

Thinking Straight Critical Reasoning Workshop 5-1 (April 29, 2008)

0 Task to be announced

I Review of Fallacies Validity and Venn Diagrams

- A. Check your answers for the Assignment on truth-tables and validity against those given on the last two pages this workshop
- B. In small group Discuss the following left-over from Friday
Do the following statements commit any of the fallacies discussed in chapter 6? If so, which one(s).

1. You've been contradicting everything I say. The point I'm making is an obvious one. A National health program will ruin the quality of medical practice.
2. Anyone who serves as president of this organization has a duty to promote its interests that's written in the charter. Supporting gender equality goes against the interests of this organization. A duty is, by definition, a moral obligation. So as president of this organization, I have a moral obligation to oppose gender equality. Actually, this is an obligation I am happy to fulfill, because I firmly believe that gender equality is a dangerous idea. You can predict the kind of behavior it will produce in women generally if you look at the angry, hysterical, man-hating females who are leaders of this movement. I would argue that the gentle, ladylike demeanor which is befitting of womankind will all but disappear if the feminists succeed in promoting their cause.
3. Tina has never had a Teddy Bear. A mother's love. A doll to cuddle. Tina knows nothing of these things. But she does know fear, rejection, and hunger. For just \$15 a month, you can help save a child like Tina. Through our "adoption" program you can help provide a child with a better diet, clothes, medical attention, school. And even a toy or two. But don't wait. There are so many. And somewhere, right now, a child is dying from starvation and neglect.

C. Plenary Session

II Discussion of the Exam Friday, May 2, Pre-Exam Q&A 9-9:30, Exam 9:30-12

The exam will be closed book and consist of a series of short answer questions. For example, picking out the main conclusion and supporting premises as in Chapter 1; circling conclusion and premises in a fully articulated argument that contains indicator words or putting them in standard form as in Chapter 2; writing out the patterns for arguments as in Chapter 2 and 3; providing the form of an argument pattern from the list on p. 34-35 and distinguishing *modus ponens* and *modus tollens* from related fallacies as in the self-administered quizzes. Adding missing(implicit) premises or conclusion as in Chapter 3; finding a pattern for an argument that is not an explicit version of the 7 in our list of basic argument patterns; reconstructing arguments in longer passages as in Chapter three; showing familiarity with the Principle of Charitable interpretation **including the addition of appropriate IMPLICIT premises or conclusion**, the concept of deductive validity and the concept of soundness; showing that an argument is invalid using the method of counterexample or producing an invalidating alternative as in Chapter 4; casting doubt on premises as in Chapter 4, showing invalidity using the truth-table method, identifying fallacies in short passages and indicating why they might be persuasive. There will also be some extra credit options including use of Venn diagrams for validity and reconstruction and criticism of in a longer passage.

Sample Questions:

- S1 According to your text, if someone appeals to your emotions by describing how badly you will be affected by some action you are considering, this person is
- a. making a fallacious appeal to pity.
 - b. confusing emotion with reason.
 - c. committing the straw man fallacy.
 - d. making a legitimate appeal to emotion.

- S2 The following arguments commits a fallacy.

I favor abortion, but there are some who apparently cannot see that it is justified. These opponents must think that an unwanted pregnancy is the result of sexual indiscretion, and that a woman should be punished for this indiscretion by being forced to bear a child.

- a. State the name of the fallacy committed
- b. Explain why it is a bad argument
- c. Why might it still be persuasive

III Review 1

A. In small group discuss the following sample arguments:

Write what you take to be the author's main point, and (b) list any claims the author makes that support this point. Set aside for the moment your own position on the issues raised, and try to capture the author's position as best you can. It is often useful to simplify a passage, using your own words, then write the argument in the passage in standard form indicating what the pattern seems to be. Is the argument valid?

The abortion issue seems to be in the news practically every week. There are rallies and political speeches. Various candidates are jockeying for political advantage by embracing one side or the other on this controversial issue. Abortion raises some fundamental issues that bring into conflict our very conception of humanity and our ideals of liberty. In spite of the importance of the topic, abortion should not be made the central issue in political campaigns. Candidates for public office differ in a variety of ways, some of which are more important to the fate of the country than abortion policy is. If we do not adequately deal with the deficit and the drug problem, both our ideals of humanity and our liberty will be threatened. There should be no "litmus test," no single criterion, in judging people for public life in our complex and increasingly vulnerable world.

B. Plenary

IV Review 2 A. In small group Reconstruct and evaluate

Religion and cloning

State Sen. Adrian Smith, in his effort to ban all types of human cloning in Nebraska, clearly is attempting to insert his religious dogma — that an embryo and a person are morally equivalent — into the law. There are compelling legal, scientific and religious reasons to disagree.

Science shows~ us that only a portion of the cells resulting from a fertilized human egg will, in a normal pregnancy, become a baby. Others are destined to become a placenta. In therapeutic cloning there is no intent of a baby forming, and thus no person whose rights should be protected. Religious teachings on the beginning of life vary greatly, and the Supreme - Court has ruled that law must be neutral with respect to religion.

When elected officials enact theology into criminal law, it's not only scientific research that comes under threat. Religious freedom is at stake as well.

Clay Farris Nail, *Lincoln*

B. Plenary

V Review 3

- A. Small group** The following selection each contain arguments. Use the techniques of reconstruction discussed in the text to reconstruct one or two of the more important and interesting ones.

Lecture Fragment

Plea bargaining (agreeing to plead guilty in exchange for a reduced sentence) generates problems. Innocent defendants who can't afford bail may plead guilty just to avoid jail time waiting for trial. The process makes no presumption of innocence. Guilt is not determined in an adversarial process, it is negotiated. It makes work easier for prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges, but it sacrifices the interests of society.

Given these problems, some have suggested that plea bargaining be eliminated. But this might create an even worse problem. Ninety percent of defendants plead guilty, and most of those do plea-bargain.

Suppose plea bargaining were eliminated and the percentage of guilty pleas dropped to 80 percent. This would double the number of criminal trials, placing a staggering burden on the criminal justice system.

The experience of Alaska, however, calls this fear into question. Alaska has virtually done away with plea bargaining. There was some increase in the number of trials, but not as much as expected. In the year before elimination of plea bargaining, there were seventy-two felony trials in Fairbanks. In the year after, there were ninety. This is only a 25 percent increase.

Why was the increase so small? The explanation of why defendants plead guilty could be because most of them are factually guilty, and they don't have a viable legal argument for their defense (that is, they are legally guilty as well), so they believe it is unlikely they would win in a trial. If this is the case, then as Alaska's experience indicates, while it may be difficult to eliminate plea bargaining, it is not impossible.

(Note: There are several arguments in this lecture fragment.. Remember that the reconstruction of arguments from longer passages allows for some degree of individual interpretation.)

B. Plenary

VI Review 4.

- A. Small Group** We read the Froma Harrop editorial *Gay, straight: What's the deal?* in the first workshop and discussed its main conclusion. (There is a copy on the next page) Use the techniques discuss in chapters 2-4 to reconstruct and criticize the argument as best you can.
- B. Small Group** Review Michelle Malkin's *,Bordering on Idiocy* from Friday's Workshop Does it commit any fallacies? If so, which ones.
- C. Plenary** discussion of passages

- VII Opportunity** for those that want more review to talk individually or in small groups with David



Friday May 2 Exam. 9-9:30 Pre exam Last minute Q&A. 9:30-12 Exam Assignment for Tuesday May 6. Read: *Critical Reasoning* Ch. 8

Froma Harrop / Syndicated columnist

Gay, straight: What's the deal?

The U.S. Senate has blocked the proposed constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage. In doing this, the senators have earned my gratitude — though for reasons not directly related to gay rights. Rather, the move will spare us all some of the repetitive back-and-forth that has characterized this debate. It has gotten boring, and both sides of the argument irritate me. About 82 million unmarried American adults will know of what I speak.

Gay advocates always note the thousand-plus federal rights and benefits that are available to married heterosexuals and not to committed same-sex couples. The guardians of traditional values then counter that marriage has always been a man-and-woman thing — letting gay couples in on the deal would harm whatever is left of the American family.

What really rankles me, though, is "the deal" itself. That hit home in a news story around the time that Massachusetts started recognizing gay marriages. The day after a lesbian couple wed, the women filed a medical-malpractice lawsuit. One of them suffered from advanced breast cancer, which the suit claimed, a doctor had failed to detect. The other wanted to collect for "loss of consortium." In other words, the doctor's alleged negligence was depriving her of the love and companionship of a mate, and she wanted monetary compensation for her pain.

You can't read this without thinking about similar hurts being felt all the time in non-marital relationships. People develop intense connections with old friends, neighbors and grandmothers. Why can't they sue for loss of companionship, also?

Quickie marriages get more legal respect than friendships lasting decades. An hour after Britney Spears gets hooked to her next husband, the federal government will shower her with all sorts of rights and benefits not available to the man who has spent eight years caring for a mother with Alzheimer's.

So here is the point: The push toward gay marriage doesn't threaten hetero marriages as much as it threatens "the deal." It puts light on the illogic behind handing a variety of goodies to certain people because some civil authority issued them marriage certificates.

There is a potent political issue here, which could complicate matters for candidates. They must do more than just choose between advocates of gay rights and those of so-called traditional values. They must consider the lot of single Americans, who could cause a ruckus if they ever woke up.

So much attention is paid to married couples that most of the public — including single people themselves — thinks of unmarried adults as a marginal minority. Actually, they account for half of America's grownups. Households headed by single people are now the majority in 13 states and 113 congressional districts.

These districts are wildly diverse. Some include the poorest black inner cities, while others are wealthy and mostly white. In the nation's richest congressional district — located on Manhattan's East Side — more than 70 percent of the households are headed by unmarried adults.

Government should have no interest in a citizen's marital status. It certainly has no business sending a bigger tax bill to cohabiting sisters than to a man-and-wife team reporting the same income and deductions as the sisters.

Marriage is a fine institution and a very important stabilizing force for the raising of children. Some purists will argue that even child tax credits are a kind of social engineering. Using the tax code to help people pay for child expenses seems OK to me. But giving tax breaks to Larry King and his seventh wife — and in the name of helping children — is outrageous.

Of course, stereotypes underpin these unfair policies. Married couples are seen as the moral backbone of America. Singles, on the other hand, are regarded as questionable citizens and possibly misfits. In truth, single America includes everything from 21-year-old serial daters and bachelor playboys to widowed grandfathers and divorced parents. And whose business is it, anyway?

Perhaps the diversity of the group helps explain why unmarried adults haven't made common cause. They should, and when they do, the whole conversation will change. The real issue will no longer be whether gays should get in on the same marriage deal as heterosexuals, but why the deal exists in the first place.

Providence Journal columnist Froma Harrop's column appears regularly on editorial pages of The SeattleTimes.

What does combating illegal immigration have to do with combating Middle Eastern terrorists in America? Well, duh.

Let's review: Three of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers were illegal visa overstayers. Seven of the 19 obtained fraudulent ID cards with the help of illegal alien day laborers in Virginia. Two of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers were illegal aliens. At least two bin Laden-linked bomb plotters attempted to cross illegally through our land borders. More than 115,000 people from Middle Eastern countries are here illegally. More than 1,000 of them were smuggled through Mexico by convicted global crime ring leader George Tajirian. And some 6,000 Middle Eastern men who have defied deportation orders remain on the loose.

The connection between illegal immigration reform and homeland security is now fantastically obvious to most Americans, but the loose-and-open borders crowd is as blind and dumb as ever. Leading the senseless is the Wall Street Journal editorial page, which I admired in the past for its stalwart promotion of the rule of law and abhorrence of race-card demagoguery. On March 18, the paper betrayed both principles with disturbing flippancy. "So Atta got his visa. That's no reason to kick out Mexican workers," pooh-poohed an online summary of an editorial titled "Immigrants and Terrorists." In it, the Journal's unrepentant open borders proponents approve of bipartisan efforts -- foolishly embraced by President Bush and favored by Mexican president Vicente Fox -- to extend partial amnesty to hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who have been in the country since 1998. The so-called 245(i) provision of federal immigration law will allow illegal aliens who have found employer or family sponsors to obtain visas in the U.S. for a \$1,000 fee, instead of being forced to return home - where consular offices would thoroughly scrutinize their native criminal records before approving applications. The 245(i) program would also allow these applicants to bypass a 1996 federal law barring illegal aliens from re-entering the U.S. for up to 10 years.

The manner in which the Bush administration initially attempted to ram this proposal through - by a stealth "cloaked" vote - was cravenly Clintonesque. But not a peep of complaint was heard from the Journal on that. Instead, the editorial board lambasted principled conservative critics of 245(i) such as Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado) for "scapegoating" Mexicans who "bus tables." Drop the Jesse Jackson imitation, guys. This isn't just about innocent Mexican bus boys. The amnesty would be extended to any law-breaking alien from any country who can hustle up an American employer or "spouse" and pay a good immigration lawyer to cook up an eligibility claim.

Section 245(i) is not a family values plan. It is a law-enforcement evasion plan.

The Journal says it doesn't want to overburden consular offices abroad. But what about the dangerous bureaucratic onslaught this program is causing here at home? As we have seen in the past, amnesty is an open invitation for marriage fraud, document fraud, endless litigation, and swamped adjudications offices. It is also a known loophole for terrorists. At least one al Qaeda-linked operative, convicted in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plot, obtained amnesty through a program intended for farm workers. Who knows how many more are now lurking among us as amnestied American citizens?

The Journal editorial board and its ilk perpetuate a perilous myth -- that we can continue to reward "good" illegal immigrants streaming across the borders while keeping the "bad" illegal immigrants out. "There's always a chance that terrorist cells lie dormant among these folks," the Journal concedes. But even after the heinous murder of 3,000 people in its backyard at the hands of these sleepers who slipped through, the New York-based paper is far more concerned about not wanting to "upend the lives of Mexican nannies in San Diego."

This takes the cake. While the Wall Street Journal editors and their border-crashing allies remain obsessed with protecting illegal Mexican workers from the slightest inconvenience, the lives of countless American soldiers and their families across the country have been "upended" in the war on terror to ensure that we remain a safe and sovereign nation. Which side are our friends at the Journal on, anyway?

Exercises 6.1 f, h, j; 6.2 #1 f,h #3 a,c,g,h, Exercise 6.3 # 2,#4,#6; Exercise 6.4 #2b,d,f,h Exercise 6.5 #2, #4, #8; Exercise 7.1 #2 b, d (**EXTRA CREDIT**, Exercises on using Venn diagrams Exercise 5.4 #1 f, #2 d, f, #3 b, d, f)

Exercises 6.1 f, h,j

- 1f. Straw man. The opposition is portrayed as making a weaker argument against prayer than might be made. Even if, properly interpreted, the constitution calls for separation of church and state, this might be compatible with individual, voluntary prayer in public schools.
- 1h. False dilemma and slippery slope. There are many choices between these two extremes. Furthermore, if cigarettes and “self-abuse” at 15 led to being a moral and physical wreck at 48. then there would be a lot of moral and physical wrecks. The illustration was probably effective in its day because the prospect of becoming dissipated and then outcast would have been frightening enough to distract the reader’s attention from the implausibility of the argument.
- 1j Straw man. You might be distracted by possible weakness in the claim that there is no strategy what ever to deal with the root causes of terrorism and fail to realize that the war against terrorism as it is currently being pursued might be unwinnable, without embracing the view that some other strategy might work much better.

6.2 #1f,h #3 a,c,g,h,

- 1f. Affirming the consequent. This resembles a valid argument.
- 1h. Equivocation. “Invasion” at first means large numbers coming into the country illegally. Then, to justify using lethal force, “invasion” is given the connotation of an attack on this country. But one who is inclined to agree with the conclusion of the argument would probably overlook this shift in meaning.
- 3a. Denying the antecedent. This resembles a good argu-ment, but pattern is faulty.
- 3c. Affirming the consequent. This resembles a good argument, but pattern is faulty. 3g. Slippery slope and false dilemma. The speaker probably believes the steps in the slope are connected just because she doesn’t want to take the first one (living in the dorm). The only alternative she sees is the expensive apartment because she doesn’t want to look for other alternatives.
- 3g. Slippery slope and false dilemma. The speaker probably believes the steps in the slope are connected just because she doesn’t want to take the first one (living in the dorm). The only alternative she sees is the expensive apartment because she doesn’t want to look for other alternatives.
- 3h. “Reverse” of slippery slope. It is doubtful that all these things follow from this kind of peace of mind. But seeing some kinds of good follow from a practice leads one to expect all manner of good to follow.

Exercise 6.3 # 2,#4,#6

- 2. Appeal to force.
- 4. Appeal to pity.
- 6. Prejudicial language (“throwing money”).

Exercise 6.4 #2 b,d,f,h

- 2b. Affirming the consequent
- 2d. Attacking the person, appeal to pity.
- 2f. Equivocation (“diverse view points”, diversity)
- 2h. Prejudicial language (“too ridiculous,” “bureaucratic wrath and bureaucratic thirst for power”), slippery slope.

Exercise 6.5 #2, #4, #8

- 2. It might be claimed that this is the fallacy of appeal to authority. It is questionable whether running a business makes one an authority concerning the economic policies of a country; one could teach in a narrow area of economics that is relatively unrelated to questions of national economic policy. There surely are better authorities that the speaker could consult. But it must be admitted that these supposedly better authorities often disagree (see Chapter 11). It must also be admitted that the speaker of the argument is probably taking a better course of action in consulting with these two people than he or she would be in voting out of complete ignorance.
- 4. Is this a fallacious appeal to pity? This is debatable. All that is necessary to establish that Bert deserves compensation is to show that the company was responsible (the first sentence) and that Bert suffered damage. If a poor case had been made to establish responsibility, the arguer must be trying to compensate here by getting the

audience to feel sorry for Bert because he can't feed himself. The degree of his suffering is irrelevant to whether he deserves compensation. But it would be relevant to the issue of how much compensation he deserves.

8. The question is whether this is a false dilemma. It is questionable whether the only alternative to living with an unacceptably high risk of another major terrorist attack is the extreme border closing initiative that would be necessary to screen out virtually all unauthorized immigrants. A more targeted security program coupled with economic incentives to limit organized border crossing might provide a reasonable degree of security.

Exercise 7.1 #2 b, d,

2b. Reconstruction:

- (1) If the average couple has more than two children, the population will rise drastically.
- (2) We should prevent the population from rising drastically.

∴ We should prevent the average couple from having more than two children.

Assessment:

The argument is valid. The expression "average couple" in the conclusion might be interpreted as meaning a couple that is typical in a variety of ways—for example, income, education, and so on. Construed in this way, the conclusion enjoins us to prevent them from having more than two children. But the term "average couple" in premise 1 is plausibly interpreted as a mathematical construct. Population will grow only if the number of children is (somewhat) greater than the number of people in couples. But this average can be obtained if some (perhaps other-wise typical) couples have considerably more than two children and others have no children at all. Not everybody is a member of a couple, not all couples have children, war and disease take a toll; so premise 1 is true, if at all, only if the average number of children per couple is significantly greater than two.

2d. Reconstruction:

- (1) Men and women are different physiologically and emotionally.
- (2) If men and women are different physiologically and emotionally, then they are not equal.
- (3) If men and women are not equal, then they should not be called "equal" by the law.
- (4) If men and women should not be called "equal" by the law, then equal rights for women should not be constitutionally guaranteed. (IMPLICIT)

∴ Equal rights for women should not be constitutionally guaranteed.

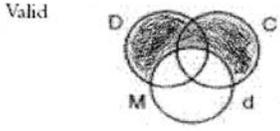
Assessment:

The argument is valid, but the expression "equal" is used equivocally. As used in premise 3, it means having (or being entitled to) equal legal rights. Premises 1 and 2 depend on interpreting "equal" in terms of physical and emotional characteristics.

Extra Credit Validity and Venn diagram **Exercise 5.4** #1 f, #2 d, f, #3 b, d, f) Note: the choice of letters to represent predicates was dictated by the sample argument of the form indicated for each exercise item. You could have used any distinct letters, e.g. A, B, C as will as name m.

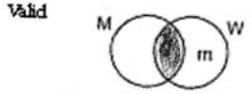
1f. (1) Every dog is a mammal. $(x)(Dx \rightarrow Mx)$.
 (2) Every cat is a mammal. $(x)(Cx \rightarrow Mx)$.
 (3) Donald Duck is not a mammal. $\neg Md$.

 \therefore Donald Duck is not a dog and Donald Duck is not a cat. $\therefore \neg Dd \ \& \ \neg Cd$.



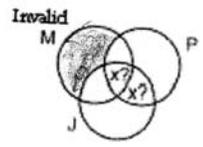
2d. (1) No men are women. $(x)(Mx \rightarrow \neg Wx)$.
 (2) Madonna is a woman. Wm .

 \therefore Madonna is not a man. $\therefore \neg Mm$.



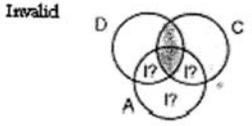
3b. (1) All mothers are parents. $(x)(Mx \rightarrow Px)$.
 (2) Some men are parents. $(\exists x)(fx \ \& \ Px)$.

 \therefore Some men are mothers. $\therefore (\exists x)(fx \ \& \ Mx)$.



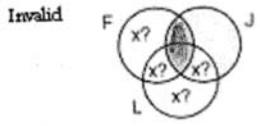
2f. (1) None of the dogs is a cat. $(x)(Dx \rightarrow \neg Cx)$.
 (2) Every cat is an animal. $(x)(Cx \rightarrow Ax)$.
 (3) Lassie is an animal. Al .

 \therefore Lassie is not a dog. $\therefore \neg Dl$.



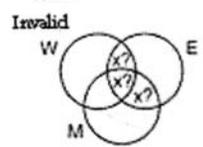
3f. (1) No felons are judges. $(x)(Fx \rightarrow \neg Jx)$.
 (2) All judges are lawyers. $(x)(Jx \rightarrow Lx)$.

 \therefore Some lawyers are not felons. $\therefore (\exists x)(Lx \ \& \ \neg Fx)$.



3d. (1) Some women are corporate executives. $(\exists x)(Wx \ \& \ Ex)$.
 (2) Some men are corporate executives. $(\exists x)(Mx \ \& \ Ex)$.

 \therefore Some women are men. $\therefore (\exists x)(Wx \ \& \ Mx)$.



Modus Ponens

Modus Tollens

Disjunctive Argument

Hypothetical Argument

Chain Argument

Predicate Instantiation

Universal Syllogism

Fallacy of Affirming the Consequent

Fallacy of Denying the Antecedent