

NAME: _____

Philosophy 1104: Critical Thinking

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'. [10 marks total]

	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	Consistent? (Yes/No)
(i)	Mike isn't a biology student	Mike is a student	
(ii)	The government says that there is nothing to worry about	There is something to worry about	
(iii)	Dave has never been sailing	Dave knows the name of everything on a sailboat	
(iv)	Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world	Lake Malawi in east Africa is deeper than Lake Baikal	
(v)	Erik is a lawyer	Johanna was born in Germany	
(vi)	Most cyclists also drive a car	Hardly any car drivers also cycle	
(vii)	Most Texans own guns	Jake, a Texan, doesn't own a gun	
(viii)	Seniors are high-risk drivers	Senior drivers have lower risk than teenage drivers	
(ix)	Alex is generally very honest	Alex lied about his ex-girlfriends	
(x)	Australia is the world's largest island	Australia is a continent, not an island	

2. In the statements below, the speaker claims to find an anomaly or contradiction. In each case say whether the anomaly 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.) [3 marks each part]

According to the theory of 'Continental Drift', the continental land masses are drifting around the globe at a rate of a few centimetres per year, which adds up to thousands of kilometres over the geological timescale of hundreds of millions of years. Wegener for example sees the continents as "ploughing" through the ocean crust, like a ship cutting through sea ice. The problem with this is that it contradicts the fact that the ocean crust is actually denser than the continental crust. There's just no way that the continents could slice through it.

Answer:

Mainstream geologists believe that the continents are fixed in place and cannot move. This assumption gives rise to a number of anomalies, however, such as the rather striking fact that the world's continents approximately fit together, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Also, when you look at the animals and plants along these matching coastlines (now separated by thousands of miles of ocean) you find that they are astonishingly similar. This proves a common origin for these creatures, but how could they have crossed such a vast ocean? Such anomalies prove that these continents were once joined together.

Answer:

3. In July 2011 the *Huffington Post* published a story “Why ‘100% Orange Juice’ is Still Artificial”. The author claimed that orange juice is no more nutritious than soda, and contains just as much sugar. Also, the juice is initially stripped of oxygen to make it last for up to a year in giant tanks. However, since this juice now has no flavour, before sale a ‘flavor pack’ of chemicals is added to it. The Florida Department of Citrus responded:

Purchased by nearly 70 percent of American households, people choose 100 percent orange juice for its great taste and nutrition benefits. By utilizing state-of-the-art technology, Florida is able to provide a consistent supply of high quality orange juice year round. By law, 100 percent orange juice is made only from oranges. The basic principle of orange juice processing is similar to how you make orange juice at home. ... During processing, natural components such as orange aroma, orange oil from the peel, and pulp may be separated from the orange juice. After the juice is pasteurized, these natural orange components may be added back to the orange juice for optimal flavor.

Underline and number any aspects of the statement above that appear slippery, and might be intentionally misleading. (Briefly explain what’s fishy about it.) [6 marks]

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Are you convinced by the following argument? Briefly explain your answer. [2 marks]

People who talk about the dangers of motor vehicles are just out of date. In G8 countries, for example, deaths and injuries for vehicle occupants are less than half what they were 30 years ago.

5. Comment on the suitability of the study’s definition of the level of ‘cycling safety’ of a city. How suitable is it, for its purpose? Briefly explain your answer. [4 marks]

A new study finds that Vancouver is BC’s least safe city to cycle in. The level of safety in a city was measured by the number of ICBC claims involving cyclists between 2012 and 2016. Vancouver ‘tops’ the list with 2,157 claims, well ahead of Victoria (413), Surrey (410) and Richmond (265).

Answer:

6. Underline and number three possibly misleading parts in the following paragraph, especially related to *ambiguity*, *vagueness*, *weasel words*, etc. In each case briefly explain what the problem is. [6 marks]

Our research has proven a statistical link between consumption of diet sodas and obesity, suggesting that heavy consumption of diet soda may increase the risk of obesity by as much as 20%. For the sake of public health, we urge that a new policy is needed concerning diet soda.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7. In the following text, underline each term or phrase that has a positive connotation. Suggest replacements that *have similar meaning* but either neutral or negative connotation, writing them above the original words or phrases. [4 marks]

- (i) My dad is challenging to live with. He gets up at an ungodly hour, and with my room being next to the bathroom I'm jolted awake each morning by his ear-splitting singing in the shower. He obstinately insists on making me breakfast every morning, which is invariably something dull, as well as very heavy and slow to digest.
- (ii) In the following text, underline each term or phrase that has a negative connotation. Suggest replacements that *have similar meaning* but either neutral or positive connotation, writing them above the original words or phrases. [4 marks]

Translink is proposing to impose yet another tax on Metro Vancouver residents, with the Orwellian name 'mobility pricing'. If they get their way, drivers will again be punished, apparently to force them out of their cars. It won't work, so drivers will end up being gouged just to pay for more buses and trains, so that society's losers can travel around on my dime.

6. For this exercise, assume that the following passage about Stalin is true. In your answers, feel free to cherry pick, and alter the connotation of words as required for the purpose.

Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) was the dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1929 to 1953. Under Stalin, the Soviet Union was transformed from a peasant society into an industrial and military superpower. However, he ruled by terror, and millions of his own citizens died during his brutal reign. Born into poverty, Stalin became involved in revolutionary politics, as well as criminal activities, as a young man. After Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin died, Stalin outmaneuvered his rivals for control of the party. Once in power, he industrialised farming, which involved seizing land from wealthy farmers, who were executed or sent to forced labor camps. At the start of World War II, Stalin initially made a pact with Hitler. After Hitler betrayed him, however, Stalin aligned with the United States and Britain, and his armies were largely responsible for destroying the Nazi war machine and winning the war. After the war he took control of Eastern Europe, installing repressive communist governments controlled by Moscow.

- (i) Write a *true* biography of Stalin that makes him look good. [3 marks]

- (ii) Write a *true* biography of Stalin that makes him look bad. [3 marks]
