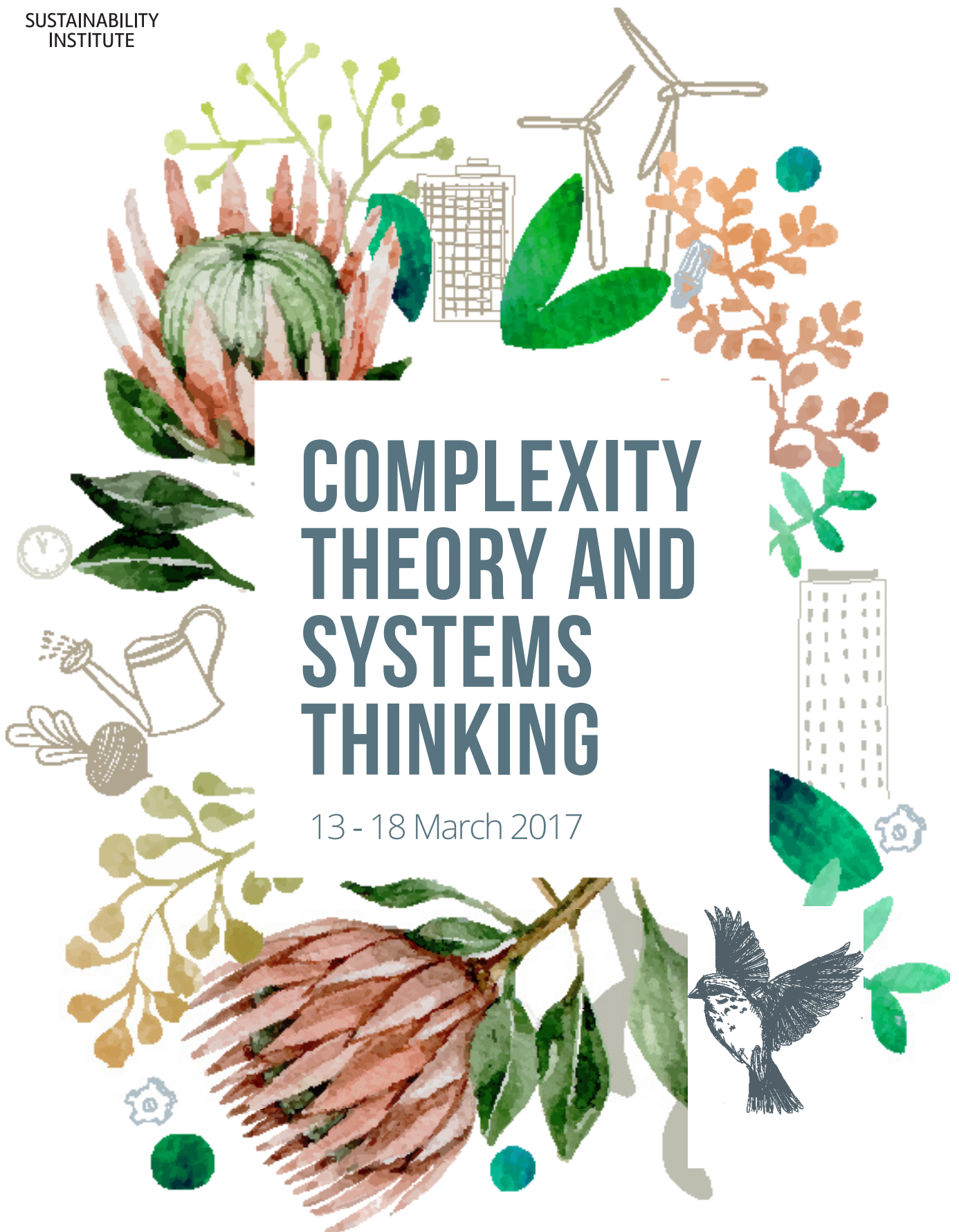




SUSTAINABILITY  
INSTITUTE



# COMPLEXITY THEORY AND SYSTEMS THINKING

13 - 18 March 2017

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# Complexity Theory & Systems Thinking

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This is a theoretical and conceptual course that addresses the notion of complexity which, in turn, has become a vast and intricate literature that spans the globe, cuts across all disciplines and means many different things to different people. The orientation of this course is to locate complexity within a philosophical and 'history of science' context, and to distinguish complexity from more modernist interpretations such as chaos theory and most systems theories. Importantly, this course provides the primary conceptual framework that students will require to fully understand sustainability in general and sustainable development in particular. Increasingly across the globe sustainability is being understood via complexity perspectives that seem most capable of handling the transdisciplinary nature of sustainability. The course will try to demonstrate some of these links. Although a week is much too short to do justice to the subject of complexity and systems thinking, this basic introductory course is designed to provide course participants with the key conceptual tools that will be required to fully integrate all the different dimensions of sustainability that are addressed in the other modules.

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Postgraduate students and practitioners seeking an introductory understanding and those studying complex adaptive systems. This course will help you to develop your understanding of the nature of complex problems and how they can be tackled. Systems thinking enables you to grasp and manage situations of complexity and uncertainty in which there are no simple answers. It's a way of 'learning your way towards effective action' by looking at connected wholes rather than separate parts. It's sometimes called practical holism.

## VENUE AND TIME

This course will be presented at the Sustainability Institute at Lynedoch Ecovillage, Lynedoch Rd (off R310 Baden Powell Drive), Stellenbosch. It will run Monday to Friday from 08:15 to 17:15 and Saturday from 09:00 to 13:00. Directions can be obtained from Google maps or [www.sustainabilityinstitute.net](http://www.sustainabilityinstitute.net).

## TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation and travel are for your own account. Accommodation is available directly adjacent to the venue in the heart of Lynedoch Ecovillage at Drie Gewels Eco-Lodge. For bookings and rates please see our website, contact +27 (0)21 881 3196 or email [hospitality.si@sustainabilityinstitute.net](mailto:hospitality.si@sustainabilityinstitute.net).

## APPLICATION

Contact the Short Course Administrator on [shortcourses@sustainabilityinstitute.net](mailto:shortcourses@sustainabilityinstitute.net) to receive this information. Applications close strictly 2 working weeks prior to course commencement, accompanied by full payment of course fees.

## COURSE FEES

R9 500 per short course including lunches and tea breaks (Mon - Fri).

## CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

Attendees who satisfy the minimum performance requirements i.e. attendance of the full 6-day course, full participation and contribution to class and group projects, will be awarded a Certificate of Attendance from the Sustainability Institute.

## PRESENTER

### RIKA PREISER

Rika Preiser is a researcher at the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition at Stellenbosch University. She holds Master's degrees in Journalism (2004) and Social Anthropology (2008), both obtained at Stellenbosch University. In 2012 she completed her PhD in Philosophy entitled "The Problem of Complexity: Rediscovering the role of Critique". Her current research is focused on the philosophical and critical implications of complexity theory and systems thinking. The practical implications of applying a complexity approach to research and knowledge generation (epistemology) is an important field of collaboration with researchers from a variety of disciplines.

