

**ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC
AND CRITICAL THINKING
(AILACT)
NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2016**

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From the Editor

The OSSA 2016 conference, Argumentation, Objectivity and Bias, is in the final preparation stages. Information is available here: <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/ossa/>. Hope to see you in Windsor in May.

The 2013/14 sessions of AILACT at the Eastern and Central APA meetings have both been completed. The Pacific APA just finished up on April 3rd, though the originally planned AILACT session was ultimately denied space at the increasingly competitive Pacific venue. Information about current and future sessions at all three meetings is available in section 2 below.

This year's call for papers for the AILACT Essay Prize is printed below in section 3 or available at: <https://ailact.wordpress.com/essay-prize/>.

A Membership Form is available at the end of this newsletter. Dues, which continue to be \$10.00, may be paid by check or credit card or PayPal; the form should be completed and sent (with a check if payment is by check) to our treasurer, Don Hatcher. Please note the new members are now required to register on AILACT's online Member Area.

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AILACT @ APA

Eastern Division: Initial Announcement of Upcoming Session

AILACT Session at the 2017 APA Eastern Division Meeting

Topic: Critical Thinking about Latin American Philosophy

Date of Meeting: 1/4/2017 » 1/7/2017

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

Speakers: TBA

For more information please contact Susana Nuccetelli, snuccetelli@stcloudstate.edu or Gary Seay, gmseay@aol.com.

Central Division: Report on the Central Division AILACT meeting, March 3, in Chicago:

David Wright (Sam Houston State U.) filled in as Chair for Frank Fair.

Heather Battaly (Cal. State Fullerton) began the program with “Responsibilist Virtues in Reliabilist Classrooms,” defending and illustrating the various techniques she employs in her logic class for enhancing students’ dispositions to apply CT skills by getting them to be motivated to seek the truth in their beliefs by means of responsibilist virtues such as open-mindedness and intellectual courage and humility. In light of the research by Ron Ritchhart, she uses formal instruction, exemplars, and practice exercises in her curriculum, so as to cultivate in the students a desire to form true beliefs by means of their CT skills. We all participated in some of the exercises she uses in her classroom, which led to a lively discussion.

Don Hatcher (Baker U.) presented “Critical-Thinking Instruction: A Realistic Evaluation.” Don is rather skeptical as to whether CT instruction can have much of an impact on students. His many years of teaching and assessing CT have had far better results than most other CT programs, and yet those results have been tragically modest compared to students’ improvement when studying other subject matters, such as English skills. Don also discussed some of the recent psychological research that indicates how difficult it is to undo people’s un-critical thinking habits and replace them with appropriate CT skills. Don is not defeatist about trying to enhance people’s CT skills, however; he just urges us to lower our expectations by thinking of CT abilities as being more like musical abilities—not as generally learnable as most other subject matters. A spirited discussion of Don’s years’ of teaching and assessment and his conclusions followed.

Kevin Possin (Winona State U.) finished the evening by providing a summary of the “AILACT Innovation Memo” and “The AILACT Core CT Project” and then opened the floor for discussion of the Association’s numerous proposed initiatives. Participants had many good questions of clarification, observations, and suggestions.

Discussions continued, as participants adjourned to the APA Reception.

For information about upcoming AILACT sessions at the Central APA, please contact Kevin Possin, kpossin@winona.edu

Pacific Division: The Pacific APA has grown so there is now competition for meeting space. As a result AILACT, along with several other groups who put in for a meeting slot, did not have a 2016 APA session. AILACT is expected to have a spot for 2017.

For information about future AILACT Sessions at the Pacific APA, please contact Peter Tan at ptan@msmu.edu

2015 AILACT Essay Prize Call for Submissions

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2015 AILACT Essay Prize. This will be the 12th year in which the prize has been offered.

- Value: \$500 U.S.
- The prize-winning paper, and any “honourable mention” paper, will be considered for publication in *Informal Logic* upon the conditions listed below.*
- Papers related to the teaching or theory of informal logic or critical thinking, and papers on argumentation theory, will be considered for the prize.
- There are no restrictions on authorship. Authors need not be members of AILACT.
- Previously unpublished papers, and papers published or accepted for publication between January 1, 2013 and September 1, 2016, are eligible. Maximum length: 6,000 words.
- Entries will be assessed on the basis of their argument, scholarship, style, and importance to the field.
- The jury members for the 2014 AILACT essay prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Lilian Bermejo Luque, Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Universidad de Granada; Geoffrey Goddu, Professor of Philosophy, University of Richmond; Christopher Tindale, Professor of Philosophy, University of Windsor. The decision of the jury is final.
- To submit a paper, attach a PDF (preferred) or MS Word or RTF document to an email with AILACT ESSAY ENTRY on the “subject” line and send it to Derek Allen (derekallen@trinity.utoronto.ca) with a covering note giving your name and a mailing address. Please send the paper ready for blind-reviewing (the author not identified on the paper or file containing the paper or in the description of the document’s properties that is part of the file, and self-identifying references removed from the text, notes and references).

- There is a limit of one entry per author.
- The deadline for receipt of submissions is September 1, 2016. The winner will be announced by December 15, 2016. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner on its web site and at AILACT sessions held at APA divisional meetings in 2016 and 2017.
- For further information about the essay prize, please contact Ben Hamby (bhamby@coastal.edu).

*The prize-winning paper, and any “honourable mention” paper, will be eligible for consideration for publication in *Informal Logic* if it has not already been published or accepted or committed for publication elsewhere and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and if the author consents to its consideration for publication in *Informal Logic*. The editors of *Informal Logic* will arrange for blind review of the paper if these conditions are met. The author will be expected to revise the paper in light of the reviewers’ suggestions, or to justify not doing so.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMAL LOGIC & CRITICAL THINKING

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FOR 2016

AILACT was formed in 1983 to promote research on, and teaching and testing of, informal logic and critical thinking at all levels; to increase the extent and quality of such research, teaching, and testing; and to facilitate discussion among its members. AILACT sponsors sessions at each APA divisional meeting and other meetings; has a Web site, <http://ailact.wordpress.com/> that provides a wide variety of information about AILACT, informal logic, and critical thinking, and posts papers and other members' materials; has an e-mail discussion list for discussion of topics of interest to members; and holds an annual essay prize competition.

I would like to become a member of AILACT (US\$10 or equivalent)

I would like to renew my membership (US\$10 or equivalent)

I am a student and would like to become a member of AILACT (Fees waived)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Institutional affiliation (if any): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Payment Options: **Check:** Make checks (US or Canadian only) payable to AILACT

Credit Card Payment: Please deduct US \$10 from

Credit Card: Visa MasterCard

Account Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

PayPal: log in to your account and send the payment to Don Hatcher's email address (dhatcher@bakeru.edu). PayPal will indicate that your payment is to AILACT.

New members: To complete the process of becoming a member of AILACT, you will need to register on AILACT's password-protected Member Area website: <http://ailact1.humanities.mcmaster.ca>. Click on "Register" and complete the listed fields. (These include "User name" and "Password." Make up a user name and a password.) Click on "Register." When your registration has been validated, you will receive an email saying that this has been done and explaining how to enter a profile for yourself on the site.

Mail to: Donald Hatcher, AILACT Treasurer, Department of Philosophy, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006 USA. **Email:** <dhatcher@bakeru.edu>