

NAME: _____

Philosophy 1104: Critical Thinking

Another Practice Quiz #1

TIME: 60 minutes

1. Which of the following pairs of propositions are consistent? (Write just ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ in the column provided.) If you think that the propositions, while consistent, have strong negative relevance to each other, then also write ‘SNR’.

	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	Consistent? (Yes/No)
(i)	Fred just hit a hole-in-one	Fred never played golf before today	
(ii)	I have between 4 and 6 eggs	I have at least 3 eggs	
(iii)	I have at least 4 eggs	I have no more than 2 eggs	
(iv)	It’s not the case that every politician is corrupt.	Every politician is honest	
(v)	Janet likes listening to Jazz	Vancouver is west of Calgary	
(vi)	Simpson is a heavy smoker	Simpson is a world-class skier	
(vii)	Alex is a woman	Alex is Ben’s father	
(viii)	Qin’s theory is rejected by all relevant scientific authorities	Qin’s theory is true	
(ix)	Sally is a feminist	Sally has eight children	
(x)	Ali stabbed a man in Vernon, B.C. in 1998.	Ali first entered Canada in 2002.	

2. In the conversations below, the speaker claims to find a contradiction. In each case say whether the inconsistency is serious or trivial, i.e. whether it threatens the general truth of the account. Briefly explain your judgement. (If you think that additional information is required to make this judgement, then briefly explain why.)

The official explanation of the WTC collapses on 9/11 claims that the main cause was the fires that occurred around the airplane impact area. These fires heated the steel frame of the building, softening and weakening it, until it collapsed. But this story contradicts the fact that WTC 2, which was struck second, collapsed first. WTC 2 burned for only 56 minutes, compared to 102 minutes for WTC 1.

Answer:

The official explanation of the WTC collapses on 9/11 claims that the main cause was the fires that occurred around the airplane impact area. These fires heated the steel frame of the building, softening and weakening it, until it collapsed. But this story contradicts the fact that molten iron or steel was seen (and recorded on video) pouring out of one corner of WTC 2 before it collapsed. Glowing molten metal was also observed in the rubble piles after the collapses, and spheres of previously-molten iron were found in the dust. Iron and steel melt at around 1400 Celsius, whereas office fires, even ones started with jet fuel, cannot get hotter than about 1000 Celsius.

Answer:

3. Underline all vague words and phrases in the following paragraph . Each each case say whether or not the vagueness is acceptable, and why.

Mr. Howson, a former student of mine, has asked me to write a letter in support of his application to the exchange program. Mr. Howson took at least one course with me during his studies at Langara, and in each case was one of the only students who really mastered the material. His attendance record was excellent, and he certainly contributed to the class discussions. His course grade reflected his level of achievement.

Answer:

4. Comment on the suitability of the study's definition of "spanking". How suitable is it, for its purpose?

Groups that support a parent's right to spank their children are scrambling to respond to a recent study that shows the damage that spanking causes to the child. The study found that adults who were previously spanked, as children, have significantly higher rates of depression and suicide, and also commit more violent crimes. "Spanking" is defined as the act of a parent striking the child, either using a hand or some implement.

Answer:

5. Underline any ambiguous terms in the following paragraph, and explain their possible meanings.

Studies show that carbon taxes are totally unnecessary for reducing carbon emissions – there are plenty of other ways to do it. And no one has proved that carbon dioxide emissions are the cause of global warming anyway! So far, all the evidence is inconclusive.

Answer:

6. In the following passage, underline each term or phrase that has a positive connotation. Suggest replacements that have either neutral or negative connotation, writing them above the original words or phrases.

(i) You should hire me because I am single-minded, determined, and have years of experience.

Working as a sales associate I was recognised among my colleagues for clear, honest communication, confidence, and being proactive. I am always meticulous, paying attention to details, and willing to help others find and correct their mistakes.

In this passage do the *reverse*, i.e. replace negative or neutral terms with positive ones. Make the sale!

(ii) *Just Listed!!!* Cramped, two-bedroom condo right in the busy centre of Kits. Beach rather a

long walk away. Small kitchen with old appliances. Fir floors are dented and scratched.

Dim northern exposure. Draughty. Tiny balcony with no roof.

7. Each of the following definitions is flawed in some way (each in just one way, I think, or at least one main one). Diagnose each definition as “circular”, “too narrow”, “too broad”, or “loaded”.

(i) I define a *cow* as an animal that produces milk.

(ii) *Beer* is a golden-coloured, frothy alcoholic beverage brewed from barley, hops and yeast.

(iii) A *lawyer* is someone who feeds off the misery of others, and frequently adds to that misery.

(iv) In chemistry, an *oxidising agent* is something that oxidises other substances.

(v) A *philosopher* is someone who can say an awful lot about something without saying anything at all.

(vi) A *living* being is defined as something that is alive.

(vii) *Science*, derived from the Latin *scientia*, literally means ‘knowledge’.

(viii) *Science* is the attempt to reduce everything good and noble in the world to the trivial operations of matter.
