, and especially with the help of technological

platforms, various interorganizational relationships and institutions that transcend organizations may support high degrees of coordination and even cooperation.

For social scientists, the challenges and opportunities associated with the understanding of cooperation as an organizing principle offer a fertile ground for exploring new ideas, relationships and logics of organizing while also having a positive impact. They also present opportunities to engage with unorthodox methodologies that are often needed to tackle complex causal interdependences that cut across social, technical, political as well as disciplinary boundaries.

The purpose of “The 2021 Medici Summer School” is to bring together leading researchers who are focused on advancing our knowledge on the way in which cooperation shapes what organizations are, how they function and how they interact with their environment. This theme choice reflects a sense of excitement about how societal demands for solidarity and cooperation are addressed in contemporary organizing. In particular, our goal is to discuss cutting-edge organizational research that sheds new light on theoretical mechanisms, processes as well as methodological approaches that can enhance our understanding of major questions.

Some of the topics and questions that will be discussed include (but are not limited to) the following:

- How is cooperation addressed across organizational forms and domains?
- What is the role of cooperation in processes that stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship?
- How do the challenges of coordination and cooperation intersect?
- How do various new technological developments support or hinder cooperative efforts?
- How are efforts to sustain cooperation over time?
- What institutional conditions may enable cooperation as an organizing principle? Alternatively, what institutional pressures may threaten cooperative organizing efforts?
- What are the dilemmas of cooperation with regard to organizational processes and decision-making?
- What organizational principles inform cooperative innovation efforts within and across organizational boundaries?
- In what ways are practices and processes of cooperative organizing similar or different in different fields (such as market and non-market based settings)?
- How can cooperation emerge and thrive in market settings?
- What are the theoretical opportunities and limitations for building more comprehensive theorizing on cooperation as a general organizing principle, e.g. with regard to different disciplinary traditions or levels of analysis?
- What are the possible unintended consequences of efforts to organize cooperation and how do organizations deal with these?
- How do trust and prosocial behavior extend beyond the boundaries of the family, clan or group to larger and more diverse collectives?
- What are the dispositional mechanisms through which cooperation emerges in specific social settings?

To function, collectivities need to foster solidarity and cooperation among their members. Answering these questions is therefore crucial to achieving cohesion in the heterogeneous social worlds we increasingly inhabit today.

Overall, the goal of the 2021 edition of the Medici Summer School is to shed light on the sources and consequences of cooperation as a general principle for organizing and innovating. The Medici Summer School is to equip students with theoretical and methodological tools that will enable them to untangle a complex theoretical landscape, define the key questions, identify open puzzles, and delineate the central ideas for a future agenda devoted to understanding organizational cooperation. To this end, the 2021 Medici Summer School brings together interdisciplinary scholarship at multiple levels of analysis to shed light on organizational tensions, market challenges and social dilemmas associated with the occurrence of many instances of collective action. By learning from different theoretical and empirical approaches, we believe attendees will substantially enrich their particular research agendas.

### **Program and Faculty**

The host faculty members include representatives from the three co-sponsoring institutions and those who have been organizing the Summer School over the years. Host faculty at this year's summer school include Simone Ferriani and Gianni Lorenzoni (Bologna), Ezra Zuckerman Sivan and Emilio J. Castilla (MIT), Rodolphe Durand (HEC Paris).

In addition to the host faculty, the Summer School will bring together guest faculty who consist of leading strategy, organizations, sociology, and social psychology scholars. The five days of the Summer School will be tentatively organized as follows:

**Day 1, June 14:** Lead faculty: Ray Reagans, MIT

**Day 2, June 15:** Lead faculty: Delia Baldassarri, NYU

**Day 3, June 16:** Lead faculty: Claudine Gartenberg, Wharton School

**Day 4, June 17:** Lead faculty: Alessandro Lomi, University of Lugano

**Day 5, June 18:** Lead faculty: Arnout van de Rijt, EUI

Each faculty member will be present at the School for 2 days, allowing ample time for one-to-one sessions, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities.

### **Application procedure**

The School will admit 20-25 student participants. Applications for these slots are welcome from current Ph.D. students in Management, Strategy, Organization Theory, Economic Sociology, and related disciplines from universities worldwide. Students for the Summer School will be selected in

accordance with the quality of their doctoral curricula, research interests, and application materials. Applications from students who have completed at least two years of doctoral training will be considered, with preference given to those who have satisfied their course requirements and exams but have not yet embarked on their dissertation research. Applications from post-docs will also be considered.

There is no application or participation fee. Student participants will be responsible for covering their own travel expenses to and from Bologna, but the Summer School will cover all accommodation and board expenses during the week of sessions provided that students attend the entire week. Applications should include:

- a. A simple statement declaring that the applicant is interested in being considered for admission to the Summer School together with the applicant's contact information: email address, telephone, and mailing address. All of this should be in the body of an email sent to the address below.
- b. Curriculum vitae listing educational background, Ph.D. program, nationality, etc.
- c. A motivation letter (no longer than 1 page) indicating the applicant's current research activities and his/her specific interest in the topic of the 2019 Summer School.
- d. A brief recommendation letter from a member of their dissertation committee.
- e. Applicants are also encouraged (but not required) to submit an extended abstract or discussion note that they will present during the Summer School. The Selection Committee will evaluate the relevance of this paper to the 2021 School theme.

All application materials should be sent by March 30th, 2021 exclusively via email to the following address: [registration@medicisummerschool.it](mailto:registration@medicisummerschool.it) with "**Application Medici Summer School**" in the **subject** of the email. For any specific inquiry or clarification please also contact [donato.cutolo@unibo.it](mailto:donato.cutolo@unibo.it).

Admitted candidates will be **notified** by **April 25th**, 2021.