

# ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC AND CRITICAL THINKING *NEWSLETTER*

## Spring 2006

**From the New Editor:** With this issue, I am beginning a three-year term as editor of the *AILACT Newsletter*. I have been teaching logic, both formal and informal, at Hunter College of The City University of New York, since 1978, have published a text and two monographs in the field, and have been a regular at various informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation conferences over the years. I expect that many of you know me already but am glad to greet you in this new capacity. I hope to keep the *Newsletter* a vehicle for transmitting information about upcoming meetings and other scholarly activities of interest. In this issue, you will find information about upcoming meetings during 2006 featuring discussion of informal logic and critical thinking, abstracts of papers for the two group sessions AILACT is sponsoring at the Central Division American Philosophical Association meetings, announcements and calls for papers, and an announcement of the AILACT essay contest. I hope you find at least some of this information useful and of interest. Should any of you have notices or other information you would like included in future issues, please e-mail me at [jfreeman@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:jfreeman@hunter.cuny.edu). Issues should be published close to April 1, August 1, and December 1 each year.

**James B. Freeman**

## Upcoming Meetings 2006

### **Group Sessions at the Central Division American Philosophical Association Meetings, April 27, 2006, Palmer House, Chicago, IL**

Joint Session Co-sponsored by the Association of Philosophy Teachers

9:00 a.m.-Noon, Crystal Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)

Betsy Newel, Decyk, Chair, California State University-Long Beach

Rod Bertolet, Purdue University

Adrienne McEvoy, Mansfield University

Ralph H. Johnson and J. Anthony Blair, University of Windsor, Teaching First Year Courses in Informal Logic and Critical Thinking at the University Level

Late Afternoon/Early Evening Session

5:15-7:15 p.m., Crystal room

Peter D. Asquith, Chair, Michigan State University

Tom Solon, Danville Area Community College, "Generic Critical Thinking Infusion and Course Content Learning in Introductory Psychology"

Commentator: Donald L. Hatcher, Baker University

David Sherry, Northern Arizona University, "Yanal et al. on Linked and Convergent"

Commentator: Robert J. Yanal, Wayne State University

**Sixth International Conference on Argumentation, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, June 27-30, 2006**

Sponsored by the International Society for the Study of Argumentation

Information about the program and all other details of the conference is available at the ISSA website: [give web address]

**Group Sessions at the Eastern Division American Philosophical Association Meetings, December 28-30, 2006, Washington, DC**

Program to be announced

**Abstracts of papers to be presented at the Central Division APA Group Sessions**

Title: Teaching First Year Courses in Informal Logic and Critical Thinking at the University Level

Presenters: J Anthony Blair & Ralph H Johnson

Department of Philosophy

University of Windsor

"Teaching introductory logic, teaching about arguments (informal logic), and teaching critical thinking (reasoning)--these are NOT the same thing! As educators, we need to get our conceptualizations clear and our stories about exactly what we are doing in such courses straightened out, and be forthright and clear about our educational objectives. The speakers have 35 years of experience teaching logic (formal and informal), argumentation and critical thinking at the university level."

Presenter: Rod Bertolet

Department of Philosophy

Purdue University

"My contribution as a department head will involve discussing why we have two 100-level logic courses and how they differ, what we're trying to accomplish in the critical thinking course and how we try to do it, and what we do to help grad students teach the course, which some of them sometimes do. In addressing what assistance we provide grad students, I hope to report on their views about how well we have helped them and perhaps what more they would have found useful."

Presenter: Adrienne McEvoy

Mansfield University

"As someone fresher out of graduate school, who was not taught how to teach any course while in graduate school, I plan on discussing some ways we can incorporate critical thinking into any philosophy course(whether it is a logic or critical thinking class or not). Once we become more comfortable bringing parts of the critical thinking process into our classrooms in general, it's

easier to teach an entire course on the topic. I define critical thinking as including 4 parts: analysis, synthesis, judgment (evaluation), and communication. I have been using Paul and Elders' Miniature Guides to Critical Thinking in all of my classes and it seems to be helping tremendously. Another point I will make is how to teach critical thinking effectively without becoming so swamped with prep and grading that you lose your effectiveness as a teacher."

Title: Generic Critical Thinking Infusion and Course Content Learning in Introductory Psychology

Presenter: Tom Solon

Danville Area Community College

One group of introductory psychology students received a moderate infusion of generic critical thinking material. The other group did not. Otherwise both groups had the same course content, and took the same pretests and posttests of their critical thinking ability and their knowledge of psychology. The experimental group improved its critical thinking test scores significantly more than the control group. There was no significant difference in psychology learning as reflected by test scores. The results provide limited support for the hypothesis that a moderate investment of class time in generic critical thinking material can lead to significant improvement in reasoning skills without necessarily causing a significant cost in terms of course content learning—an altogether felicitous set of outcomes.

Title: Against the Linked/Convergent Distinction

Presenter: David Sherry

Northern Arizona University

Nearly everyone who teaches argument diagramming maintains that arguments with linked premises are diagrammed differently from arguments with convergent premises. Attempts to state the distinction are generally unhelpful platitudes like “we can identify [them] by asking whether the premises are supposed to work separately ..., or whether they are to be taken as a single complex of evidence.” Yanal has attempted to give the criterion a precise, quantitative formulation, the ordinary sum criterion. Using ideas from elementary probability, I argue that paradigm convergent arguments fail not just the ordinary sum criterion, but any criterion based on summing the conditional probabilities that separate lines of reasoning lead to a single conclusion. Reflection upon these arguments leads me to the heretical suggestion that there is no linked/convergent distinction.

### **Call for Papers, Special Issue of *Informal Logic* on the work of Douglas Walton**

Over the last 25 years, Douglas Walton has been a prolific and influential contributor to informal logic scholarship in a great many areas. Besides numerous articles, he has published books on relevance, informal fallacies, dialogue games, fallacy theory, informal logic, argument structure, presumptive argument schemes, practical reasoning, legal argumentation, ethical argumentation, plausible argument, abductive argument, and argument and artificial intelligence, as well as books on particular fallacies or species of argument, including ad hominem, begging the question, slippery slope, emotion, argument from ignorance, ambiguity, appeal to authority, to pity,

and to popular opinion, and threats. (This list is not complete.) To recognize the contributions of Professor Walton to informal logic and argumentation theory, Informal Logic invites papers that discuss, critique, develop, engage with or apply some aspect of his work. Among the topics that contributors might address are: dialectical and dialogic approaches to argument, recent developments in dialogue-based approaches to argument dialogue and legal argumentation, argumentation schemes, argumentation and computing, abductive reasoning, and argument, dialogue-based approaches to fallacy theory. Paper submission cut-off deadline: October 1, 2006; early submissions are welcomed. Paper word limit: 7,000 words. Papers are to be prepared for blind review and submitted electronically, with "Walton Issue" in the subject line, to: [goddendm@uwindsor.ca](mailto:goddendm@uwindsor.ca). Please take note of and FOLLOW the instructions for authors found in Informal Logic and on the Informal Logic website: <http://web2.uwindsor.ca/faculty/arts/philosophy/IL/submissions.htm>

Announcement of 2007 Meeting and Call for Papers, Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation

## **DISSENSUS**

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## **THE SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND**

*A conference presented by the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation*

*June 6 - 9, 2007*

*University of Windsor*

*Keynote addresses to be given by*

### **MICHAEL GILBERT**

*Philosophy, York University*

### **DALE HAMPLE**

*Communication, Western Illinois University*

### **CHRISTIAN KOCK**

*Rhetoric, University of Copenhagen*

*The Organizing Committee invites proposals for papers in informal logic, rhetoric or argumentation theory on topics related to the above theme.*

*Abstracts must be submitted electronically no later than*

***September 9, 2006***

*and should be between 200 and 300 words long. Additional information for submitting proposals will be available on the Conference website. Graduate students working in one of the mentioned areas are also encouraged to apply. (The J. Anthony Blair Prize is awarded to the best student paper presented at the conference.)*

*Abstracts prepared for blind refereeing (with the heading 'Dissensus') should be sent to: <infolog@uwindsor.ca>*

*Organizing Committee:*

*Hans V. Hansen Christopher W. Tindale*

*J. Anthony Blair Ralph H. Johnson*

*\*Canadian graduate students who need financial assistance in order to attend should advise the Organizing Committee when they submit their proposals.*

[www.uwindsor.ca/ossa](http://www.uwindsor.ca/ossa)

## **Announcement of AILACT ESSAY PRIZE 2006**

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking invites applications for its third annual AILACT Essay Prize.

The value of the AILACT Essay Prize is US\$500. The prize may, in extraordinary circumstances, be divided among entries judged to be of about equal merit. Additionally, AILACT intends to publish a volume with this winning essay, together with the winning essays of the last two years and the best essays of all three years. Essays related to the teaching or theory of informal logic or critical thinking will be considered for the prize. An essay may be unpublished, forthcoming or previously published. There are no restrictions on authorship. Published papers must have appeared on or after 1 January 2006. Essays should be in the neighbourhood of 3500-5000 words.

The essays will be assessed on the basis of, in no particular order: their originality, their scholarship, if applicable (papers that ignore the relevant literature will tend to go to the bottom of the pile), their argument (needless to say?), their style (lucid, delightful-to-read papers will tend to rise to the top), and their importance to the field (measured by how high they register on the "Everyone should read this paper-and soon!" scale).

The jury members for the 2006 AILACT Essay Prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Tony Blair (chair), Merrilee Salmon and Michael Scriven. The verdict of the jury is final.

To submit a paper, attach an electronic file to an e-mail with AILACT ESSAY ENTRY on the "Subject" line, or mail three paper copies, to the appropriate address below. Please send the paper ready for blind-reviewing (the author not identified on the paper or file containing the paper, and self-identifying references removed from the text, notes and References).

The deadline for receipt of papers to be considered for the 2006 AILACT Essay Prize is 1 September 2006. Address email entries to: [philos@uwindsor.ca](mailto:philos@uwindsor.ca) and put in the Subject line: AILACT ESSAY PRIZE ENTRY. Address paper copy entries to: AILACT ESSAY PRIZE ENTRY, Department of Philosophy, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, Canada N9B 3P4. Be sure to include your name and a mailing address in your covering note.

The winner will be announced by 1 December 2006. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner. For information about AILACT, see our Web site: <http://ailact.mcmaster.ca/>