



KARL SCHLECHT
STIFTUNG



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT
HALLE-WITTENBERG



Summer School: Normative Arguments and Practical Implications

30 August - 3 September 2026 - Wittenberg, Germany

The Spring School is part of the Doctoral Academy that is hosted by the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics and the Friede Springer Chair of Business Ethics and Management Accounting at Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. It is generously funded by the Karl Schlecht Foundation. More information: <https://doctoral-academy.de>

Course Description

Research in business ethics grapples with the challenge of connecting rigorous normative reasoning to pressing real-world problems such as artificial intelligence, leadership, and political corporate responsibility in organizations. This requires not only well-developed normative arguments, but also a clear understanding of normative methods, the role of empirical insights, and the pathways through which ethical research can inform practice.

The Summer School offers doctoral researchers a structured learning journey that moves from foundational questions to applied contexts. It begins by introducing the building blocks of normative argumentation and key philosophical methods, such as reflective equilibrium, conceptual analysis and the practical syllogism. Building on this foundation, participants engage with current debates in areas including AI ethics, leadership ethics, and political corporate responsibility, examining how normative reasoning operates in complex, interdisciplinary settings. The program also includes a discussion about how normative research can be translated into organizational practice.

Participants also have the opportunity to present a current research project and receive constructive feedback from both peers and distinguished scholars. This session is designed as a supportive space to discuss work in progress, refine research questions, and gain diverse perspectives across disciplines.

Through a combination of lectures, interactive workshops, and peer exchange, participants develop the ability to articulate and justify their normative assumptions, position their work within broader ethical debates, and present their research in ways that resonate beyond disciplinary boundaries. The Summer School thus equips early-career scholars with both conceptual rigor and practical skills to advance impactful research in business ethics and related fields.

Preliminary Schedule (Open to Change)

Sunday (30/08/2026)	
16:00 - 18:00	Welcome & Get to Know Each Other
18:30 - open end	Joint Dinner

Monday (31/08/2026)	
08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 12:00	<p>Lecture: What Is a Normative Argument? Moral Reasoning & Empirical Evidence (Lisa Schmalzried)</p> <p><i>Introduction to the structure of normative arguments and discussion about how empirical insights can inform ethical reasoning</i></p>
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:30	<p>Research Project Presentations of Participants (voluntary)</p> <p><i>Participants present current research projects, each 20 min</i></p>
16:00 - 18:00	<p>Lecture: Normative Methods: Reflective Equilibrium and Conceptual Analysis (tbd)</p> <p><i>Introduction to core philosophical methods for normative inquiry, focusing on reflective equilibrium and conceptual analysis as tools for rigorous ethical reasoning</i></p>
18:30 - open end	Dinner (self-organized)

Tuesday (01/09/2026)	
08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 12:00	<p>Lecture: Normative Business Ethics and Ordonomic Reasoning (Ingo Pies)</p> <p><i>Introduction to Karl Homann's ordonomic approach, focusing on practical syllogism, rule orientation, and how institutional design strengthens normative arguments</i></p>
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00- 15:30	<p>Research Project Presentations of Participants (voluntary)</p> <p><i>Participants present current research projects, each 20 min</i></p>

16:00 - 17:00	<p>Online Roundtable: Publishing Normative Work in Business Ethics Journals (tbd)</p> <p><i>Editors and reviewers from leading journals discuss what makes normative research publishable, common pitfalls in peer review, and how to position ethical arguments for interdisciplinary audiences</i></p>
18:30 - 20:00	Dinner (self-organized)
20:00 - open end	Online Fireside Chat: Communicating Research Beyond Academia

Wednesday (02/09/2026)	
08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 12:00	<p>Lecture: Leadership Ethics and New Forms of Organizing (tbd)</p> <p><i>Exploring ethical leadership</i></p>
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:00	<p>Research Project Presentations of Participants (voluntary)</p> <p><i>Participants present current research projects, each 20 min</i></p>
15:30 - 18:00	Company visit to TESVOLT Headquarter: Insight into lived holacracy
18:30 - open end	Joint Dinner & Charles Bar

Thursday (03/09/2026)	
08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 12:00	<p>Lecture: AI Ethics: Normative Principles, Risks, and Responsible Design (tbd)</p> <p><i>How to obtain and communicate results to different audiences</i></p>
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break



14:00 - 16:30	Lecture: Political Corporate Responsibility: Beyond Market Boundaries (tbd) <i>Exploring the normative foundations of corporate political engagement</i>
16:30 - 17:00	Farewell

Credits & Examination

The course corresponds to a scope of 6 ECTS/LP. Participants will receive their credits + certification after submitting (and passing) a short research assignment. More details will be shared during the school.

Participation without examination (and consequently, without receiving credits) is possible.

Costs & Application

Early-Bird rate (€100) is available for applications submitted by June 26, 2026 (afterwards, standard fee: €150). We accept **max. 20 participants** and will send out acceptance letters on a rolling basis so our spots may fill out soon!

Apply here: <https://survey.ethicalcloud.de/index.php/734648?lang=en>

More information: <https://doctoral-academy.de>

Contact

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