# Program Fall Semester 2021

Doctoral Program: Argumentation in Professional Practice
Doctoral Program: Managing Languages, Arguments and Narratives in the Datafied Society

| Date | Teacher | Mode | Topic | ECTS |
|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| November 4, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00<br>November 5, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00 | Elena Musi | Live, at USI | Critical thinking in the datafied society: a human computer interaction approach | 1.5 |
| November 8, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00 | Elena Musi | Live, at USI | Viral arguments and narratives in the post-truth world | 1 |
| December 1, 13.30-17.30<br>December 2, 9.00-12.00 / 13.30-16.30<br>December 3, 9.00-12.00 / 13.30-16.30 | Rudi Palmieri | Live, at USI | Rhetorical argumentation in society | 1.5 |
| December 7, 09.00-12.00 | Alice Delorme | Online | AI and language: What neural machine translation teaches us about communicating through algorithms | 1 |
| December 14, 14.00-17.00<br>December 21, 14.00-17.00 | Danae Perez Inofuentes | Online | Academic writing for PhD students | 1 |
| December 22, 15.00-17.00 / followed by an Apéro | n/a | Live, at ZHAW | Closing Event of PhD program Argumentation in Professional Practice (2017-2021) | n/a |

# Critical thinking in the datafied society: a human computer interaction approach

**ECTS:** 1.5

**Dates:**
- 4 November, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00
- 5 November, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00

**Format:** the course is articulated into two main live sessions. Each session features 2 hrs lectures and 4 hrs seminars where guided activities, group and individual work will be alternated.

**Instructor:** Dr. Elena Musi, University of Liverpool, Elena.Musi@liverpool.ac.uk

**Topic, focus:**
This course addresses the role that human computer interaction can play in advancing public critical thinking. Since the beginning of the Artificial Intelligence era, AI efforts have been classified into two major buckets: strong (general) AI that focuses on building intelligence able to handle any task across domains as the human brain and weak (narrow AI) that is meant to focus on a specific problem-solving reinforcing human skills. The ability to reason through conversation has been considered as one of the main requirements for general AI. But is a machine who is able to perform a human-like conversation capable of thinking like a human? Adopting a conception of AI as ancillary to humans, we explore a complementary issue: can arguing with a machine help humans develop better critical thinking skills? And if so, why and how? To tackle such questions, in the first session you will be provided with an overview of human-computer interaction systems that have so far been developed by the argumentation mining community and you will directly engage with some of them to critically assess their functionalities. In the second session you will be introduced to main notions of chatbot design and actively participate in the development of a "reason checking" chatbot. Particular attention will be devoted to natural language processing methodologies involved as well as human computer interaction dialogical principles with the goal to enucleate what argumentative features shall be implemented to reduce polarization and advance reasonableness across discussants in the public sphere.

**Main value added from a theoretical and methodological perspective:**
The course will demonstrate how discourse analytic tools drawn from Argumentation Theory and Informal Logic can be used to develop conversational agents. From a methodological viewpoint the approaches presented include corpus analysis and chatbot design.

**Main value added from a practical perspective:**
The seminar is meant to provide students with empirical skills to advance dialogue templates of conversational agents aimed at prompting critical thinking.

**Learning objective: knowledge**. After this course, participants know how to evaluate argumentative features in a human-computer interaction environment.

**Learning objective: skills, practices**. After this course, participants can design dialogue templates amenable to an innovative human-computer interaction environment.

**Learning objective: researcher attitudes.** In this course, participants sharpen their critical thinking skills and design thinking skills. They form attitudes on the dissemination and vulgarization of research results.

**Evaluation:** Attendance to the whole seminar is required in order to obtain credits. The course will involve the design of HCI dialogue templates which will be assessed with a pass/ fail evaluation.

# Viral arguments and narratives in the post-truth world

**ECTS:** 1

**Date:** 8 November, 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-17.00

**Format:** the course is organized as a live seminar during which short lectures are alternated to group discussions and activities.

**Instructor:** Dr. Elena Musi, University of Liverpool, Elena.Musi@liverpool.ac.uk

**Topic, focus:**
The course focuses on the phenomenon of information virality within and across digital media.
Understanding what makes a message viral is paramount for a variety of stakeholders ranging from politicians (e.g propaganda) to communication gatekeepers at large (e.g. crisis communication) as well as companies (e.g. marketing, advertisements). However, the complexity of the phenomenon makes this endeavor a very challenging task: is virality a synonym of popularity? What's the role played by multimodal content in determining the life cycle of information? Does a message need to be persuasive in order to become viral? How long does virality last? During the course we will tackle such questions adopting an argumentative perspective: despite the use of the epidemic metaphor, information virality does, in fact, have to do with human factors such as intentionality that cannot be modelled without a solid conceptual framework. Through an active learning approach, you will understand how to identify and analyze viral arguments across contexts and digital platforms.

**Main value added from a theoretical and methodological perspective:**
The seminar will demonstrate how conceptual tools from Rhetorics, Argumentation Theory and Media Literacy can be used to investigate and predict information virality. From a methodological viewpoint the approaches presented include social network and corpus analysis (both quantitative and qualitative).

**Main value added from a practical perspective:**
The seminar offers conceptual and empirical means to examine aspects that underlie the life cycle of information with the goal of teaching students tools to mitigate the spread of dangerous information as well as to design messages able to reach a wide audience in a fast-paced scenario.

**Learning objective: knowledge**. After this course, participants know how to analyze and identify information features which make a message viral.

**Learning objective: skills, practices**. After this course, participants are skilled in learning how to leverage natural language processing fueled softwares to analyze information virality tailored to different digital platforms' affordances.

**Learning objective: researcher attitudes.** In this course, participants sharpen their critical thinking skills and their design thinking skills. They form attitudes on the dissemination and vulgarization of research results.

**Evaluation:** Attendance to the seminar is required in order to obtain credits. The course will involve the elaboration of persuasive and/or viral messages in a fictional environment  which will be assessed with a pass/ fail evaluation.

# Rhetorical argumentation in society

**Instructor**: Dr. Rudi Palmieri, University of Liverpool, palmieri@liv.ac.uk

**ECTS**: 1.5

**Dates:**
- 1 December, 13.30-17.30
- 2 December, 9.00-12.00 / 13.30-16.30
- 3 December, 9.00-12.00 / 13.30-16.30

**Course aims and focus**
This course aims at providing students with advanced knowledge in rhetorical argumentation theory. In line with Aristotle's rhetorical theory and other contemporary academic reflections (e.g., Green, 2004; Jacobs, 2006; Garsten, 2009; van Eemeren, 2010), the course starts from an optimistic view of communicative persuasion, based on the strategic and contextualized combination of reasonableness and effectiveness. Following this line of thought, the course will focus on the relationship between reason, persuasion and trust to bring to light not only the ethical but also the strategic value of reasonable argumentation. Through case studies and examples, students will familiarize themselves with analytic concepts and tools that help identify, reconstruct and critically assess argumentative strategies in different social contexts. A small group work will give students the opportunity to directly engage with the theories introduced in the course and to apply the analytic instruments to a real case of rhetorical argumentation.

The following is an indicative syllabus of the course:

1. Rhetorical argumentation in society: introduction
   (i). Some keywords to start with: persuasion, reason, trust and democracy.
   (ii). Rhetorical argumentation: from the Greek polis to social media.
   (iii). The study of rhetorical argumentation: key authors and historical remarks.
2. Rhetorical argumentation: analysis and evaluation
   (i). What is argumentation?
   (ii). The dialectical and the rhetorical dimensions
   (iii). Analysing argumentation 1/2: the dialectical level (critical discussion, analytic overview, pro and counter-arguments)
   (iv). Analysing argumentation 2/2: the inferential level.
   (v). Evaluating argumentation: detecting fallacies with critical questions
3. Argumentative strategies
   (i). Context and rhetorical situations
   (ii). Multiple audiences as text stakeholders
   (iii). Reconstructing argumentative strategies in rhetorical situations with multiple audiences
4. Student group work: case study analysis and presentation.

**Main value added from a theoretical and methodological perspective:**
Students will gain advanced knowledge of key theories underlying the study of rhetorical argumentation, which will constitute a crucial basis for future courses in the

doctoral schools. Methodologically, the course introduces students to fundamental analytic instruments for the reconstruction and evaluation of rhetorical argumentation in context.

**Main value added from a practical perspective:**
Students will enhance their ability to critically scrutinize rhetorical argumentation discourses and practices in societal contexts. The theories and methods learnt in this course will be directly relevant for their doctoral dissertation.

**Learning objective: knowledge**. Gaining critical understanding of the role of rhetorical argumentation in society and the importance of argumentation for sustainable persuasion. Learning how to identify, reconstruct and evaluate argumentative strategies in context.

**Learning objective: skills, practices**. Learning how to analytically reconstruct and critically assess arguments in different social contexts. Learning how to work in a team towards a common project.

**Learning objective: researcher attitudes.** Critical thinking, discourse analysis, team work, presentation skills.

**Evaluation:** Attendance to the whole course is required in order to obtain full credits. The final group work will be assessed with a pass/ fail evaluation.

**Bio notes/ Profiles**
**Rudi Palmieri** (PhD in Communication, USI Lugano) is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Communication at the University of Liverpool (UK) where he founded and currently leads an MSc Programme in Strategic Communication. His main research interest is the analysis of argumentation as a trust-oriented rhetorical activity in different social contexts, particularly business communication contexts such as finance, crisis management and entrepreneurship. He is the author of "Corporate Argumentation in Takeover Bids" (2014, John Benjamins) and of several peer-reviewed articles in top international journals in argumentation and (strategic) communication studies.

**Readings**
Bitzer, L. 1968. The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1: 1–14.
Eemeren, F. H. van & Grootendorst, R. (2004) *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation.* 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.
Eemeren, F.H. van et al. (2014) *Handbook of Argumentation Theory.* Dordrecht, Springer.
Fuoli, M., & Paradis, C. 2014. A model of trust-repair discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 74, 52-69.
Garsten, B. (2009). *Saving persuasion*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
Green, S.E. (2004). A rhetorical theory of diffusion. *Academy of Management Review.* 29(4): 653-659.
Pinto, R. C. (2001) *Argument, inference and dialectic: Collected papers on informal logic*. Dordrecht, Kluwer.

Rigotti, E. & Greco Morasso, S. (2009) Argumentation as an Object of Interest and as a Social and Cultural Resource. In: Muller-Mirza, N. & Perret-Clermont, A.-N. (eds.) *Argumentation and Education*. New York, Springer, pp. 9-66.

Palmieri, R. (2014). *Argumentation in Takeover Bids*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Palmieri, R., & Mazzali-Lurati, S. (2016). Multiple audiences as text stakeholders. A conceptual framework for analysing complex rhetorical situations. *Argumentation*, 30(4), 467-499.

Palmieri, R., & Musi, E. (2020). Trust-Repair Strategies in Crisis Rhetorical (Sub-) Arenas: An Argumentative Perspective. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1-22.

Rigotti, E., & Greco, S. (2018). *Inference in argumentation: A topics-based approach to argument schemes* (Vol. 34). Springer, Chapter 6. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-04568-5

Rigotti, E. & A. Rocci. 2006. Towards a definition of communication context. *Studies in Communication Sciences* 6(2): 155–180.

Walton, D. N (2006/2013). *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walton, D. N., Reed, C. & Macagno, F. (2008) *Argumentation Schemes*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

# AI and language: What neural machine translation teaches us about communicating through algorithms

**ECTS**: 1

**Date**: 7 December, 09.00-12.00

**Instructor**: Dr. Alice Delorme Benites, Institute of translation and Interpreting, Zurich university of Applied Sciences, delr@zhaw.ch

(The seminar is expected to take place online via Ms Teams. The event will have a duration of about 3 hours, including discussion/ activities/ demos)

**Topic, focus:**
The seminar introduces the issues raised by the advent of neural machine translation for public and private communication. In 2016, neural machine translation (NMT) was launched by Google and DeepL and quickly supplanted its predecessor, statistical machine translation. NMT produced far more fluent texts and has been improving in quality ever since. It also radically changed the practices of multilingual communication, since it is used by almost everybody, whereas statistical machine translators were mostly used by translation professionals only. This change of paradigm, accelerated by the globalization of information and the rise of social media, raises several questions. Because it is used in a wide range of situations and for many different purposes, NMT has placed artificial intelligence (AI) in a key position within the communication process – sometimes very openly and sometimes in such a way that text recipients are not even aware of it. Yet, while many voices express their concern about the omnipresence of algorithms in other contexts (Google searches, cookies and privacy settings when visiting webpages, communication apps such as WhatsApp), most users tend to trust NMT systems with their data and with the output they produce. However, NMT systems are still far from flawless: for example, like any AI, they are prone to algorithmic bias. This workshop will show the impact of translation (human and machine) on discourse and then move on to the current practices around NMT, before addressing the main issues that NMT still holds for language and communication (biases, *machine-translationese*, priming, vocabulary impoverishment).

**Main value added from a theoretical and methodological perspective:**
From a theoretical perspective, the seminar will demonstrate how AI is now intricately part of today's online communication and should be included in the conceptualization of communication processes wherever relevant. From a methodological viewpoint, possible approaches to tackle these questions are corpus studies, experimental settings and surveys. Examples of such approaches will be presented during the seminar.

**Main value added from a practical perspective:**
The seminar offers an overview of the current issues linked to the active use of NMT and the unaware consumption of machine translated communicative contents. This is a starting point for the development of machine translation literacy, as a subset of digital literacy, which can then be further transmitted to various audiences within educational interventions.

**Learning objective: knowledge**. Participants understand the role and the pitfalls of AI (here neural machine translation) in the context of globalized and digitalized communication.

**Learning objective: skills, practices**. Participants learn how to work with neural machine translation as an omnipresent AI technology and minimize the risks linked to a uninformed and unreflected use.

**Learning objective: researcher attitudes.** Participants develop machine translation literacy, especially for research design: they take into account the central role of AI in the modelization of communication processes.

**Evaluation:** Full attendance is required in order to obtain credits. Each seminar will involve an in-course activity which will be assessed with a pass/ fail evaluation.

**Bio notes/ Profile**

**Alice Delorme Benites.** I am a lecturer in Translation and Applied linguistics. I hold a PhD in German linguistics from the university of Siegen (Germany) and I have been working as a freelance translator for many years. My research focusses on the effects and implications of neural machine translation technologies (e.g. DeepL, Google Translate) on multilingual communication and discourses. I have a special interest in exploring the effects of machine translation on textual features from the perspective of Grammar Construction, a linguistic theoretical approach that includes textual and syntactical structures in the semantic and pragmatic considerations. My latest projects focus on the implications of machine translation for academic texts (e.g. in light of Swales' CARS model) and on the use and perceptions of machine translation in Swiss universities.

# Academic writing for PhD students

**ECTS**: 1

**Dates:**
- 14 December, 14.00-17.00
- 21 December, 14.00-17.00

**Format:** The course will be held online via MS Teams.

**Instructor:** Dr. Danae Perez (ZHAW Institute of Language Competence), peze@zhaw.ch

**Focus:** One central academic skill is the successful diffusion of one's own research, both at conferences and via academic publishing outlets. These platforms require the successful submission of written proposals or articles to an evaluation committee. The aim of this two-day course is to give students the tools to successfully write their research results in a format that will convince evaluation committees. They will learn three main skills: a) the use of academic language – how is the academic style different from other genres? b) abstract writing – how to write an abstract that will be accepted for a conference presentation; c) paper structuring – how to structure a paper and avoid the pitfalls that lead to paper rejection. The language of instruction is English.

**Main value added from a methodological perspective:**
The course is designed to be highly interactive with hands-on examples from real academic sources. The students will also work on their own material and assess each other's work.

**Main value added from a practical perspective:**
The seminar focuses on practical skills and aims at equipping students with the skills to write successful abstracts and scientific papers in English.

**Learning objective: knowledge**. A better understanding of the particularities of academic language and the evaluation process of academic outlets.

**Learning objective: skills, practices**. Students will learn how to efficiently structure their content and write in academic style with confidence.

**Learning objective: researcher attitudes.** Critical thinking, content strategy, self-confidence.

**Evaluation:** Both sessions involve in-course activities as well as homework. Full attendance and fulfillment of activities are required in order to obtain the credits. Pass/fail will depend on whether the homework is submitted in time and according to the requirements.

**Bio notes Danae Perez**. Dr. Danae Perez is lecturer in multilingual communication at ZHAW. She has extensive experience in both research as well as teaching at the tertiary level. Her research on the evolution of world languages has been published with renowned international publishers and in different formats, including a monograph and three journal articles. Danae Perez has given over 40 conference talks and won

an award for her paper at the *International Association of World Englishes* conference in 2013. She has been invited to give talks at Cambridge, LMU Munich, and the CNRS in Paris, among many others.