PHIL 1010, CRITICAL THINKING
EXERCISES DUE THURS, 8/28

Answer Key

EXERCISES 1.1 (Sections 2 - 2.3)

B. Assume that Jack and Jill had the following discussion. (a) For each sentence, indicate whether it makes a statement or not. (b) For each sentence that is not a statement, describe what it does.

1. Jack: Let’s go up the hill.
   Command
2. Jill: That’s a bad idea.
   Statement
3. Jack: Why?
   Question
4. Jill: It’s a very steep hill
   Statement
5. Jack: I don’t care about that.
   Statement
6. Jill: But I have a heart condition.
   Statement
7. Jack: I don’t care about that either.
   Statement
8. Jill: Well, I see that you are a heartless human being.
   Statement
9. Jack: To the contrary, I have a very healthy heart.
   Statement
10. Jill: But you don’t care at all about my heart.
    Statement
11. Jack: If you have a heart condition, then you should get a good cardiologist to care for it.
    Statement
    Statement
    Are you some kind of jerk, or what?
    Question
D. Which of the following sentences are *not* likely to be the premise of any argument? Explain.

1. Many people in the United States own a car.  
   Likely to be used as a premise.
2. Freedom is the most important value.  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
3. Hang-gliding is more dangerous than walking on a beach.  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is not known by many people.
4. Give me liberty or give me death.  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
5. Democracy is the best form of government.  
   Could be used as a premise among Americans. Not likely to be used as a premise if talking to people in other countries as in that context this statement is controversial.
6. Communism was an evil system.  
   Could be used as a premise among Americans. Not likely to be used as a premise if talking to people in other countries as in that context this statement is controversial.
7. Evil will win if good people do not fight against it.  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
8. *Back To Black* (Title of an Amy Winehouse album.)  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This is not a statement.
9. Abortion should be legal.  
   Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
10. Abortion should be illegal.  
    Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
11. How far until the next exit?  
    Not likely to be used as a premise. This is not a statement.
12. Everyone should take an economics course.  
    Not likely to be used as a premise. This statement is controversial.
13. “It is considered important to be able to listen to another person.” (From a quote above.)  
    Likely to be used as a premise.
14. “[G]overnment should not be in the business of limiting speech.” (From a quote above.)  
    Could be used as a premise among Americans. Not likely to be used as a premise if talking to people in other countries as in that context this statement is controversial.
15. “The Cherokees believed that they had a sacred duty to avenge the deaths of fallen comrades.”  
    (From a quote above.)  
    Likely to be used as a premise.
EXERCISES 1.5 (Sections 4.2.5 - 4.3.5)

B. Determine whether each of the following passages contains: an argument, an assertion, a question, a command, or a description. If the passage contains an argument, identify the premises and conclusion of each argument.

1. Look it, we need to take I-285 instead of I-75. At this time of day, I-285 is always a mess and I read in the newspaper this morning that they were repaving part of I-285 today.
   Argument.
   Conclusion: We should take I-285.
   Premise: I-285 is always a mess.
   Premise: They are repaving part of I-285 today.

2. The patient presents with fever, sweating, and a cough but claims that she has no pain in the throat or the ears.
   Description.

3. Your car is pulling right but the tires look ok. I think you one of your tie rods is bent.
   Argument
   Conclusion: One of your tie rods is bent.
   Premise: Your care is pulling to the right.
   Premise: The tires look ok.

   Command.

   Question

6. “Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries!” Monty Python and the Holy Grail.
   Assertion

7. “It is often said that brown sugar is a healthier option than white sugar….In reality, brown sugar is most often ordinary table sugar that is turned brown by the reintroduction of molasses. Normally molasses is separated and removed when sugar is created….Because of its molasses content, brown sugar does contain certain minerals…But…these minerals are present in only minuscule amounts….Nutritionally, brown sugar and white sugar are not much different.” NY Times June 12, 2007, p. D5.
   Argument
   Conclusion: Nutritionally, brown sugar and white sugar are not much different.
   Premise: Brown sugar is white sugar with molasses added.
   Premise: The molasses adds only minuscule amounts of minerals.

8. “[A]ll genuine political theories presuppose man to be evil…. This can be easily documented in the works of every specific political thinker.” Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political, George Schwab, trans. U of Chicago Press, 1996 [1932], p. 61.
   Assertion

9. The following passage is about the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs. It speaks of the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma, the Spanish conquistador, Cortes, and the legendary Aztec god-King, Queztalcoatl, who had been driven from this throne and had vowed to return some day.
“Moctezuma was said to believe that Cortes was Queutzalcoatl….There is no reason to doubt the
good faith of the authors of these accounts: it is clear that they believed this version.
Nonetheless, the same may not have been true of Moctezuma and his relations. The Spaniards
appeared for the first time in 1517, whereas Queutzalcoatl was supposed to have returned in a
One-Reed year of the Aztec calendar ... in 1519.” Tzvetan Todorov, The Morals of History

Argument
Conclusion: Moctezuma may not have believed that Cortes was Queutzalcoatl.
Premise: The Spaniards appeared for the first time in 1517, whereas Queutzalcoatl was supposed to have
returned in a One-Reed year of the Aztec calendar in 1519.

10. “In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his
library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose
beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate,
for they had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window that he wore a blue coat, and
rode a black horse.” Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice.

Description

11. “In perpetrating a revolution, there are two requirements: someone or something to revolt against and
someone to actually show up to do the revolting. Dress is usually causal and both parties may be
flexible about the time and place.... In the Chinese revolution of 1650 neither party showed up
and the deposit on the hall was forfeited.” Woody Allen, The Complete Prose of Woody Allen

Description (of a joking sort)

12. In the following passage, Sigmund Freud presents his view of dreams.

“Dreams are not to be likened to the unregulated sounds that rise from a musical instrument
struck by the blow of some external force instead of by a player's hand...they are not
meaningless; they are not absurd...On the contrary, they are psychical [mental] phenomena of
complete validity -- fulfillments of wishes. Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams Basic
Books, 1969, p. 155

Assertion

13. “The growth and intensification of serfdom was a major tendency in Russian history....[A]t the end of
the nineteenth century...thirty-four million people out of a population of thirty-six millions were
reckoned as serfs.” William Henry Chamberlain, The Russian Revolution, Volume 1 NY
Grosset and Dunlop 1965 p 5.

Argument or description. We don’t have enough context to tell.
Conclusion: The growth and intensification of serfdom was a major tendency in Russian history.
Premise: At the end of the nineteenth century thirty-four million people out of a population of thirty-six
millions were reckoned as serfs.

14. Background information: Amphibians are cold-blooded. They draw all the heat they need to live
from their environment.

“New fossilized remains of an amphibian which roamed the Earth more than 245 million years
ago have been discovered in Antarctica, suggesting that its [climate] during much of the Triassic,
the epoch when dinosaurs and the first primitive mammals emerged, was remarkably warm. The
60 cm (24-inch) piece of skull was dug out from thick sandstone at Fremouw Peak in the
Transantarctic Mountains, just six degrees away from the South Pole. The mixed team of
European-American paleontologists has assessed the creature as a Parotosuchus, a 2 m (6.5 ft)
long giant crocodile-like predator (but it was rather related to modern salamanders) that lived 40

Argument

Conclusion: During the Triassic, the Antarctic was remarkably warm.

Premise: The fossils of an amphibian have been found in Antarctica.

15. The following passage is about a study conducted by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski.

“Malinowski’s famous study of Melanesian sexual beliefs and practices provides evidence that sexual jealousy really does have a genetic rather than a purely cultural explanation. The tribe that he studied did not believe in physiological paternity; they thought the only function of sexual intercourse was to enlarge the vagina so that spirits could implant the fetus in the womb. Nevertheless, men were as jealous... as in societies in which the male role in procreation is understood.” Richard Posner, Sex and Reason (Harvard 1992), pp. 97-98.

Argument

Conclusion: Sexual jealousy has a genetic rather than a purely cultural explanation.

Premise: Melanesians do not believe physiological paternity.

Premise: Melanesian men are as jealous as men in societies in which the male role in procreation is understood.