

Argumentation in public communication I

Edition: spring 2017

Syllabus

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Master in Public Management and Policy

Rationale and objectives

In public communication, most activities and interactions (oral and written) are characterized by *argumentation*, as actors are committed to be accountable for their decisions and give reasons for their claims. Argumentation in Public Communication I (3 ECTS) is specifically focused on *argumentative discussions* as a means to resolve disagreement through *reasonable* dialogue; taking into account that well-conducted argumentative interactions, ideally, increase the *quality* of communicative exchanges, as they allow us to avoid conflict and manipulation. This course will equally provide students with theoretical and methodological tools to identify *different types of argument schemes* that can be used in support of a given standpoint, thus providing more robust instruments of analysis and design of communicative interventions in the field of public communication.

This course adopts a bottom-up approach, based on the analysis of empirical data (documents, oral discourses) in the field of public communication and on the design of argumentative (oral or written) discourse in specific situations relative to public communication and administrative rhetoric. Students will learn both to *analyse* and to *design* argumentative texts (oral or written), focusing on a delicate balance between the critical requirement of resolving disagreement in a *reasonable* fashion and the attempt to persuade others and win one's cause. Classes will allow significant space for students' discussion, group-work, and guided controversy in order to see how argumentation works in practice.

Alongside a general introduction of the different uses and applications of public rhetoric, emphasis will be placed on two key domains in which argumentation plays an important role. The former is the role of argumentation as an alternative to conflict in (public) organizations. Given the high economic and human costs of conflict, managing disagreement by means of reasonable discussion is important in order to scaffold efficient and healthy relations. The latter domain concerns how argumentation is used in the system of Swiss semi-direct democracy, with a special focus on popular initiatives at the federal level.

For those who wish to know more about argumentation and the tools for analysing arguments in different domains of public communication, the additional course *Argumentation in Public Communication II* will be offered in SA 2017.

Course methodology

This course largely adopts a *bottom-up approach*, based on the analysis of empirical data (documents, oral discourses) in the field of public communication, as well as on the design of argumentative (oral or written) discourse in specific situations relative to public communication and administrative rhetoric.

Class interaction will allow for significant room for students' discussion, group-work, and guided controversy in order to see how argumentation works in practice. As a general attitude, argumentative discussion is encouraged in class, as this course combines the two poles of "learning argumentation" with "doing argumentation to learn" (Schwarz 2009). In this edition (spring 2017), we will also benefit from discussion with guest speakers within our course.

In order to contact Prof. Greco (office 011, "blue" building, via Buffi) or Ms. van Bijnen (office 353, main building, via Buffi), please make an appointment via e-mail (sara.greco@usi.ch; emma.van.bijnen@usi.ch).

Evaluation

Evaluation is as follows: 15% based on a design of argumentative texts exercise to be submitted during the course (deadlines: tba); 10% based on active participation in class discussions; and 75% based on a final oral exam that includes the contents of the course plus discussion of assigned readings. The oral exam will take place during the regular session at USI (June 2017). More details will be provided during the course.

Assigned readings

All readings will be made available on the course online platform *iCorsi* as downloadable PDF files.

General introduction to argumentation

- Rigotti and Greco, S. 2005. *Introducing argumentation*. Argumentum eLearning module, www.argumentum.ch (restricted access).
- Van Eemeren, F. H., and Grootendorst, R. 1992. *Argumentation, communication and fallacies: A pragma-dialectical perspective*. Hillsdale (NJ): Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 2 (pp. 13-25); Chapter 4 (only pp. 34-37).
- Van Eemeren, F.H., and Snoeck-Henkemans, F. 2017. *Argumentation: Analysis and evaluation* (2nd edition). New York: Routledge. Chapter 3 (pp. 31-39); Chapter 5 (pp. 55-70).
- Olmos, P. 2015. Story credibility in narrative arguments. In F. H. van Eemeren and B. Garssen (Eds.), *Reflections on theoretical issues in Argumentation Theory*. Cham (etc.): Springer, pp. 155-167.
- Schwarz, B., and Baker, M. 2016. *Dialogue, argumentation and education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

On evidence in argumentation: a critical approach

- Zieglmueller, G. W., and Kay, J. 1997. *Argumentation: Inquiry and advocacy*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (pp. 74-75; and pp. 172-178).

- Freeley, A. J., and Steinberg, D. L. 2005. *Argumentation and debate: Critical thinking for reasoned decision making*. Boston (MA): Wadsworth Cengage Learning (pp. 76-79; and pp. 126-151).

On the classical model of rhetoric

- Murphy, J. J., Katula, R. A., and Hoppmann, M. 2014. *A synoptic history of classical rhetoric*. New York: Routledge (pp. 134-136).

On communication and argumentation in conflict resolution

- Greco Morasso, S. 2011. *Argumentation in dispute mediation: a reasonable way to handle conflict*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins (pp. 22-24; and pp. 36-43).
- Fisher, R., Ury, W., and Patton, B. 1991 (2nd edition). *Getting to yes. Negotiating agreement without giving in*. New York: Penguin Books (pp. 40-43).
- Wehr, P. Conflict Mapping. In *Beyond Intractability*, G. Burgess and H. Burgess (Eds.). Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2006 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-mapping>>.

On argumentation, policy making and direct democracy

- Aakhus, M. 2016. Understanding the competence involved in constructing argumentative contexts. In D. Mohammed and M. Lewinski (Eds.), *Argumentation and reasoned action: Proceedings of the 1st European Conference on Argumentation, Lisbon 2015, volume II*. London: College Publications, pp. 153-161.
- Fairclough, I., and Fairclough, N. 2012. Political discourse analysis. Abingdon (etc.): Routledge. **Chapter 1.**
- Kriesi, H. 2005. *Direct democratic choice: The Swiss experience*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. **Chapter 7.**
- Palmieri, R., and Mazzali-Lurati, S. 2016. Practical argumentation and multiple audience in policy proposals. In D. Mohammed and M. Lewinski (Eds.), *Argumentation and reasoned action: Proceedings of the 1st European Conference on Argumentation, Lisbon 2015, volume I*. London: College Publications, pp. 567-588.

On the analysis of arguments (Argumentum Model of Topics)

- Greco, S., Palmieri, R., and Rigotti, E. 2016. Institutional argumentation and conflict prevention: The case of the Swiss Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner. *Journal of Pragmatics* 105: 39-53.
- Greco Morasso, S. (2012a). Contextual frames and their argumentative implications: a case-study in media argumentation. *Discourse Studies* 14 (2): 197-216.

Additional readings may be provided during the course, also in view of students' personal interests.

Program (subject to changes).

| N. | Date | Contents |
|----|-------|---|
| 1 | 21.02 | <p>Introduction to argumentation in public communication</p> <p><i>The goal of this class is to introduce the basic and fundamental concepts of argumentation (issue, standpoint, argument) and to put them into practice by means of a first exercise.</i></p> <p><i>The aims and structure of “Argumentation in public communication I” will also be introduced and discussed.</i></p> |
| 2 | 28.02 | <p>A critical approach to argument evaluation and production</p> <p><i>In the first part of this class we discuss the philosophical foundation of argumentation as a critical approach to decision-making. Based on an ideal of <u>reasonableness</u>, argumentative discussion enhances the quality of public communication. Reflection will be aided by watching and discussing (part of) a movie that is inspiring at the level of the potential of argumentation within policy making and public debate.</i></p> <p>Stock issues</p> <p><i>The second part of the class, more practical, will introduce the analysis of stock issues for the introduction of public policy.</i></p> |
| 3 | 07.03 | <p>A model for the design of argumentation</p> <p><i>This class introduces a first model to guide the design (production) of argumentative interventions, based on ancient deliberative oratory (and in particular on the <i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>).</i></p> <p><i>Introduction of an assignment concerning the design of argumentative interventions. This assignment is based on an interesting case of public debate (partly based on social media): the #Rhodesmustfall debate.</i></p> |
| 4 | 14.03 | <p>Argumentation as the lifeblood of public organizations</p> <p><i>Having considered production or design in the preceding class, in this class we focus on the analysis and evaluation of argumentative texts in public communication. After having discussed the roles of argumentation within public institutions, the case of foundational texts of public organizations will be taken, specifying the role of means-end argumentation in public organizations.</i></p> <p>Argumentation structures</p> <p><i>The second part of this class is devoted to explaining the different types of argumentation structures.</i></p> |
| 5 | 21.03 | <p>Argumentation in conflict management: Part 1.</p> <p><i>In this class dispute mediation is introduced as a communicative practice relevant to public organizations at the formal and informal levels. An overview of Alternative Dispute Resolution practices is given. Professional opportunities and challenges for mediators and current training programs (especially in Switzerland) are discussed.</i></p> <p><i>Via the analysis of video materials, in this class we will discuss the phases of mediation (mediation cycle) as a communicative approach to conflict resolution. We will also focus on the “conflict mapping guide” as a tool for understanding conflict.</i></p> |
| 6 | 28.03 | <p><i>A first part of this class will be devoted to discussing the results of the #Rhodes must fall exercise.</i></p> <p>Argumentation in conflict management: Part 2.</p> |

In this class we discuss the different types of questions that are necessary to facilitate conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Video materials of dispute mediation will be discussed.

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| 7 | 04.04 | Seminar on discourse and argumentation in scientific communication LABCS laboratory NB: From 12:30 to 14:00 (details to be announced) |
| 8 | 11.04 | Intervention by Dr. Rudi Palmieri Lecturer, University of Liverpool Strategic communication and argumentation |
| 9 | 25.04 | Argumentation in conflict management: Part 3. This class is devoted to a role-play of dispute mediation in order to experiment with the concepts of argumentation in conflict resolution that have been introduced so far. |
| 10 | 02.05 | Argumentation and semi-direct democracy: Part 1 Via the analysis of a case of popular initiative at the Federal level, in this class we will discuss the role of argumentation in Swiss semi-direct democracy, especially in written documents. With the collaboration of G. Dillena. |
| 11 | 09.05 | Argumentation and semi-direct democracy: Part 2 During this class, a model for the analysis of arguments (Argumentum Model of Topics or AMT) will be introduced. This new theoretical and methodological tool will help us make a more profound account of the texts of popular initiatives. Recurrent arguments will be analyzed and discussed. |
| 12 | 16.05 | The AMT Model: examples of analysis In this class, we will be considering further examples of argument analysis based on the AMT model. |
| 13 | 23.05 | The AMT Model: examples of analysis In this class, we will be considering further examples of argument analysis based on the AMT model. |
| 14 | 30.05 | Discussion The final meeting will be an occasion to review the “Fil rouge” of this course, while discussing what we have learnt and what is still left open. |

References

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- Andone, C. 2013. *Argumentation in political interviews*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Barrett, M. 2013. *Interculturalism and multiculturalism: similarities and differences*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Cigada, S. 2008. *Les émotions dans le discours de la construction européenne*. Milano: ISU.
- Danesi, M., and Greco, S. 2016 (ed.). *Case studies in discourse analysis*. Munich: Lincom.
- Eemeren, F. H., van, and Grootendorst, R. 2004. *A systematic theory of argumentation: The pragma-dialectical account*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eemeren, F. H., van, 2010. *Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse: extending the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

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- Fairclough, I., and M droane, I. D. 2014. An argumentative perspective on framing. Policy conflict, deliberation and framing in the Ro ia Montan case. Paper presented at the 8th Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA), Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1-4 July, 2014.
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- Greco, S., Palmieri, R., and Rigotti, E. 2016. Institutional argumentation and conflict prevention: The case of the Swiss Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner. *Journal of Pragmatics* 105: 39–53.
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- Ihnen Jory, C. 2012. *Pragmatic argumentation in law-making debates*. Amsterdam: Sic Sat.
- Kriesi, H. 2005. *Direct democratic choice: The Swiss experience*. Lanham (etc): Lexington Books.
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- Mohammed, D. 2013. Pursuing multiple goals in European Parliamentary debates: EU immigration policies as a case in point. *Journal of Argumentation in Context* 2 (1): 47-74.
- Olmos. P. 2015. Story credibility in narrative arguments. In F. H. van Eemeren and B. Garssen (Eds.), *Reflections on theoretical issues in Argumentation Theory* (pp. 155-167). Cham (etc.): Springer.
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- Rigotti, E., and Greco Morasso, S. 2010. Comparing the Argumentum Model of Topics to other contemporary approaches to argument schemes: the procedural and material components. *Argumentation* 24 (4): 489-512.
- Schwarz, B. 2009. Argumentation and learning. In A.N. Perret-Clermont and N. Muller-Mirza (Eds.), *Argumentation and education: theoretical foundations and practices*, New York: Springer, pp. 91-126.
- Schwarz, B., and Baker, M. 2016. *Dialogue, argumentation and education. History, theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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