**Logical Fallacies**

***Directions:*** *For each logical fallacy, describe what is wrong with each example. Be specific and describe the problems in terms of the premise (first part), the middle term (establishes relationship or connection), or the conclusion (last part). Use specific language from the example in your descriptions.*

1. **Begging the Question (or circular logic)** 
   1. Example: "These movies are popular because they make so much money. They make a lot of money because people like them. People like them because they are so popular."
   2. "Useless courses like English 101 should be dropped from the college's curriculum."
2. **Non Sequitur arguments** 
   1. Example: "The rain came down so hard that Jennifer actually called me."
   2. "Giving up our nuclear arsenal in the 1980's weakened the United States' military. Giving up nuclear weaponry also weakened China in the 1990s. For this reason, it is wrong to try to outlaw pistols and rifles in the United States today."
3. **Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc** (after this, therefore also this) arguments, or **post hoc** for short (false cause).
   1. Example: "Eating five candy bars and drinking two sodas before a test helps me get better grades. I did that and got an A on my last test in history."
   2. "A black cat crossed my path at noon. An hour later, my mother had a heart-attack. Because the first event occurred earlier, it must have caused the badluck later."
   3. “Since the teenaged murderer listened to Metallica before killing his family, the music was responsible.”
4. **Faulty Analogies** lead to faulty conclusions.
   1. Example: "Forcing students to attend cultural events is like herding cattle to slaughter. The students stampede in to the event where they are systematically ‘put to sleep’ by the program."
   2. “Education is like cake; small amounts tastes sweet, but eat too much and your teeth will rot out. Likewise, more than two years of education is bad for a student.”
5. **Hasty Generalizations** 
   1. Example: Concluding that all fraternities are party houses because you have seen three parties at one fraternity is a hasty generalization.
6. **Red Herrings** 
   1. Example: "Winthrop should pave the lot behind Dinkins. Besides, I can never find a parking space on campus anyway."
   2. “I should not pay a fine for reckless driving. There are many other people on the street who are dangerous criminals and rapists, and the police should be chasing them, not harassing a decent tax-paying citizen like me.”
   3. “Why am I in trouble? The other students are talking too!”
7. **Equivocation** 
   1. Example: When representing himself in court, a defendant said "I have told the truth, and I have always heard that the truth would set me free."
   2. “Plato says the end of a thing is its perfection; I say that death is the end of life; hence, death is the perfection of life.”
8. **Ignoring the Question** 
   1. Example: During a press conference, a political candidate is asked a pointed, specific question about some potentially illegal fund-raising activity. Instead of answering the allegations, the candidate gives a rousing speech thanking all of his financial supporters.
9. **Opposing a Straw Man** 
   1. Example: The debate over drink machines centers around cost and choice. Opponents of the new drink machines bring up their location as an important issue.
   2. "Tennessee should increase funding to unemployed single mothers during the first year after childbirth because they need sufficient money to provide medical care for their newborn children." The second speaker retorts, "My opponent believes that some parasites who don't work should get a free ride from the tax money of hard-working honest citizens. I'll show you why he's wrong . . ."
10. **Either—Or (false dilemma)**
    1. Example: "Either we go to Panama City for the whole week of Spring Break, or we don’t go anywhere at all." This rigid argument ignores the possibilities of spending part of the week in Panama City, spending the whole week somewhere else, or any other options.
    2. "We go to war with Canada, or else Canada will eventually grow in population and overwhelm the United States." "Either you drink Burpsy Cola, or you will have no friends and no social life."
11. **Slippery Slopes** 
    1. Example: "If we force public elementary school pupils to wear uniforms, eventually we will require middle school students to wear uniforms. If we require middle school students to wear uniforms, high school requirements aren’t far off. Eventually even college students who attend state-funded, public universities will be forced to wear uniforms."
    2. "If we allow the government to infringe upon our right to privacy on the Internet, it will then feel free to infringe upon our privacy on the telephone. After that, FBI agents will be reading our mail. Then they will be placing cameras in our houses. We must not let any governmental agency interfere with our Internet communications, or privacy will completely vanish in the United States."
12. **Bandwagon Appeals (ad populum)** 
    1. Example: "Fifty million Elvis fans can’t be wrong!"
    2. “85% of consumers purchase IBM computers rather than Macintosh; all those people can’t be wrong. IBM must make the best computers.”
13. **False Authority** 
    1. Example: A popular football star discusses the benefits of aloe in a shaving cream advertisement.
    2. “I will take Advil PM because Drake Remoray, a doctor on a Soap Opera, recommends it for sleep disorders.”
14. **Ad Hominem (attacking the character of the opponent)** 
    1. Example: Candidate A claims that Candidate B cannot possibly be an advocate for the working people because he enjoys the opera more than professional wrestling.
    2. The Irish should not be allowed to vote because they are all drunks.
    3. You should vote for the bill because you are a democrat. Only bad democrats wouldn’t vote for it.
15. **Tu Quoque (you’re another)** 
    1. Example: "How can the police ticket me for speeding? I see cops speeding all the time."