

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

December 2018

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## From the Editor

Greetings, everyone! I hope this newsletter finds you all enjoying your favourite combination of relaxation and productivity over the break.

In this issue, you'll find an updated statement from the President, which omits an error that was included in the Newsletter that was posted to the AILACT listserv. You will also find details regarding the 2019 AILACT @ APA sessions. For anyone planning to attend the upcoming APA meetings, these sessions look very good!

There is also a call for papers for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual graduate/undergraduate conference in honour of John Hoaglund, at Christopher Newport University. Abstracts are due February 7<sup>th</sup>, and the conference will take place March 30<sup>th</sup>.

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.

Finally, please send me details regarding any news, events, or calls for papers that would be of interest to the AILACT readership by April 1<sup>st</sup>, for potential inclusion in the next newsletter.

Best,  
Pat Bondy  
[patrick.bondy@wichita.edu](mailto:patrick.bondy@wichita.edu)

## **From the President**

This year, AILACT celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. From its inception, our association has decisively contributed to promote informal logic and critical thinking and to set up the field within the philosophical curriculum. We have managed to be present in all the meetings of the *American Philosophical Association* since then, and today our field is widely known and its significance is fully acknowledged.

In the last years, new initiatives have joined us in this effort: new conference and book series, new associations, journals, etc., now provide more opportunities to present our work and to push our field further. And year after year, young scholars from all around the world become interested in the research, teaching, and testing of informal logic and critical thinking. The field is mature, and probably because of this we no longer feel the need of defending its relevance. Despite appearances, this is good news.

I would like to take the opportunity of the last letter of this year for expressing the deepest gratitude to all those wonderful colleagues who have contributed to this achievement. After 35 years, some of them are no longer with us, but their good labor remains. Thanks very much for it.

All best wishes for the New Year,

Lilian Bermejo-Luque  
President of AILACT

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## **AILACT @ APA**

### **Eastern Division**

January 8<sup>th</sup> 2019, 2:00-5:00 PM  
Sheraton Hotel Times Square  
53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Seventh Avenue, 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

**Central Division**

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019

7:30-10:30 PM

Affiliated Group: Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT)

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

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?

**Moderator**

Frank Fair, Psychology and Philosophy, Sam Houston State University, [psy\\_fkf@shsu.edu](mailto:psy_fkf@shsu.edu)

**Presenters**

Lee McIntyre, Research Fellow at the Center for Philosophy and History of Science at Boston University, author of *Post-Truth* (MIT Press), [leemcintyre@rcn.com](mailto:leemcintyre@rcn.com)  
Title: "From Post-Truth to the Scientific Attitude"

Jon Haber, Inaugural Visiting Fellow, Harvard X, and Chief Learner Degree of Freedom Project, author of *The Essential Knowledge Guide to Critical Thinking* (under contract to MIT Press), [jonathan@degreeoffreedom.org](mailto:jonathan@degreeoffreedom.org)

Title: “A Cure for What Ails Us: Critical Thinking as Defense Against Post Truth”

Ted Greenhalgh, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, University of Nevada Las Vegas, author of *Knowing: Critical Thinking in the Modern Era* (Kendall Hunt Publishing), [ted.greenhalgh@unlv.edu](mailto:ted.greenhalgh@unlv.edu)

Title: "Building a better mousetrap: Creating an introductory critical thinking course based on the heuristics learned pursuing a Ph.D."

**Pacific Division**

Presenters: Sharon Bailin (Simon Fraser University) and Mark Battersby (Capilano University)

Title: "Inquiry: A Dialectical Model for Teaching Critical Thinking"

The inquiry approach involves a comparative evaluation of contending positions and arguments with the goal of reaching a reasoned judgment on an issue (see our text, *Reason in the Balance: An Inquiry Approach to Critical Thinking*, Hackett, 2016). A heuristic model we have found very useful for encouraging rational consideration of alternative views is a dialectical argument table, i.e., a table which summarizes the main arguments, objections, and responses on various sides of an issue. In this presentation, we will describe the inquiry approach, explain its rationale, and present the dialectical argument table as an illustration of how the dialectical dimension of critical thinking is manifested in this approach.

Presenters: Robert Sanchez (Mount St. Mary's University) and Neal Tognazzini (Western Washington University)

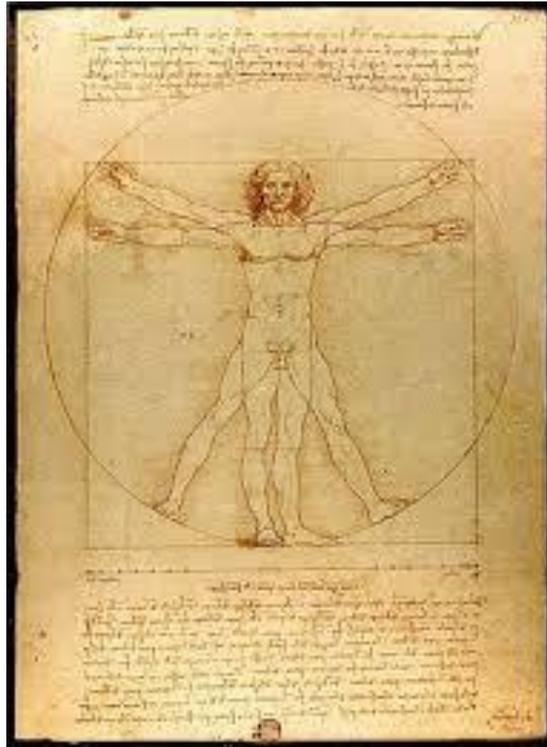
Title: "Reasoning with a Human Touch: The Interrogative Model"

What enables us to understand and evaluate arguments is the human context that situates them: our general understanding of the world, our grasp of the questions that motivate ordinary reasoning, and the limits of our imagination. In this presentation, we outline a model of reasoning that incorporates these various elements of everyday context. The model provides a unified way of understanding how reasoning can be effortless and why, especially in the context of controversy, it can be ineffective.

## Call For Papers

CNU's Phi Sigma Tau & Theta Alpha Kappa Chapters present:  
The 9th Annual Hoaglund Philosophy and Religious Studies Conference at Christopher Newport  
University:

## **To Be Human: Nature, Identity, and Condition**



**March 30th, 2019**  
**At Christopher Newport University, VA**

The 9th Annual Hoaglund Conference at Christopher Newport University invites undergraduate and graduate students from all disciplines to submit paper proposals addressing the topic of humanity and humanness, broadly construed.

**Abstract, Paper and Presentation Guidelines:** Abstracts should provide an understanding of the main topics of the paper and should not exceed approximately 200 words in length. The recommended length of papers is 8-15 pages, double-spaced. Presentations will be 15-20 minutes in length including time for questions and answers.

**Submission Protocol:** Submit an abstract to [john.mccormick.15@cnu.edu](mailto:john.mccormick.15@cnu.edu). Please remember to include name, title and institutional affiliation. Deadline for receipt of abstracts: Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Full length papers must be sent in by Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:dhatcher@bakeru.edu)>