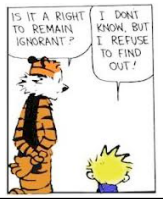
FALLACIES



FALLACY

Mistake in logic that destroys the validity of the argument

Why care?

So you will not make those mistakes

So you can recognize when others make them

POST HOC/SLIPPERY SLOPE

The assumption that an earlier event caused a later event, when there is no real connection between them

Because we allowed smoking in the dormitory, students are now bringing alcohol into their rooms.

Slippery slope – predicting that a series of events will happen with no connection between events

We have to stop the tuition increase! The next thing you know, they'll be charging $40,000 a semester!

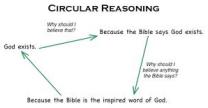
AD HOMINEM

Attacking a person's motive or character instead of his/her stand on an issue

This is used to prejudice the audience against the opponent and his view. In politics, this is called 'mud slinging.'

CIRCULAR REASONING

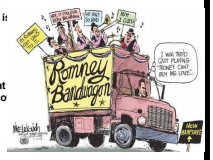
A statement or claim is assumed to be true without evidence other than the statement or claim itself.



BANDWAGON APPEAL

An argument for a certain idea based solely on the fact that it i popular.

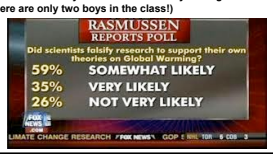
Example: Everyone is selfish; everyone is doing what he believes will make himself happier. The recognition of that can take most of the sting out o accusations that you're being "selfish." Why should you feel guilty for seeking your own happiness when that's what everyone else is doing, too?



MISLEADING STATISTICS

The use of statistical evidence in order to mislead

Fifty percent of the boys in the cooking class failed the course. The school should not encourage boys to take the class because they don't have the ability to be good cooks.
(There are only two boys in the class!)



RED HERRING

Something that is used to distract attention from the real issue

I think there is great merit in making the requirements stricter for the graduate students. I recommend that you support it, too. After all, we are in a budget crisis and we do not want our salaries affected.