Thinking Straight Critical Reasoning Workshop 3-1   (April 15, 2008)

I   **A. (Individual)** review the answers for the assignment given on the the next two pages.
   B. (In pairs) discuss any items that you found difficult .
   C. Plenary discussion of any remaining problems.

II.   **A. Discussion:** What was our objective in doing exercises 3.1 and 3.2?
      Ultimately, to understand and evaluate real-world arguments from our reading and our
      conversations. A problem is that most real-world arguments are not complete
      deductive arguments. By reconstructing an argument so that it fits a complete
      deductive pattern, we are able to tell whether, by accepting the premises, we are
      compelled to accept the conclusion.
   —Example: argument concerning sex education (quoted on p. 73)
      *Well, I insist—and I here follow von Hildebrand—that we parents, we married people, in
      no way believe sex is dirty, but we believe it is private and intimate. Therefore, it cannot
      endure being publicized the way mathematics or even the way health is publicized. It is
      quite tactful for you to go to a party and talk about your tonsils. It is not tactful—not
      acceptable—for you to go to a party and talk about how your wife makes love to you, not
      because you think it is dirty, my friends, but because you think it is intimate.*
            1. Sex is private and intimate.
            2. ???
            _____

            ∴ Sex shouldn't be publicized.
      The passage comes from a book entitled *Raping our Children: The Sex Education Scandal*
   that argues against sex education in schools. In **small group** discuss how the argument
   might be incorporated in a longer argument that argues against sex education

   B. The remainder of the chapter moves into applying the technique to longer passages We
      suggest a two step process (1) make a first approximation
      Put the argument in your own words and simplifying it. Then (2), if necessary make it
      more detailed and subtle if the passage warrants it.
      (In small group) briefly simplify the following:
      i. Few are the rewards of indolence and many its pains; rich is the harvest of hard work
      ii. If you want to get ahead in this world, you've got to be down at the carwash when the
               fancy cars roll in.
      iii Yet all this bespeaks a dim realization of the truth—the truth that modern man lives under
      the illusion that he knows what he wants, while he actually wants what he is *supposed* to
      want. In order to accept this it is necessary to realize that to know what one really wants is
      not comparatively easy, as most people think, but one of the most difficult problems any
      human being has to solve. It is a task we frantically try to avoid by accepting ready-made
      goals as though they were our own. (Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*. **Hint: Does Fromm believe that
      people really know what they want?)**

   C Plenary discussion

III Longer argumentative passages

    A. **In small group** discuss the example below, then reconstruct the argument it contains by constructing a first approximation of the conclusion and supporting point in your own words, then find linking premises that fit the basic patterns or some extension of them.   Be prepared to write your reconstruction on the board

> *Books and magazines that use a vocabulary that deludes women into thinking themselves rebels and outlaws, on the cusp of some new freedom, misperceive our basic situation. A defect in the early thinking of the women's movement was a tendency to liberate women not for life but for life in the counterculture; when that life was over, many women found themselves in limbo. . . . If we wish to be firm-voiced and progressive about meeting our primary needs, we should not point our heads in the direction of the wrong revolution. Vague definitions such as sister, rebel and outlaw may be handy for magazines in search of a vast circulation, but are of no use to thinking adults. Sexual liberation without economic security grants women merely the right to stay marginal. Women must cease being conned into substituting fantasy sexual revolutions for political pressure or real reforms that would give us true equality.* (Barbara Probst Solomon, *"This Take-a-Lover Chatter Overlooks the Bottom Line" International Herald Tribune, 10 July 1992.*)

    B. **Plenary** Discussion

    C **If time permits**
        1. **Individually** read the Gun-Control essay on the next page and reconstruct the main argument it contains.
        2. **In small grou**p, read your reconstruction.
        3. Be prepared to write ;your reconstruction on the board

    D. **Plenary** discussion of results and evaluation of the argument.

Assignment for Friday, April 18 : **Read**: Ch 4; **Submit: Exercise 3.2** #4 and (either #8 or #10);   **Exercise 3.3** #1b,d, f, #2c

License Users of Guns, Just Like Drivers of Cars
Opposing view: Only the law-abiding will submit to such restrictions, thereby making crime easier
(By André Marrou, 1992 Libertarian Party presidential nominee)[25]

If anti-gun laws worked, then New York and Washington, with the toughest anti-gun laws, would have the lowest crime rates. But they have the *highest*.

Conversely, crime rates plummeted up to 90% after certain cities and states—like Orlando, Fla., and Kennesaw, Ga.—allowed law-abiding citizens to carry concealed handguns.

The reason should be obvious: law-abiding citizens know and obey the law. Criminals don't care what the law is and won't obey it. So who benefits when gun ownership and use are restricted? The criminals, because decent folks are disarmed by the law, making it easier for criminals to prey upon them.

Registering guns and licensing gun owners won't reduce crime any more than registering cars and licensing drivers now reduce traffic accidents—which is to say, hardly at all. With millions of highly restrictive laws, still about 44,000 Americans yearly die in traffic accidents, while about 15,000 are shot to death. Since there are fewer cars than guns, cars are clearly more dangerous than guns. Should we outlaw cars?

Like cars, guns are dangerous tools. So are kitchen knives (ask John Bobbitt) and chain saws; should we register or outlaw them, or license their use? Just because something is dangerous—say climbing mountains or riding bulls—doesn't mean we should restrict its use or test and license its practitioners.

Guns are tools, not evil instruments capable of their own malevolence. A gun simply amplifies its user's power. In a rapist's hands, a gun is bad; in a law-abiding woman's hand, it's good. New York and Washington have proved that guns cannot be kept from criminal hands; shouldn't we let decent people arm themselves without licensing?

Ultimately, "gun control" is not about guns. It's about control. Beware.

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25. The January 1, 1994, issue of *USA TODAY* contained an editorial titled "License Users of Guns, Just Like Drivers of Cars," which presented the position of the editorial staff. It defended the position that "as a matter of public safety and accountability, the states should require that all gun users be licensed." The André Marrou selection above presents an opposing view.

Sample Assignment Answers Check your our assignment. Put a check
√ next to answers that are similar, an **X** next ones that miss the mark, and a question
mark **?** next to any that are problematic List the number out of 14 checked .

Exercise 3.1 #1 f,h,j , #2 d,f,h,j,l,n,p,r, t, #3 b ,d

Chain Argument

1f. (1) If A, then [B].
    (2) If B, then C.
    (3) [A].
    ∴ C.

(1) If the Hacker laptop has only
    128 Megs of RAM, then [it
    can't run Webvideo
    software].
(3) Hacker laptop has only 128
    Megs of RAM.]

(Or, alternatively, one can make the not component explicit.)

(1) If A, then [not B].
(2) If not B, then not C.
(3) [A].
∴ Not C.

(1) If the Hacker laptop has only 128 Megs of RAM, then it is not
    the case that [it can run Webvideo software].
(3) [The Hacker laptop has only 128 Megs of RAM.]

[products guaranteed three years] are [products that give you a
    lot of protection against faulty engineering and
    workmanship].

Predicate Instantiation

1h. (1) All P1's are P2's.
    (2) [m] is a [P1].
    ∴ m is a P2.

(2) [A new high-definition
    TV] is [an addition to my TV entertainment system].

Pattern Not on List

1j. (1) Either A or B, and
        not (A and B).
    (2) If not B, then C.
    (3) [Not C].
    ∴ Not A.

(3) [It is not the case that I'll
risk an accident.]

2d. (1) All P1's are P2's.
    (2) m is a P1.
    ∴ m is a P2.

(1) All teachers should be sensitive to other
    people.
(2) Harold is a teacher. (IMPLICIT)
∴ Harold should be sensitive to other people.

2f. (1) If A, then B.
    (2) Not B.
    ∴ Not A.

(1) If being affectionate were the only important virtue,
    then Maurice would be a saint.
(2) Maurice is not a saint. (IMPLICIT)
∴ Being affectionate is not the only important virtue.

2h. (1) A.
    (2) If A, then B.
    (3) If B, then C.
    ∴ C.

(1) Many college faculty members are reaching retirement age.
(2) If many college faculty members are reaching retirement age, then
    many new, younger faculty members will be hired.
(3) If younger faculty members will be hired, then before long,
    college faculties will become more energetic. (IMPLICIT)
∴ Before long, college faculties will become more energetic.

2j. (1) A.
   (2) If A, then B.
   (3) If B, then C.
   ——————————
   ∴ C.

(1) The number of unmarried adults in the United States is continuing to increase.
(2) If the number of unmarried adults in the United States is continuing to increase, then there is an increase in people unsupported by close, personal bonds. (IMPLICIT)
(3) If there is an increase in people unsupported by close, personal bonds, then there will be an increase in alcoholism and suicide.
——————————————————————————
∴ There will be an increase in alcoholism and suicide.

2l. (1) The higher the interest rates, e better the bank.
  .(2) The interest rates at CASH National Bank are the highest in town.
——————————————————————————
  ∴ The CASH National Bank is the best bank in town. (IMPLICIT)

2n . (1) Either I should spend my tax refund on paying off my debts or I should buy books for this term [but not both].
  (2) If I don't buy books, then I risk failing my courses.
  (3) I shouldn't risk failing my courses. (IMPLICIT)
——————————————————————
  ∴ I shouldn't spend the refund on paying off my debts.

2p. (1) Every human action is determined by laws of nature.
  (2) If a person deserves praise or blame, then she can act differently than she in fact did. (Or, equivalently: If she cannot act differently than she did, then no person deserves praise or blame.)
  (3) If every human action is determined by laws of nature, then a person cannot act differently than she in fact did. (IMPLICIT)
——————————————————————————
  ∴ No person deserves praise or blame.

2r. (1) Either we should give the voucher system a faire trial or we should abandon the potential of the children of inner cities to become educated.
  (2) We should not abandon the potential of children of inner cities to become educated. (IMPLICIT)
  . ∴ We should give the voucher system a fair trial (IMPLICIT)

2t . (1) If the United States passed rights for homosexuals, then the United States would support what is unnatural.
  (2) The United States should never support what is unnatural.
  ∴ The United States should not pass rights for homosexuals.

(Note that this reconstruction treats as acceptable an argument form similar to *modus tollens* but with "should not" appearing in premise 2 and the conclusion but not in premise 1.This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.)

3b. None of the reconstructions are adequate, but a combination of (ii) and (iii) would be. (i) has the wrong conclusion and is invalid. (ii) is invalid as it stands; it needs the assertion that gender discrimination against women is wrong.(iii) contains this assertion but needs to include a premise asserting that combat roles only for men discriminates against men on the basis of gender.

3d. Reconstruction (iii) is adequate. (i) takes the "easy way out" using if-then. (ii) has an overly broad conclusion; it does not mention the case in which the mother's life is in danger. An even more charitable reconstruction would modify (iii) to refer to anything that *significantly* cheapens American commitment to protecting life.