

Call for Abstracts

Workshop "Knowing by Example"

October 8–9, 2026 (Thursday–Friday), University of Technology Nuremberg (UTN)

Concept: This workshop starts from the premise that exemplarity constitutes a distinct mode of knowledge organization. Rather than merely illustrating deductive arguments, examples often generate epistemic force in their own right: they organize knowledge, establish norms, and persuade without relying on formally connected syllogistic reasoning. How do examples generate and communicate knowledge rather than simply illustrate it? In what ways do exemplary cases argue, demonstrate, or acquire epistemic authority in the absence of formal proof?

Constitutive of exemplarity is the productive tension between the singular case and the general concept it is meant to illuminate. How do singular examples produce general or normative force? Through which narrative, rhetorical, or conceptual mechanisms do individual cases support broader claims while preserving their specificity? In mediating between observation and norm, experience and theory, narrative and proof, examples frequently precede, accompany, or even substitute for abstraction and systematic explanation.

Focusing on ancient, medieval, and early modern materials across diverse cultural traditions, the workshop investigates how examples achieve epistemic force within different knowledge cultures. It asks how exemplary reasoning stabilizes or challenges knowledge claims, structures judgment and comparison, and shapes epistemic communities across time and cultural boundaries. How do examples foster shared modes of reasoning? How do they connect communities and stimulate further inquiry—whether through paradigmatic cases, authoritative repertoires such as the Greek *paradeigma* and Roman *exemplum*, or through hypothetical and thought examples that function as heuristics for theory formation?

Conceived as a concept-focused laboratory within the research series *Examples: Knowledge, Communities, Fictionality*, organized by the Early Modern and Classics Labs at the University of Technology Nuremberg (UTN), the workshop forms part of a broader program that includes weekly guest lectures under the guiding question *How Examples Shape Knowledge* and the international conference *Traveling Examples: Epistemics and Dynamics of Exemplarity*.

The workshop combines participants' contributions (ca. 20 minutes) — including paper presentations and impulse talks — with close readings of selected key passages from thinkers such as Aristotle, Quintilian, and Bacon. Both formats are designed to foster sustained discussion and to consolidate a shared conceptual vocabulary for analyzing exemplarity as an epistemic practice.

Participants: The workshop warmly welcomes contributions from Classicists, Sinologists, Judaists, Medieval and Early Modern scholars, philosophers, historians of science, epistemologists, and researchers from related disciplines. We invite applications from advanced PhD candidates to senior researchers and particularly encourage contributions that engage across disciplinary and cultural boundaries.

Organization: UTN covers the costs of a round-trip to (Deutsche Bahn, 2nd class) and accommodation in Nuremberg for all participants.

Application:

Please submit:

- An abstract of approximately **300 words**
- A short bio (max. **150 words**), including an email address

Please send submissions by **June 30, 2026** to tobias.hirsch@utn.de

We would be delighted to welcome you to the University of Technology Nuremberg.

Gyburg Uhlmann, Chair and Professor of Classics, UTN

Dana Jalobeanu, Professor of Early Modern Philosophy, UTN

Tobias Hirsch, Postdoctoral Researcher in Classics, UTN