

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

August 2018

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From the Editor

AILACT @ APA: updated details about the sessions at the next APA meetings are included below. There is also a call for proposals for the Central Division meeting, and a call for commentators for the Pacific Division meeting. Interested parties are invited to contact the session organizers.

Exciting news: there is a new network for argumentation scholars in North America, tentatively titled “North American Argumentation Network” (NAAN). A statement from the Network, including a statement of its purpose, a call for anyone interested in becoming a member, and a call for abstracts for the network’s inaugural meeting next June, is included below.

For those who haven’t seen it yet, David Hitchcock’s entry “Critical Thinking” is now out in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. It’s available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-thinking/>. This is a very good resource for anyone interested in the theory or the historical development of the concept of critical thinking.

The final call for papers for this year’s AILACT essay competition is included below. Note that the September 1 deadline is very close, so be sure to get your essay in!

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 that new members are now required to register on AILACT’s online Member Area.

If you have any news, events, or calls for papers that would be of interest to the AILACT readership, please send me details by December 1st for potential inclusion in the next newsletter.

Pat Bondy
patrick.bondy@wichita.edu

From the President

In my last message, I announced the launching of a debate in our AILACT-D discussion list aimed at collectively deliberating on how to reinforce our association. Our first question for this debate was on the possibility of translating our website (or parts of it) into other languages. We had very good proposals, and we are now working on them.

As regards our website, we have also decided to include a section with Critical Thinking Textbook Announcements. We think that promoting good critical thinking textbooks is a good way for AILACT to serve our academic community and give visibility to scholarly work in our field. Besides, it should help students and teachers to select good textbooks for their classes. Shortly you will find in the website the criteria for publishing the announcements of your books should you be interested.

Also, we will launch another question in our AILACT-D discussion list by mid-September. We hope to count on all of you for this new exercise of collective deliberation aimed at making AILACT a more useful tool for our community.

Warmest regards,
Lilian Bermejo-Luque
President of AILACT

AILACT @ APA

Eastern Division

AILACT Group Session Eastern APA January 8, 2019 NYC

Methods to Determine How Well the Premises of an Argument Support Its Conclusion

There are two important tasks in critically assessing arguments: (i) to provide a diagram or map of the inferential structure of the argument and (ii) to determine how well the premises of the argument support its conclusion. Many texts in critical thinking provide little guidance for (ii), other than to taxonomize arguments into deductive, inductive, and fallacious. This material is certainly important and useful, but it does not provide a general method for determining the support of any argument (of any kind). Of course, there are arguments that there cannot be an inductive logic—and so there cannot be any means of formalizing the criteria for good inductive reasoning. It is not clear, though, that these arguments would rule out an informal method for

assessing inductive support. The question, then, is twofold: (i) what method do you use in determining how well the premises of an argument support its conclusion and (ii) how do you teach this method in a course in critical thinking?

Chair

Sarah Donovan Wagner College

Speakers

Susana Nuccetelli St. Cloud State University
David Godden Michigan State University
Alina Reznitskaya Montclair State University
Phil Washburn New York University
Jeff Buechner Rutgers University-Newark and The Saul Kripke Center, CUNY GC
James Freeman Hunter College, CUNY

For more information, please contact Jeffrey Buechner, at buechner@newark.rutgers.edu.

Central Division

Critical Thinking in the “Post Truth” Era: The Need for “Re-enlightenment”

Session Description:

Increasingly there is reason to be concerned about the quality of our public discourse, and so there are calls for “Enlightenment Now” (Pinker) and worries about “Post Truth” (McIntyre) and “Truth Decay” (Kavanaugh and Rich). What contribution can those of us involved in critical thinking education make in these circumstances? We of AILACT will have a three hour session for presentations and discussions at the 2019 APA Central Division meeting in Denver on 2/20-2/23.

Please send your proposal for a contribution to the session to Frank Fair, email: psy_fkf@shsu.edu, by Monday, September 17.

Pacific Division

The Pacific Division AILACT session will be on “The Virtues of the Interrogative Model for Teaching Critical Thinking,” with Robert Sanchez and Neal Tognazzini. We are currently searching for commentators. Any interested parties please contact the Program Chair, Peter Tan, at ptan@msmu.edu.

North American Argumentation Network

Dear Argumentation Theorists, Informal Logicians, Researchers of Argumentative Rhetoric, Inquirers into Deliberations, and other Argumentation Enthusiasts:

We are writing to tell you about a new initiative aimed at developing an organization tentatively titled the North American Argumentation Network (NAAN). The aim of NAAN is to bring early career argumentation scholars together and provide them with a platform to network with their peers and benefit from the experience of senior scholars.

While early career argumentation scholars in Europe are relatively well connected through initiatives such as the European Conference on Argumentation, there is not yet any organization to connect emerging scholars in North America. We hope the establishment of this kind of network contributes to keeping the field growing and helping argumentation scholarship to keep developing here as it does elsewhere in the world.

To this end, our vision is to begin by establishing a network of support between junior, emerging, and established scholars. The inaugural meeting is being planned for June 3-5, 2019 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. At this event, Jr. scholars can receive feedback on their work from their peers and some emerging and established scholars they have not yet met. We will also discuss the organization's governance structure and what steps should be taken next.

We are working hard to secure funding for the travel and accommodation of graduate students and scholars without tenure-track positions. However, it currently does not look like we will be able to provide funding for scholars with tenure or tenure-track positions.

The first step in the process is collecting the names of all those interested. In that regard we encourage applications from junior scholars for the event and will try to accommodate as many as possible. Please send us your contact information and a short abstract for a paper that represents your research interests and that you would like to present at the workshop. Don't worry, there is some flexibility for now and we will solicit more detailed abstracts at a later date.

We would also like to extend the call to any emerging or established scholars who would like to take part in and present a paper at this event. We also invite emerging and established scholars to bring this call to the attention of junior scholars they know and have them contact us.

Please send all correspondence to: naargnet@gmail.com

Please submit all applications by September 30th, 2019.

If you have any questions or comments about this initiative, please do not hesitate to let us know, we would love to hear from you.

With thanks for your support and cooperation,

Katharina Stevens, Paul Simard Smith, Patrick Bondy, Michael Baumtrog, and Curtis Hyra.

Contact: naargnet@gmail.com

Essay Prize in Informal Logic/Critical Thinking/Argumentation Theory

FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) invites submissions for the 2018 AILACT Essay Prize. This will be the 14th 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, 2015 and September 1, 2018 are eligible. Maximum length: 6,000 words (exclusive of footnotes and references).
- Entries will be assessed on the basis of their argument, scholarship, style, and importance to the field. There is a limit of one entry per author.
- The jury members for the 2018 AILACT essay prize, approved by the AILACT Board of Directors, are Marianne Doury, Researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Paris; Christopher Tindale, Professor of Philosophy, University of Windsor; David Sherry, Department of Philosophy, Northern Arizona University. The jury's decision 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). Each page after the first should be numbered.
- ***The deadline for receipt of submissions is September 1, 2018.*** The winner will be announced by December 15, 2018. AILACT will publicize the name of the winner on its web site and at AILACT sessions held at APA divisional meetings in 2019.
- For further information about the essay prize, contact Gilbert Plumer (plumerge@gmail.com). For information about AILACT, visit our web site: <https://ailact.wordpress.com/>

*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 2018

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: <https://forum.ailact.org>. 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>