

Phil 57 section 3  
Fall 2010

HW #5 (Informal Fallacies)

*For each passage, determine if there is an argument present. If there is no argument present, identify what kind of passage it is (explanation, illustration, report). If there is an argument present, determine whether a fallacy is present and name or explain the fallacy.*

1. I deserve a better grade on this exam, Professor Smith, because I studied hard for it.
2. You cannot say divorce is immoral, because you yourself are divorced.
3. A Princeton student found guilty of plagiarism admitted that the work was not her own but argued that the university ought not to penalize her for this infraction, since she had been “under enormous pressure at the time, having to meet a deadline for her senior thesis with only one day left to write the paper.”
4. Everybody visits the Art Institute of Chicago. Therefore, you should visit it, too.
5. A protester demonstrating against the new president said, “A recount of the ballots is needed in this presidential election. If not, we will blockade airports and highways, we’ll take over embassies, and we’ll bring traffic to a halt all over this country.”
6. Professor Nathan’s history of the Catholic Church is a classic. But she’s a Protestant, so we cannot expect her treatment of Catholicism to be fair.
7. Over 2 million people die in the United States every year. Therefore the United States is a dangerous place to visit, and we should take our vacation elsewhere.
8. Rev. Armstrong urges us not to support the war, saying that violence is barbaric in all forms and only breeds more violence in return. But his view should be rejected, since it amounts to arguing that our nation’s enemies are not bad guys at all, and that we should just surrender to them.
9. Global war is inevitable, for the cultures of East and West are radically different.
10. I know I have failed to pay my rent for the past three months, but if you evict me I’ll have no place to go. How can you throw me, an eighty-year-old grandmother, out onto the street?
11. According to contemporary biology, species evolve over time. But I have never seen any animals evolving. Have you?

12. Darwin's theory of evolution cannot be correct. It holds that we all evolved from monkeys! But monkeys do not evolve into people. And, we are too different to have evolved from them. Thus, Darwin's theory of evolution has to be false.

13. My opponent, Representative Smith, says she favors abolishing the death penalty. But what she's really saying is that it's just fine for murderers to be housed and fed for years at the tax-payers' expense, and that it is OK with her that they are ultimately released to prey on our citizens again.

14. CBS News is trying to make people believe that there are unsafe working conditions in this factory. But I tell you this: anyone who plans to continue working for me should not talk to reporters.

15. Those who refuse to accept my conclusions are just too stubborn to admit that I am right.

16. Phil is taking six courses this semester, and they're all three-credit courses. But each course is easy, so Phil will have an easy semester.

17. If we continue to permit abortion, then we'll soon be allowing euthanasia on demand. This line of reasoning leads straight to justifying mass exterminations of any "unwanted" people. Finally, we'll be led to death camps and outright genocide. Therefore, abortion should not be permitted.

18. The manager told me she would lose no time in looking at my resume. So, I'm sure she will read it immediately.

19. Stealing is wrong. Although Johnny was hungry, it does not make his action of taking the bread a non-stealing of the bread. So, what Johnny did was wrong.

20. Since Democrats have taken office, the economy has gotten worse. So, we can conclude that the worsening of the economy is the Democrats' fault.

21. Several kids at Preston High School were caught stealing. So, the kids who go to that school must be bad.

22. It's important that we place restrictions on foreign investments in this country. Japan owns almost 75% of the commercial real estate in Los Angeles. Foreign firms are buying more and more American companies.

23. Modern societies have many conflicts; the people in a modern society, therefore, have many conflicts.

24. The changes that television makes in any of us are small and barely noticeable. So, the changes that television makes in society are small and barely noticeable.

25. India's citizens are mostly poor. Therefore, India is a poor country.
26. Giving aid to countries that are in need leads to a depletion of the resources of the country that does the giving. Thus, if any country continually gives to a poor country, it will eventually become poor itself.
27. Everybody likes chocolate. So, you should like chocolate.
28. The universe is spherical in form because all the constituent parts of the universe (that is, the sun, moon, and the planets) appear in this form.
29. No man will take counsel, but every man will take money; therefore, money is better than counsel.
30. Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, is a good to the aggregate of all people.
31. Order is indispensable to justice because justice can be achieved only by means of social and legal order.
32. Mysticism is one of the great forces of the world's history. For religion is nearly the most important thing in the world, and religion never remains for long altogether untouched by mysticism.
33. Whether we are to live in a future state, as it is the most important question which can possibly be asked, is so the most intelligible question which can be expressed.
34. Gender Feminism is notoriously impossible to falsify: it chews up and digests all counterevidence, transmuting it into confirming evidence. The fact that most people, including women, do not see the pervasive and tenacious system of male power only show how thoroughly they have been socialized to perpetuate it. The more women who reject the Gender Feminist perspective, the more this proves them in thrall to the androcentric system. Nothing and no one can refute the hypothesis of the sex-gender system for those who see it so clearly "everywhere".
35. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that you won't do well in logic; therefore, we may conclude that you will do well.
36. H. L. A. Jenkins, the noted international rose expert, has publicly stated that logic is essential to a life of excellence; consequently, it must be so.
37. When are you going to stop fooling around and begin to take your college education seriously? You will only benefit yourself if you start studying effectively.

38. The U.S. is a true democracy; therefore, children and criminals should be allowed to vote.
39. Every human being is born, grows, declines, and dies, as it must if it is an aggregation of individual living cells.
40. Einstein became a great physicist because his parents and his teachers left him alone to dream. Had they badgered him to study, he never would have gotten beyond the Swiss patent office.
41. As I drove to school this morning, not one car that was turning had its turn signal in. Thus, I conclude that the drivers in this state are not well trained, since they never use their turn signals.
42. The best definition distinguishing man from other animals is that man is a rational animal. Therefore, you, as a person, should spend more time studying and using your brain than you should spend goofing off.
43. I can see that you are greatly impressed by the power of logic and argument. Therefore, are you going to sign up for "Introduction to Philosophical Inquiry" this semester or next semester? It's got to be one or the other.
44. The Smithsonian Foundation is investigating whether or not police officers are using excessive force in traffic arrests of minorities. Hence, it is quite reasonable to conclude that *some* police officers, at least, use excessive force in that kind of arrest.
45. The testimony of the defendant accused of manslaughter in this indictment should be disallowed because she has been arrested for shoplifting on many occasions.
46. It should be no surprise that the state is, again, headed into either a recession or a deep economic downturn. After all, a Republican has just been elected Governor.
47. When I was shopping at Bess's Fine Clothing, not one person gave me the time of day. I guess Bess's is not a very friendly place to work.
48. John Braden, a professor at the Advanced Institute of Physics, has gone on record to say that the American Medical Association needs to raise its standards for physicians. The opinion of a man of that brilliance should not be disregarded.
49. If we took a poll right now, almost every American would agree that a vaccine for AIDS would soon be found. Therefore, there can be little doubt that AIDS will be practically wiped out in the near future.
50. I made low grades on my first tests in math and English. I must really be dumb.

51. As a daughter when I was four, my father taught me the beauty of numbers, and I have excelled at mathematics ever since. My conclusion as to why females do not score as high on math tests? The males with a high aptitude for mathematics are not spending enough time with their daughters.

52. I think the tests given in this class were more than fair, and I think you will agree with me, because if you do not, your grade in this course will certainly be in jeopardy.

53. The reason I do well in economics is simple. I eat Post Cereal every morning for breakfast, and this breakfast helps my ability to analyze things in greater depth. It must be all those complex carbohydrates.

54. Oriental Philosophy is the best course taught at Lander University. I know this because all of my friends say so.

55. Look, Mr. IRS examiner, of course I owe taxes – I'm not denying that. However, I was unable to file on time because my wife was sick and my two children need my attention. Surely the IRS is not opposed to keeping the family together.

56. Mr. Smith, maybe there is some truth to what you say about me being rude to salespeople, but I have certainly heard many salespeople complain about your manners, so you are certainly not the person to point this out to me.

57. Sir, don't you want to look more closely at our aluminum siding for your new home? When we put this up, your home will take on the glow of beauty, and others will admire you as someone who cares. Not only that, but your life will be richer as you proudly invite others into your home to share the better way of life.

58. It is easy to see that goodness is in the world and not just in our minds, because as we look at the world, some things are obviously not evil or indifferent in themselves.

59. Mr. Watkins has clearly and concisely detailed his arguments concerning the relative safety of tobacco products for Third World countries. But, let me remind you that we could hardly expect him to say anything else because he has worked in the tobacco industry for the last twenty years.

60. All plants are living things. Many types of cloth are made from plants. So, many cloths are living things.