

Mullins

Logical Fallacies

Fallacies are statements that may sound reasonable at first, but on closer examination prove to be illogical. Sometimes these fallacies are accidental and sometimes they are intentional. It's good to be able to spot them so that you can both avoid them and not be fooled by them. A logical fallacy always undermines an argument.

post hoc or faulty cause and effect

two related events do not necessarily have a cause-effect relationship;
correlation does not equal causation

In prison, Malcolm X copied the entire dictionary by hand, and this is what made him the great civil rights leader that he became.

false analogy

creates a comparison between things that actually aren't comparable

Telling men to be the heads of households is like putting a loaded gun to the head of every woman in America.

red herring

distracts from actual argument

Susan Faludi looks at the the real causes for why women were not happy in late 1980s U.S. society. I don't see the need to deal with this problem since men were suffering just as much.

ad hominem

attacks the person not the issue; mistakes personality for reasoning

I don't think we should take Deborah Tannen's analysis of differing gender communication styles in the workplace seriously, since Tannen was unhappy in her own marriage and was obviously a man-hater.

bandwagon

argument based on popular appeal, not logic

Most people think homosexuals should not teach young children. So homosexuals should not be allowed to teach elementary school.

hasty generalization

a broad claim made on the basis of only a limited amount of evidence; when applied to a group of people, this is a stereotype

My uncle stays at home and takes care of the kids while my aunt goes to work. So obviously all men are can be perfectly happy giving up their traditional roles.

either/or

offers only two extreme choices to a complex situation

Either you believe in traditional gender roles, or you believe in destroyong society as we know it.

circular reasoning

supports opinion with the opinion itself; the argument goes in a circle; tautology

Male violence is culturally taught, because society instructs men to be aggressive.

assumption

assuming a claim to be true without any proof

Violent crime is on the rise among teenagers. So we need to reduce the amount of single-parent familes and make sure that men stay in their marriages.

slippery slope

an argument that assumes that one thing will lead to something extreme

If we tell women that it's okay not to be mothers, then soon no woman will want to be a mother.