

Human Population 2018

Lecture 5
Critical thinking. Moral philosophy.

Reading

Van Heuveln:

Critical thinking

Arguments

Fallacies

Tessman:

moral requirements

first order/ second order judgement

First order or second order judgement?

- Ouch!
- Not my problem.
- Shut up!
- I will if you will.
- No way!
- It depends.
- I'm leaving!
- That's a knee-jerk reaction.
- No, you're a knee-jerk reaction!

Fallacies of relevance

- Appeal to fear
- Appeal to desire
- Appeal to tradition
- Appeal to popularity
- Ought-From-Is
- Appeal to authority
- Appeal to ignorance
- Abusive ad hominem
- Circumstantial ad hominem
- Inconsistency ad hominem
- Hasty generalization

Fallacies of assumption

- Straw man
- Slippery slope
- Circular reasoning
- False dilemma

Convolutions of judgements

Does first order judgement lead to fallacious second order judgements?

1. You react to a trigger. (1st order judgement)
2. People react to you with distrust. (1st order judgements are unreliable)
3. You feel the need to regain trust.
Admitting you are wrong would lead to distrust.
Proving you are right would regain trust.
4. You decide to prove you are right, so you need arguments.
5. Arguments, whether valid or fallacious, convince some people.
6. Fallacious arguments do the trick in most cases, and are easier to come by.

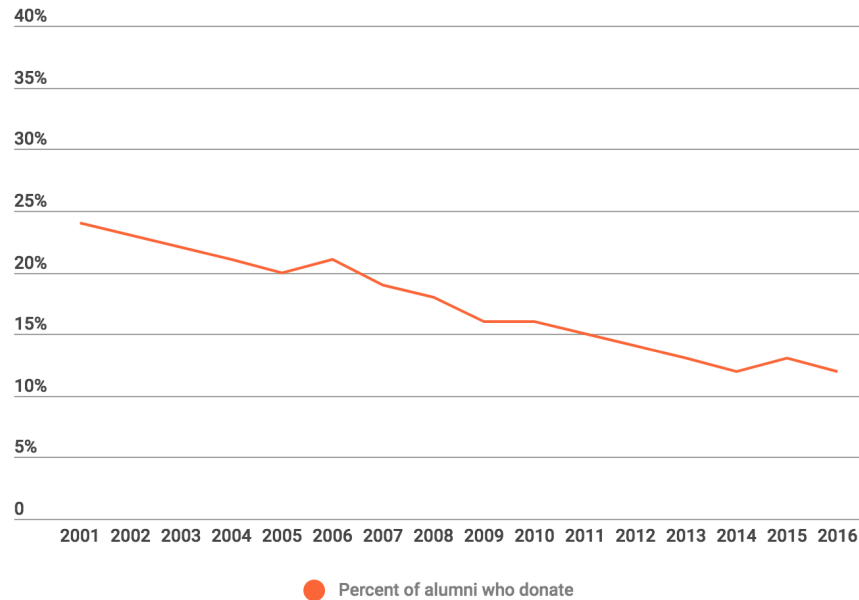
Current events: Jan 21, 2018

- Times-Union article cites downturn in Alumni giving.

The most recent data from U.S. News & World Report shows RPI's alumni participation rate falling by half from 24 percent in 2001 to 12 percent in 2016, while its rank for alumni giving fell from 48th to 88th over the same time period.

Alumni giving

RPI's alumni participation rate for giving has declined.



Current events: Jan 22, 2018

- Professor Bystroff writes letter to faculty, citing racism/sexism as a possible cause.

From: Bystroff, Chris
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2018
Subject: A letter in response to the front-page TU article of Jan 2, by Bethany Bump

OK, I'll say it.

Shame on you.

I am talking to the alumni who have withdrawn their support for RPI over the last 18 years since Prof. Shirley Jackson has taken the helm.

Do you abandon your family when they disappoint you?

This whole thing stinks. I could shut up and look for work elsewhere, but I choose to speak out here instead. After all, my lab just got a grant! I am feeling good about this place! It pains me to read in the Times Union what I never saw in the Poly. Are we really in a death spiral as the article suggests?

The situation needs to be analyzed from all sides. Has this happened elsewhere? Are we the only major university to see a 50% drop in alumni participation? In fact, a widespread trend towards "a disproportionate reliance on a handful of wealthy donors" (<https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/4/10/mega-gifts-universities-fundraising>) has been visible for years.

And what about this blame-game. Dr. Jackson is being called an "autocrat." Really?

Did you notice that the downturn in alumni donations began immediately after Dr. Jackson's installation? Not a sign of a well-reasoned response. Did she become an autocrat on day one? How long does it take to establish a reputation as an non-transparent autocrat?

Current events: Jan 29, 2018

- Administration shares letter with Alumni.

From: Bystroff, Chris
Sent: Monday, January 22, 2018
Subject: A letter in response to the front-page TU article of Jan 2, by Bethany Bump

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Current events: Jan 30, 2018

- Prof. Bystroff gets hate mail (and support mail)

<censored>

Current events: Jan 30, 2018

- Times Union publishes Bystroff letter and Alumni hate mail responses.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a news article on the Times Union website. The URL in the address bar is <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/RPI-email-to-alumni-shares-concerns-of-racism-12536402.php>. The page features a navigation menu with categories like News, Sports, Business, Entertainment, Living, Blogs, Jobs, Homes, Cars, and Classified. The main headline is "RPI email to alumni: Criticism of leadership rooted in racism, sexism" by Bethany Bump, published on Tuesday, January 30, 2018. A large photograph shows RPI president Shirley Ann Jackson speaking at a podium with the RPI seal in the background. To the right of the photo is a Progressive insurance advertisement offering a \$620 savings. Below the photo is a "TROY" advertisement for leggings. At the bottom right, there is a "FROM THE WEB" section with a small image of a woman's face.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/RPI-email-to-alumni-shares-concerns-of-racism-12536402.php>

Current events: Jan 30, 2018

- Bystroff calls Times-Union, talks to B. Bump, author of story.
- Bump promises possible future investigative story on donor giving to universities with black/female presidents.

Critical Thinking

- being 'critical' simply means taking a close look at certain beliefs or actions and seeing if they make any sense.

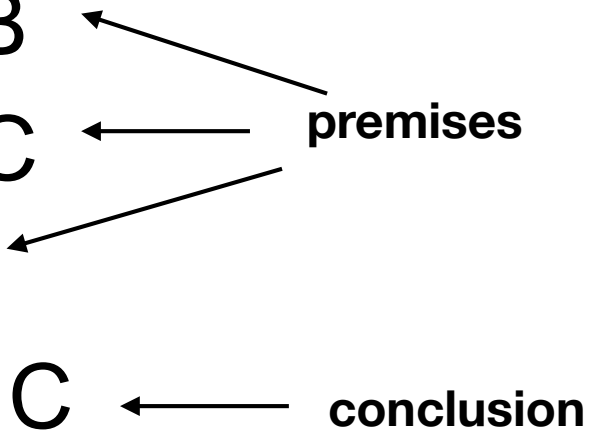
Critical Thinking

- Open-mindedness is .. not at all about what you believe or do, but rather about your attitudes regarding those beliefs and actions.

Critical Thinking is hard!

- psychological difficulty
- Society looks up at strong willed and consistent people
- we hate to find out and admit that we're wrong, or even might be wrong

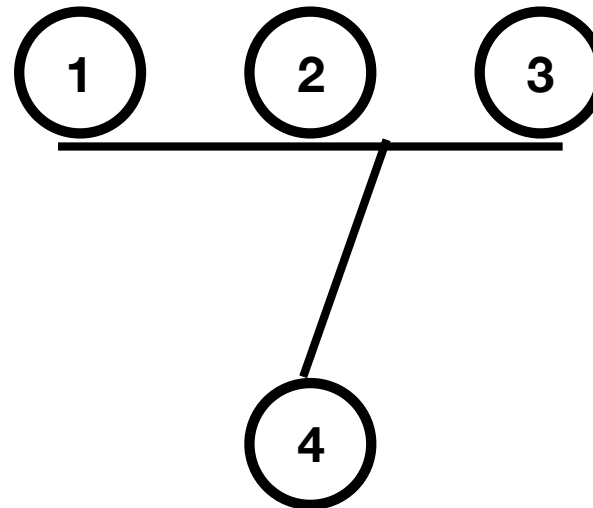
Arguments

- if A, then B
 - if B, then C
 - A
 - Therefore C
- ← premises
- ← conclusion
- 

Arguments

1. if A, then B
2. if B, then C
3. A
4. Therefore C

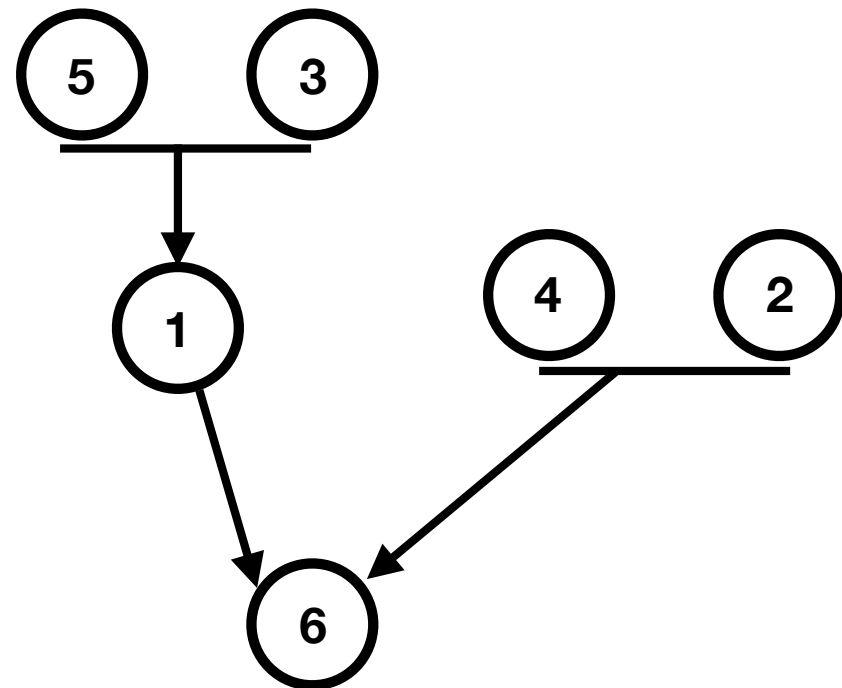
All three premises are required for conclusion, but none requires any of the others.



Arguments

1. A implies C
2. B implies C
3. D implies A
4. B
5. D
6. Therefore C

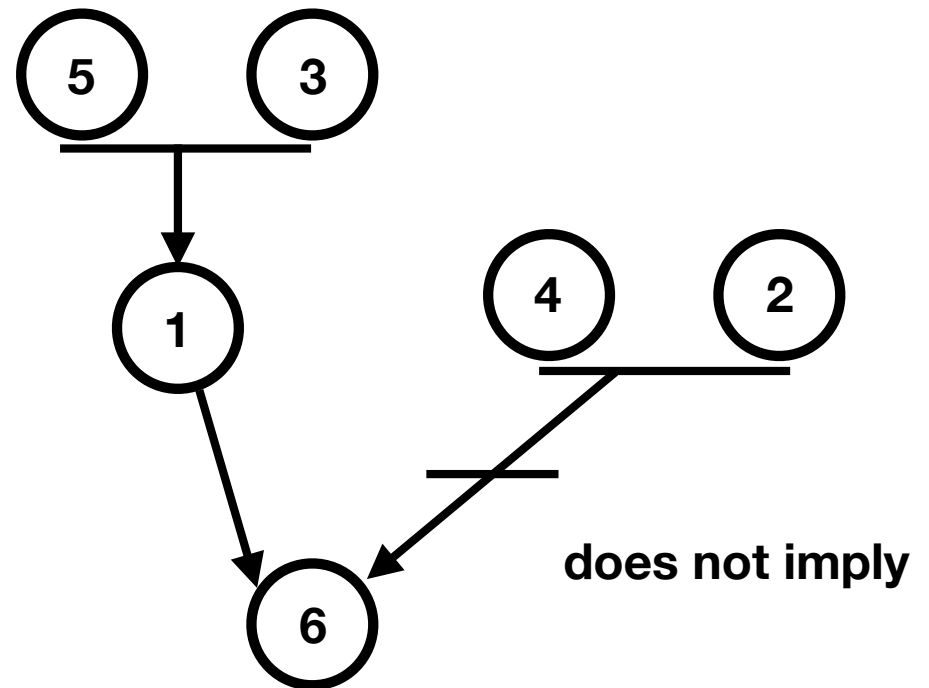
Premises chain together.



Premises act independently to support the same conclusion.

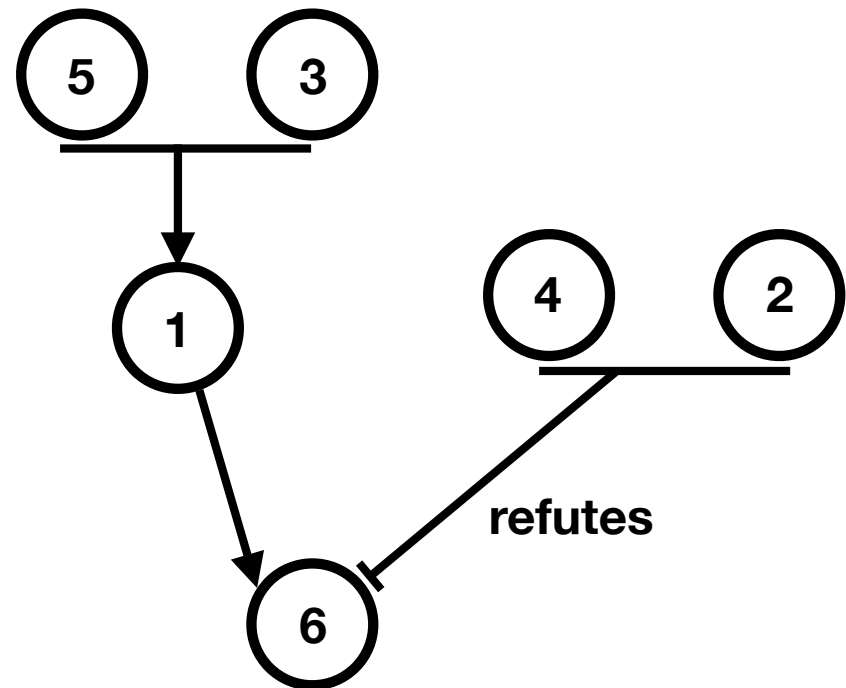
Arguments

1. A implies C
2. B implies C
3. D implies A
4. not B
5. D
6. Therefore C



Arguments

1. A implies C
2. B implies not C
3. D implies A
4. B
5. D
6. Therefore C



Converting words to arguments

Dilemma. SpongeBob is here or Squidward is here. If SpongeBob is here, then Sandy Cheeks is here. If Squidward is here, then Patrick Starfish is here. Therefore, either Sandy Cheeks is here or Patrick Starfish is here.

p or q

If p , then r

If q , then s

r or s

Group discussion