

Teaching notes for the course: Value-oriented argumentation – Version of 2022/07

General information

The course is originally produced in German language and is now available in a German and an English language version in order to build up competence also in mixed teams together with foreign students. It would be nice to see further translations in the future for other languages, too. In the best case, students can switch between the language versions at will. For both existing language versions, a complete Moodle course is available for import as well as all files to make the course available in other technical platforms and to edit it further as desired and adapt it to one's own purposes. For further processing a Microsoft Office package is required with the Powerpoint plugin iSpring Suite (manufacturer: iSpringsolutions) version 9 or above.

We recommend that students get a high degree of freedom in absolving the online units. To achieve this, recommendations are given for the timely processing of the units (see attached Excel). Conditions are set in the learning management system so that a unit can only be absolved once the preceding unit has been processed => sequential activation of the didactically sequenced units.

In addition voluntarily presented bonus content makes it easy to identify particularly motivated and interested students and to sensitise them specifically with regard to topic-related theses. At the same time, students can receive awards in the course by processing bonus content, which can be rewarded in the form of a small prize, an additional certificate or an award in the course (gamification approach).

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Introduction

Form of teaching

Ideally, this unit should be held in person and must include a clear description of the portfolio examination and its parts. It is recommended that this description should also be stored in the online course in order to create verifiable legal certainty for grading conditions right from the start.

For late beginners there is a version with an explanation video (optionally only available as an audio track), which makes it possible to include students who were not present at the introductory event in the course afterwards. Students with procrastination tendencies, who learn from their fellow students after the introductory course that the course cannot be completed without active virtual and physical participation, can be integrated without disadvantages until the first mandatory online group activity takes place.

Core Content & Explanations

With this introductory unit, students understand the requirements and didactics of the course - especially the online part. On the one hand, acceptance for the chosen teaching format has to be created, on the other hand the importance of orientation competence is to be internalised, which is promoted as the overriding goal of the course. In addition to an explanation of the teaching concept, the learning objectives and the type of examination, an optional identification of previous knowledge is recommended (e.g. by generating a mindmap through a collection of knowledge foundations brought along by students from other courses).

Basic knowledge of ethics

Form of teaching

This unit is produced as an online unit with audio explanations. Depending on the time budget, the content can also be partly lectured and developed in the first classroom session, with an invitation to complete the missing part online at home. The aim is to link the classroom experience with the online teaching experience as seamlessly as possible in order to increase further acceptance for the coming online units.

Core Content & Explanations

In this unit students acquire basic knowledge. They can distinguish ethics, morals and values and understand the interplay of principles, norms and values. This enables the theory-driven recognition of the social, political, legal and economic necessity of ethical considerations. On the practical side, moral language ability is thematized especially for normative unclear areas. The difference between legal and morally legitimate is discussed, as is the institutionalization of social norms based on a process of social and cultural evolution. With regard to group morality, it is made clear that there is a large number of external factors influencing moral understanding and therefore no prejudgement of individual people for morally questionable acts should be made: A morally questionable action or situation should always be seen in context.

One focus of the teaching success of this unit is the realization that one's own "moral point of view" is influenced by individual and personal values and that personal value recognition and acceptance unfolds multidimensionally. To this end, impulses from other disciplines (such as philosophy of religion, sociology of culture and anthropology of culture...) are added to the mostly known economic interpretation of values in order to achieve a sensitization for the relevance of ideological foundations for values. In principle, the focus here is on a pluralism of values that should enable students to understand and recognize values beyond their own imprint. Here teachers can set their own priorities with appropriate examples, make their own imprints transparent and encourage students to critically reflect on these imprints.

Bonus content: In the optional supplement, the major ethics schools are explained in order to make it clear to students those ethical analyses do not always lead to the same quality statements. The coreinsight here is that ethical evaluations must always include an explanation of the used school of thought in order to be comprehensible to third parties. It is also shown how applied ethics transparently integrates all essential aspects of the major schools of ethics in order to make holistic normative statements about responsibility.

Values in focus

Form of teaching

This unit is produced as a pure online unit and is provided with audio explanations. It is the most comprehensive online unit in the course and its understanding is fundamental to the further learning process. Due to the often unfamiliar topics for students at that time, a supplementary webcast or alternatively an additional flipped classroom appointment is recommended for consultation and clarification as well as in-depth explanation of individual questions.

Core Content & Explanations

The significance of values as part of responsibility in the sense of giving answers in concrete action and decision-making situations becomes clear in this unit. The online unit begins with a decision dilemma that draws students' attention to the relevance of their own value preferences for responsible decisions. The decision case arouses curiosity about the influencing factors of ethical judgements, which are presented in a model. The focus is on the value preferences of the decisive individual as a form of orientation competence for argumentation with values. Students are sensitized to become aware of their own value preferences in order to be able to use these as a broad basis for their decisions and to develop an understanding for the roots of the concept of values and their diversity.

Interpretations for the understanding of values from the economic sphere are presented, since these are often common starting points for students. It becomes clear that already in this field completely different views on values prevail. Immediately afterwards, the essential philosophical views on values are presented, which also show that diametrically opposed assessments of values also exist in this area. This should enable students to recognise rhetorical influence by third parties more easily and at the same time demonstrate the necessity of taking their own position on the validity of values in a context-related and well-founded way. An interactive overview makes clear which core positions can be chosen with which contents and corresponding consequences for argumentation: Value monism (e.g. implemented as profit maximisation) is exposed as a reductionist and extremist view, value pluralism (e.g. implemented as the quest for sustainability) is shown as a discourse-oriented and innovation-promoting view, value relativism (e.g. in the form of acceptance of human rights violations in foreign countries) is explained as egalitarian tolerance, which no longer permits meaningful normative control and can turn into acceptance for the suffering of others. The explanation of these essential schools of thought on value orientation makes it clear to the students that different assessments of the validity of values prevail in different contexts, depending on the individually taken philosophical opinion.

Of great importance is the insight that values can only serve as orientation as a coherent system and with a normative reconnection that legitimizes them. It is shown that the acceptance of objective values in a group entails functions that can make a significant contribution to the successful design of organisations. Particularly for the functions of values, the flipped classroom approach allows many practical examples from personal experience to be explained, which can make the mode of operation of the functions comprehensible. The cycle in which standards develop from values and values are

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derived from standards is shown and examples of widely accepted valid standards are introduced. Students are thus enabled to assess value systems on the basis of these standards. In addition, they should become normatively capable of speaking for their own ideas by finding and articulating the reconnection of values in the presented norms. Students' individual voice performance is indispensable for the acquisition of competence and will be practiced in the course.

Bonus content: In the optional supplement, the simplification of ethics of economics reduced to utilitarianism are uncovered as monism of values and illustrated with a few examples. Profit maximization is questioned massively. The short unit shows the students the necessity of their own positioning. Ludwig Erhard's discussion of the ranking of values in his book "Wohlstand für Alle" (Prosperity for All) illustrates that the pursuit of profit, especially in a social market economy, cannot be conveyed as a value-monistic optimum, but only represents one value among many to be considered. Ludwig Erhard was one of the fathers of the Social Market Economy – "Soziale Marktwirtschaft". As an example, the value-pluralistic sustainability paradigm with the concept of the Triple Bottom Line is shown and the ideological foundation of Ludwig Erhard's value ranking is made visible.

Value dynamics and pluralism

Form of teaching

The unit is intended as a face-to-face event in order to clarify open points from the intensive online phase and to promote topic-related face-to-face interaction among students as well. This serves the further online interaction of the students in the following unit.

Core Content & Explanations

Depending on the time available (e.g. if the time budget is > 120 minutes), the bonus content from basic ethics knowledge can be briefly presented and, if necessary, deepened with examples in order to develop a common understanding of aspects of applied responsibility ethics for all course participants. An interactive form of teaching with the active involvement of the students who have completed the bonus unit is recommended here. As a practical question, the ethical evaluation of lying is discussed.

After clarifying open questions from the previous units, the fixation of topics to be reflected on together is on the agenda. The topics are relevant for the later development of an individual value-oriented argumentation by the students and for the graded group discussions. Depending on the number of students, several topics can be selected here to which students assign themselves. Maximum freedom in the choice of topics makes it possible to find subject areas in which the students are highly intrinsically motivated to continue working. Alternatively, it is also possible to work with pre-selected topics that fit in with a professionally specified course program. In any case, it is important to give students freedom in their choice of topics. A critical group size of at least 12-24 students per topic should not be undercut, since in the further course of each topic controversial contents are to be compiled collaboratively and at the end of the course a graded group discussion in appropriate size has to take place. Using the World Values Survey (WVS) as an example, the following discussion will focus on the globally predominant pluralism of values and the dynamics of values over time. The culture maps by Ronald Inglehart & Christian Welzel are introduced as one attempt (among many!) to categorize values. In a playful and explorative way, the class works out together which examples can be found for the respective categories. Immediately afterwards, a joint attempt will be made in the discourse to locate the countries of the present nationalities and the following countries on the still empty cultural map: Russia, China, Japan, Germany, Sweden, USA, Ireland, Turkey, Zimbabwe. A comparison is then made online directly on the website of the World Values Survey. Questions about the WVS will be asked at this point at the latest, which will be answered directly by the teacher and/or researched jointly directly on the WVS-website. The change in the cultural maps over time as an empirical illustration of the historically predominant value change is shown by means of the videos available online. Some important interrelations will be discussed (see slides) in order to clarify that the change of value systems and the global plurality of these value systems are a matter of course from an empirical perspective. It is therefore necessary to explore these systems and anticipate their change, as well as to develop one's own positions on change and one's own value context. The practical use of the WVS data takes place through the tasks set out in the slide set. Depending on the time budget, these can be started in small groups or jointly directly in the classroom event and can be completed independently at home as a task until the next classroom unit. In this way the students get to know a practical tool for learning to assess value issues internationally for various applications.

What are YOUR values?!

Form of teaching

Collaborative online phase with a teacher-supplied online discussion forum and a wiki for the collaborative generation of a value list for each topic. Two weeks are planned for this task, the teacher will at best contribute to the discussion in an activating way.

Core Content & Explanations

In this part, a value discussion has to take place online in a forum and a topic-related value portfolio has to be created from the discussion together in the Wiki. The discussion in the forum about the (own) group topic will contain value statements, which will finally be brought together for each topic to a value portfolio in the form of a wiki. For each value found, at best a separate wiki page is used to explain why this value is relevant for the case study and what it actually means. The teacher is challenged here to give an example for each case. In the face-to-face event following the online phase, the results will continue to be worked on in the plenum.

Grounding of values

Form of teaching

Online with additional optional webcast to clarify open questions.

Core Content & Explanations

This unit looks at an essential source of values, morals and ethics in a self-learning package and shows how this source can be described and understood: Worldviews calibrate the individual value compass and the understanding of ethics of individuals, but are hardly made aware or even actively reflected. With James W. Sire's definition and analysis questions, Worldview is clarified in this unit as an ethical basis and the connection to behavioural economics is shown. The online unit shows three examples of common generic worldviews (naturalism or secular humanism, Christian theism and pantheistic monism on a Hindu-Buddhist basis) and clarifies that in practice worldviews are mostly mixtures of generic descriptions. Using two examples from students, course participants can try to identify elements of generic worldviews in students' statements. The aim is to develop an understanding of perspectives that are currently incompatible with one's own ideas in order to promote acceptance of pluralism and diversity.

Since the reflection of fundamental philosophical questions of life is a novelty for most students, they are confronted with these questions online for the first time - without open discourse in the plenum of a classroom event. Experience shows that this prior sensitisation allows further treatment in a subsequent face-to-face event with considerably fewer prejudices and preconceptions.

Bonus content: Finally, as a voluntary task, a personal reflection on the own worldview is offered in order to learn more about one's own foundation of values and to reflect on it.

Utilization of values

Form of teaching

Presence event with 50% discourse on pluralistic understanding of values and 50% knowledge transfer.

Core Content & Explanations

At the beginning of the event, the online collaboratively created value list is called up and the values are questioned, explained and discussed with their ranking. The objective is to address different views on values and to establish a link to widely recognised standards. In particular, the constitution of the respective federal state and the countries' constitution are suitable for this purpose, as the teaching staff is sworn in and thus a normative commitment to it can become visible. In addition, the introduction of extracts of the UN Charter of Human Rights is recommended, as it will be applied in the course later on. It becomes clear that the use of values in argumentation requires decisions and a commitment to their grounding. The ability of the normative grounding of values in connection with a personal commitment to certain catalogues of norms increases the depth of justification of individual values later on. In the concluding discussion of values as an examination achievement, one's own research is visibly operationalised beyond the teaching input and the understanding developed from it.

In the discourse, reason and rationality are used to justify individual values in the context of the discussion topic. Besides the reference to Kant's categorical imperative as an example of duty ethics (reference to the bonus knowledge unit), the question of a definition of rationality has to be posed and discussed together. It is worked out that the prevailing understanding of rationality depends on the context and composition of the group determining it, as well as on its educational backgrounds, objectives, resources and power relations and ideological imprints. Rationality is understood sociologically as a socially constructed element - and not as a purely mathematically definable logic. Different understandings of rationality in organizations go hand in hand with different constructions of meaning. In this way, different values become systemically understandable and values become clear as a connecting element between these constructions of meaning and rationalities. Conflicting constructions of meaning and rationalities are discussed on the basis of exemplary social subsystems (it is recommended to start with the economy and then introduce further subsystems - e.g. art, education, law, politics, technology, etc.).

The overriding didactic goal is to develop an understanding for the existence of different constructions of meaning and to show that shared values can act as mediators and connectors (Jürgen Habermas even speaks of "glue") between different understandings of rationality. In the second part of this thematic unit, which will follow later, it will be shown how corresponding tensions can be used and resolved in a targeted manner using management methods.

Arguing with values - the theory

Form of teaching

Presence and/or online (a reproduced package is available)

Core Content & Explanations

At the beginning there is a link to worldview analysis and clarification of questions about the own worldview analysis, depending on the group requirements. Depending on the time available, the sociological concept of social plausibility structures can be explained on the basis of a query on Sire's worldview analysis questions. As a rule, students do not always publicly answer the question of the origin of the cosmos with their currently prevailing thoughts and according to their individual spirituality, but rather retreat to the naturalistic position of a random big bang as the origin of all being. By comparing the answers given publicly and the answers made visible with a hidden card query, it is possible to make visible different explanatory patterns that would not have come to light due to the social plausibility structure ruling the public query. The aim of the exercise is to make preconceptions and group dynamics tangible and to sensitise students to verbalise their own ideas even if they do not correspond to the group-related mainstream. This also applies to respect for the ideas of minorities, which are not shared by the majority. Especially in situations in which a waking conscience urges contradiction, this experience can awaken courage to express one's own concerns and a dissenting opinion on the "moral point of view".

How helpful a professional value-oriented argumentation can be in case of value differences is again clarified and then the scheme for a high-quality value argumentation is explained in detail. For the individual steps we recommend examples (good and bad practice) from one's own professional experience and the reference to the available tools, which are also very easy to use in the later professional context. It should be made clear that the argumentation of values can only be internalised and practiced through application. It is important to refer to the necessary steps of action after the creation of a value argumentation in the practical context in order to strengthen the credibility and integrity of the arguer in the long term.

Arguing with values – the practice

Form of teaching

Online.

Core Content & Explanations

The theoretically explained value argumentation scheme is brought to life by means of a step-by-step case study from loan sales. The online unit guides in detail through each step, shows examples and finally leads to a fully elaborated value-oriented argumentation based on a concrete ethical question of the loan sales case. Now at the latest, the students are made aware of the simple procedure, while important quality features become visible on the basis of the fully developed value-oriented model argumentation of the loan sales case.

Immediately after the guided tour through the case study, the students are required to draw up their own complete value-oriented argumentation on their own group topic (as jointly fixed at the beginning in the unit "Value dynamics and pluralism"). Through the input of the discussion forum and the values wiki as well as the normative foundations of values, all necessary resources are available and have already been addressed deep enough. After the upload of their own value-oriented argumentation, a student evaluation phase (peer review) takes place in which the students evaluate each other on the basis of clearly defined and provided quality characteristics. In this way, the quality characteristics and the argumentation generation scheme are again repeated and internalised. The students receive appropriate feedback from their fellow students, which they can use to improve their own argumentation. Only after this phase will the individual value-oriented argumentations be submitted by the students for grading. At this point, competence building has already progressed well with active participation in all tasks, so that as a rule the arguments given are of high quality and a very good basis has been laid for verbalising the contents in the discourse talks with fellow students as a further part of the competence-building portfolio assessment.

Managing with values

Form of teaching

Classroom teaching with 50% knowledge transfer and 50% discourse on selected value conflicts.

Core Content & Explanations

The unit follows on from "Utilization of values" and "Grounding of values" and addresses the professional handling of conflicts of values in organizations. After a short repetition of the illustrated diversity of worldviews, the re-entry into multirational management takes place through the repetition of the emergence of different constructions of meaning. In the following, the objectives and strengths of multirational management with values are presented and explained. The teacher shows the developmental stages of a successful multirational management in a stylized way and deals with the implementation practice (preferably based on an example from his own professional biography).

Subsequently, the handling of value conflicts in multirational management is discussed on the basis of practice. It is a good idea here to use one's own university as a concrete example of a highly multirational organization, to work out relevant social reference systems (e.g. with stakeholder analysis), to describe their specific construction logics and to examine prevailing value conflicts within the organization (e.g. administrative requirements vs. freedom of teaching) for possible solutions to shared values.

Analyzing responsibility (OPTIONAL)

Form of teaching

Presence with online supplementation.

Core Content & Explanations

Central to this unit is the development of a basic understanding for the analysis of responsibility. It represents a link to other ethics related classes and courses at the university or faculty (e.g. CSR, compliance, sustainability management and others). On the basis of the "cloverleaf of responsibility", corporate responsibility is described interactively with the students. The normativity required to determine the content of corporate responsibility is exemplified. This is done either in the form of a guest lecture on CSR activities of the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce or by referring to the (only in German language available) online supplement at the Virtual University of Bavaria: Theoretical unit "Corporate Responsibility and Honourable Businessmen" at the [Business Ethics Case Studies Course](#).

Human rights as a foundation of values

Form of teaching

Presence, Flipped Classroom with case study preparation in advance.

Core Content & Explanations

The teaching objective for this unit is to internalize human rights as a value basis for one's own argumentation. The students prepare a case study about human rights violations (e.g. the Virtual University of Bavaria "Universalism vs. Relativism: Human rights in the example of the "Gao Feng" case in the [Business Ethics Case Studies Course](#) – available only in German language). On the basis of this case study, the flipped classroom approach makes it clear that supposed neutrality or restrained indecision in normative core issues such as the observance of human rights are not a viable option for action. On the basis of the human rights article presented in the case, an overview of the entire contents of the UN Human Rights Charter will be compiled and the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights will be presented (<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/2>). Depending on the length of the lecture unit as a double hour, Germany's position is clarified by the National Action Plan (NAP) for Business and Human Rights of the Federal Government and its current monitoring is presented (<https://www.csr-in-deutschland.de>) and the counterparts of the articles in the Bavarian Constitution (or that of another suitable federal state). Afterwards group work takes place, in which students identify consistent value statements and norms in the Charter of Human Rights and the selected Constitution and then present them to the plenary.

Value discourse talks & individual presentations

Form of teaching

Oral part of the examination in attendance. Alternative by Short individual Videopresentations.

Core Content & Explanations

The examination performance of the discourse discussions is a targeted part of competence building. The students present their individually preferred values on the group topic in a form of their own choice. This makes it clear what understanding they have of these values as a system and their normative connection as well as the depth to which they can define the selected values. In groups of a maximum of twelve students, a value discourse discussion of about one hour on the group topic will then be held, which will reveal the quality with which the students can argue individually (see the evaluation scheme proposal in attached Excel document). At the beginning, this discussion starts often prearranged, but experience shows that it becomes more and more natural and intensive in the course of time. At best, the students experience their own acquired competence live in action and prove their ability to represent their normative ideas at a high level. Students who are not visible enough in the discussion can be activated in the last quarter by intervention of the teacher, in which individual subject questions are specifically addressed to individual students.