

## ENGLISH 9 Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	Syllabus
Weekly Schedule	Diagnostic Exam
Essay Tip Sheet and Rubric	Writer’s Reference Exercises
Argument Essay - sample, instructions	Rhetorical Precis (for introducing and integrating sources)
Outline, Reverse Outline- template	Thesis - instruction
Checklist - after final draft of essay	Checklist - before drafting essay
Notes on Toulmin, Rogerian, and Classical Arguments	<b>Notes on Logical Fallacies</b>
	Final Exam Answer Cover Sheet- 75 Qs with REFLECTION
Essays for Reading (in addition to textbook):  Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Go Ahead, Speak for Yourself”  Nausicaa Renner, “How Do You Explain the ‘Obvious?’”  Bernie Sanders, “We Must Make Public Colleges and Universities Tuition Free”	Essays for Reading (in addition to textbook):  Suzanne Nossel, “The Pro-Free Speech Way to Fight Fake News”  Bridget Anderson, “The Politics of Pests: Immigration and the Invasive Other”  Isaac Chotiner, “How Anti-Semitism Rises on the Left and Right”

## COMMON FALLACIES IN REASONING

**1. FAULTY CAUSE:** (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*) mistakes correlation or association for causation, by assuming that because one thing follows another it was caused by the other.

example: A black cat crossed Babbs' path yesterday and, sure enough, she was involved in an automobile accident later that same afternoon.

example: The introduction of sex education courses at the high school level has resulted in increased promiscuity among teens. A recent study revealed that the number of reported cases of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) was significantly higher for high schools that offered courses in sex education than for high schools that did not.

**2. SWEEPING GENERALIZATION:** (*dicto simpliciter*) assumes that what is true of the whole will also be true of the part, or that what is true in most instances will be true in all instances.

example: Muffin must be rich or have rich parents, because she belongs to ZXQ, and ZXQ is the richest sorority on campus.

example: I'd like to hire you, but you're an ex-felon and statistics show that 80% of ex-felons recidivate.

**3. HASTY GENERALIZATION:** bases an inference on too small a sample, or on an unrepresentative sample. Often, a single example or instance is used as the basis for a broader generalization.

example: All of those movie stars are really rude. I asked Kevin Costner for his autograph in a restaurant in Westwood the other evening, and he told me to get lost.

example: Pit Bulls are actually gentle, sweet dogs. My next door neighbor has one and his dog loves to romp and play with all the kids in the neighborhood!

**4. FAULTY ANALOGY:** (can be literal or figurative) assumes that because two things, events, or situations are alike in some known respects, that they are alike in other unknown respects.

example: What's the big deal about the early pioneers killing a few Indians in order to settle the West? After all, you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs.

example: Banning "head" shops from selling drug paraphernalia in order to curb drug abuse makes about as much sense as banning bikinis to reduce promiscuity.

**5. APPEAL TO IGNORANCE:** (*argumentum ad ignorantiam*) attempts to use an opponent's inability to disprove a conclusion as proof of the validity of the conclusion, i.e. "You can't prove I'm wrong, so I must be right."

example: We can safely conclude that there is intelligent life elsewhere in the galaxy, because thus far no one has been able to prove that there is not.

example: The new form of experimental chemotherapy must be working; not a single patient has returned to complain.

**6. BIFURCATION:** (either-or, black or white, all or nothing fallacy) assumes that two categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive, that is, something is either a member of one or the other, but not both or some third category.

example: Either you favor a strong national defense, or you favor allowing other nations to dictate our foreign policy.

example: It's not TV. It's HBO.

**7. FALSE DILEMMA:** (a form of bifurcation) implies that one of two outcomes is inevitable, and both have negative consequences.

example: Either you buy a large car and watch it guzzle away your paycheck, or you buy a small car and take a greater risk of being injured or killed in the event of an accident.

example: You can put your money in a savings account, in which case the IRS will tax you on the interest, and inflation will erode the value of your money, or you can avoid maintaining a savings account in which case you will have nothing to fall back on in a financial emergency.

**8. FAULTY SIGN:** (also includes argument from circumstance) wrongly assumes that one event or phenomenon is a reliable indicator or predictor of another event or phenomenon.

example: the cars driving in the opposite direction have their lights on; they must be part of a funeral procession.

example: That guy is wearing a Raiders jacket and baggy pants. I'll bet he's a gang member.

**9. DAMNING THE SOURCE:** (ad hominem, sometimes called the genetic fallacy) attempts to refute an argument by indicting the source of the argument, rather than the substance of the argument itself.

example: There is no reason to listen to the arguments of those who oppose school prayer, for they are the arguments of atheists!

example: The American Trial Lawyers Association favors of this piece of legislation, so you know it has to be bad for ordinary citizens.

**10. TU QUOQUE:** (look who's talking or two wrongs make a right) pointing to a similar wrong or error committed by another.

example: Gee, Mom and Dad, how can you tell me not to do drugs when you both smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol?

example: The United States has no business criticizing the human rights policies of the Third World nations, not as long as discrimination and segregation continue to exist in the United States.

**11. EQUIVOCATION:** allows a key word or term in an argument to shift its meaning during the course of the argument. The result is that the conclusion of the argument is not concerned with the same thing as the premise(s).

example: Only man is rational. No woman is a man. Therefore, no woman is rational.

example: No one who has the slightest acquaintance with science can reasonably doubt that the miracles in the Bible actually took place. Every year we witness countless new miracles in the form recombinant DNA, micro-chips, organ transplants, and the like. (the word "miracle" does not have the same meaning in each case)

**12. BEGGING THE QUESTION:** (*petitio principii*) entails making an argument, the conclusion of which is based on an unstated or unproven assumption. In question form, this fallacy is known as a COMPLEX QUESTION.

example: Abortion is murder, since killing a baby is an act of murder.

example: Have you stopped beating your wife?

**13. TAUTOLOGY:** (a sub-category of circular argument) defining terms or qualifying an argument in such a way that it would be impossible to disprove the

argument. Often, the rationale for the argument is merely a restatement of the conclusion in different words.

example: The Bible is the word of God. We know this because the Bible itself tells us so.

example: You are a disagreeable person and, if you disagree with me on this, it will only further prove what a disagreeable person you are.

**14. APPEAL TO AUTHORITY:** (*ipse dixit* also called *ad verecundiam* sometimes) attempts to justify an argument by citing a highly admired or well-known (but not necessarily qualified) figure who supports the conclusion being offered.

example: If it's good enough for (insert celebrity's name here), it's good enough for me.

example: Laws against marijuana are plain silly. Why, Thomas Jefferson is known to have raised hemp on his own plantation.

**15. APPEAL TO TRADITION:** (don't rock the boat or *ad verecundiam*) based on the principle of "letting sleeping dogs lie". We should continue to do things as they have been done in the past. We shouldn't challenge time-honored customs or traditions.

example: Of course we have to play "pomp and circumstance" at graduation, because that's always been the song that is played.

example: Why do I make wine this way? Because my father made wine this way, and his father made wine this way.

**16. APPEAL TO THE CROWD:** (*ad populum* or playing to the gallery) refers to popular opinion or majority sentiment in order to provide support for a claim. Often the "common man" or "common sense" provides the basis for the claim.

example: all I can say is that if living together is immoral, then I have plenty of company.

example: Professor Windplenty's test was extremely unfair. Just ask anyone who took it.

**17. STRAW MAN:** stating an opponent's argument in an extreme or exaggerated form, or attacking a weaker, irrelevant portion of an opponent's argument.

example: A mandatory seat belt law could never be enforced. You can't issue citations to dead people.

example: What woman in her right mind could truly desire total equality with men? No woman wants the right to be shot at in times of war, the right to have to pay alimony, or the right to have to use the same restrooms as men.

**18. SLIPPERY SLOPE:** (sometimes called a snowball argument or domino theory) suggests that if one step or action is taken it will invariably lead to similar steps or actions, the end results of which are negative or undesirable. A slippery slope always assume a chain reaction of cause-effect events which result in some eventual dire outcome.

example: If the Supreme Court allows abortion, next think you know they'll allow euthanasia, and it won't be long before society disposes of all those persons whom it deems unwanted or undesirable.

example: If I let one student interrupt my lecture with a question, then I'll have to let others and, before long, there won't be any time left for my lecture.

**19. APPEALING TO EXTREMES:** A fallacy very similar to slippery slope, which involves taking an argumentative claim or assertion to its extreme, even though the arguer does not advocate the extreme interpretation. The difference between the two fallacies is that appealing to extremes does not necessarily involve a sequence of causal connections.

example: Husband to ex-wife: Well, if you want to be completely fair about dividing everything up, you should get one of my testicles and I should get one of your breasts!

example: Debtor to creditor: Hey, you've already repossessed my car and my television. Why don't you just draw a quart of blood or carve a pound of flesh from my heart too?

**20. HYPOTHESIS CONTRARY TO FACT:** This fallacy consists of offering a poorly supported claim about what might have happened in the past or future if circumstances or conditions were other than they actually were or are. The fallacy also involves treating hypothetical situations as if they were fact.

example: If you had only tasted the stewed snails, I'm sure you would have liked them.

example: If Hitler had not invaded Russia and opened up two military fronts, the Nazis would surely have won the war.

**21. NON SEQUITAR:** (literally means "does not follow") in a general sense any argument which fails to establish a connection between the premises and the conclusion may be called a non-sequitar. In practice, however, the label non-sequitar tends to be reserved for arguments in which irrelevant reasons are offered to support a claim.

example: I wore a red shirt when I took the test, so that is probably why I did so well on the test.

example: Mr Boswell couldn't be the person who poisoned our cat, Truffles, because when I used to take Truffles for walks he always smiled and said "Hello" when we walked by.

**22. RED HERRING:** attempting to hide a weakness in an argument by drawing attention away from the real issue. A red herring fallacy is thus a diversionary tactic or an attempt to confuse or fog the issue being debated. The name of the fallacy comes from the days of fox hunting, when a herring was dragged across the trail of a fox in order to throw the dogs off the scent.

example: accused by his wife of cheating at cards, Ned replies "Nothing I do ever pleases you. I spent all last week repainting the bathroom, and then you said you didn't like the color."

example: There's too much fuss and concern about saving the environment. We can't create an Eden on earth. And even if we could, remember Adam and Eve got bored in the Garden of Eden anyway!

**23. INCONSISTENCY:** advancing an argument that is self-contradictory, or that is based on mutually inconsistent premises.

Example: A used car salesperson says, "Hey, you can't trust those other car salesman. They'll say anything to get you to buy a car from them."

Example: A parent has just read a child the story of Cinderella. The child asks, "If the coach, and the footmen, and the beautiful clothes all turned back into the pumpkin, the mice, and the rags, then how come the glass slipper didn't change back too?"

[Log in or Sign up](#) to track your course progress, gain access to final exams, and get a free certificate of completion!

## Writing Commons: "Logical Fallacies"

Read this article to learn about logical fallacies and how to avoid them. Logical fallacies occur when the chain of reasoning breaks down, which invalidates the conclusion. Try to identify any logical fallacies in your writing by revisiting one of the writing activities for this course or another course

### Fallacious *Kairos*

- **Red Herring:** Introducing irrelevant facts or claims to detract from the actual argument. For instance, our invasion of Iraq was predicated, in part, upon the connection between the attacks of 9/11 and Saddam Hussein. The war was described by some as an appropriate response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, but in reality, the connection between Iraq and Saddam Hussein was a red herring. Hussein was not connected to Al Qaeda, the terrorist network that perpetrated the attacks, or 9/11.
- **Argument from Authority:** We already noted that an argument from false authority involves a speaker or writer claiming authority in a particular area without giving evidence of that authority (see "[Fallacious Ethos](#)"). These claims of authority are obviously connected to ethos, but depending on the argument, may also be connected to kairos. For example, when a political candidate claims that, if action is not taken right now, the nation risks ruin, he or she is identifying him- or herself as an expert on both the nature of the problem as well as the timing.

### Fallacious *Logos*

- **Appeal to Nature:** Suggesting a certain behavior or action is normal/right because it is "natural." This is a fallacious argument for two reasons: first, there are multiple, and often competing, ways to define "nature" and "natural." Because there is no one way to define these terms, a writer cannot assume his or her reader thinks of "nature" in the same way he or she does. Second, we cannot assume that "unnatural" is the same as wrong or evil. We (humans) have made lots of amendments to how we live (e.g., wearing clothes, living indoors, farming) with great benefit.
- **Argument from Ignorance:** Assuming something is true because it has not been proven false. In a court of law, a defendant is, by law, "innocent until proven guilty." However, judges and jurors must hear testimonies from both sides and receive all facts in order to draw conclusions about the defendant's guilt or innocence. It would be an argument from ignorance for a judge or juror to reach a verdict without hearing all of the necessary information.
- **Straw Man:** Intentionally misrepresenting your opponent's position by over-exaggerating or offering a caricature of his or her argument. It would be fallacious to claim to dispute an opponent's argument by creating a superficially similar position and refuting that position (the "straw man") instead of the actual argument. For example, "Feminists want to turn men into slaves." This statement fails to accurately represent feminist motivations—which can be very diverse. Most feminists agree in their goal to ensure women's *equality* with men. Conceptions of equality can vary among feminists, but characterizing them as men-haters detracts from their true motivations.
- **False Dilemma:** Assuming that there are only two options when there are, in fact, more. For example, "We either cut Social Security, or we have a huge deficit." There are many ways to resolve deficit problems, but this statement suggests there is only one.
- **Hasty Generalization:** Drawing a broad conclusion based on a small minority. For instance, if you witnessed a car accident between two women drivers, it would be a hasty generalization to conclude that all women are bad drivers.



- **Cum Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc (With This, Therefore Because of This):** Confusing correlation with causation—that is, thinking that because two things happened simultaneously, then one must have caused the other. For example, "There has been an increase in both immigration and unemployment; therefore, immigrants are taking away American jobs." This statement is fallacious because there is no evidence to suggest that immigration and unemployment are related to each other—other than that their rates increased simultaneously.
- **The Slippery Slope:** We already noted that the slippery slope argument is often a way to scare readers or listeners into taking (or not taking) a particular action (see "[Fallacious Pathos](#)"). The slippery slope argument can also function as a false invocation of logic or reason in that it involves a causal statement that lacks evidence. For example, I might argue that if the drinking age were lowered from 21 to 18, vast numbers of college students would start drinking, which in turn would lead to alcohol poisoning, binge drinking, and even death. This conclusion requires evidence to connect the legality of drinking with overindulgence. In other words, it does not follow that college students would drink irresponsibly if given the opportunity to drink legally.

## Fallacious *Pathos*

- **Argument by Dismissal:** Rejecting an idea without providing a reason or explanation for its dismissal. For instance, there is a tendency to cry "socialism" when faced with calls for a single-payer system in the ongoing health care debate. Such a dismissal of the single-payer system may include the observations, "This is America!," or, "You are free to live elsewhere if you prefer." While we do live in the United States and people are free to live wherever they want, neither of these observations actually addresses the argument, either for or against the single-payer system. The observer relies on the simple (and fallacious) dismissal of the opposing viewpoint.
- **Argument by Emotive Language:** Using emotional words that are not supported by evidence and/or are unconnected to the argument being made. For example, in abortion debates regarding a woman's right to choose, the argument sometimes shifts from a discussion of medical or legal rights to a graphic description of the abortion process or extreme analogies between abortion and genocide. Most would agree that genocide should be prevented and that the destruction of a fetus is a violent procedure, but these observations distract from the conversation about a woman's medical and legal rights.
- **Appeal to Pity:** Drawing on irrelevant personal experiences or feelings in order to produce a sympathetic response. For instance, if I were writing about the necessity of universal health care and I included a personal anecdote about falling ill in Canada and being unable to receive free health care, that anecdote would be a fallacious appeal to pity. My personal experience, though interesting, does not illuminate the issue of universal health care.
- **The Slippery Slope:** Suggesting that a particular argument or course of action will lead to disastrous consequences without offering evidence. This fallacy usually produces an emotional response. A common example is the assertion that legalizing gay marriage will lead to polygamy, bestiality, and/or pedophilia.

## Fallacious *Ethos*

- **Ad Hominem (Argument to the Person):** Attacking the person instead of the argument. For example, "You say I shouldn't drink so much, but you drink every day." The validity of the argument (drink less) can't be based on the behavior of the person making the argument. Instead, the validity of the argument should be evaluated on its own terms—separate from the person making the claim.
- **Argument from Authority:** Claiming to be an expert and, on that basis, to be deserving of trust. It's important to remember that there are different kinds and levels of expertise: My weekend cooking class doesn't make me an authority on recipes, though I can honestly say I've studied cooking. So, I might be an

authority on some elements of cooking, but not all of cooking. When faced with an argument from authority, it is important to investigate the credentials of the speaker or writer.

- **Appeal to Authority:** Using a statement taken out of context as authoritative support. For instance, it would be fallacious to use Malcolm X's declaration "by any means necessary" to justify an oppressed group's violence against police officers. Such an assertion ignores the context, and therefore the complexity, of Malcolm X's statement.
- **Argument from False Authority:** Using an expert in a specific field as an expert in all related fields. For instance, if I am writing a paper about heart disease and I quote my chiropractor, Dr. Wallace, then I would be making an appeal to fallacious ethos; despite being a doctor, she is not an authority on heart disease.
- **Appeal to Anonymous Authority:** Using appeals to nonspecific groups (e.g., doctors, scientists, researchers, and so on). For example, "Research shows that all women are inferior to men." Or, "Studies indicate that all college students binge drink." Neither of these statements offers a specific credible source, so both claims lack authority.
- **Inflation of Conflict:** Using a conflict between two authorities as a reason to dismiss their arguments and knowledge. For instance, it would be fallacious to assert that global climate change does not exist because two scientists disagree about its effects.

## Logical Fallacies

By now you know that all arguments operate according to an internal logic. No matter which of the four rhetorical appeals the author uses, her thesis will succeed or fail based on the soundness of her argument. In classical logic, an argument is sound only if all of its premises are true and the argument is valid. And an argument is valid only if its conclusion follows logically from the combination of its premises. For example, Plato's classic syllogism, "All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal" is both valid and sound. Its premises are true, and the conclusion is undeniable given an understanding of the definitions of the terms.

Plato's famous syllogism is an example of a deductive argument; that is, it relies on a process of reasoning from general statements of common knowledge to arrive at a specific and logically consistent conclusion. But most of the arguments you will encounter in college and in life in general take the form of inductive arguments, which move in the opposite direction: from statements of specific instances toward a general conclusion. For instance, if I say that the sun has always risen in the morning, and then conclude that the sun will therefore rise tomorrow, I have formulated an inductive argument. Notice, however, that my conclusion is not necessarily valid given the definitions of the terms. I can be fairly confident that the sun will rise tomorrow in the morning, but I can't be absolutely certain of it. After all, the sun might go supernova overnight.

Of course, given the fact that astronomers suggest that the sun isn't likely to die for at least another four billion years, my inductive argument's lack of absolute certainty shouldn't bother anyone. The point is that because my argument relies on a specific instance known to be true ("the sun has always risen in the morning"), and then moves to a general conclusion ("the sun will therefore rise tomorrow in the morning"), the possibility that I have committed a logical fallacy in the course of my argument is relatively high. That is, somewhere in the chain of reason leading from the premise to the conclusion, I might have unknowingly violated the internal logic my argument needs in order to succeed. The term "logical fallacy" refers to the point—or points—at which that chain of reason snaps, rendering the conclusion invalid.

Not all inductive arguments commit logical fallacies. Indeed, most of the argumentative texts you will encounter in college manage to avoid such faulty reasoning, mainly because successful authors—i.e., those who publish—have learned how to avoid such pitfalls. They know that inductive argumentation is vulnerable

to logical fallacies, not only because such arguments start with specific premises and move to general conclusions, but also because their premises so often rely on human values and abstract concepts. Furthermore, poorly constructed inductive arguments often make statements that on the surface appear plausible, but after consideration or further research reveal inconsistencies or outright falsehoods.

For example, let's say that I'm writing an essay attempting to prove that same-sex marriage is wrong and should not be allowed. One of my premises suggests that if same-sex marriage were legal, pretty soon humans would be marrying their dogs. This statement commits a number of logical fallacies, but the most egregious of them is called the slippery slope, which describes a situation in which a generally unacceptable situation (humans marrying dogs) is proposed as the inevitable outcome of a policy change (allowing same-sex marriage). But no evidence exists that such an outcome will in fact obtain. Furthermore, the argument commits a variant of a categorical mistake, because dogs and humans do not belong to the same species; a dog cannot consent to or decline a marriage vow, and marriage legally requires that both parties are willing and able to provide consent. A reader who accepts such arguments at face value simply cannot make an informed decision about the issue at hand. Logical fallacies not only result in bad writing; they also translate to irresponsible citizenship.

Many more logical fallacies exist than can be included in this article. In the sections that follow, you will find explanations of some of the more common examples as they play out within the context of the four rhetorical appeals. Further research in the library and on reliable websites will yield an inexhaustible amount of information on the various logical fallacies (see some example websites below). As you read assigned texts and write your own argumentative essays, you should constantly test the arguments they contain, examining the premises and their links to one another and to the conclusion. Learning to recognize logical fallacies is a skill essential to college-level writing and to critical thinking in general.

### **Further Research**

- *The OWL at Purdue* lists some of the most common logical fallacies with examples:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/>

- The Writing Center at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a more extensive list:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/handouts-demos/writing-the-paper/fallacies>

- Finally, the *Fallacy Files* devotes its entire web presence to all things fallacious:

<http://www.fallacyfiles.org/>

# UNIV 1301 University Seminar

## A Short Course in Intellectual Self-Defense

"The Progymnasmata"



# Master List of Logical Fallacies

Fallacies are fake or deceptive arguments, "junk cognition," that is, arguments that seem irrefutable but prove nothing. Fallacies often seem superficially sound and they far too often retain immense persuasive power even after being clearly exposed as false. Like epidemics, fallacies sometimes "burn through" entire populations, often with the most tragic results, before their power is diminished or lost. Fallacies are not always deliberate, but a good scholar's purpose is always to identify and unmask fallacies in arguments. Note that many of these definitions overlap, but the goal here is to identify contemporary and classic fallacies as they are used in today's discourse. Effort has been made to avoid mere word-games (e.g., "The Fallacist's Fallacy," or the famous "Crocodile's Paradox" of classic times), or the so-called "fallacies" of purely formal and symbolic, business and financial, religious or theological logic. No claim is made to "academic rigor" in this listing.

1. **The A Priori Argument** (also, Rationalization; Dogmatism, Proof Texting.): A corrupt argument from logos, starting with a given, pre-set belief, dogma, doctrine, scripture verse, "fact" or conclusion and then searching for any reasonable or reasonable-sounding argument to rationalize, defend or justify it. Certain ideologues and religious fundamentalists are proud to use this fallacy as their primary method of "reasoning" and some are even honest enough to say so. E.g., since we know there is no such thing as "evolution," a prime duty of believers is to look for ways to explain away growing evidence, such as is found in DNA, that might suggest otherwise. See also the Argument from Ignorance. The opposite of this fallacy is the Taboo.
2. **Ableism** (also, The Con Artist's Fallacy; The Dacoit's Fallacy; Shearing the Sheeple; Profiteering; "Vulture Capitalism," "Wealth is disease, and I am the cure."): A corrupt argument from ethos, arguing that because someone is intellectually slower, physically or emotionally less capable, less ambitious, less aggressive, older or less healthy (or simply more trusting or less lucky) than others, s/he "naturally" deserves less in life and may be freely victimized by those who are luckier, quicker, younger, stronger, healthier, greedier, more powerful, less moral or more gifted (or who simply have more immediate felt need for money, often involving some form of addiction). This fallacy is a "softer" argumentum ad baculum. When challenged, those who practice this fallacy seem to most often shrug their shoulders and mumble "Life is ruff and you gotta be tuff [*sic*]," "You gotta do what you gotta do to get ahead in this world," "It's no skin off my nose," "That's free enterprise," "That's the way life is!" or similar.
3. **Actions have Consequences:** The contemporary fallacy of a person in power falsely describing an imposed punishment or penalty as a "consequence" of another's negative act. E.g., "The consequences of your misbehavior could include suspension or expulsion." A corrupt argument from ethos, arrogating to oneself or to one's rules or laws an ethos of cosmic inevitability, i.e., the ethos of God, Fate, Karma, Destiny or Reality Itself. Illness or food poisoning are likely "consequences" of eating spoiled food, while being "grounded" is a *punishment for*, not a "consequence," of childhood misbehavior. Freezing to death is a natural "consequence" of going out naked in subzero weather but going to prison is a *punishment* for bank robbery, not a natural, inevitable or unavoidable "consequence," of robbing a bank. Not to be confused with the Argument from Consequences, which is quite different. See also Blaming the Victim. An opposite fallacy is that of Moral Licensing.
4. **The Ad Hominem Argument** (also, "Personal attack," "Poisoning the well"): The fallacy of attempting to refute an argument by attacking the opposition's intelligence, morals, education, professional qualifications, personal character or reputation, using a corrupted negative argument from ethos. E.g., "That so-called judge," or "He's so evil that you can't believe anything he says." See also "Guilt by Association." The opposite of this is the "Star

Power" fallacy. Another obverse of Ad Hominem is the **Token Endorsement Fallacy**, where, in the words of scholar Lara Bhasin, "Individual A has been accused of anti-Semitism, but Individual B is Jewish and says Individual A is not anti-Semitic, and the implication of course is that we can believe Individual B because, being Jewish, he has special knowledge of anti-Semitism. Or, a presidential candidate is accused of anti-Muslim bigotry, but someone finds a testimony from a Muslim who voted for said candidate, and this is trotted out as evidence against the candidate's bigotry." The same fallacy would apply to a sports team offensively named after a marginalized ethnic group, but which has obtained the endorsement (freely given or paid) of some member, traditional leader or tribal council of that marginalized group so that the otherwise-offensive team name and logo magically become "okay" and nonracist.

5. **The Affective Fallacy** (also The Romantic Fallacy; Emotion over Reflection; "Follow Your Heart"): An extremely common modern fallacy of Pathos, that one's emotions, urges or "feelings" are innate and in every case self-validating, autonomous, and above any human intent or act of will (one's own or others'), and are thus immune to challenge or criticism. (In fact, [researchers now \[2017\] have robust scientific evidence that emotions are actually cognitive and not innate.](#)) In this fallacy one argues, "I feel it, so it must be true. My feelings are valid, so you have no right to criticize what I say or do, or how I say or do it." This latter is also a fallacy of stasis, confusing a respectful and reasoned response or refutation with personal invalidation, disrespect, prejudice, bigotry, sexism, homophobia or hostility. A grossly sexist form of the Affective Fallacy is the well-known crude fallacy that the phallus "Has no conscience" (also, "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do;" "Thinking with your other head."), i.e., since (male) sexuality is self-validating and beyond voluntary control what one does with it cannot be controlled either and such actions are not open to criticism, an assertion eagerly embraced and extended beyond the male gender in certain reifications of "Desire" in contemporary academic theory. See also, Playing on Emotion. Opposite to this fallacy is the **Chosen Emotion Fallacy** (thanks to scholar Marc Lawson for identifying this fallacy), in which one falsely claims complete, or at least reliable prior voluntary control over one's own autonomic, "gut level" affective reactions. Closely related if not identical to this last is the ancient fallacy of **Angelism**, falsely claiming that one is capable of "objective" reasoning and judgment without emotion, claiming for oneself a viewpoint of Olympian "disinterested objectivity" or pretending to place oneself far above all personal feelings, temptations or bias. See also, Mortification.
6. **Alphabet Soup**: A corrupt modern implicit fallacy from ethos in which a person inappropriately overuses acronyms, abbreviations, form numbers and arcane insider "shop talk" primarily to prove to an audience that s/he "speaks their language" and is "one of them" and to shut out, confuse or impress outsiders. E.g., "It's not uncommon for a K-12 with ASD to be both GT and LD;" "I had a twenty-minute DX Q-so on 15 with a Zed-S1 and a couple of LU2's even though the QR-Nancy was 10 over S9;" or "I hope I'll keep on seeing my BAQ on my LES until the day I get my DD214." See also, Name Calling. This fallacy has recently become common in media pharmaceutical advertising in the United States, where "Alphabet Soup" is used to create false identification with and to exploit patient groups suffering from specific illnesses or conditions, e.g., "If you have DPC with associated ZL you can keep your B2D under control with Luglugmena®. Ask your doctor today about Luglugmena® Helium Tetracarbide lozenges to control symptoms of ZL and to keep your B2D under that crucial 7.62 threshold. Side effects of Luglugmena® may include K4 Syndrome which may lead to lycanthropic bicephaly, BMJ and occasionally, death. Do not take Luglugmena® if you are allergic to dogbite or have type D Flinder's Garbosis..."
7. **Alternative Truth** (also, Alt Facts; Counterknowledge; Disinformation; Information Pollution): A newly-famous contemporary fallacy of logos rooted in postmodernism, denying the resilience of facts or truth as such. Writer Hannah Arendt, in her [The Origins of Totalitarianism](#) (1951) warned that "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, true and false, no longer exists." Journalist Leslie Grass (2017) writes in her Blog [Reachoutrecovery.com](#), "Is there someone in your life who insists things happened that didn't happen, or has a completely different version of events in which you have the facts? It's a form of mind control and is very common among families dealing with substance and behavior problems." She suggests that such "Alternate Facts" work to "put you off balance," "control the story," and "make you think you're crazy," and she notes that "presenting alternate facts is the hallmark of untrustworthy people." The Alternative Truth fallacy is related to the Big Lie Technique. See also Gaslighting, Blind Loyalty, The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy, and Two Truths
8. **The Appeal to Closure**: The contemporary fallacy that an argument, standpoint, action or conclusion no matter how questionable must be accepted as final or else the point will remain unsettled, which is unthinkable because those affected will be denied "closure." This fallacy falsely reifies a specialized term (closure) from Gestalt Psychology while refusing to recognize the undeniable truth that some points will indeed remain open and unsettled, perhaps forever. E.g., "Society would be protected, real punishment would be inflicted, crime would be deterred and justice

served if we sentenced you to life without parole, but we need to execute you in order to provide some closure." See also, Argument from Ignorance, and Argument from Consequences. The opposite of this fallacy is the Paralysis of Analysis.

9. **The Appeal to Heaven:** (also, Argumentum ad Coelum, Deus Vult, Gott mit Uns, Manifest Destiny, American Exceptionalism, or the Special Covenant): An ancient, extremely dangerous fallacy (a deluded argument from ethos) that of claiming to know the mind of God (or History, or a higher power), who has allegedly ordered or anointed, supports or approves of one's own country, standpoint or actions so no further justification is required and no serious challenge is possible. (E.g., "God ordered me to kill my children," or "We need to take away your land, since God [or Scripture, or Manifest Destiny, or Fate, or Heaven] has given it to us as our own.") A private individual who seriously asserts this fallacy risks ending up in a psychiatric ward, but groups or nations who do it are far too often taken seriously. Practiced by those who will not or cannot tell God's will from their own, this vicious (and blasphemous) fallacy has been the cause of endless bloodshed over history. See also, Moral Superiority, and Magical Thinking. Also applies to deluded negative Appeals to Heaven, e.g., "You say that famine and ecological collapse due to climate change are real dangers during the coming century, but I know God wouldn't ever let that happen to us!" The opposite of the Appeal to Heaven is the Job's Comforter fallacy.
10. **The Appeal to Nature** (also, Biologizing; The Green Fallacy): The contemporary romantic fallacy of ethos (that of "Mother Nature") that if something is "natural" it has to be good, healthy and beneficial. E.g., "Our premium herb tea is lovingly brewed from the finest freshly-picked and delicately dried natural T. Radicans leaves. Those who dismiss it as mere 'Poison Ivy' don't understand that it's 100% organic, with no additives, GMO's or artificial ingredients. It's time to Go Green and lay back in Mother's arms." One who employs or falls for this fallacy forgets the old truism that left to itself, nature is indeed "red in tooth and claw." This fallacy also applies to arguments alleging that something is "unnatural," or "against nature" and thus evil (**The Argument from Natural Law**) e.g. "Homosexuality should be outlawed because it's against nature," arrogating to oneself the authority to define what is "natural" and what is unnatural or perverted. E.g., during the American Revolution British sources widely condemned rebellion against King George III as "unnatural," and American revolutionaries as "perverts," because the Divine Right of Kings represented Natural Law, and according to 1 Samuel 15:23 in the Bible, rebellion is like unto witchcraft.
11. **The Appeal to Pity:** (also, "Argumentum ad Miserecordiam"): The fallacy of urging an audience to "root for the underdog" regardless of the issues at hand. A classic example is, "Those poor, cute little squeaky mice are being gobbled up by mean, nasty cats ten times their size!" A contemporary example might be America's uncritical popular support for the Arab Spring movement of 2010-2012 in which The People ("The underdogs") were seen to be heroically overthrowing cruel dictatorships, a movement that has resulted in retrospect in chaos, impoverishment, anarchy, mass suffering, civil war, the regional collapse of civilization and rise of extremism, and the largest refugee crisis since World War II. A corrupt argument from pathos. See also, Playing to Emotions. The opposite of the Appeal to Pity is the **Appeal to Rigor**, an argument (often based on machismo or on manipulating an audience's fear) based on mercilessness. E.g., "I'm a real man, not like those bleeding hearts, and I'll be tough on [fill in the name of the enemy or bogeyman of the hour]." In academia this latter fallacy applies to politically-motivated or elitist calls for "Academic Rigor," and rage against university developmental / remedial classes, open admissions, "dumbing down" and "grade inflation."
12. **The Appeal to Tradition:** (also, Conservative Bias; Back in Those Good Times, "The Good Old Days"): The ancient fallacy that a standpoint, situation or action is right, proper and correct simply because it has "always" been that way, because people have "always" thought that way, or because it was that way long ago (most often meaning in the audience members' youth or childhood, not before) and still continues to serve one particular group very well. A corrupted argument from ethos (that of past generations). E.g., "In America, women have always been paid less, so let's not mess with long-standing tradition." See also Argument from Inertia, and Default Bias. The opposite of this fallacy is **The Appeal to Novelty** (also, "Pro-Innovation bias," "Recency Bias," and "The Bad Old Days;" The Early Adopter's Fallacy), e.g., "It's NEW, and [therefore it must be] improved!" or "This is the very latest discovery--it has to be better."
13. **Appeasement** (also, "Assertiveness," "The squeaky wheel gets the grease;" "I know my rights!"): This fallacy, most often popularly connected to the shameful pre-World War II appeasement of Hitler, is in fact still commonly practiced in public agencies, education and retail business today, e.g. "Customers are always right, even when they're wrong. Don't argue with them, just give'em what they want so they'll shut up and go away, and not make a stink--it's cheaper and easier than a lawsuit." Widespread unchallenged acceptance of this fallacy encourages offensive,

uncivil public behavior and sometimes the development of a coarse subculture of obnoxious, "assertive" manipulators who, like "spoiled" children, leverage their knowledge of how to figuratively (or sometimes even literally!) "make a stink" into a primary coping skill in order to get what they want when they want it. The works of the late Community Organizing guru [Saul Alinsky](#) suggest practical, nonviolent ways for groups to harness the power of this fallacy to promote social change, for good or for evil.. See also Bribery.

14. **The Argument from Consequences** (also, Outcome Bias): The major fallacy of logos, arguing that something cannot be true because if it were the consequences or outcome would be unacceptable. (E.g., "Global climate change cannot be caused by human burning of fossil fuels, because if it were, switching to non-polluting energy sources would bankrupt American industry," or "Doctor, that's wrong! I can't have terminal cancer, because if I did that'd mean that I won't live to see my kids get married!") Not to be confused with Actions have Consequences.
15. **The Argument from Ignorance** (also, Argumentum ad Ignorantiam): The fallacy that since we don't know (or can never know, or cannot prove) whether a claim is true or false, it must be false, or it must be true. E.g., "Scientists are never going to be able to positively prove their crazy theory that humans evolved from other creatures, because we weren't there to see it! So, that proves the Genesis six-day creation account is literally true as written!" This fallacy includes **Attacking the Evidence** (also, "Whataboutism"; The Missing Link fallacy), e.g. "Some or all of your key evidence is missing, incomplete, or even faked! What about that? That proves you're wrong and I'm right!" This fallacy usually includes fallacious "Either-Or Reasoning" as well: E.g., "The vet can't find any reasonable explanation for why my dog died. See! See! That proves that you poisoned him! There's no other logical explanation!" A corrupted argument from logos, and a fallacy commonly found in American political, judicial and forensic reasoning. The recently famous "Flying Spaghetti Monster" meme is a contemporary refutation of this fallacy--simply because we cannot conclusively disprove the existence of such an absurd entity does not argue for its existence. See also A Priori Argument, Appeal to Closure, The Simpleton's Fallacy, and Argumentum ex Silentio.
16. **The Argument from Incredulity**: The popular fallacy of doubting or rejecting a novel claim or argument out of hand simply because it appears superficially "incredible," "insane" or "crazy," or because it goes against one's own personal beliefs, prior experience or ideology. This cynical fallacy falsely elevates the saying popularized by Carl Sagan, that "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof," to an absolute law of logic. See also Hoyle's Fallacy. The common, popular-level form of this fallacy is dismissing surprising, extraordinary or unfamiliar arguments and evidence with a wave of the hand, a shake of the head, and a mutter of "that's crazy!"
17. **The Argument from Inertia** (also "Stay the Course"): The fallacy that it is necessary to continue on a mistaken course of action regardless of pain and sacrifice involved and even after discovering it is mistaken, because changing course would mean admitting that one's decision (or one's leader, or one's country, or one's faith) was wrong, and all one's effort, expense, sacrifice and even bloodshed was for nothing, and that's unthinkable. A variety of the Argument from Consequences, E for Effort, or the Appeal to Tradition. See also "Throwing Good Money After Bad."
18. **The Argument from Motives** (also Questioning Motives): The fallacy of declaring a standpoint or argument invalid solely because of the evil, corrupt or questionable motives of the one making the claim. E.g., "Bin Laden wanted us to withdraw from Afghanistan, so we have to keep up the fight!" Even evil people with the most corrupt motives sometimes say the truth (and even good people with the highest and purest motives are often wrong or mistaken). A variety of the Ad Hominem argument. The opposite side of this fallacy is falsely justifying or excusing evil or vicious actions because of the perpetrator's apparent purity of motives or lack of malice. (E.g., "Sure, she may have beaten her children bloody now and again but she was a highly educated, ambitious professional woman at the end of her rope, deprived of adult conversation and stuck between four walls for years on end with a bunch of screaming, fighting brats, doing the best she could with what little she had. How can you stand there and accuse her of child abuse?") See also Moral Licensing.
19. **Argumentum ad Baculum** ("Argument from the Club." Also, "Argumentum ad Baculam," "Argument from Strength," "Muscular Leadership," "Non-negotiable Demands," "Hard Power," Bullying, The Power-Play, Fascism, Resolution by Force of Arms, Shock and Awe.): The fallacy of "persuasion" or "proving one is right" by force, violence, brutality, terrorism, superior strength, raw military might, or threats of violence. E.g., "Gimmee your wallet or I'll knock your head off!" or "We have the perfect right to take your land, since we have the big guns and you don't." Also applies to indirect forms of threat. E.g., "Give up your foolish pride, kneel down and accept our religion today if you don't want to burn in hell forever and ever!" A mainly discursive Argumentum ad Baculum is that of forcibly silencing opponents, ruling them "out of order," blocking, censoring or jamming their message, or simply speaking over them or speaking more loudly than they do, this last a tactic particularly attributed to men in mixed-gender discussions.

20. **Argumentum ad Mysteriam** ("Argument from Mystery;" also Mystagogy.): A darkened chamber, incense, chanting or drumming, bowing and kneeling, special robes or headgear, holy rituals and massed voices reciting sacred mysteries in an unknown tongue have a quasi-hypnotic effect and can often persuade more strongly than any logical argument. The Puritan Reformation was in large part a rejection of this fallacy. When used knowingly and deliberately this fallacy is particularly vicious and accounts for some of the fearsome persuasive power of cults. An example of an Argumentum ad Mysteriam is the "**Long Ago and Far Away**" fallacy, the fact that facts, evidence, practices or arguments from ancient times, distant lands and/or "exotic" cultures seem to acquire a special gravitas or ethos simply because of their antiquity, language or origin, e.g., publicly chanting Holy Scriptures in their original (most often incomprehensible) ancient languages, preferring the Greek, Latin, Assyrian or Old Slavonic Christian Liturgies over their vernacular versions, or using classic or newly invented Greek and Latin names for fallacies in order to support their validity. See also, Esoteric Knowledge. An obverse of the Argumentum ad Mysteriam is the Standard Version Fallacy.
21. **Argumentum ex Silentio** (Argument from Silence): The fallacy that if available sources remain silent or current knowledge and evidence can prove nothing about a given subject or question this fact in itself proves the truth of one's claim. E.g., "Science can tell us nothing about God. That proves God doesn't exist." Or "Science admits it can tell us nothing about God, so you can't deny that God exists!" Often misused in the American justice system, where, contrary to the 5th Amendment and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, remaining silent or "taking the Fifth" is often falsely portrayed as proof of guilt. E.g., "Mr. Hixon can offer no alibi for his whereabouts the evening of January 15th. This proves that he was in fact in room 331 at the Smuggler's Inn, murdering his wife with a hatchet!" In today's America, choosing to remain silent in the face of a police officer's questions can make one guilty enough to be arrested or even shot. See also, Argument from Ignorance.
22. **Availability Bias** (also, Attention Bias, Anchoring Bias): A fallacy of logos stemming from the natural tendency to give undue attention and importance to information that is immediately available at hand, particularly the first or last information received, and to minimize or ignore broader data or wider evidence that clearly exists but is not as easily remembered or accessed. E.g., "We know from experience that this doesn't work," when "experience" means the most recent local attempt, ignoring overwhelming experience from other places and times where it *has* worked and *does* work. Also related is the fallacy of **Hyperbole** [also, Magnification, or sometimes Catastrophizing] where an immediate instance is immediately proclaimed "the most significant in all of human history," or the "worst in the whole world!" This latter fallacy works extremely well with less-educated audiences and those whose "whole world" is very small indeed, audiences who "hate history" and whose historical memory spans several weeks at best.
23. **The Bandwagon Fallacy** (also, Argument from Common Sense, Argumentum ad Populum): The fallacy of arguing that because "everyone," "the people," or "the majority" (or someone in power who has widespread backing) supposedly thinks or does something, it must therefore be true and right. E.g., "Whether there actually is large scale voter fraud in America or not, many people now think there is and that makes it so." Sometimes also includes **Lying with Statistics**, e.g. "Over 75% of Americans believe that crooked Bob Hodiak is a thief, a liar and a pervert. There may not be any evidence, but for anyone with half a brain that conclusively proves that Crooked Bob should go to jail! Lock him up! Lock him up!" This is sometimes combined with the "Argumentum ad Baculum," e.g., "Like it or not, it's time to choose sides: Are you going to get on board the bandwagon with everyone else, or get crushed under the wheels as it goes by?" Or in the 2017 words of former White House spokesperson Sean Spicer, ""They should either get with the program or they can go," A contemporary digital form of the Bandwagon Fallacy is the **Information Cascade**, "in which people echo the opinions of others, usually online, even when their own opinions or exposure to information contradicts that opinion. When information cascades form a pattern, this pattern can begin to overpower later opinions by making it seem as if a consensus already exists." (Thanks to [Teaching Tolerance](#) for this definition!) See also Wisdom of the Crowd, and The Big Lie Technique. For the opposite of this fallacy see the Romantic Rebel fallacy.
24. **The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy** (also, the Führerprinzip; Mad Leader Disease): A not-uncommon but extreme example of the Blind Loyalty Fallacy below, in which a tyrannical boss, military commander, or religious or cult-leader tells followers "Don't think with your *little* brains (the brain in your head), but with your *BIG* brain (mine)." This last is sometimes expressed in positive terms, i.e., "You don't have to worry and stress out about the rightness or wrongness of what you are doing since I, the Leader, am assuming all moral and legal responsibility for all your actions. So long as you are faithfully following orders without question I will defend you and gladly accept all the consequences up to and including eternal damnation if I'm wrong." The opposite of this is the fallacy of "Plausible Deniability." See also, "Just Do It!", and "Gaslighting."
25. **The Big "But" Fallacy** (also, Special Pleading): The fallacy of enunciating a generally-accepted principle and then directly negating it with a "but." Often this takes the form of the "Special Case," which is supposedly exempt from



the usual rules of law, logic, morality, ethics or even credibility. E.g., "As Americans we have always believed on principle that *every* human being has God-given, inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, including in the case of criminal accusations a fair and speedy trial before a jury of one's peers. *BUT*, your crime was so unspeakable and a trial would be so problematic for national security that it justifies locking you up for life in Guantanamo without trial, conviction or possibility of appeal." Or, "Yes, Honey, I still love you more than life itself, and I know that in my wedding vows I promised before God that I'd forsake all others and be faithful to you 'until death do us part,' *but* you have to understand, this was a special case..." See also, "Shopping Hungry," and "We Have to do *Something!*"

26. **The Big Lie Technique** (also the Bold Faced Lie; "Staying on Message."): The contemporary fallacy of repeating a lie, fallacy, slogan, talking-point, nonsense-statement or deceptive half-truth over and over in different forms (particularly in the media) until it becomes part of daily discourse and people accept it without further proof or evidence. Sometimes the bolder and more outlandish the Big Lie becomes the more credible it seems to a willing, most often angry audience. E.g., "What about the Jewish Problem?" Note that when this particular phony debate was going on there was no "Jewish Problem," only a Nazi Problem, but hardly anybody in power recognized or wanted to talk about that, while far too many ordinary Germans were only too ready to find a convenient scapegoat to blame for their suffering during the Great Depression. Writer Miles J. Brewer expertly demolishes The Big Lie Technique in his classic (1930) short story, ["The Gostak and the Doshes."](#) However, more contemporary examples of the Big Lie fallacy might be the completely fictitious August 4, 1964 "Tonkin Gulf Incident" concocted under Lyndon Johnson as a false justification for escalating the Vietnam War, or the non-existent "Weapons of Mass Destruction" in Iraq (conveniently abbreviated "WMD's" in order to lend this Big Lie a legitimizing, military-sounding "Alphabet Soup" ethos), used in 2003 as a false justification for the Second Gulf War. The November, 2016 U.S. President-elect's statement that "millions" of ineligible votes were cast in that year's American. presidential election appears to be a classic Big Lie. See also, Alternative Truth; The Bandwagon Fallacy, the Straw Man, Alphabet Soup, and Propaganda.
27. **Blind Loyalty** (also Blind Obedience, Unthinking Obedience, the "Team Player" appeal, the Nuremberg Defense): The dangerous fallacy that an argument or action is right simply and solely because a respected leader or source (a President, expert, one's parents, one's own "side," team or country, one's boss or commanding officers) says it is right. This is over-reliance on authority, a gravely corrupted argument from ethos that puts loyalty above truth, above one's own reason and above conscience. In this case a person attempts to justify incorrect, stupid or criminal behavior by whining "That's what I was told to do," or "I was just following orders." See also, The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy, and The "Soldiers' Honor" Fallacy.
28. **Blood is Thicker than Water** (also Favoritism; Compadrisimo; "For my friends, anything."): The reverse of the "Ad Hominem" fallacy, a corrupt argument from ethos where a statement, argument or action is automatically regarded as true, correct and above challenge because one is related to, knows and likes, or is on the same team or side, or belongs to the same religion, party, club or fraternity as the individual involved. (E.g., "My brother-in-law says he saw you goofing off on the job. You're a hard worker but who am I going to believe, you or him? You're fired!") See also the Identity Fallacy.
29. **Brainwashing** (also, Propaganda, "Radicalization."): The Cold War-era fantasy that an enemy can instantly win over or "radicalize" an unsuspecting audience with their vile but somehow unspeakably persuasive "propaganda," e.g., "Don't look at that website! They're trying to brainwash you with their propaganda!" Historically, "brainwashing" refers more properly to the inhuman Argumentum ad Baculum of "beating an argument into" a prisoner via a combination of pain, fear, sensory or sleep deprivation, prolonged abuse and sophisticated psychological manipulation (also, the "**Stockholm Syndrome**"). Such "brainwashing" can also be accomplished by pleasure ("**Love Bombing**"); e.g., "Did you like that? I know you did. Well, there's lots more where that came from when you sign on with us!" (See also, "Bribery.") An unspeakably sinister form of persuasion by brainwashing involves deliberately addicting a person to drugs and then providing or withholding the substance depending on the addict's compliance. Note: Only the *other* side brainwashes. "We" *never* brainwash.
30. **Bribery** (also, Material Persuasion, Material Incentive, Financial Incentive). The fallacy of "persuasion" by bribery, gifts or favors is the reverse of the Argumentum ad Baculum. As is well known, someone who is persuaded by bribery rarely "stays persuaded" in the long term unless the bribes keep on coming in and increasing with time. See also Appeasement.
31. **Calling "Cards"**: A contemporary fallacy of logos, arbitrarily and falsely dismissing familiar or easily-anticipated but valid, reasoned objections to one's standpoint with a wave of the hand, as mere "cards" in some sort of "game" of

rhetoric, e.g. "Don't try to play the 'Race Card' against me," or "She's playing the 'Woman Card' again," or "That 'Hitler Card' won't score with me in this argument." See also, The Taboo, and Political Correctness.

32. **Circular Reasoning** (also, The Vicious Circle; Catch 22, Begging the Question, Circulus in Probando): A fallacy of logos where A is because of B, and B is because of A, e.g., "You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job." Also refers to falsely arguing that something is true by repeating the same statement in different words. E.g., "The witchcraft problem is the most urgent spiritual crisis in the world today. Why? Because witches threaten our very eternal salvation." A corrupt argument from logos. See also the "Big Lie technique."
33. **The Complex Question**: The contemporary fallacy of demanding a direct answer to a question that cannot be answered without first analyzing or challenging the basis of the question itself. E.g., "Just answer me 'yes' or 'no': Did you think you could get away with plagiarism and not suffer the consequences?" Or, "Why did you rob that bank?" Also applies to situations where one is forced to either accept or reject complex standpoints or propositions containing both acceptable and unacceptable parts. A corruption of the argument from logos. A counterpart of Either/Or Reasoning.
34. **Confirmation Bias**: A fallacy of logos, the common tendency to notice, search out, select and share evidence that confirms one's own standpoint and beliefs, as opposed to contrary evidence. This fallacy is how "fortune tellers" work--If I am told I will meet a "tall, dark stranger" I will be on the lookout for a tall, dark stranger, and when I meet someone even marginally meeting that description I will marvel at the correctness of the "psychic's" prediction. In contemporary times Confirmation Bias is most often seen in the tendency of various audiences to "curate their political environments, subsisting on one-sided information diets and [even] selecting into politically homogeneous neighborhoods" ([Michael A. Neblo et al., 2017, Science magazine](#)). Confirmation Bias (also, Homophily) means that people tend to seek out and follow solely those media outlets that confirm their common ideological and cultural biases, sometimes to an degree that leads a the false (implicit or even explicit) conclusion that "everyone" agrees with that bias and that anyone who doesn't is "crazy," "looney," evil or even "radicalized." See also, "Half Truth," and "Defensiveness."
35. **Cost Bias**: A fallacy of ethos (that of a product), the fact that something expensive (either in terms of money, or something that is "hard fought" or "hard won" or for which one "paid dearly") is generally valued more highly than something obtained free or cheaply, regardless of the item's real quality, utility or true value to the purchaser. E. g., "Hey, I worked hard to get this car! It may be nothing but a clunker that can't make it up a steep hill, but it's *mine*, and to me it's better than some millionaire's limo." Also applies to judging the quality of a consumer item ([or even of its owner!](#)) primarily by the item's brand, price, label or source, e.g., "Hey, you there in the Jay-Mart suit! Har-har!" or, "Ooh, she's driving a *Mercedes!*"
36. **Default Bias**: (also, Normalization of Evil, "Deal with it;" "If it ain't broke, don't fix it;" Acquiescence; "Making one's peace with the situation;" "Get used to it;" "Whatever *is*, is right;" "It is what it is;" "Let it be, let it be;" "This is the best of all possible worlds [or, the *only* possible world];" "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't."): The logical fallacy of automatically favoring or accepting a situation simply because it exists right now, and arguing that any other alternative is mad, unthinkable, impossible, or at least would take too much effort, expense, stress or risk to change. The opposite of this fallacy is that of **Nihilism** ("Tear it all down!"), blindly rejecting what exists in favor of what could be, the adolescent fantasy of romanticizing anarchy, chaos (an ideology sometimes called political "**Chaos Theory**"), disorder, "permanent revolution," or change for change's sake.
37. **Defensiveness** (also, Choice-support Bias: Myside Bias): A fallacy of ethos (one's own), in which after one has taken a given decision, commitment or course of action, one automatically tends to defend that decision and to irrationally dismiss opposing options even when one's decision later on proves to be shaky or wrong. E.g., "Yeah, I voted for Snith. Sure, he turned out to be a crook and a liar and he got us into war, but I still say that at that time he was better than the available alternatives!" See also "Argument from Inertia" and "Confirmation Bias."
38. **Deliberate Ignorance**: (also, Closed-mindedness; "I don't want to hear it!"; Motivated Ignorance; Tuning Out; Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil [The Three Monkeys' Fallacy]): As described by author and commentator [Brian Resnik on Vox.com](#) (2017), this is the fallacy of simply choosing not to listen, "tuning out" or turning off any information, evidence or arguments that challenge one's beliefs, ideology, standpoint, or peace of mind, following the popular humorous dictum: "Don't try to confuse me with the facts; my mind is made up!" This seemingly innocuous fallacy has enabled the most vicious tyrannies and abuses over history, and continues to do so today. See also Trust your Gut, Confirmation Bias, The Third Person Effect, "They're All Crooks," the Simpleton's Fallacy, and The Positive Thinking Fallacy.

39. **Diminished Responsibility:** The common contemporary fallacy of applying a specialized judicial concept (that criminal punishment should be less if one's judgment was impaired) to reality in general. E.g., "You can't count me absent on Monday--I was hung over and couldn't come to class so it's not my fault." Or, "Yeah, I was speeding on the freeway and killed a guy, but I was buzzed out of my mind and didn't know what I was doing so it didn't matter that much." In reality the death does matter very much to the victim, to his family and friends and to society in general. Whether the perpetrator was high or not does not matter at all since the material results are the same. This also includes the fallacy of **Panic**, a very common contemporary fallacy that one's words or actions, no matter how damaging or evil, somehow don't "count" because "I panicked!" This fallacy is rooted in the confusion of "consequences" with "punishment." See also "Venting."
40. **Disciplinary Blinders:** A very common contemporary scholarly or professional fallacy of ethos (that of one's discipline, profession or academic field), automatically disregarding, discounting or ignoring *a priori* otherwise-relevant research, arguments and evidence that come from outside one's own professional discipline, discourse community or academic area of study. E.g., "That might be relevant or not, but it's *so* not what we're doing in our field right now." See also, "Star Power" and "Two Truths." An analogous fallacy is that of **Denominational Blinders**, arbitrarily ignoring or waving aside without serious consideration any arguments or discussion about faith, morality, ethics, spirituality, the Divine or the afterlife that come from outside one's own specific religious denomination or faith tradition.
41. **Dog-Whistle Politics:** An extreme version of reductionism and sloganeering in the public sphere, a contemporary fallacy of logos and pathos in which a brief phrase or slogan of the hour, e.g., "Abortion," "The 1%," "9/11," "Zionism," "Chain Migration," "Islamic Terrorism," "Fascism," "Communism," "Big government," "Taco trucks!", "Tax and tax and spend and spend," "Gun violence," "Gun control," "Freedom of choice," "Lock 'em up," "Amnesty," etc. is flung out as "red meat" or "chum in the water" that reflexively sends one's audience into a snapping, foaming-at-the-mouth feeding-frenzy. Any reasoned attempt to more clearly identify, deconstruct or challenge an opponent's "dog whistle" appeal results in puzzled confusion at best and wild, irrational fury at worst. "Dog whistles" differ widely in different places, moments and cultural milieux, and they change and lose or gain power so quickly that even recent historic texts sometimes become extraordinarily difficult to interpret. A common but sad instance of the fallacy of Dog Whistle Politics is that of candidate "debaters" of differing political shades simply blowing a succession of discursive "dog whistles" at their audience instead of addressing, refuting or even bothering to listen to each other's arguments, a situation resulting in contemporary (2017) allegations that the political Right and Left in America are speaking "different languages" when they are simply blowing different "dog whistles." See also, Reductionism..
42. **The "Draw Your Own Conclusion" Fallacy** (also the Non-argument Argument; Let the Facts Speak for Themselves). In this fallacy of logos an otherwise uninformed audience is presented with carefully selected and groomed, "shocking facts" and then prompted to immediately "draw their own conclusions." E.g., "Crime rates are more than twice as high among middle-class Patzinaks than among any other similar population group--draw your own conclusions." It is well known that those who are allowed to "come to their own conclusions" are generally much more strongly convinced than those who are given both evidence and conclusion up front. However, Dr. William Lorimer points out that "The only rational response to the non-argument is 'So what?' i.e. 'What do you think you've proved, and why/how do you think you've proved it?'" Closely related (if not identical) to this is the well-known **"Leading the Witness" Fallacy**, where a sham, sarcastic or biased question is asked solely in order to evoke a desired answer.
43. **The Dunning-Kruger Effect:** A cognitive bias that leads people of limited skills or knowledge to mistakenly believe their abilities are greater than they actually are. (Thanks to [Teaching Tolerance](#) for this definition!) E.g., "I know Washington was the Father of His Country and never told a lie, Pocahontas was the first Native American, Lincoln freed the slaves, Hitler murdered six million Jews, Susan B. Anthony won equal rights for women, and Martin Luther King said "I have a dream!" Moses parted the Red Sea, Caesar said "Et tu, Brute?" and the only reason America didn't win the Vietnam War hands-down like we always do was because they tied our generals' hands and the politicians cut and run. See? Why do I need to take a history course? I know *everything* about history!"
44. **E" for Effort.** (also Noble Effort; I'm Trying My Best; The Lost Cause): The common contemporary fallacy of ethos that something must be right, true, valuable, or worthy of respect and honor solely because one (or someone else) has put so much sincere good-faith effort or even sacrifice and bloodshed into it. (See also Appeal to Pity; Argument from Inertia; Heroes All; or Sob Story). An extreme example of this fallacy is **Waving the Bloody Shirt** (also, the **"Blood of the Martyrs" Fallacy**), the fallacy that a cause or argument, no matter how questionable or reprehensible, cannot be questioned without dishonoring the blood and sacrifice of those who died so nobly for that

cause. E.g., "[Defend the patriotic gore / That flecked the streets of Baltimore..](#)" (from the official Maryland State Song). See also Cost Bias, The Soldier's Honor Fallacy, and the Argument from Inertia.

45. **Either/Or Reasoning:** (also False Dilemma, All or Nothing Thinking; False Dichotomy, Black/White Fallacy, False Binary): A fallacy of logos that falsely offers only two possible options even though a broad range of possible alternatives, variations and combinations are always readily available. E.g., "Either you are 100% Simon Straightarrow or you are as queer as a three dollar bill--it's as simple as that and there's no middle ground!" Or, "Either you're in with us all the way or you're a hostile and must be destroyed! What's it gonna be?" Or, if your performance is anything short of perfect, you consider yourself an abject failure. Also applies to falsely contrasting one option or case to another that is not really opposed, e.g., falsely opposing "Black Lives Matter" to "Blue Lives Matter" when in fact not a few police officers are themselves African American, and African Americans and police are not (or ought not to be!) natural enemies. Or, falsely posing a choice of either helping needy American veterans or helping needy foreign refugees, when in fact in today's United States there are ample resources available to easily do both should we care to do so. See also, Overgeneralization.
46. **Equivocation:** The fallacy of deliberately failing to define one's terms, or knowingly and deliberately using words in a different sense than the one the audience will understand. (E.g., President Bill Clinton stating that he did not have sexual relations with "that woman," meaning no sexual penetration, knowing full well that the audience will understand his statement as "I had no sexual contact of any kind with that woman.") This is a corruption of the argument from logos, and a tactic often used in American jurisprudence. Historically, this referred to a tactic used during the Reformation-era religious wars in Europe, when people were forced to swear loyalty to one or another side and did as demanded via "equivocation," i.e., "When I solemnly swore true faith and allegiance to the King I really meant to King Jesus, King of Kings, and not to the evil usurper squatting on the throne today." This latter form of fallacy is excessively rare today when the swearing of oaths has become effectively meaningless except as obscenity or as speech formally subject to perjury penalties in legal or judicial settings.
47. **The Eschatological Fallacy:** The ancient fallacy of arguing, "This world is coming to an end, so..." Popularly refuted by the observation that "Since the world is coming to an end you won't need your life savings anyhow, so why not give it all to me?"
48. **Esoteric Knowledge** (also Esoteric Wisdom; Gnosticism; Inner Truth; the Inner Sanctum; Need to Know): A fallacy from logos and ethos, that there is some knowledge reserved only for the Wise, the Holy or the Enlightened, (or those with proper Security Clearance), things that the masses cannot understand and do not deserve to know, at least not until they become wiser, more trusted or more "spiritually advanced." The counterpart of this fallacy is that of **Obscurantism** (also Obscurantism, or Willful Ignorance), that (almost always said in a basso profundo voice) "There are some things that we mere mortals must never seek to know!" E.g., "Scientific experiments that violate the privacy of the marital bed and expose the deep and private mysteries of human sexual behavior to the harsh light of science are obscene, sinful and morally evil. There are some things that we as humans are simply not meant to know!" For the opposite of this latter, see the "Plain Truth Fallacy." See also, Argumentum ad Mysteriam.
49. **Essentializing:** A fallacy of logos that proposes a person or thing "is what it is and that's all that it is," and at its core will always be the way it is right now (E.g., "All terrorists are monsters, and will still be terrorist monsters even if they live to be 100," or "'The poor you will always have with you,' so any effort to eliminate poverty is pointless."). Also refers to the fallacy of arguing that something is a certain way "by nature," an empty claim that no amount of proof can refute. (E.g., "Americans are cold and greedy by nature," or "Women are naturally better cooks than men.") See also "Default Bias." The opposite of this is **Relativizing**, the typically postmodern fallacy of blithely dismissing any and all arguments against one's standpoint by shrugging one's shoulders and responding "Whatever..., I don't feel like arguing about it;" "It all depends...;" "That's your opinion; everything's relative;" or falsely invoking Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Quantum Weirdness or the Theory of Multiple Universes in order to confuse, mystify or "refute" an opponent. See also, "Red Herring" and "Appeal to Nature."
50. **The Etymological Fallacy:** (also, "The Underlying Meaning"): A fallacy of logos, drawing false conclusions from the (most often long-forgotten) linguistic origins of a current word, or the alleged meanings or associations of that word in another language. E.g., "As used in physics, electronics and electrical engineering the term 'hysteresis' is grossly sexist since it originally came from the Greek word for 'uterus' or 'womb.'" Or, "I refuse to eat fish! Don't you know that the French word for 'fish' is 'poisson,' which looks just like the English word 'poison'? And doesn't that suggest something to you?" Famously, postmodern philosopher Jacques Derrida played on this fallacy at great length in his (1968) "[Plato's Pharmacy](#)."

51. **The Excluded Middle:** A corrupted argument from logos that proposes that since a little of something is good, more must be better (or that if less of something is good, none at all is even better). E.g., "If eating an apple a day is good for you, eating an all-apple diet is even better!" or "If a low fat diet prolongs your life, a no-fat diet should make you live forever!" An opposite of this fallacy is that of **Excluded Outliers**, where one arbitrarily discards evidence, examples or results that disprove one's standpoint by simply describing them as "Weird," "Outliers," or "Atypical." See also, "The Big 'But' Fallacy." Also opposite is the **Middle of the Road Fallacy** (also, *Falacia ad Temperantiam*; "The Politics of the Center;" Marginalization of the Adversary), where one demonstrates the "reasonableness" of one's own standpoint (no matter how extreme) not on its own merits, but solely or mainly by presenting it as the only "moderate" path among two or more obviously unacceptable extreme alternatives. E.g., anti-Communist scholar [Charles Roig \(1979\)](#) notes that Vladimir Lenin successfully argued for Bolshevism in Russia as the only available "moderate" middle path between bomb-throwing Nihilist terrorists on the ultra-left and a corrupt and hated Czarist autocracy on the right. As Texas politician and humorist Jim Hightower famously [declares](#) in an undated quote, "The middle of the road is for yellow lines and dead armadillos."
52. **The "F-Bomb"** (also Cursing; Obscenity; Profanity). An adolescent fallacy of pathos, attempting to defend or strengthen one's argument with gratuitous, unrelated sexual, obscene, vulgar, crude or profane language when such language does nothing to make an argument stronger, other than perhaps to create a sense of identity with certain young male "urban" audiences. This fallacy also includes adding gratuitous sex scenes or "adult" language to an otherwise unrelated novel or movie, sometimes simply to avoid the dreaded "G" rating. Related to this fallacy is the **Salacious Fallacy**, falsely attracting attention to and thus potential agreement with one's argument by inappropriately sexualizing it, particularly connecting it to some form of sex that is perceived as deviant, perverted or prohibited (E.g., Arguing against Bill Clinton's presidential legacy by continuing to wave Monica's Blue Dress, or against Donald Trump's presidency by obsessively highlighting his past boasting about genital groping). Historically, this dangerous fallacy was deeply implicated with the crime of lynching, in which false, racist accusations against a Black or minority victim were almost always salacious in nature and the sensation involved was successfully used to whip up public emotion to a murderous pitch. See also, Red Herring.
53. **The False Analogy:** The fallacy of incorrectly comparing one thing to another in order to draw a false conclusion. E.g., "Just like an alley cat needs to prowl, a normal adult can't be tied down to one single lover." The opposite of this fallacy is the **Sui Generis Fallacy** (also, *Differance*), a postmodern stance that rejects the validity of analogy and of inductive reasoning altogether because any given person, place, thing or idea under consideration is "sui generis" i.e., different and unique, in a class unto itself.
54. **Finish the Job:** The dangerous contemporary fallacy, often aimed at a lesser-educated or working class audience, that an action or standpoint (or the continuation of that action or standpoint) may not be questioned or discussed because there is "a job to be done" or finished, falsely assuming "jobs" are meaningless but never to be questioned. Sometimes those involved internalize ("buy into") the "job" and make the task a part of their own ethos. (E.g., "Ours is not to reason why / Ours is but to do or die.") Related to this is the **"Just a Job"** fallacy. (E.g., "How can torturers stand to look at themselves in the mirror? But I guess it's OK because for them it's just a job like any other, the job that they get paid to do.") See also "Blind Loyalty," "The Soldiers' Honor Fallacy" and the "Argument from Inertia."
55. **The Free Speech Fallacy:** The infantile fallacy of responding to challenges to one's statements and standpoints by whining, "It's a free country, isn't it? I can say anything I want to!" A contemporary case of this fallacy is the **"Safe Space,"** or **"Safe Place,"** where it is not allowed to refute, challenge or even discuss another's beliefs because that might be too uncomfortable or "triggery" for emotionally fragile individuals. E.g., "All I told him was, 'Jesus loves the little children,' but then he turned around and asked me 'But what about birth defects?' That's *mean*. I think I'm going to cry!" [Prof. Bill Hart Davidson \(2017\)](#) notes that "Ironically, the most strident calls for 'safety' come from those who want us to issue protections for discredited ideas. Things that science doesn't support AND that have destroyed lives - things like the inherent superiority of one race over another. Those ideas wither under demands for evidence. They *\*are\** unwelcome. But let's be clear: they are unwelcome because they have not survived the challenge of scrutiny." Ironically, in contemporary America "free speech" has often become shorthand for freedom of racist, offensive or even neo-Nazi expression, ideological trends that once in power typically quash free speech. Additionally, a recent (2017) scientific study has found that, in fact, ["people think harder and produce better political arguments when their views are challenged"](#) and not artificially protected without challenge.
56. **The Fundamental Attribution Error** (also, Self Justification): A corrupt argument from ethos, this fallacy occurs as a result of observing and comparing behavior. "You assume that the bad behavior of others is caused by character flaws and foul dispositions while your behavior is explained by the environment. So, for example, I get up in the morning at 10 a.m. I say it is because my neighbors party until 2 in the morning (situation) but I say that the reason

why you do it is that you are lazy. Interestingly, it is more common in individualistic societies where we value self volition. Collectivist societies tend to look at the environment more. (It happens there, too, but it is much less common.)" [Thanks to scholar Joel Sax for this!] The obverse of this fallacy is **Self Deprecation** (also Self Debasement), where, out of either a false humility or a genuine lack of self-esteem, one deliberately puts oneself down, most often in hopes of attracting denials, gratifying compliments and praise.

57. **Gaslighting:** A recently-prominent, vicious fallacy of logic, denying or invalidating a person's own knowledge and experiences by deliberately twisting or distorting known facts, memories, scenes, events and evidence in order to disorient a vulnerable opponent and to make him or her doubt his/her sanity. E.g., "Who are you going to believe? Me, or your own eyes?" Or, "You claim you found me in bed with *her*? Think again! You're crazy! You seriously need to see a shrink." A very common, though cruel instance of Gaslighting that seems to have been particularly familiar among mid-20th century generations is the fallacy of **Emotional Invalidation**, questioning, after the fact, the reality or "validity" of affective states, either another's or one's own. E.g., "Sure, I made it happen from beginning to end, but but it wasn't *me* doing it, it was just my stupid hormones betraying me." Or, "You didn't really mean it when you said you 'hate' Mommy. Now take a time-out and you'll feel better." Or, "No, you're not really in love; it's just infatuation or 'puppy love.'" The fallacy of "Gaslighting" is named after British playwright Patrick Hamilton's 1938 stage play "Gas Light," also known as "Angel Street." See also, Blind Loyalty, "The Big Brain/Little Brain Fallacy," The Affective Fallacy, and "Alternative Truth."
58. **Guilt by Association:** The fallacy of trying to refute or condemn someone's standpoint, arguments or actions by evoking the negative ethos of those with whom the speaker is identified or of a group, party, religion or race to which he or she belongs or was once associated with. A form of Ad Hominem Argument, e.g., "Don't listen to her. She's a Republican so you can't trust anything she says," or "Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" An extreme instance of this is the Machiavellian **"For my enemies, nothing" Fallacy**, where real or perceived "enemies" are by definition *always* wrong and must be conceded nothing, not even the time of day, e.g., "He's a Republican, so even if he said the sky is blue I wouldn't believe him."
59. **The Half Truth** (also Card Stacking, Stacking the Deck, Incomplete Information): A corrupt argument from logos, the fallacy of consciously selecting, collecting and sharing only that evidence that supports one's own standpoint, telling the strict truth but deliberately minimizing or omitting important key details in order to falsify the larger picture and support a false conclusion. (E.g. "The truth is that Bangladesh is one of the world's fastest-growing countries and can boast of a young, ambitious and hard-working population, a family-positive culture, a delightful, warm climate of tropical beaches and swaying palms where it never snows, low cost medical and dental care, a vibrant faith tradition and a multitude of places of worship, an exquisite, world-class spicy local curry cuisine and a swinging entertainment scene. Taken together, all these solid facts clearly prove that Bangladesh is one of the world's most desirable places for young families to live, work and raise a family.") See also, Confirmation Bias.
60. **Hero-Busting** (also, "The Perfect is the Enemy of the Good"): A postmodern fallacy of ethos under which, since nothing and nobody in this world is perfect there are not and have never been any heroes: Washington and Jefferson held slaves, Lincoln was (by our contemporary standards) a racist, Karl Marx sexually exploited his family's own young live-in domestic worker and got her pregnant, Martin Luther King Jr. had an eye for women too, Lenin condemned feminism, the Mahatma drank his own urine (ugh!), Pope Francis is wrong on abortion, capitalism, same-sex marriage and women's ordination, Mother Teresa loved suffering and was wrong on just about everything else too, etc., etc Also applies to the now near-universal political tactic of ransacking everything an opponent has said, written or done since infancy in order to find *something* to misinterpret or condemn (and we all have *something!*). An early example of this latter tactic is deftly described in Robert Penn Warren's classic (1946) novel, [All the King's Men](#). This is the opposite of the "Heroes All" fallacy, below. The "Hero Busting" fallacy has also been selectively employed at the service of the **Identity Fallacy** (see below) to falsely "prove" that "you cannot trust anyone" but a member of "our" identity-group since *everyone else*, even the so-called "heroes" or "allies" of other groups, are *all* racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, or hate "us." E.g., In 1862 Abraham Lincoln said he was willing to settle the U.S. Civil War either with or without freeing the slaves if it would preserve the Union, thus "conclusively proving" that all whites are viciously racist at heart and that African Americans must do for self and never trust any of "them," not even those who claim to be allies.
61. **Heroes All** (also, "Everybody's a Winner"): The contemporary fallacy that *everyone* is above average or extraordinary. A corrupted argument from pathos (not wanting anyone to lose or to feel bad). Thus, *every* member of the Armed Services, past or present, who serves honorably is a national hero, *every* student who competes in the Science Fair wins a ribbon or trophy, and *every* racer is awarded a winner's yellow jersey. This corruption of the argument from pathos, much ridiculed by disgraced American humorist Garrison Keeler, ignores the fact that if everybody wins *nobody* wins, and if everyone's a hero *no one's* a hero. The logical result of this fallacy is that, as

children's author Alice Childress writes (1973), "[A hero ain't nothing but a sandwich](#)." See also the "Soldiers' Honor Fallacy."

62. **Hoyle's Fallacy:** A fallacy of logoi, falsely assuming that a possible event of low (even vanishingly low) probability can *never* have happened and/or would *never* happen in real life. E.g., "The probability of something as complex as human DNA emerging by purely random evolution in the time the earth has existed is so negligible that it is for all practical purposes *impossible* and *must* have required divine intervention." Or, "The chance of a casual, Saturday-night poker player being dealt four aces off an honest, shuffled deck is so infinitesimal that it would never occur even once in a normal lifetime! That *proves* you cheated!" See also, Argument from Incredulity. An obverse of Hoyle's Fallacy is "**You Can't Win if You Don't Play,**" (also, "Someone's gonna win and it might as well be YOU!") a common and cruel contemporary fallacy used to persuade vulnerable audiences, particularly the poor, the mathematically illiterate and gambling addicts to throw their money away on lotteries, horse races, casinos and other long-shot gambling schemes.
63. **I Wish I Had a Magic Wand:** The fallacy of regretfully (and falsely) proclaiming oneself powerless to change a bad or objectionable situation over which one has power. E.g., "What can we do about gas prices? As Secretary of Energy I wish I had a magic wand, but I don't" [shrug]. Or, "No, you can't quit piano lessons. I wish I had a magic wand and could teach you piano overnight, but I don't, so like it or not, you have to keep on practicing." The parent, of course, ignores the possibility that the child may not want or need to learn piano. See also, TINA.
64. **The Identity Fallacy** (also Identity Politics; "Die away, ye old forms and logic!"): A corrupt postmodern argument from ethos, a variant on the Argumentum ad Hominem in which the validity of one's logic, evidence, experience or arguments depends not on their own strength but rather on whether the one arguing is a member of a given social class, generation, nationality, religious or ethnic group, color, gender or sexual orientation, profession, occupation or subgroup. In this fallacy, valid opposing evidence and arguments are brushed aside or "othered" without comment or consideration, as simply not worth arguing about solely because of the lack of proper background or ethos of the person making the argument, or because the one arguing does not self-identify as a member of the "in-group." E.g., "You'd understand me right away if you were Burmese but since you're not there's no way I can explain it to you," or "Nobody but another nurse can know what a nurse has to go through." Identity fallacies are reinforced by common [ritual](#), language, and discourse. However, these fallacies are occasionally self-interested, driven by the egotistical ambitions of academics, politicians and would-be group leaders anxious to build their own careers by carving out a special identity group constituency to the exclusion of existing broader-based identities and leadership. An Identity Fallacy may lead to scorn or rejection of potentially useful allies, real or prospective, because they are not of one's own identity. The Identity Fallacy promotes an exclusivist, sometimes cultish "do for self" philosophy which in today's world virtually guarantees self-marginalization and ultimate defeat. A recent application of the Identity Fallacy is the fallacious accusation of "**Cultural Appropriation,**" in which those who are not of the right Identity are condemned for "appropriating" the cuisine, clothing, language or music of a marginalized group, forgetting the old axiom that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." Accusations of Cultural Appropriation very often stem from competing selfish economic interests (E.g., "What right do those p\*nche Gringos have to set up a taco place right here on Guadalupe Drive to take away business from Doña Teresa's Taquería? They even dare to play Mexican music in their dining room! That's cultural appropriation!"). See also, Othering.
65. **Infotainment** (also Infortainment; Fake News; InfoWars); A very corrupt and dangerous modern media-driven fallacy that deliberately and knowingly stirs in facts, news, falsities and outright lies with entertainment, a mixture usually concocted for specific, base ideological and profit-making motives. Origins of this fallacy predate the current era in the form of "Yellow" or "Tabloid" Journalism. This deadly fallacy has caused endless social unrest, discontent and even shooting wars (e.g., the Spanish American War) over the course of modern history. Practitioners of this fallacy sometimes hypocritically justify its use on the basis that their readers/listeners/viewers "know beforehand" (or *should* know) that the content offered is not intended as real news and is offered for entertainment purposes only, but in fact this caveat is rarely observed by uncritical audiences who eagerly swallow what the purveyors put forth. See also Dog-Whistle Politics.
66. **The Job's Comforter Fallacy** (also, "Karma is a bi\*\*h;" "What goes around comes around."): The fallacy that since there is no such thing as random chance and we (I, my group, or my country) are under special protection of heaven, any misfortune or natural disaster that we suffer must be a punishment for our own or someone else's secret sin or open wickedness. The opposite of the Appeal to Heaven, this is the fallacy employed by the Westboro Baptist Church members who protest fallen service members' funerals all around the United States. See also, Magical Thinking.

67. **Just Do it.** (also, "Find a way;" "I don't care how you do it;" "Accomplish the mission;" "By Any Means Necessary."): A pure, abusive Argumentum ad Baculum (argument from force), in which someone in power arbitrarily waves aside or overrules the moral objections of subordinates or followers and orders them to accomplish a goal by any means required, fair or foul. The clear implication is that unethical or immoral methods should be used. E.g., "You say there's no way you can finish the dig on schedule because you found an old pioneer gravesite with a fancy tombstone on the excavation site? Well, find a way! Make it disappear! *Just do it!* I don't want to know *how* you do it, just do it! This is a million dollar contract and we need it done by Tuesday." See also, Plausible Deniability.
68. **Just Plain Folks** (also, "Values"): This corrupt modern argument from ethos argues to a less-educated or rural audience that the one arguing is "just plain folks" who is a "plain talker," "says what s/he is thinking," "scorns political correctness," someone who "you don't need a dictionary to understand" and who thinks like the audience and is thus worthy of belief, unlike some member of the fancy-talking, latte-sipping Left Coast Political Elite, some "double-domed professor," "inside-the-beltway Washington bureaucrat," "tree-hugger" or other despised outsider who "doesn't think like we do" or "doesn't share our values." This is a counterpart to the Ad Hominem Fallacy and most often carries a distinct reek of xenophobia or racism as well. See also the Plain Truth Fallacy and the Simpleton's Fallacy.
69. **The Law of Unintended Consequences** (also, "Every Revolution Ends up Eating its own Young;" Grit; Resilience Doctrine): In this very dangerous, archly pessimistic postmodern fallacy the bogus "Law of Unintended Consequences," once a semi-humorous satirical corollary of "Murphy's Law," is elevated to the status of an iron law of history. This fallacy arbitrarily proclaims *a priori* that since we can never know *everything* or securely foresee *anything*, sooner or later in today's "complex world" unforeseeable adverse consequences and negative side effects (so-called "unknown unknowns") will *always* end up blindsiding and overwhelming, defeating and vitiating any and all naive "do-gooder" efforts to improve our world. Instead, one must always expect defeat and be ready to roll with the punches by developing "grit" or "resilience" as a primary survival skill. This nihilist fallacy is a practical negation of the possibility of *any* valid argument from logos. See also, TINA.
70. **Lying with Statistics:** The contemporary fallacy of misusing true figures and numbers to "prove" unrelated claims. (e.g. "In real terms, attending college has never been cheaper than it is now. When expressed as a percentage of the national debt, the cost of getting a college education is actually far less today than it was back in 1965!"). A corrupted argument from logos, often preying on the public's perceived or actual mathematical ignorance. This includes the **Tiny Percentage Fallacy**, that an amount or action that is quite significant in and of itself somehow becomes insignificant simply because it's a tiny percentage of something much larger. E.g., the arbitrary arrest, detention or interception of "only" a few hundred legally-boarded international travelers as a tiny percentage of the tens of thousands who normally arrive. Under this same fallacy a consumer who would choke on spending an extra dollar for two cans of peas will typically ignore \$50 extra on the price of a car or \$1000 extra on the price of a house simply because these differences are "only" a tiny percentage of the much larger amount being spent. Historically, sales taxes or value-added taxes (VAT) have successfully gained public acceptance and remain "under the radar" because of this latter fallacy, even though amounting to hundreds or thousands of dollars a year in extra tax burden. See also Half-truth, the Snow Job, and the Red Herring.
71. **Magical Thinking** (also, the Sin of Presumption; Expect a Miracle!): An ancient but deluded fallacy of logos, arguing that when it comes to "crunch time," provided one has enough faith, prays hard enough, says the right words, does the right rituals, "names it and claims it," or "claims the Promise," God will always suspend the laws of the universe and work a miracle at the request of or for the benefit of the True Believer. In practice this nihilist fallacy denies the existence of a rational or predictable universe and thus the possibility of *any* valid argument from logic. See also, Positive Thinking, the Appeal to Heaven, and the Job's Comforter fallacy.
72. **Mala Fides** (Arguing in Bad Faith; also Sophism): Using an argument that the arguer himself or herself knows is not valid. E.g., An unbeliever attacking believers by throwing verses from their own Holy Scriptures at them, or a lawyer arguing for the innocence of someone whom s/he knows full well to be guilty. This latter is a common practice in American jurisprudence, and is sometimes portrayed as the worst face of "Sophism." [*Special thanks to Bradley Steffens for pointing out this fallacy!*] Included under this fallacy is the fallacy of **Motivational Truth** (also, **Demagogy**, or **Campaign Promises**), deliberately lying to "the people" to gain their support or motivate them toward some action the rhetor perceives to be desirable (using evil discursive means toward a "good" material end). A particularly bizarre and corrupt form of this latter fallacy is **Self Deception** (also, **Whistling by the Graveyard**), in which one deliberately and knowingly deludes oneself in order to achieve a goal, or perhaps simply to suppress anxiety and maintain one's energy level, enthusiasm, morale, peace of mind or sanity in moments of adversity.



73. **Measurability:** A corrupt argument from logos and ethos (that of science and mathematics), the modern Fallacy of Measurability proposes that if something cannot be measured, quantified and replicated it does not exist, or is "nothing but anecdotal, touchy-feely stuff" unworthy of serious consideration, i.e., mere gossip or subjective opinion. Often, achieving "Measurability" necessarily demands preselecting, "fiddling" or "massaging" the available data simply in order to make it statistically tractable, or in order to support a desired conclusion. Scholar Thomas Persing thus describes "The modernist fallacy of falsely and inappropriately applying norms, standardizations, and data point requirements to quantify productivity or success. This is similar to complex question, measurability, and oversimplification fallacies where the user attempts to categorize complicated / diverse topics into terms that when measured, suit their position. For example, the calculation of inflation in the United States doesn't include the changes in the price to gasoline, because the price of gasoline is too volatile, despite the fact gasoline is necessary for most people to live their lives in the United States." See also, "A Priori Argument," "Lying with Statistics," and the "Procrustean Fallacy."
74. **Mind-reading** (Also, "The Fallacy of Speculation;" "I can read you like a book"): An ancient fallacy, a corruption of stasis theory, speculating about someone else's thoughts, emotions, motivations and "body language" and then claiming to understand these clearly, sometimes more accurately than the person in question knows themselves. The rhetor deploys this phony "knowledge" as a fallacious warrant for or against a given standpoint. Scholar Myron Peto offers as an example the baseless claim that "Obama doesn't a da\*\* [sic] for human rights." Assertions that "call for speculation" are rightly rejected as fallacious in U.S. judicial proceedings but far too often pass uncontested in public discourse. The opposite of this fallacy is the postmodern fallacy of **Mind Blindness** (also, the **Autist's Fallacy**), a complete denial of any normal human capacity for "Theory of Mind," postulating the utter incommensurability and privacy of minds and thus the impossibility of ever knowing or truly understanding another's thoughts, emotions, motivations or intents. This fallacy, much promoted by the late postmodernist guru Jacques Derrida, necessarily vitiates any form of Stasis Theory. However, the Fallacy of Mind Blindness has been decisively refuted in several studies, including [recent \(2017\) research published by the Association for Psychological Science](#), and a (2017) Drexel University study indicating how ["our minds align when we communicate."](#)
75. **Moral Licensing:** The contemporary ethical fallacy that one's consistently moral life, good behavior or recent extreme suffering or sacrifice earns him/her the right to commit an immoral act without repercussions, consequences or punishment. E.g., "I've been good all year, so one bad won't matter," or "After what I've been through, God knows I need this." The fallacy of Moral Licensing is also sometimes applied to nations, e.g., "Those who criticize repression and the Gulag in the former USSR forget what extraordinary suffering the Russians went through in World War II and the millions upon millions who died." See also Argument from Motives. The opposite of this fallacy is the (excessively rare in our times) ethical fallacy of **Scruples**, in which one obsesses to pathological excess about one's accidental, forgotten, unconfessed or unforgiven sins and because of them, the seemingly inevitable prospect of eternal damnation.
76. **Moral Superiority** (also, Self Righteousness; the Moral High Ground): An ancient, immoral and extremely dangerous fallacy, enunciated in Thomistic / Scholastic philosophy in the late Middle Ages, arguing that Evil has no rights that the Good and the Righteous are bound to respect. That way lies torture, heretic-burning, and the Spanish Inquisition. Those who practice this vicious fallacy reject any "moral equivalency" (i.e., even-handed treatment) between themselves (the Righteous) and their enemies (the Wicked), against whom anything is fair, and to whom nothing must be conceded, not even the right to life. This fallacy is a specific denial of the ancient "Golden Rule," and has been the cause of endless intractable conflict, since if one is Righteous no negotiation with Evil and its minions is possible; The only imaginable road to a "just" peace is through total victory, i.e., the absolute defeat and liquidation of one's Wicked enemies. American folk singer and Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan expertly demolishes this fallacy in his 1963 protest song, ["With God on Our Side."](#) See also the Appeal to Heaven, and Moving the Goalposts.
77. **Mortification** (also, Live as Though You're Dying; Pleasure-hating; No Pain No Gain): An ancient fallacy of logos, trying to "beat the flesh into submission" by extreme exercise or ascetic practices, deliberate starvation or infliction of pain, denying the undeniable fact that discomfort and pain exist for the purpose of warning of lasting damage to the body. Extreme examples of this fallacy are various forms of self-flagellation such as practiced by the New Mexico "*Penitentes*" during Holy Week or by Shia devotees during Muharram. More familiar contemporary manifestations of this fallacy are extreme "insanity" exercise regimes not intended for normal health, fitness or competitive purposes but just to "toughen" or "punish" the body. Certain pop-nutritional theories and diets seem based on this fallacy as well. Some contemporary experts suggest that self-mortification (an English word related to the Latinate French root "mort," or "death.") is in fact "suicide on the installment plan." Others suggest that it

involves a narcotic-like addiction to the body's natural endorphins. The opposite of this fallacy is the ancient fallacy of **Hedonism**, seeking and valuing physical pleasure as a good in itself, simply for its own sake.

78. **Moving the Goalposts** (also, Changing the Rules; All's Fair in Love and War; The Nuclear Option; "Winning isn't everything, it's the *only* thing"): A fallacy of logos, demanding certain proof or evidence, a certain degree of support or a certain number of votes to decide an issue, and then when this is offered, demanding even more, different or better support in order to deny victory to an opponent. For those who practice the fallacy of **Moral Superiority** (above), Moving the Goalposts is often perceived as perfectly good and permissible if necessary to prevent the victory of Wickedness and ensure the triumph of one's own side, i.e, the Righteous.
79. **MYOB** (Mind Your Own Business; also You're Not the Boss of Me; "None of yer beeswax," "So What?", The Appeal to Privacy): The contemporary fallacy of arbitrarily prohibiting or terminating any discussion of one's own standpoints or behavior, no matter how absurd, dangerous, evil or offensive, by drawing a phony curtain of privacy around oneself and one's actions. A corrupt argument from ethos (one's own). E.g., "Sure, I was doing eighty and weaving between lanes on Mesa Street--what's it to you? You're not a cop, you're not my nanny. It's my business if I want to speed, and your business to get the hell out of my way. Mind your own damn business!" Or, "Yeah, I killed my baby. So what? Butt out! It wasn't your brat, so it's none of your damn business!" Rational discussion is cut off because "it is none of your business!" See also, "Taboo." The counterpart of this is "**Nobody Will Ever Know**," (also "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas;" "I Think We're Alone Now," or the Heart of Darkness Syndrome) the fallacy that just because nobody important is looking (or because one is on vacation, or away in college, or overseas) one may freely commit immoral, selfish, negative or evil acts at will without expecting any of the normal consequences or punishment. Author Joseph Conrad graphically describes this sort of moral degradation in the character of Kurtz in his classic novel, [\*Heart of Darkness\*](#).
80. **Name-Calling**: A variety of the "Ad Hominem" argument. The dangerous fallacy that, simply because of who one is or is alleged to be, any and all arguments, disagreements or objections against one's standpoint or actions are automatically racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, bigoted, discriminatory or hateful. E.g., "My stand on abortion is the only correct one. To disagree with me, argue with me or question my judgment in any way would only show what a pig you really are." Also applies to refuting an argument by simply calling it a "fallacy," or declaring it invalid without proving *why* it is invalid, or summarily dismissing arguments or opponents by labeling them "racist," "communist," "fascist," "moron," any name followed by the suffix "tard" (short for the highly offensive "retard") or some other negative name without further explanation. E.g., "He's an a\*\*hole, end of story" or "I'm a loser." A subset of this is the **Newspeak** fallacy, creating identification with a certain kind of audience by inventing or using racist or offensive, sometimes military-sounding nicknames for opponents or enemies, e.g., "The damned DINO's are even worse than the Repugs and the Neocons." Or, "In the Big One it took us only five years to beat both the J\*ps and the Jerries, so more than a decade and a half after niner-eleven why is it so hard for us to beat a raggedy bunch of Hajjis and Towel-heads?" Note that originally the word "Nazi" belonged in this category, but this term has long come into use as a proper English noun. See also, "Reductionism," "Ad Hominem Argument," and "Alphabet Soup."
81. **The Narrative Fallacy** (also, the Fable; the Poster Child) The ancient fallacy of persuasion by telling a "heartwarming" or horrifying story or fable, particularly to less-educated or uncritical audiences who are less likely to grasp purely logical arguments or general principles. E.g., Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Narratives and fables, particularly those that name names and personalize arguments, tend to be *far* more persuasive at a popular level than other forms of argument and are virtually irrefutable, even when the story in question is well known to be entirely fictional. This fallacy is found even in the field of science, as noted by [a recent \(2017\) scientific study](#).
82. **The NIMBY Fallacy** (Not in My Back Yard; also "Build a Wall!"; "Lock'em up and throw away the key;" The Ostrich Strategy; The Gitmo Solution.). The infantile fallacy that a problem, challenge or threat that is not physically nearby or to which I am not directly exposed has for all practical purposes "gone away" and ceased to exist. Thus, a problem can be permanently and definitively solved by "making it go away," preferably to someplace "out of sight," a walled-off ghetto or a distant isle where there is no news coverage, and where nobody important stays. Lacking that, it can be made to go away by simply eliminating, censoring or ignoring "negative" media coverage and public discussion of the problem and focusing on "positive, encouraging" things instead.
83. **No Discussion** (also No Negotiation; the Control Voice; Peace through Strength; a Muscular Foreign Policy; Fascism): A pure Argumentum ad Baculum that rejects reasoned dialogue, offering either instant, unconditional compliance/surrender or defeat/death as the only two options for settling even minor differences, e.g., screaming "Get down on the ground, *now!*" or declaring "We don't talk to terrorists." This deadly fallacy falsely paints real or potential "hostiles" as monsters devoid of all reason, and far too often contains a very strong element of "machismo" as well. I.e. "A real, muscular leader never resorts to pantywaist pleading, apologies, excuses, fancy talk or

argument. That's for lawyers, liars and pansies and is nothing but a delaying tactic. A real man stands tall, says what he thinks, draws fast and shoots to kill." The late actor John Wayne frequently portrayed this fallacy in his movie roles. See also, The Pout.

84. **Non-recognition:** A deluded fallacy in which one deliberately chooses not to publicly "recognize" ground truth, usually on the theory that this would somehow reward evil-doers if we recognize their deeds as real or consequential. Often the underlying theory is that the situation is "temporary" and will soon be reversed. E.g., In the decades from 1949 until Richard Nixon's presidency the United States officially refused to recognize the existence of the most populous nation on earth, the People's Republic of China, because America supported the U.S.-friendly Republic of China government on Taiwan instead and hoped they might somehow return to power on the mainland. Perversely, in 2016 the U.S. President-Elect caused a significant international flap by chatting with the President of the government on Taiwan, a de facto violation of long-standing American non-recognition of that same regime. More than half a century after the Korean War the U.S. still refuses to pronounce the name of, or recognize (much less conduct normal, peaceful negotiations with) a nuclear-armed DPRK (North Korea). An individual who practices this fallacy risks institutionalization (e.g., "I refuse to recognize Mom's murder, 'cuz that'd give the victory to the murderer! I refuse to watch you bury her! Stop! Stop!") but tragically, such behavior is only too common in international relations. See also the State Actor Fallacy, Political Correctness, and The Pout.

85. **The Non Sequitur:** The deluded fallacy of offering evidence, reasons or conclusions that have no logical connection to the argument at hand (e.g. "The reason I flunked your course is because the U. S. government is now putting out purple five-dollar bills! *Purple!*"). (See also Red Herring.)

Occasionally involves the breathtaking arrogance of claiming to have special knowledge of why God, fate, karma or the Universe is doing certain things. E.g., "This week's earthquake was obviously meant to punish those people for their great wickedness." See also, Magical Thinking, and the Appeal to Heaven.

86. **Nothing New Under the Sun** (also, Uniformitarianism, "Seen it all before;" "Surprise, surprise;" "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."): Fairly rare in contemporary discourse, this deeply cynical fallacy, a corruption of the argument from logos, falsely proposes that there is not and will never be any real novelty in this world. Any argument that there are truly "new" ideas or phenomena is judged *a priori* to be unworthy of serious discussion and dismissed with a jaded sigh and a wave of the hand as "the same old same old." E.g., "[Sigh!] Idiots! Don't you see that the current influx of refugees from the Mideast is just the same old Muslim invasion of Christendom that's been going on for 1,400 years?" Or, "Libertarianism is nothing but re-warmed anarchism, which, in turn, is nothing but the ancient Antinomian Heresy. Like I told you before, there's nothing new under the sun!"

87. **Olfactory Rhetoric** (also, "The Nose Knows"): A vicious, zoological-level fallacy of pathos in which opponents are marginalized, dehumanized or hated primarily based on their supposed odor, lack of personal cleanliness, imagined diseases or filth. E. g., "Those demonstrators are demanding something or another but I'll only talk to them if first they go home and take a bath!" Or, "I can smell a Jew a block away!" Also applies to demeaning other cultures or nationalities based on their differing cuisines, e.g., "I don't care what they say or do, their breath always stinks of garlic. And have you ever smelled their kitchens?" Olfactory Rhetoric straddles the borderline between a fallacy and a psychopathology. A [2017 study by Ruhr University Bochum](#) suggests that olfactory rhetoric does not arise from a simple, automatic physiological reaction to an actual odor, but in fact, strongly depends on one's predetermined reaction or prejudices toward another, and one's olfactory center "is activated even before we perceive an odour." See also, Othering.

88. **Oops!** (also, "Oh, I forgot...", "The Judicial Surprise," "The October Surprise,"): A corrupt argument from logos in which toward the decisive end of a discussion, debate, trial, electoral campaign period, or decision-making process an opponent suddenly, elaborately and usually sarcastically shams having just remembered or uncovered some salient fact, argument or evidence. E.g., "Oops, I forgot to ask you: You *were* convicted of this same offense twice before, weren't you?!" Banned in American judicial argument, this fallacy is only too common in public discourse. Also applies to supposedly "discovering" and sensationally reporting some potentially damning information or evidence and then, after the damage has been done or the decision has been made, quietly declaring, "Oops, I guess that really wasn't that significant after all. Ignore what I said. Sorry 'bout that!"

89. **Othering** (also Otherizing, "They're Not Like Us," Stereotyping, Xenophobia, Racism, Prejudice): A badly corrupted, discriminatory argument from ethos where facts, arguments, experiences or objections are arbitrarily disregarded, ignored or put down without serious consideration because those involved "are not like us," or "don't think like us." E.g., "It's OK for Mexicans to earn a buck an hour in the maquiladoras [Mexico-based "Twin Plants"

run by American or other foreign corporations]. If it happened here I'd call it brutal exploitation and daylight robbery but south of the border, down Mexico way the economy is different and they're not like us." Or, "You claim that life must be really terrible over there for terrorists to ever think of blowing themselves up with suicide vests just to make a point, but always remember that they're different from us. They don't think about life and death the same way we do." A vicious variety of the Ad Hominem Fallacy, most often applied to non-white or non-Christian populations. A variation on this fallacy is the "**Speakee**" Fallacy ("You speakee da English?"; also the Shibboleth), in which an opponent's arguments are mocked, ridiculed and dismissed solely because of the speaker's alleged or real accent, dialect, or lack of fluency in standard English, e.g., "He told me 'Vee vorkers need to form a younion!' but I told him I'm not a 'vorker,' and to come back when he learns to speak proper English." A very dangerous, extreme example of Othering is **Dehumanization**, a fallacy of faulty analogy where opponents are dismissed as mere cockroaches, lice, apes, monkeys, rats, weasels or bloodsucking parasites who have no right to speak or to live at all, and probably should be "squashed like bugs." This fallacy is ultimately the "logic" behind ethnic cleansing, genocide and gas ovens. See also the Identity Fallacy, "Name Calling" and "Olfactory Rhetoric." The opposite of this fallacy is the "Pollyanna Principle" below.

90. **Overexplanation:** A fallacy of logos stemming from the real paradox that beyond a certain point, more explanation, instructions, data, discussion, evidence or proof inevitably results in less, not more, understanding. Contemporary urban mythology holds that this fallacy is typically male ("**Mansplaining**"), while barely half a century ago the prevailing myth was that it was men who were naturally monosyllabic, grunting or non-verbal while women would typically overexplain (e.g., the 1960 hit song by Joe Jones, "You Talk Too Much"). "Mansplaining" is, according to scholar Danelle Pecht, "the infuriating tendency of many men to always have to be the smartest person in the room, regardless of the topic of discussion and how much they actually know!" See also The Snow Job, and the "Plain Truth" fallacy.
91. **Overgeneralization** (also Hasty Generalization; Totus pro Partes Fallacy; the Merological Fallacy): A fallacy of logos where a broad generalization that is agreed to be true is offered as overriding all particular cases, particularly special cases requiring immediate attention. E.g., "Doctor, you say that this time of year a flu vaccination is essential. but I would counter that ALL vaccinations are essential" (implying that I'm not going to give special attention to getting the flu shot). Or, attempting to refute "Black Lives Matter" by replying, "All Lives Matter," the latter undeniably true but still a fallacious overgeneralization in that specific and urgent context. " Overgeneralization can also mean one sees a single negative outcome as an eternal pattern of defeat. Overgeneralization may also include the the **Pars pro Toto Fallacy**, the stupid but common fallacy of incorrectly applying one or two true examples to all cases. E.g., a minority person who commits a particularly horrifying crime, and whose example is then used to smear the reputation of the entire group, or when a government publishes special lists of crimes committed by groups who are supposed to be hated, e.g., Jews, or undocumented immigrants. Famously, the case of one Willie Horton was successfully used in this manner in the 1988 American presidential election to smear African Americans, Liberals, and by extension, Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. See also the fallacy of "Zero Tolerance" below.
92. **The Paralysis of Analysis** (also, Procrastination; the Nirvana Fallacy): A postmodern fallacy that since *all* data is never in, any conclusion is always provisional, no legitimate decision can *ever* be made and any action should always be delayed until forced by circumstances. A corruption of the argument from logos. (See also the "Law of Unintended Consequences.")
93. **The Passive Voice Fallacy** (also, the Bureaucratic Passive): A fallacy from ethos, concealing active human agency behind the curtain of the grammatical passive voice, e.g., "It has been decided that you are to be let go," arrogating an ethos of cosmic infallibility and inevitability to a very fallible conscious decision made by identifiable, fallible and potentially culpable human beings. Scholar Jackson Katz notes (2017): "We talk about how many women were raped last year, not about how many men raped women. We talk about how many girls in a school district were harassed last year, not about how many boys harassed girls. We talk about how many teenage girls in the state of Vermont got pregnant last year, rather than how many men and boys impregnated teenage girls. ... So you can see how the use of the passive voice has a political effect. [It] shifts the focus off of men and boys and onto girls and women. Even the term 'Violence against women' is problematic. It's a passive construction; there's no active agent in the sentence. It's a bad thing that happens to women, but when you look at the term 'violence against women' nobody is doing it to them, it just happens to them... Men aren't even a part of it." See also, Political Correctness. An obverse of the Passive Voice Fallacy is the **Be-verb Fallacy**, a cultish linguistic theory and the bane of many a first-year composition student's life, alleging that an extraordinary degree of "clarity," "sanity," or textual "liveliness" can be reached by strictly eliminating all passive verb forms and all forms of the verb "to be" from English-language writing. This odd but unproven contention, dating back to Alfred Korzybski's "General Semantics" self-

improvement movement of the 1920's and '30's via S. I. Hayakawa, blithely ignores the fact that although numerous major world languages lack a ubiquitous "be-verb," e.g., Russian, Hindi and Arabic, speakers of these languages, like English-speaking General Semantics devotees themselves, have never been proven to enjoy any particular cognitive advantage over ordinary everyday users of the passive voice and the verb "to be." Nor have writers of the curiously stilted English that results from applying this fallacy achieved any special success in academia, professional or technical writing, or in the popular domain.

94. **Paternalism:** A serious fallacy of ethos, arbitrarily tut-tutting, dismissing or ignoring another's arguments or concerns as "childish" or "immature;" taking a condescending attitude of superiority toward opposing standpoints or toward opponents themselves. E.g., "Your argument against the war is so infantile. Try approaching the issue like an adult for a change," "I don't argue with *children*," or "Somebody has to be the grownup in the room, and it might as well be me. Here's why you're wrong..." Also refers to the sexist fallacy of dismissing a woman's argument because she is a woman, e.g., "Oh, it must be that time of the month, eh?" See also "Ad Hominem Argument" and "Tone Policing."
95. **Personalizaion:** A deluded fallacy of ethos, seeing yourself or someone else as the essential cause of some external event for which you or the other person had no responsibility. E.g., "Never fails! It had to happen! It's my usual rotten luck that the biggest blizzard of the year had to occur just on the day of our winter festival. If it wasn't for ME being involved I'm sure the blizzard wouldn't have happened!" This fallacy can also be taken in a positive sense, e.g. Hitler evidently believed that simply because he was Hitler every bullet would miss him and no explosive could touch him. "Personalization" straddles the borderline between a fallacy and a psychopathology. See also, "The Job's Comforter Fallacy," and "Magical Thinking."
96. **The Plain Truth Fallacy;** (also, the Simple Truth fallacy, Salience Bias, the KISS Principle [Keep it Short and Simple / Keep it Simple, Stupid], the Monocausal Fallacy; the Executive Summary): A fallacy of logos favoring familiar, singular, summarized or easily comprehensible data, examples, explanations and evidence over those that are more complex and unfamiliar but much closer to the truth. E.g., "Ooooh, look at all those equations and formulas! Just boil it down to the Simple Truth," or "I don't want your damned philosophy lesson! Just tell me the Plain Truth about why this is happening." A more sophisticated version of this fallacy arbitrarily proposes, as did 18th century Scottish rhetorician John Campbell, that the Truth is always simple by nature and only malicious enemies of Truth would ever seek to make it complicated. (See also, The Snow Job, and Overexplanation.) The opposite of this is the postmodern fallacy of **Ineffability** or **Complexity (also, Truthiness; Post-Truth)**, arbitrarily declaring that today's world is so complex that there *is* no truth, or that Truth (capital-T), if indeed such a thing exists, is unknowable except perhaps by God or the Messiah and is thus forever inaccessible and irrelevant to us mere mortals, making any cogent argument from logos impossible. See also the Big Lie, and Paralysis of Analysis.
97. **Plausible Deniability:** A vicious fallacy of ethos under which someone in power forces those under his or her control to do some questionable or evil act and to then falsely assume or conceal responsibility for that act in order to protect the ethos of the one in command. E.g., "Arrange a fatal accident but make sure I know nothing about it!"
98. **Playing on Emotion** (also, the Sob Story; the Pathetic Fallacy; the "Bleeding Heart" fallacy, the Drama Queen / Drama King Fallacy): The classic fallacy of pure argument from pathos, ignoring facts and evoking emotion alone. E.g., "If you don't agree that witchcraft is a major problem just shut up, close your eyes for a moment and picture in your mind all those poor moms crying bitter tears for their innocent tiny children whose cozy little beds and happy tricycles lie all cold and abandoned, just because of those wicked old witches! Let's string 'em all up!" The opposite of this is the **Apathetic Fallacy** (also, Cynicism; Burnout; Compassion Fatigue), where any and all legitimate arguments from pathos are brushed aside because, as noted country music artist Jo Dee Messina sang (2005), "My give-a-damn's busted." Obverse to Playing on Emotion is the ancient fallacy of **Refinement** ("*Real* Feelings"), where certain classes of living beings such as plants and non-domesticated animals, infants, babies and minor children, barbarians, slaves, deep-sea sailors, farmworkers, criminals and convicts, refugees, addicts, terrorists, Catholics, Jews, foreigners, the poor, people of color, "Hillbillies," "Hobos," homeless or undocumented people, or "the lower classes" in general are deemed incapable of experiencing *real* pain like we do, or of having any "*real* feelings" at all, only brutish appetites, vile lusts, evil drives, filthy cravings, biological instincts, psychological reflexes and automatic tropisms. Noted rhetorician Kenneth Burke falls into this last, behaviorist fallacy in his otherwise brilliant (1966) [\*Language as Symbolic Action\*](#), in his discussion of a bird trapped in a lecture room. See also, Othering.
99. **Political Correctness ("PC"):** A postmodern fallacy, a counterpart of the "Name Calling" fallacy, supposing that the nature of a thing or situation can be changed by simply changing its name. E.g., "Today we strike a blow for animal rights and against cruelty to animals by changing the name of 'pets' to 'animal companions.'" Or "Never, ever play

the 'victim' card, because it's so manipulative and sounds so negative, helpless and despairing. Instead of being 'victims,' we are proud to be 'survivors.'" (Of course, when "victims" disappear then perpetrators conveniently vanish as well!) See also, The Passive Voice Fallacy, and The Scripted Message. Also applies to other forms of political **"Language Control,"** e.g., being careful *never* to refer to North Korea or ISIS/ISIL by their rather pompous proper names ("the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and "the Islamic State," respectively) or to the Syrian government as the "Syrian government," (It's always the "Regime" or the "Dictatorship."). Occasionally the fallacy of "Political Correctness" is falsely confused with simple courtesy, e.g., "I'm sick and tired of the tyranny of Political Correctness, having to watch my words all the time--I want to be free to speak my mind and to call out a N----- or a Queer in public any time I damn well feel like it!" See also, Non-recognition. An opposite of this fallacy is the fallacy of Venting, below.

100. **The Pollyanna Principle** (also, "The Projection Bias," "They're Just Like Us," "Singing 'Kumbaya.'"): A traditional, often tragic fallacy of ethos, that of automatically (and falsely) assuming that everyone else in any given place, time and circumstance had or has basically the same (positive) wishes, desires, interests, concerns, ethics and moral code as "we" do. This fallacy practically if not theoretically denies both the reality of difference and the human capacity to chose radical evil. E.g., arguing that "The only thing most Nazi Storm Troopers wanted was the same thing we do, to live in peace and prosperity and to have a good family life," when the reality was radically otherwise. Dr. William Lorimer offers this explanation: "The Projection Bias is the flip side of the 'They're Not Like Us' [Othering] fallacy. The Projection bias (fallacy) is 'They're just people like me, therefore they must be motivated by the same things that motivate me.' For example: 'I would never pull a gun and shoot a police officer unless I was convinced he was trying to murder me; therefore, when Joe Smith shot a police officer, he must have been in genuine fear for his life.' I see the same fallacy with regard to Israel: 'The people of Gaza just want to be left in peace; therefore, if Israel would just lift the blockade and allow Hamas to import anything they want, without restriction, they would stop firing rockets at Israel.' That may or may not be true - I personally don't believe it - but the argument clearly presumes that the people of Gaza, or at least their leaders, are motivated by a desire for peaceful co-existence." The Pollyanna Principle was gently but expertly demolished in the classic twentieth-century American animated cartoon series, "The Flintstones," in which the humor lay in the absurdity of picturing "Stone Age" characters having the same concerns, values and lifestyles as mid-twentieth century white working class Americans. This is the opposite of the Othering fallacy. (Note: The Pollyanna Principle fallacy should not be confused with a psychological principle of the same name which observes that positive memories are usually retained more strongly than negative ones. )
101. **The Positive Thinking Fallacy:** An immensely popular but deluded modern fallacy of logos, that because we are "thinking positively" that in itself somehow biases external, objective reality in our favor even before we lift a finger to act. See also, Magical Thinking. Note that this particular fallacy is often part of a much wider closed-minded, somewhat cultish ideology where the practitioner is warned against paying attention to to or even acknowledging the reality of evil, or of "negative" evidence or counter-arguments against his/her standpoints. In the latter case rational discussion, argument or refutation is most often futile. See also, Deliberate Ignorance.
102. **The Post Hoc Argument:** (also, "Post Hoc Propter Hoc;" "Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc;" "Too much of a coincidence," the "Clustering Illusion"): The classic paranoiac fallacy of attributing an imaginary causality to random coincidences, concluding that just because something happens close to, at the same time as, or just after something else, the first thing is caused by the second. E.g., "AIDS first emerged as a epidemic back in the very same era when Disco music was becoming popular--that's too much of a coincidence: It proves that Disco caused AIDS!" Correlation does not equal causation.
103. **The Pout** (also The Silent Treatment; Nonviolent Civil Disobedience; Noncooperation): An often-infantile Argumentum ad Baculum that arbitrarily rejects or gives up on dialogue before it is concluded. The most benign nonviolent form of this fallacy is found in passive-aggressive tactics such as slowdowns, boycotts, lockouts, sitdowns and strikes. Under President Barack Obama the United States finally ended a half-century long political Pout with Cuba. See also "No Discussion" and "Nonrecognition."
104. **The Procrustean Fallacy** (also, "Keeping up Standards," Standardization, Uniformity, Fordism). The modernist fallacy of falsely and inappropriately applying the norms and requirements of standardized manufacturing. quality control and rigid scheduling, or of military discipline to inherently diverse free human beings, their lives, education, behavior, clothing and appearance. This fallacy often seems to stem from the pathological need of someone in power to place in "order" their disturbingly free, messy and disordered universe by restricting others' freedom and insisting on rigid standardization, alphabetization, discipline, uniformity and "objective" assessment of everyone under their power. This fallacy partially explains why marching in straight lines, mass calisthenics, goose-stepping, drum-and-bugle or flag corps, standing at attention, saluting, uniforms, and standardized categorization are so typical of

fascism, tyrannical regimes, and of tyrants petty and grand everywhere. Thanks to author Eimar O'Duffy for identifying this fallacy!

105. **Prosopology** (also, Prosopography, Reciting the Litany; "Tell Me, What Were Their Names?"; Reading the Roll of Martyrs): An ancient fallacy of pathos and ethos, publicly reading out loud, singing, or inscribing at length a list of names (most or all of which will be unknown to the reader or audience), sometimes in a negative sense, to underline the gravity of a past tragedy or mass-casualty event, sometimes in a positive sense, to emphasize the ancient historical continuity of a church, organization or cause. Proper names, especially if they are from the same culture or language group as the audience, can have near-mystical persuasive power. In some cases, those who use this fallacy in its contemporary form will defend it as an attempt to "personalize" an otherwise anonymous recent mass tragedy. This fallacy was virtually unknown in secular American affairs before about 100 years ago, when the custom emerged of listing of the names of local World War I casualties on community monuments around the country. That this is indeed a fallacy is evident by the fact that the names on these century-old monuments are now meaningful only to genealogists and specialized historians, just as the names on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington or the names of those who perished on 9/11 will surely be in another several generations.
106. **The Red Herring** (also, Distraction): An irrelevant argument, attempting to mislead and distract an audience by bringing up an unrelated but emotionally loaded issue. E.g., "In regard to my several bankruptcies and recent indictment for corruption let's be straight up about what's really important: *Terrorism!* Just look at what happened last week in [name the place]. Vote for me and I'll fight those terrorists anywhere in the world!" Also applies to raising unrelated issues as falsely opposing the issue at hand, e.g., "You say 'Black Lives Matter,' but I would rather say 'Climate Change Matters!'" when the two contentions are in no way opposed, only competing for attention. See also Availability Bias, and Dog Whistle Politics.
107. **Reductio ad Hitlerum** (or, ad Hitleram): A highly problematic contemporary historical-revisionist contention that the argument "That's just what Hitler said (or would have said, or would have done)" is a fallacy, an instance of the Ad Hominem argument and/or Guilt by Association. Whether the Reductio ad Hitlerum can be considered an actual fallacy or not seems to fundamentally depend on one's personal view of Hitler and the gravity of his crimes.
108. **Reductionism**: (also, Oversimplifying, Sloganeering): The fallacy of deceiving an audience by giving simple answers or bumper-sticker slogans in response to complex questions, especially when appealing to less educated or unsophisticated audiences. E.g., "If the glove doesn't fit, you must vote to acquit." Or, "Vote for Snith. He'll bring back jobs!" In science, technology, engineering and mathematics ("STEM subjects") reductionism is intentionally practiced to make intractable problems computable, e.g., the well-known humorous suggestion, "[First, let's assume the cow is a sphere!](#)". See also, the Plain Truth Fallacy, and Dog-whistle Politics.
109. **Reifying** (also, Mistaking the Map for the Territory): The ancient fallacy of treating imaginary intellectual categories, schemata or names as actual, material "things." (E.g., "The War against Terror is just another chapter in the eternal fight to the death between Freedom and Absolute Evil!") Sometimes also referred to as "**Essentializing**" or "**Hypostatization**."
110. **The Romantic Rebel** (also, the Truthdig / Truthout Fallacy; the Brave Heretic; Conspiracy theories; the Iconoclastic Fallacy): The contemporary fallacy of claiming Truth or validity for one's standpoint solely or primarily because one is supposedly standing up heroically to the dominant "orthodoxy," the current Standard Model, conventional wisdom or Political Correctness, or whatever may be the Bandwagon of the moment; a corrupt argument from ethos. E.g., "Back in the day the scientific establishment thought that the world was flat, that was until Columbus proved them wrong! Now they want us to believe that ordinary water is nothing but H<sup>2</sup>O. Are you going to believe them? The government is frantically trying to suppress the truth that our public drinking-water supply actually has nitrogen in it and causes congenital vampirism! And what about Area 51? Don't you care? Or are you just a kiss-up for the corrupt scientific establishment?" The opposite of the Bandwagon fallacy.
111. **The "Save the Children" Fallacy** (also, Humanitarian Crisis): A cruel and cynical contemporary media-driven fallacy of pathos, an instance of the fallacious Appeal to Pity, attracting public support for intervention in somebody else's crisis in a distant country by repeatedly showing in gross detail the extreme (real) suffering of the innocent, defenseless little children (occasionally extended even to their pets!) on "our" side, conveniently ignoring the reality that innocent children on all sides usually suffer the most in any war, conflict, famine or crisis. Recent (2017) examples include the so-called "Rohingya" in Myanmar/Burma (ignoring multiple other ethnicities suffering ongoing hunger and conflict in that impoverished country), children in rebel-held areas of Syria (areas held by *our* rebels, not by the Syrian government or by Islamic State rebels), and the children of Mediterranean boat-people (light complected children from the Mideast, Afghanistan and North Africa, but *not* darker, African-complected

children from sub-Saharan countries, children who are evidently deemed by the media to be far less worthy of pity). Scholar Glen Greenwald points out that a cynical key part of this tactic is hiding the child and adult victims of one's own violence while "milking" the tragic, blood-soaked images of children killed by the "other side" for every tear they can generate as a *causus belli* [a puffed-up excuse for war, conflict or American/Western intervention].

112. **Scapegoating** (also, Blamecasting): The ancient fallacy that whenever something goes wrong there's always *someone* other than oneself to blame. Although sometimes this fallacy is a practical denial of randomness or chance itself, today it is more often a mere insurance-driven business decision ("I don't care if it *was* an accident! Somebody with deep pockets is gonna pay for this!"), though often scapegoating is no more than a cynical ploy to shield those truly responsible from blame. The term "Scapegoating" is also used to refer to the tactic of casting collective blame on marginalized or scorned "Others," e.g., "The Jews are to blame!" A particularly corrupt and cynical example of scapegoating is the fallacy of **Blaming the Victim**, in which one falsely casts the blame for one's own evil or questionable actions on those affected, e.g., "If you move an eyelash I'll have to kill you and you'll be to blame!" "If you don't bow to our demands we'll shut down the government and it'll be totally YOUR fault!" or "You bi\*\*h, you acted flirty and *made* me rape you! Then you snitched on me to the cops and let them collect a rape kit on you, and now I'm going to prison and every bit of it is *your* fault!" See also, the Affective Fallacy.
113. **Scare Tactics** (also Appeal to Fear; Paranoia; the Bogeyman Fallacy; Shock Doctrine [ShockDoc]; Rally 'Round the Flag; Rally 'Round the President): A variety of Playing on Emotions, a corrupted argument from pathos, taking advantage of an emergent or deliberately-created crisis and its associated public shock, panic and chaos in order to impose an argument, action or solution that would be clearly unacceptable if carefully considered. E.g., "If you don't shut up and do what I say we're all gonna die! In this moment of crisis we can't afford the luxury of criticizing or trying to second-guess my decisions when our very lives and freedom are in peril! Instead, we need to be united as one!" Or, in the (2017) words of former White House Spokesperson Sean Spicer, "This is about the safety of America!" This fallacy is discussed at length in Naomi Klein's (2010) [\*The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism\*](#) and her (2017) [\*No is Not Enough: Resisting Trump's Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need\*](#). See also, The Shopping Hungry Fallacy, Dog-Whistle Politics, "We Have to do *Something!*", and The Worst Case Fallacy.
114. **"Scoring"** (also, Moving the Ball Down the Field, the Sports World Fallacy; "Hey, Sports Fans!"): An instance of faulty analogy, the common contemporary fallacy of inappropriately and most often offensively applying sports, gaming, hunting or other recreational imagery to unrelated areas of life, such as war or intimacy. E.g., "Nope, I haven't scored with Francis yet, but last night I managed to get to third base!" or "We really need to take our ground game into Kim's half of the field if we ever expect to score against North Korea." This fallacy is almost always soaked in testosterone and machismo. An associated fallacy is that of **Evening up the Score** (also, Getting Even), exacting tit-for-tat vengeance as though life were some sort of "point-score" sports contest. Counter-arguments to the "Scoring" fallacy usually fall on deaf ears, since the one and only purpose for playing a game is to "score," isn't it?
115. **The Scripted Message** (also, Talking Points): A contemporary fallacy related to Big Lie Technique, where a politician or public figure strictly limits her/his statements on a given issue to repeating carefully scripted, often exaggerated or empty phrases developed to achieve maximum acceptance or maximum desired reaction from a target audience. See also, Dog Whistle Politics, and Political Correctness, above. The opposite of this fallacy is that of "Venting."
116. **Sending the Wrong Message**: A dangerous fallacy of logos that attacks a given statement, argument or action, no matter how good, true or necessary, because it will "send the wrong message." In effect, those who use this fallacy are openly confessing to fraud and admitting that the truth will destroy the fragile web of illusion they have deliberately created by their lies. E.g., "Actually, we haven't a clue about how to deal with this crisis, but if we publicly admit it we'll be sending the wrong message." See also, "Mala Fides."
117. **Shifting the Burden of Proof**: A classic fallacy of logos that challenges an opponent to disprove a claim rather than asking the person making the claim to defend his/her own argument. E.g., "These days space-alien are everywhere among us, masquerading as true humans, even right here on campus! I dare you to prove it isn't so! See? You can't! You admit it! That means what I say has to be true. Most probably, you're one of them, since you seem to be so soft on space-alien!" A typical tactic in using this fallacy is first to get an opponent to admit that a far-fetched claim, or some fact related to it, is indeed at least theoretically "possible," and then declare the claim "proven" absent evidence to the contrary. E.g., "So you *admit* that massive undetected voter fraud *is* indeed possible under our current system, and could have happened in this country at least in theory, and you can't produce even the tiniest scintilla of evidence that it didn't actually happen! Ha-ha! I rest my case." See also, Argument from Ignorance.



118. **The Shopping Hungry Fallacy:** A fallacy of pathos, a variety of Playing on Emotions and sometimes Scare Tactics, making stupid but important decisions (or being prompted, manipulated or forced to "freely" take public or private decisions that may be later regretted but are difficult to reverse) "in the heat of the moment" when under the influence of strong emotion (hunger, fear, lust, anger, sadness, regret, fatigue, even joy, love or happiness). E.g., Trevor Noah, (2016) host of the Daily Show on American television attributes public approval of draconian measures in the Patriot Act and the creation of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security to America's "shopping hungry" immediately after 9/11. See also, Scare Tactics; "We Have to Do *Something*;" and The Big "But" Fallacy.
119. **The Silent Majority Fallacy:** A variety of the argument from ignorance, this fallacy, famously enunciated by disgraced American President Richard Nixon, alleges special knowledge of a hidden "silent majority" of voters (or of the population in general) that stands in support of an otherwise unpopular leader and his/her policies, contrary to the repeated findings of polls, surveys and popular vote totals. In an extreme case the leader arrogates to him/herself the title of the "**Voice of the Voiceless.**"
120. **The Simpleton's Fallacy:** (Or, The "Good Simpleton" Fallacy): A corrupt fallacy of logos, described in an undated quote from science writer Isaac Asimov as "The false notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.'" The name of this fallacy is borrowed from Walter M. Miller Jr.'s classic (1960) post-apocalyptic novel, [\*A Canticle for Leibowitz\*](#), in which in the centuries after a nuclear holocaust knowledge and learning become so despised that "Good Simpleton" becomes the standard form of interpersonal salutation. This fallacy is masterfully portrayed in the person of the title character in the 1994 Hollywood movie, "Forrest Gump." The fallacy is widely alleged to have had a great deal to do with the outcome of the 2016 US presidential election, See also "Just Plain Folks," and the "Plain Truth Fallacy." U.S. President Barack Obama noted to the contrary (2016), "In politics and in life, ignorance is not a virtue. It's not cool to not know what you're talking about. That's not real or telling it like it is. That's not challenging political correctness. That's just not knowing what you're talking about." The term "Simpleton's Fallacy" has also been used to refer to a deceptive technique of argumentation, feigning ignorance in order to get one's opponent to admit to, explain or overexplain something s/he would rather not discuss. E.g., "I see here that you have a related prior conviction for something called 'Criminal Sodomy.' I may be a poor, naive simpleton but I'm not quite sure what that fine and fancy lawyer-talk means in plain English. Please explain to the jury in simple terms what exactly you did to get convicted of that crime." See also, Argument from Ignorance, and The Third Person Effect.
121. **The Slippery Slope** (also, the Domino Theory): The common fallacy that "one thing inevitably leads to another." E.g., "If you two go and drink coffee together one thing will lead to another and next thing you know you'll be pregnant and end up spending your life on welfare living in the Projects," or "If we close Gitmo one thing will lead to another and before you know it armed terrorists will be strolling through our church doors with suicide belts, proud as you please, smack in the middle of the 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service right here in Garfield, Kansas!"
122. **The Snow Job** (also Falacia ad Verboisium; Information Bias): A fallacy of logos, "proving" a claim by overwhelming an audience ("snowing them under") with mountains of true but marginally-relevant documents, graphs, words, facts, numbers, information and statistics that look extremely impressive but which the intended audience cannot be expected to understand or properly evaluate. This is a corrupted argument from logos. See also, "Lying with Statistics." The opposite of this fallacy is the Plain Truth Fallacy.
123. **The Soldiers' Honor Fallacy:** The ancient fallacy that all who wore a uniform, fought hard and followed orders are worthy of some special honor or glory or are even "heroes," whether they fought for freedom or fought to defend slavery, marched under Grant or Lee, Hitler, Stalin, Eisenhower or McArthur, fought to defend their homes, fought for oil or to spread empire, or even fought against and killed U.S. soldiers! A corrupt argument from ethos (that of a soldier), closely related to the "Finish the Job" fallacy ("Sure, he died for a lie, but he deserves honor because he followed orders and did his job faithfully to the end!"). See also "Heroes All." This fallacy was recognized and decisively refuted at the Nuremburg Trials after World War II but remains powerful to this day nonetheless. See also "Blind Loyalty." Related is the **State Actor Fallacy**, that those who fight and die for their country (America, Russia, Iran, the Third Reich, etc.) are worthy of honor or at least pardonable while those who fight for a non-state actor (armed abolitionists, guerrillas, freedom-fighters, jihadis, mujahideen) are not and remain "terrorists" no matter how noble or vile their cause, until or unless they win and *become* the recognized state, or are adopted by a state after the fact.
124. **The Standard Version Fallacy:** The ancient fallacy, a discursive Argumentum ad Baculum, of choosing a "Standard Translation" or "Authorized Version" of an ancient or sacred text and arbitrarily declaring it "correct" and "authoritative," necessarily eliminating much of the poetry and underlying meaning of the original but conveniently quashing any further discussion about the meaning of the original text, e.g., the Vulgate or The King James Version.

The easily demonstrable fact that translation (beyond three or four words) is neither uniform nor reversible (i.e., never comes back exactly the same when retranslated from another language) gives the lie to any efforts to make translation of human languages into an exact science. Islam clearly recognizes this fallacy when characterizing any attempt to translate the sacred text of the Holy Qur'an out of the original Arabic as a "paraphrase" at very best. An obverse of this fallacy is the **Argumentum ad Mysteriam**, above. An extension of the Standard Version Fallacy is the **Monolingual Fallacy**, at an academic level the fallacy of ignorantly assuming (as a monolingual person) that transparent, in-depth translation between languages is the norm, or even possible at all, allowing one to conveniently and falsely ignore everyday issues of translation when close-reading translated literature or academic text and theory. At the popular level the Monolingual Fallacy allows monolinguals to blithely demand that visitors, migrants, refugees and newcomers learn English, either before arriving or else overnight after arrival in the United States, while applying no such demand to themselves when they go to Asia, Europe, Latin America, or even French-speaking areas of Canada. Not rarely, this fallacy descends into gross racism or ethnic discrimination, e.g., the demagoguery of warning of "Spanish being spoken right here on Main Street and taco trucks on every corner!" See also, Othering, and Dog-Whistle Politics.

125. **Star Power** (also Testimonial, Questionable Authority, Faulty Use of Authority, Falacia ad Vericundiam; Eminence-based Practice): In academia and medicine, a corrupt argument from ethos in which arguments, standpoints and themes of professional discourse are granted fame and validity or condemned to obscurity solely by whoever may be the reigning "stars" or "premier journals" of the profession or discipline at the moment. E.g., "Foster's take on Network Theory has been thoroughly criticized and is so last-week!. This week everyone's into Safe Spaces and Pierce's Theory of Microaggressions. Get with the program." (See also, the Bandwagon.) Also applies to an obsession with journal Impact Factors. At the popular level this fallacy also refers to a corrupt argument from ethos in which public support for a standpoint or product is established by a well-known or respected figure (i.e., a star athlete or entertainer) who is not an expert and who may have been well paid to make the endorsement (e.g., "Olympic gold-medal pole-vaulter Fulano de Tal uses Quick Flush Internet--Shouldn't you?" Or, "My favorite rock star warns that vaccinations spread cooties, so I'm not vaccinating *my* kids!" ). Includes other false, meaningless or paid means of associating oneself or one's product or standpoint with the ethos of a famous person or event (e.g., "Try Salsa Cabria, the official taco sauce of the Winter Olympics!"). This fallacy also covers **Faulty use of Quotes** (also, The Devil Quotes Scripture), including quoting out of context or against the clear intent of the original speaker or author. E.g., racists quoting and twisting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statements in favor of racial equality against contemporary activists and movements for racial equality.
126. **The Straw Man** (also "The Straw Person" ""The Straw Figure"): The fallacy of setting up a phony, weak, extreme or ridiculous parody of an opponent's argument and then proceeding to knock it down or reduce it to absurdity with a rhetorical wave of the hand. E.g., "Vegetarians say animals have feelings like you and me. Ever seen a cow laugh at a Shakespeare comedy? Vegetarianism is nonsense!" Or, "Pro-choicers hate babies and want to kill them!" Or, "Pro-lifers hate women and want them to spend their lives barefoot, pregnant and chained to the kitchen stove!" A too-common example of this fallacy is that of highlighting the most absurd, offensive, silly or violent examples in a mass movement or demonstration, e.g. "Tree huggers" for environmentalists, "bra burners" for feminists, or "rioters" when there are a dozen violent crazies in a peaceful, disciplined demonstration of thousands or tens of thousands, and then falsely portraying these extreme examples as typical of the entire movement in order to condemn it with a wave of the hand. See also Olfactory Rhetoric.
127. **The Taboo** (also, Dogmatism):: The ancient fallacy of unilaterally declaring certain "bedrock" arguments, assumptions, dogmas, standpoints or actions "sacrosanct" and not open to discussion, or arbitrarily taking some emotional tones, logical standpoints, doctrines or options "off the table" beforehand. (E.g., " "No, let's *not* discuss my sexuality," "Don't bring my drinking into this," or "Before we start, you need to know I won't allow you to play the race card or permit you to attack my arguments by claiming 'That's just what Hitler would say!'" ) Also applies to discounting or rejecting certain arguments, facts and evidence (or even experiences!) out of hand because they are supposedly "against the Bible" or other sacred dogma (See also the A Priori Argument). This fallacy occasionally degenerates into a separate, distracting argument over who gets to define the parameters, tones, dogmas and taboos of the main argument, though at this point reasoned discourse most often breaks down and the entire affair becomes a naked Argumentum ad Baculum. See also, MYOB, Tone Policing, and Calling "Cards."
128. **They're All Crooks**: The common contemporary fallacy of refusing to get involved in public politics because "all" politicians and politics are allegedly corrupt, ignoring the fact that if this is so in a democratic country it is precisely because decent people like you and I refuse to get involved, leaving the field open to the "crooks" by default. An example of Circular Reasoning. Related to this fallacy is "**They're All Biased**," the extremely common contemporary cynical fallacy of ignoring news and news media because none tells the "objective truth" and all push

some "agenda." This basically true observation logically requiring audiences to regularly view or read a variety of media sources in order to get any approximation of reality, but for many younger people today (2017) it means in practice, "Ignore news, news media and public affairs altogether and instead pay attention to something that's fun, exciting or personally interesting to *you*." The sinister implication for democracy is, "Mind your own business and leave all the 'big' questions to your betters, those whose job is to deal with these questions and who are well paid to do so." See also the Third Person Effect, and Deliberate Ignorance.

129. **The "Third Person Effect"** (also, "Wise up!" and "They're All Liars"): An example of the fallacy of Deliberate Ignorance, the arch-cynical postmodern fallacy of deliberately discounting or ignoring media information *a priori*, opting to remain in ignorance rather than "listening to the lies" of the mainstream media, the President, the "medical establishment," professionals, professors, doctors and the "academic elite" or other authorities or information sources, even about urgent subjects (e.g., the need for vaccinations) on which these sources are otherwise publicly considered to be generally reliable or relatively trustworthy. [According to Drexel University researchers](#) (2017), the "Third Person Effect ... suggests that individuals will perceive a mass media message to have more influence on others, than themselves. This perception tends to counteract the message's intended 'call-to-action.' Basically, this suggests that over time people wised up to the fact that some mass media messages were intended to manipulate them -- so the messages became less and less effective." This fallacy seems to be opposite to and an overreaction to the Big Lie Technique. See also, Deliberate Ignorance, the Simpleton's Fallacy, and Trust your Gut.
130. **The "Thousand Flowers" Fallacy** (also, "Take names and kick butt."): A sophisticated, modern "Argumentum ad Baculum" in which free and open discussion and "brainstorming" are temporarily allowed and encouraged (even *demand*ed) within an organization or country not primarily in order to hear and consider opposing views, but rather to "smoke out," identify and later punish, fire or liquidate dissenters or those not following the Party Line. The name comes from the Thousand Flowers Period in Chinese history when Communist leader Chairman Mao Tse Tung applied this policy with deadly effect.
131. **Throwing Good Money After Bad** (also, "Sunk Cost Fallacy"): In his excellent book, [Logically Fallacious](#) (2015), [Author Bo Bennett](#) describes this fallacy as follows: "Reasoning that further investment is warranted on the fact that the resources already invested will be lost otherwise, not taking into consideration the overall losses involved in the further investment." In other words, risking additional money to "save" an earlier, losing investment, ignoring the old axiom that "Doing the same thing and expecting different results is the definition of insanity." E.g., "I can't stop betting *now*, because I already bet the rent and lost, and I need to win it back or my wife will kill me when I get home!" See also Argument from Inertia.
132. **TINA** (There Is No Alternative. Also the "Love it or Leave It" Fallacy; "Get over it," "Suck it up," "It is what it is," "Actions/Elections have consequences," or the "Fait Accompli"): A very common contemporary extension of the either/or fallacy in which someone in power quashes critical thought by announcing that there is no realistic alternative to a given standpoint, status or action, arbitrarily ruling any and all other options out of bounds, or announcing that a decision has been made and any further discussion is insubordination, disloyalty, treason, disobedience or simply a waste of precious time when there's a job to be done. (See also, "Taboo;" "Finish the Job.") TINA is most often a naked power-play, a slightly more sophisticated variety of the Argumentum ad Baculum. See also Appeal to Closure.
133. **Tone Policing**. A corrupt argument from pathos and delivery, the fallacy of judging the validity of an argument primarily by its emotional tone of delivery, ignoring the reality that a valid fact or argument remains valid whether it is offered calmly and deliberately or is shouted in a "shrill" or even "hysterical" tone, whether carefully written and published in professional, academic language in a respected, peer-reviewed journal or screamed through a bull-horn and peppered with vulgarity. Conversely, a highly urgent emotional matter is still urgent even if argued coldly and rationally. This fallacy creates a false dichotomy between reason and emotion and thus implicitly favors those who are not personally involved or emotionally invested in an argument, e.g., "I know you're upset, but I won't discuss it with you until you calm down," or "I'd believe what you wrote were it not for your adolescent overuse of exclamation points throughout the text." Or alternately, "You seem to be taking the death of your spouse way too calmly. You're under arrest for homicide. You have the right to remain silent..." Tone Policing is frequent in contemporary discourse of power, particularly in response to discourse of protest, and is occasionally used in sexist ways, e.g. the accusation of being "shrill" is almost always used against women, never against men. See also, The F-Bomb.
134. **Transfer**: (also, Name Dropping) A corrupt argument from ethos, falsely associating a famous or respected person, place or thing with an unrelated thesis or standpoint (e.g. putting a picture of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an advertisement for mattresses, using Genghis Khan, a Mongol who hated Chinese, as the name of a Chinese

restaurant, or using the Texas flag to sell more cars or pickups in Texas that were made in Detroit, Kansas City or Korea). This fallacy is common in contemporary academia in the form of using a profusion of scholarly-looking citations from respected authorities to lend a false gravitas to otherwise specious ideas or text. See also "Star Power."

135. **Trust your Gut** (also, Trust your Heart; Trust Your Feelings; Trust your Intuition; Trust your Instincts; Emotional Reasoning): A corrupt argument from pathos, the ancient fallacy of relying primarily on "gut feelings" rather than reason or evidence to make decisions. A [recent \(2017\) Ohio State University study](#) finds, unsurprisingly, that people who "trust their gut" are significantly more susceptible to falling for "fake news," phony conspiracy theories, frauds and scams than those who insist on hard evidence or logic. See also Deliberate Ignorance, the Affective Fallacy, and The "Third Person Effect."
136. **Tu Quoque** ("You Do it Too!"; also, Two Wrongs Make a Right): A corrupt argument from ethos, the fallacy of defending a shaky or false standpoint or excusing one's own bad action by pointing out that one's opponent's acts, ideology or personal character are also open to question, or are perhaps even worse than one's own. E.g., "Sure, we may have tortured prisoners and killed kids with drones, but we don't cut off heads like they do!" Or, "You can't stand there and accuse me of corruption! You guys are all into politics and you know what we have to do to get reelected!" Unusual, self-deprecating variants on this fallacy are the **Ego / Nos Quoque** Fallacies ("I / we do it too!"), minimizing or defending another's evil actions because I am / we are guilty of the same thing or of even worse. E.g., In response to allegations that Russian Premier Vladimir Putin is a "killer," American President Donald Trump (2/2017) told an interviewer, "There are a lot of killers. We've got a lot of killers. What, do you think our country's so innocent?" This fallacy is related to the Red Herring and to the Ad Hominem Argument.
137. **Two-sides Fallacy** (also, Teach the Controversy): The presentation of an issue that makes it seem to have two sides of equal weight or significance, when in fact a consensus or much stronger argument supports just one side. Also called "false balance" or "false equivalence." (Thanks to [Teaching Tolerance](#) for this definition!) E.g., "Scientists theorize that the Earth is a sphere, but there are always two sides to any argument: Others believe that the Earth is flat and is perched on the back of a giant turtle, and a truly balanced presentation of the issue requires teaching both explanations without bias or unduly favoring either side over the other."
138. **Two Truths** (also, Compartmentalization; Epistemically Closed Systems; Alternative Truth): A very corrupt and dangerous fallacy of logos and ethos, first formally described in medieval times but still common today, holding that there exists one "truth" in one given environment (e.g., in science, work or school) and simultaneously a different, formally contradictory but equally true "truth" in a different epistemic system, context, environment, intended audience or discourse community (e.g., in one's religion or at home). This can lead to a situation of stable cognitive dissonance where, as UC Irvine scholar Dr. Carter T. Butts describes it (2016), "I know but don't believe," making rational discussion difficult, painful or impossible. This fallacy also describes the discourse of politicians who cynically proclaim one "truth" as mere "campaign rhetoric" used "to mobilize the base," or "for domestic consumption only," and a quite different and contradictory "truth" for more general or practical purposes once in office. See also Disciplinary Blindness; Alternative Truth.
139. **Venting** (also, Letting off Steam; Loose Lips): In the Venting fallacy a person argues that her/his words are or ought to be exempt from criticism or consequence because s/he was "only venting," even though this very admission implies that the one "venting" was, at long last, freely expressing his/her true, heartfelt and uncensored opinion about the matter in question. This same fallacy applies to minimizing, denying the significance of or excusing other forms of frank, unguarded or uninhibited offensive expression as mere "**Locker-room Talk**," "**Alpha-male Speech**" or nothing but cute, adorable, perhaps even sexy "**Bad-boy Talk**." See also, the Affective Fallacy. Opposite to this fallacy are the fallacies of Political Correctness and the Scripted Message, above.
140. **Venue**: The ancient fallacy of Venue, a corrupt argument from kairos, falsely and arbitrarily invalidates an otherwise-valid argument or piece of evidence because it is supposedly offered in the wrong place, at the wrong moment or in an inappropriate court, medium or forum. According to PhD student Amanda Thran, "Quite often, people will say to me in person that Facebook, Twitter, etc. are 'not the right forums' for discussing politically and socially sensitive issues. ... In this same vein, I've also encountered the following argument: 'Facebook, which is used for sharing wedding, baby, and pet photos, is an inappropriate place for political discourse; people don't wish to be burdened with that when they log in.' In my experience, this line of reasoning is most often employed (and abused) to shut down a conversation when one feels they are losing it. Ironically, I have seen it used when the argument has already been transpiring on the platform [in] an already lengthy discussion." See also Disciplinary Blindness.

141. **We Have to Do *Something***: (also, the Placebo Effect; Political Theater; Security Theater; We have to send a message): The dangerous contemporary fallacy that when "People are scared / People are angry / People are fed up / People are hurting / People want change" it becomes necessary to do something, *anything*, at once without stopping to ask "What?" or "Why?", even if what is done is an overreaction, is a completely ineffective sham, an inert placebo, or actually makes the situation worse, rather than "just sitting there doing nothing." (E.g., "Banning air passengers from carrying ham sandwiches onto the plane and making parents take off their newborn infants' tiny pink baby-shoes probably does nothing to deter potential terrorists, but people are scared and we have to do *something* to respond to this crisis!") This is a badly corrupted argument from pathos. (See also "Scare Tactic" and "The Big 'But' Fallacy.")
142. **Where there's Smoke, there's Fire** (also Hasty Conclusion; Jumping to a Conclusion): The dangerous fallacy of ignorantly drawing a snap conclusion and/or taking action without sufficient evidence. E.g., "Captain! The guy sitting next to me in coach has dark skin and is reading a book in some kind of funny language all full of accent marks, weird squiggles above the "N's" and upside-down question marks. It must be Arabic! Get him off the plane before he blows us all to kingdom come!" A variety of the "Just in Case" fallacy. The opposite of this fallacy is the "Paralysis of Analysis."
143. **The Wisdom of the Crowd** (also, The Magic of the Market; the Wikipedia Fallacy; Crowdsourcing): A very common contemporary fallacy that individuals may be wrong but "the crowd" or "the market" is infallible, ignoring historic examples like witch-burning, lynching, and the market crash of 2008. This fallacy is why most American colleges and universities currently (2017) ban students from using Wikipedia as a serious reference source.
144. **The Worst-Case Fallacy** (also, "Just in case;" "We can't afford to take chances;" "An abundance of caution;" "Better Safe than Sorry;" "Better to prevent than to lament."): A pessimistic fallacy by which one's reasoning is based on an improbable, far-fetched or even completely imaginary worst-case scenario rather than on reality. This plays on pathos (fear) rather than reason, and is often politically motivated. E.g., "What if armed terrorists were to attack your county grain elevator tomorrow morning at dawn? Are you ready to fight back? Better stock up on assault rifles and ammunition today, just in case!" See also Scare Tactics. The opposite of this is the Positive Thinking Fallacy.
145. **The Worst Negates the Bad** (also, Be Grateful for What You've Got): The extremely common modern logical fallacy that an objectively bad situation somehow isn't so bad simply because it could have been far worse, or because someone, somewhere has it even worse. E.g., "I cried because I had no shoes, until I saw someone who had no feet." Or, "You're protesting because you earn only \$7.25 an hour? You could just as easily be out on the street! I happen to know there are people in Uttar Pradesh who are doing the very same work you're doing for one tenth of what you're making, and they're pathetically glad just to have work at all. You need to shut up, put down that picket sign, get back to work for what I care to pay you, and thank me each and every day for giving you a job!"
146. **Zero Tolerance** (also, Zero Risk Bias, Broken Windows Policing, Disproportionate Response; Even One is Too Many; Exemplary Punishment; Judenrein): The contemporary fallacy of declaring an "emergency" and promising to disregard justice and due process and devote unlimited resources (and occasionally, unlimited cruelty) to stamp out a limited, insignificant or even nonexistent problem. E.g., "I just read about an actual case of cannibalism somewhere in this country. That's disgusting, and even one case is way, way too many! We need a Federal Taskforce against Cannibalism with a million-dollar budget and offices in every state, a national SCAN program in all the grade schools (Stop Cannibalism in America Now!), and an automatic double death penalty for cannibals; in other words, zero tolerance for cannibalism in this country!" This is a corrupt and cynical argument from pathos, almost always politically driven, a particularly sinister variety of Dog Whistle Politics and the "We Have to do Something" fallacy. See also, "Playing on Emotions," "Red Herring," and also the "Big Lie Technique."

*OW 7/06 with thanks to the late Susan Spence. Final revision 1/18, with special thanks to [Business Insider](#), [Teaching Tolerance](#), and [Vox.com](#), to [Bradley Steffens](#), to Jackson Katz, Brian Resnick, Glen Greenwald, Lara Bhasin, Danelle M. Pecht, Marc Lawson, Eimar O'Duffy, and Mike Caetano, to Dr. William Lorimer, Dr. Carter T. Butts, [Dr. Bo Bennett](#), Myron Peto, Joel Sax, Thomas Persing, Amanda Thran, and to all the others who suggested corrections, additions and clarifications. Links to Amazon.com on this page are for reader convenience only, and no endorsement is offered or implied. This list is no longer being maintained, but please continue to copy, mirror, update and share it freely.*

Owen M. Williamson - Education Bldg 211E - phone: (915) 747 7625 - fax: (915) 747 5655

The University of Texas at El Paso - 500 W. University Ave. - El Paso, TX 79968

Important Disclaimer



Open Courseware | OCW | This work is dedicated to the [Public Domain](#)..

# Applying Toulmin: Teaching Logical Reasoning and Argumentative Writing

*The authors explain a method for teaching written argument they used successfully with alternative high school students.*

**F**rank I. Luntz, a political consultant and pollster, has made a successful career out of crafting the language of political debates. He encouraged the Republican Party to speak about “death taxes” rather than inheritance, or “estate taxes.” This shift in language altered the public’s stance on this topic. While Americans were nearly split about taxing inheritances or estates, nearly three-quarters of them were opposed to a government tax on death (Luntz 164). Though we admire Dr. Luntz’s skill with language and his keen awareness of audience, we are tired of sound bites that masquerade as sound arguments. We think it is time to reinvigorate prevailing notions about critical thinking in English language arts. How we logically relate ideas and information to argue well has been given short shrift at a time when distinguishing between pundits who are haranguers and careful thinkers seems especially important for the future health of our democracy.

With this in mind, we refocused our teaching and curriculum on developing students’ ability to create and articulate soundly reasoned arguments. We wanted to promote their capacity to engage big ideas, important questions, and complicated problems. By this, we mean that we wanted students to start by putting ideas, questions, and problems into words, and mulling them over so they could see them from different angles and reason their way through to where they wanted to stand. Then, having decided their position, we wanted them to persuasively argue their case in talk and writing with pertinent evidence and explanations. This ability to interrogate and create not just a stance but also evi-

dence and warrants is crucial for a productive and informed public.

In what follows, we explain the framework we used and describe how we taught reasoning to students at an alternative high school, where we recorded what happened. Some of those records, including student work, lessons, Web resource links, and teaching videos, can be found at the Michigan Argument Research Group website, where Steven is designer and webmaster: <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/argument/home>.

## What Students Taught Us

The students in this project taught us that adolescents already understand and respect argument in ways useful to English teachers, but that they need help with understanding and performing reasoning in the ways we want. Young children know that some ways of using words will get them what they want and others won’t (Scollon), and they use language to persuade in their self-interest. By the time they reach high school, and even earlier for quite a few, students can evaluate arguments made to them—such as infomercials, magazine advertisements, and their parents’ expectations. And, they can assess their own competence in performing arguments for particular purposes and audiences. Some can argue their way out of getting into trouble with their parents or obtain the use of the family car, and others astutely know the limits of their persuasive skills. They have repertoires of particular forms and styles of argument for particular purposes and audiences.

Students' knowledge reminded us that our task is *not* to teach them how to argue, or even the importance of argument. Rather, our challenge is to convince them to argue in writing in an academic fashion. Most often this is not the way they argue in their lives outside of school. So, our task is to relate how we want students to argue in school to their own experiences as arguers and their desires for themselves. In other words, we have to be better persuaders as well, and we need to give reasoning a more central role in English language arts.

### What Is an Argument?

To provide a useful framework for teaching argument in persuasive essay writing, we modified the work of Stephen Toulmin. An explanation of the six elements of his original model is viewable at [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/argument/toumlin\\_argument\\_model](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/argument/toumlin_argument_model).

Toulmin's way of viewing argumentation—as the process of setting out a logical series of ideas that appear persuasive to readers or hearers—made sense to us. One way of thinking about persuasiveness is to view it as reasoning that explains how something is, was, should, or could be. When we are persuaded, it is because an explanation fits the way we understand given our situation. However, because each of us can occupy many situations and understand in multiple—even conflicting—ways, making sense and being persuaded is complicated. Nevertheless, we can represent this complexity with simpler descriptive frameworks.

Each discipline (e.g., law, philosophy, or English language arts) may have its unique definition of argument with different specific requirements, but it is possible to view all effective arguments in all disciplines according to the basics of Toulmin's model. The closing argument of a criminal trial, a formal proof in mathematics, or a teenager's impassioned plea for a later curfew all require the speaker to take a position, offer compelling data, and explain the grounds, or underlying assumptions and reasoning links, that connect these data to the speaker's position.

### Writing an Argument

The basic framework we used focused on three critical components: stance, evidence, and warrant. Writing an argument begins with taking a **stance**,

or a deliberate way of looking and/or feeling toward something for a particular purpose and for specific readers. A writer can assume multiple stances. People who want to argue effectively first consider where to stand, and then they intentionally put together ideas and information to persuade readers of their position. They link these ideas and information together through reasoning in a particular manner they assume will convince their audience. To be powerful, reasoning requires ideas and information, or **evidence**, purposefully selected to fit. With stance, purpose, and readers in mind, the argument writer selects the most powerful evidence and, with it, **warrants**, or justifies, the stance. Writing warrants to explain how evidence substantiates the stance of the writer gives the argument its persuasive power. Arguments are won and lost on well-reasoned—that is, well-written—warrants.

**Students' knowledge reminded us that our task is *not* to teach them how to argue, or even the importance of argument. Rather, our challenge is to convince them to argue in writing in an academic fashion.**

#### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY STANCE?

Three questions can help one deliberately choose a stance to take for a particular situation with specific readers:

1. **Point of view:** *How do I see and understand what I'm looking at?*
  - What in my experience makes me care about this issue, idea, circumstance or condition?
  - How does this way of caring influence me toward thinking about it?
  - How does my relationship with my readers and my current situation influence where I stand?
2. **Claim:** *What is true and should be known about this subject?*
  - What is important to understand about this issue, idea, circumstance, or condition for this situation at this moment?
3. **Request:** *What should readers understand about this subject?*
  - What would or should readers think is important?
  - How would or should they feel?
  - How would or should they act?



**WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT EVIDENCE?**

Evidence that is believable and convincing should satisfy four conditions:

**1. Is the evidence credible?**

*Does the evidence match your readers' experiences of the world? If not, does the evidence come from a source that readers would accept as more knowledgeable or authoritative than they are?*

**2. Is the evidence sufficient?**

*Does the argument provide enough evidence to convince the readers? Consider the profiles of different readers and how much evidence they would require to understand the applicability of the evidence.*

**3. Is the evidence accurate?**

*Is the evidence valid or trustworthy? Are the sources quoted authorities in their field? Are statistics gathered in verifiable ways from good sources? Are quotations complete and fair (not out of context)? Are facts verifiable from other sources?*

**4. Which order of evidence is best?**

*Evidence should be arranged in the order that seems most reasonable so as to be most forceful. Each piece of evidence should gain strength as it builds upon previous evidence creating a forceful argument. Why is one ordering of evidence the best of all the options?*

Taking into account the situation and audience for one's essay is crucial to putting into play the three components in teaching written argument. Even a written argument is a conversation. As with all conversations that matter, trust that what is being said is "true" is necessary, so teaching students the importance of validly representing and not intentionally manipulating evidence is key.

**What Are Warrants?**

Warrants—the explicit reasoning that links the evidence and the stance—are the most difficult of the three elements for students to understand and to write. Likewise, as teachers we find warrants the most difficult to teach because we are asking students to put into language their subconscious prior thinking and a form of thinking that is new to

them. Asking why one order of evidence is better than the others is a useful way to engage student writers in articulating their subconscious reasons or warrants so they can put them in writing.

Effective warrants persuade readers of the connection between the claim being made and the evidence. Teaching students to write those connections involves asking them questions that require the students to talk through their reasoning until they internalize those questions for themselves. For novice writers of arguments, that takes practice. They must develop the disposition to write out their reasoning. By querying the reasoning underlying their choices of stance and evidence, and by articulating for themselves other possible relationships between their stance and evidence, students can write effective warrants. For example, we could ask student writers the following:

What were your reasons for selecting this evidence for this stance?

Why did you think this particular piece of evidence was well suited to your stance?

How does this piece provide evidence that is different from other evidence sources you selected?

How are pieces of evidence you have selected related to each other?

Writers can think of many relationships between their stance and pieces of evidence—far too many to teach directly without limiting students' reasoning options. However, a common example of a reasoning relationship is "if . . . then." For example, an English teacher could take the stance that rap belongs in the high school English curriculum. One piece of evidence could be the results of a survey showing that rap is urban adolescents' favorite choice of music. Another bit of evidence could be the promotion of rap as a valid literary genre alongside traditional poetry. An "if . . . then" reasoning link between these could be written as "If rap were brought into the English classroom alongside traditional literary forms, students would be more interested in participating and learning." If this were an essay, the writer's next task would be to elaborate that reasoning link in a way that makes it meaningfully persuasive for his or her particular readers. It requires the writer to keep asking why? Then again,

OK, why? And, how do I write that? That is the writing challenge, and what makes the difference between a strong, persuasive argument and a weak or nonexistent one. However, it is the part of the essay writing process that gets shortchanged in teaching, and is often not even addressed.

### Teaching Argument in the Classroom

We took these ideas to the alternative high school students to see their response to this way of thinking about argument reasoning as they moved from writing on-demand for standardized testing to writing *considered* essays that went through several revisions. Lesley has written about these different ways of essay writing in her recent book (Rex and Schiller), and we wondered how challenging this kind of writing would be for students who found high school writing difficult.

We selected students who would most likely be least interested or skilled in producing written arguments according to our framework—eleventh-grade English students at an alternative, “last-chance” (their own description) high school who were prepping for their high school diploma exam. For two months, Lesley and Ebony met with the students as a class, in groups, and individually during 13 75-minute sessions. We had copies of the essays they had previously written as examples of their essay writing, and most of those essays were less than a page and some were less than a sentence. Taking students’ reading and writing abilities and limited interest in the task into account, we chose the 2007 movie *Stomp the Yard* as the core text.

*Stomp the Yard’s* competition, romance, and inspiration had high appeal. Two young women had already memorized sections of dialogue. The film tells the story of DJ, a student at a historically Black university who pledges a Greek-letter fraternity and goes on to succeed in love and schooling after earlier being involved in a dance-off that results in his brother’s death. We viewed each episode in *Stomp the Yard* over a number of days, pausing between each to interpret what was happening and what that meant, so students could develop and write their stances and collect evidence. After they had written a stance and a list of evidence points, Lesley met one-on-one with students and in groups

to talk them through the plans for writing their essays, while Ebony provided individual and group coaching during the drafting phase.

### How Students Argued

When Lesley explained she wanted the students to draw from what they already knew to learn a particular way of arguing for writing essays, the vocal students showed what they could do. They argued by (in their own language) “getting up in each others’ faces” or (in our language) asserting the correctness of their stances. They raised their voices, increased their pitch and emphasis, and gestured in ways that demanded their point of view be accepted.

To manage the ensuing confrontations, Lesley took on the role of “argument police” or “floor director.” At first she allowed students the floor when they could state a clear stance; then again, when they could also provide evidence that suited their stance; and, finally only when they could provide a warrant as well. Because any number of students might be talking simultaneously and with different capacities to articulate stance, evidence, and warrant, these sessions were far from calm orchestrations. Volume remained high, but so did participation. When the time was right, Lesley stepped in to point out a student’s successful performance, and students kept tussling for the floor. As in most classrooms, some students stayed quiet and watched intently, but they all watched the film and wrote appropriate responses in their notebooks. To see an example of one student, Douglas, claiming the classroom floor to argue for his stance that Victoria Secret models are much sexier than women dancing in rap videos, go to: [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/argument/arguments\\_are\\_everywhere](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/argument/arguments_are_everywhere).

**After they had written a stance and a list of evidence points, Lesley met one-on-one with students and in groups to talk them through the plans for writing their essays, while Ebony provided individual and group coaching during the drafting phase.**

### One Student’s Story: Adrian

All the students faced challenges with writing arguments. We can’t include all their essays here, but

one student's drafts provide an example of what learning to reason aloud did for his writing. Adrian was a student for whom stating a stance remained difficult, even though he continued to argue that he had evidence for one. A charming 16-year-old, he talked rapidly in streams of words. Fluency wasn't his problem. Nor did he lack for clever and thoughtful ideas. Adrian had plenty of them but found it difficult to arrange them on the page with clarity or the kind of logical sequencing needed for formal writing. All the language necessary for writing rhetorically sophisticated academic arguments was coming out of his mouth, but he needed instructional help to manage it.

### Adrian's First Essay

Here is the essay Adrian wrote before we started. The on-demand prompt was *Should students have to have a C grade point average in school in order to get a driver's license?*

I think that whoever came out is just dumb because there are not? a lot of people that can read or write therefore the would not be able to drive and I thought we all are supposed to be treated equal and if I can't get a C because I can't read and that means I'm not being treated equally

Adrian wrote this single draft essay in 30 minutes, without feedback or assistance. We don't think it's worthwhile to assess the writing capabilities of students on the

**A generation of Adrians who reason insightfully and argue convincingly could have a transformative influence on our social and political landscape.**

basis of such performances. Nonetheless, we offer Adrian's draft as an indication of the type of essay writing he produced before he learned how to reason as he wrote. We also want to point out that it is possible to jump to the conclusion from this draft that

Adrian does not have at his command basic conventions of sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. Nor does he seem to have a sense of the conventions of academic writing, as indicated by the rambling, conversational tone and mechanical errors. The arguing-Adrian we heard and the arguing-Adrian we read had some features in common—bursts of ideas not conventionally segmented

and sequenced—yet there were some differences. The fluency, thoughtfulness, and purposefulness he exhibited in speech were missing in his writing. Adrian's writing did not adequately represent his thinking capacities, which could be elaborate. Our challenge was to get him to represent his thoughts on paper as reasoning.

### Adrian's Revised Draft

The following draft represents Adrian's writing from a different prompt after conferencing with Lesley and drafting with Ebony. This is not Adrian's final essay, but a draft that still needs some revision. Despite the need for some revision, the draft demonstrates that Adrian has greatly developed his written expression of reasoning: his draft has a clear stance, plenty of evidence from the movie, and it states warrants appropriately.

DJ was a selfish guy and his brother died because of it, but now he's a team player. If it wasn't for him DJ's brother would still be alive. I say that DJ at the beginning of the movie is dancing selfishly and not for the team and that is what got his brother killed. He realizes that being on a step team or a dance team is not just for him, others are on the team too win also. Dancing is a team thing and he realizes that.

DJ says that if it wasn't for him his brother would still be here. Early in the movie, DJ and Duran were at this dance battle out of there home town. Both teams had put up money and the winner gets that sum of money. DJ and Duran's team had won, but then DJ was like double or nothing. Nobody on the team wanted to go on but they did because the team didn't want DJ going out there by himself. DJ's team demolished the other team and won again. The opposite got mad because they'd lost and followed DJ's team out. They started to fight and in the process of fighting DJ's brother Duran got shot and died. If DJ and his team went of went home after the first dance, Duran would still be alive.

DJ starts to go to college because that's what his family wants him to do and his brother. DJ soon joins a fraternity and starts to step. Later of the steeping he's doing it for his brother and for his teammates. At the beginning of the steeping he's doing it for him self. But now he's learning how not to be selfish. He's building a family

with his new dancing partners and during the process he shows them some different type of dance moves and he is contributing to the team in non-selfish way and he is making them a better team.

The step team is practicing in the pool and DJ knows they're going to lose with these dancing moves. So he shows them something hot and new. The new steppers like it but the old ones didn't. So the leader was like let's settle this tonight at the dance floor. DJ and the leader dance and DJ lost because he didn't follow the steps, he did his own thing. Then his teammates told him it is not just about you and that makes everything click for him. DJ was like I want to be part of the team now.

The step team makes it to the National Championship but not DJ because of something that happens but he does come and dances his butt off. During the process DJ says that man come on it's for you and you always wanted it, but the step leader says no it's team thing and were going to do this. DJ goes out and does his brother's finishing move and everybody is excited and DJ and now not selfish no more he is a team player. DJ won because of his brother's move. At first causing his brother to die, to contributing dance moves to his step team and using his brother's moves he's not a selfish guy no more, and his life will be much easier.


### How Adrian and His Classmates Learned Written Argument

Adrian's draft is a written record of the reasoning he was urged to do, without any direct instruction or correction of what he was putting on the page. We regard it as proof that argument reasoning suitable for persuasive essay writing can be taught, even to students for whom most kinds of school writing are a struggle. We are not claiming that it is easy or even attainable without the kind of focused attention that Adrian and his classmates received. But we think it is important to be reminded that such learning is possible.

In-class, small-group, and one-on-one practice were what it took for students to learn written argument. In addition to class time when Adrian's desire to get and keep the floor motivated him to put his divergent thoughts into concisely stated and linked ideas, his fellow writers encouraged him

to see what was working and revise what wasn't clear. In his tutoring sessions, Adrian performed the difficult work of writing his stance in a single sentence and explaining how his evidence fit. Lesley questioned him repeatedly, telling him to write when he articulated a clearly worded idea. When he had too many ideas to keep track of, he recorded them into a tape recorder and played them back so he could hear and organize, with Ebony's oversight, what he had said.

Adrian and his classmates helped us learn how to teach them to write persuasive arguments in the form of an essay. As a group they showed us that students can already reason in the ways they need to reason when they are writing academic essays, but they don't know how to articulate that reasoning in ways that are conventional for academic purposes. They need patient and persistent, well-targeted guidance. They also showed us something else that we weren't expecting: Even when students' writing is marked by severe problems with grammar, punctuation, and syntax, these problems to some degree improve when reasoning is attended to. Clearer sentences emerge along with transitional devices, commas, and periods. Even spelling improves. Of course, Adrian needs to do more to his first draft to bring it in line with our expectations, but it's on its way, which he, and we, found incredibly satisfying and encouraging.

To learn to write well-reasoned persuasive arguments, students need in situ help thinking through the complexity and complications of an issue, making inferences based on evidence, and hierarchically grouping and logically sequencing ideas. They rely on teachers to make this happen. A generation of Adrians who reason insightfully and argue convincingly could have a transformative influence on our social and political landscape. Our democracy would benefit from fewer angry political rallies where people speak only with those they agree with and more Town Hall meetings where citizens, like Adrian, represent their own interests as members of a community of diverse individuals with varied, well-reasoned positions. 

### Works Cited

Luntz, Frank I. *Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear*. New York: Hyperion, 2007. Print.

## Applying Toulmin: Teaching Logical Reasoning and Argumentative Writing

Rex, Lesley A., and Laura Schiller. *Using Discourse Analysis to Improve Classroom Interaction*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Scollon, Ronald. *Mediated Discourse: The Nexus of Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Toulmin, Stephen. *The Uses of Argument*. 1958. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.

**Lesley A. Rex** is professor in the School of Education at the University of Michigan where she co-chairs the Joint Program in English and Education and researches English classroom interaction. She has taught high school and middle school English, university composition, and English teacher education while assisting with the direction of the South Coast Writing Project, the Oakland Writing project, and the Michigan Classroom Discourse Group. Her most recent book with Laura Schiller is *Using Discourse Analysis to Improve Classroom Interaction*. Email her at rex@umich.edu. **Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** is assistant professor of reading, language, and literature education at Wayne State University. A former Detroit Public Schools teacher, her research interests include adolescent literatures and literacies, discourse analysis, and English language arts classroom interaction. She may be reached at eethomas@wayne.edu. **Steven Engel** taught English and drama at Brighton High School (Rochester, New York) for 14 years. Currently, he is a PhD student in the Joint Program of English and Education at the University of Michigan. His research interests include plagiarism and originality in the digital era. Email him at sjengel@umich.edu.

### READWRITETHINK CONNECTION

Lisa Storm Fink, RWT

In "Finding Common Ground: Using Logical, Audience-Specific Arguments," students generate arguments from opposing points of view in a hypothetical situation, discover areas of commonality through the use of Venn diagrams, and construct logical, audience-specific arguments to persuade their opponents. Students also role-play with classmates to refine their arguments. <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/finding-common-ground-using-938.html>

### My Poem, Those People (The first of three marches from Selma to Montgomery, in 1965, is known as "Bloody Sunday.")

It's almost impossible to think,  
let alone to write a single line

without attracting, out of thin air, an impostor  
whose scheme is to find some entrance, to be given  
more than a small part in my poem, one who thinks  
something ought to be written about *him*. or maybe,  
*her*, wanting me to write them as *a dashing devil*, as  
*a delicate darling*, with a bright red, heroic heart.

But look! Who are those brave, yet desperate  
people, dark as the drab world distended about  
them gathering like ants at the foot of the Edmund  
Pettus Bridge? Some slump, but with stoic faces,  
agate eyes, tongues laden with songs  
that are sweet enough to die for.

Before, I didn't know horses could be so  
hurried, or dogs could be so drawn. They  
are mostly children whom uniformed men  
stand ready to kill. But those kids have  
more heart than hounds, more brain than  
all those horses, and enough soul to shed  
blood that is needed to solidify a nation  
that a world might no longer neglect "all  
men," no matter they labored, died like mules,  
and signed their names with all of those Xs.

—Willie James King  
© 2010 Willie James King

**Willie James King** is a poet, educator, and actor. A native of Orrville, Alabama, he has taught French and English at community colleges and high schools in Alabama. He also spent a season as an actor with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. In addition to *At the Forest Edge*, he is the author of *Wooden Windows* (Austin: Sulphur River Literary Review Press). His poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *Crazy Quilt Quarterly*, *Hawaii-Pacific Review*, *Obsidian*, *Pembroke Magazine*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and *Willow Review*. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee.