

Name: _____

Philosophy 1100: Introduction to Ethics

Exercise 5: Inference-Indicators and the Logical Structure of an Argument

Due Date: Thursday, September 30

Proportion of Final Grade: 5%

Instructions – Part 1

Of the following eight passages, four contain arguments – which may be either good or bad arguments - whereas four do not. Read the passages carefully, and decide which four passages it is most plausible to view as containing an argument - that is, as offering a reason for some conclusion. Circle each of those passages. (1 point for correctly identifying each of the four passages that are most plausibly viewed as offering an argument for a conclusion.)

- (1) In fantasy, the self can be anyone, anywhere, do anything, have everything. It is thus omnipotent and completely free - but only in fantasy. (R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*)
- (2) Mary used to be in really terrible physical condition. But since she moved to Colorado, she has taken up skiing, and has become very fit.
- (3) If God did not exist, life would be unbearable for me. But life is not unbearable for me: on the contrary, I thoroughly enjoy living. So God does exist.
- (4) Sally went to church three times a week while she was growing up. But because her parents were overly strict, she rebelled against them, sank into a life of debauchery, and appears not even to believe in God any more. (Joy Huston, *Times of Change*)
- (5) In the study that was carried out at the hospital on the effect of long exposure to Rubik's cube upon patients suffering from that syndrome, one patient went into a sort of trance after struggling with the cube for about four hours, and thus he remained, unwilling or unable to communicate with the outside world for a period of several days. (Ronald Skinner, *A Study of Stress*)
- (6) You need a special pass to get into the pits where the cars are, and John does not have one. So I guess that John will be unable to get into the pits.
- (7) Why did Maggie become such an ardent Tory? Was she moved by the force of Hayek's arguments against socialism? No, the main reason seems to have been that her parents were strong supporters of the Tory party, and good friends of Winston Churchill. (Jonathan Dewitt Guernsley, *Britain and the Iron Maiden*)

(8) The things confession is concerned with belong to the very heart of personality, to its freedom and responsibility. The danger of psychoanalysis is that it will deal with these same things from the point of view of natural occurrences and that it will constantly direct the attention of the patient to himself and his temporal existence. Thus the soul's center of gravity may be transferred from the center - from the point of personal responsibility in the presence of the Unconditioned - to the impersonal, unconscious, purely natural sphere. (Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation*)

Instructions – Part 2

Each of the following eight passages contains an argument, and each argument contains exactly one inference-indicator. For each passage, (1) circle the inference-indicator, and (2) place brackets around the conclusion associated with the inference indicator. (1 point for each correctly identified inference-indicator, and 1 point for each correctly identified conclusion.)

(1) Since he stopped watching television, John has become quite sleek, and very fit. But John must have been very different in the past, given that he has said that he used to spend most of his time glued to the tube, watching soapies, and 'reality' shows, and eating and drinking all the while. (Streng Gustafson, *On the Fitness Trail*)

(2) From the moment of its birth surrealism was an international phenomenon - the spontaneous generation of an international and fraternal *organism* in total contrast to the artificial manufacture of a collective *organization* such as the League of Nations. It would therefore be contrary to the nature of the movement to disengage, as some have suggested, a specifically English version of 'surréalisme'. (Herbert Read, *The Philosophy of Modern Art*)

(3) The occupants of the vehicle were undoubtedly killed, since the vehicle, when it overturned and went off the road, plummeted 300 feet. Why did the vehicle overturn? Was it because of tire failure? No, the reason was that the driver was speeding around the curve, and sport utility vehicles have a very high center of gravity.

(4) . . . we know that there is no greatest prime number. But of all the prime numbers that we shall have ever thought of, there certainly is a greatest. Hence there are prime numbers greater than any we shall have ever thought of. (Bertrand Russell, "On the Nature of Acquaintance")

(5) If I am told a number and merely think about it, I am likely to forget it or transpose some of the digits. If I repeat the numbers out loud or write them down, then I can remember them quite well. This surely means that there is a part of our brain which remembers sounds and images, but not thoughts. (Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden*)

(6) The existence of biological predispositions [toward crime] means that the circumstances that activate criminal behavior in one person will not do so in another, that social forces cannot deter criminal behavior in 100 percent of a population, and that the distribution of crime within and across societies may, to some extent, reflect underlying distributions of constitutional factors. (James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, *Crime and Human Nature*)

(7) An object offers as much resistance to the air as the air offers to the object. You may see that the beating of its wings against the air supports a heavy eagle in the highest and rarest atmosphere, close to the sphere of elemental fire. Again you may see the air in motion over the sea, fill the swelling sails and drive heavily laden ships. From these instances, and the reasons given, a man with wings large enough and duly connected might learn to overcome the resistance of air, and by conquering it, succeed in subjugating it and rising above it. (Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*)

(8) There is something basically wrong with our economy because a man working full time cannot support his family above the poverty level. (George Meany, Past President, American Federation of Labor)