

Philosophy 104



3.1 Notes

Standard Form

∞ Premise...

∞ Premise...

∞ ∴ Conclusion

Premise/Conclusion Markers

∞ Premise:

- Since...
- Because...
- For...
- As...
- Seeing that...
- In light of...

∞ Conclusion

- Therefore
- Hence
- Then
- Thus
- So
- Ergo
- Accordingly
- QED

Arguments and the rule of Quantity

- ✎ When giving reasons to support a claim, it might occur to you to wonder whether you need reasons for the reasons.
- ✎ ...and reasons for the reasons for the reasons...
- ✎ Language users have adopted some strategies for lessening the amount of information presented when presenting an argument.

Example:

- ∞ Smoking is unhealthy
 - ∞ That which is unhealthy should be illegal
-
- ∞ Smoking should be illegal

Here is a decent looking argument but the premises could stand some justification. Here you would expect additional reasons for the reasons.

That which is unhealthful should be illegal

- ∞ For this premise, we would expect an argument in political philosophy like:
- Governments should protect citizens
 - Laws against that which is unhealthful protect citizens
 - Governments should outlaw that which is unhealthful.

But of course this argument's premises as well should be justified. At some point one might reach statements that are widely acceptable on their own.

Smoking is unhealthy

- ∞ This statement is justified by a whole different set of arguments.
- ∞ Does everyone who smokes get lung cancer? Heart disease? Emphysema?
 - No, so the broad claim of smoking's unhealthfulness requires some statistical generalization.
- ∞ Can (or should) a strictly controlled experiment be run here?
 - Again, no, so the research itself has had to be more imprecise in order to make the claims that we generally take to be true of smoking.

Shortening Arguments

- ✎ There are three practical strategies for shortening our argument chains.
- ✎ Each of these strategies has legitimate uses and illegitimate uses.
- ✎ 3 strategies for shortening argument:
 - 1. Assuring
 - 2. Guarding
 - 3. Discounting

Assuring (1)

- ∞ Assuring is a strategy for asking someone to accept a premise on evidence that is not explicitly stated.
 - Sometimes this is done by referencing authorities
 - Sometimes this is done by making our own confidence in the claim explicit.

Assuring (2)

- ✎ Abusive assurances don't do either of the previous two things, but instead just abuse the potential opponent of a claim.
- ✎ We can give assurances that something is true or that something is false.
- ✎ Assurances can be legitimately used for brevity, or to avoid going on tangents. However, assuring terms often indicate weakness in an argument.

Guarding (1)

- ∞ A guarding term is sometimes known as a ‘weaseler’. It makes a claim weaker, but more likely to be true.
- ∞ Used legitimately, a guarding term keeps us from asserting or proving more than we have to. Used illegitimately, guarding terms make our statements insignificant or even vacuous (empty of meaning).

Guarding (2)

- ☞ 1. Weakening the extent of what is said
 - ☞ 2. Using probability terms
 - ☞ 3. Diminishing our level of commitment
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- ☞ Be sure that guarding terms don't creep in over the course of an argument.
 - ☞ Be sure that guarding terms don't disappear in the course of an argument.

Discounting (1)

- ∞ Discounting is a way of anticipating some objection by stressing that one fact is more important than the other.
- ∞ Discounting can also be used to block a conversational implication.

Discounting (2)

- ☞ “That ring is beautiful, but expensive”
 - Asserts two facts:
 - “That ring is beautiful”
 - “That ring is expensive”
 - Implies that the second fact is more important than the first. (Is a reason not to buy the ring)

- ☞ “That ring is expensive, but beautiful”
 - Asserts two facts:
 - “That ring is expensive”
 - “That ring is beautiful”
 - Implies that the second fact is more important than the first. (Is a reason to buy the ring)

Exercise IV

1. Discounting
2. Guarding
3. Assuring
4. Guarding
5. Argument (premise) marker
6. Assuring
7. Argumentative performative
8. Discounting
9. Assuring
10. None
11. Abusive Assurance
12. Guarding
13. None

Exercise IV

14. Argument marker
15. None
16. Guarding
17. None
18. Argument marker
19. Argumentative Performative
20. None
21. Discounting
22. Argumentative Performative
23. None
24. None
25. Guarding