Outline for a Talk

1. Philosophy: Leading a Good Life in the Face of Uncertainty
2. Dealing with Uncertainty and Ignorance
3. Inductive vs. Deductive Reasoning
   1. Most of our lives involve induction!
4. Fallacy: Ways of Reasoning Badly
   1. Many inductive fallacies involve confirmation bias
   2. We are really bad with dealing with probabilities, *especially* when it comes to possible but relatively low probability events
5. Out of Control Imagination: The Slippery Slope
6. Hasty Generalizations and The Availability Bias
7. You’re Not So Special: The Base Rate Fallacy
8. Causal Reasoning: The Planning Fallacy
9. Problems with People: The Halo Effect
10. I Trusted the Wrong People! Arguments from Authority
11. What Will Make Me Happy?

Russell Quote (from Philosophy for Laymen)

The demand for certainty is one which is natural to man, but is nevertheless an intellectual vice. If you take your children for a picnic on a doubtful day, they will demand a dogmatic answer as to whether it will be fine or wet, and be disappointed in you when you cannot be sure. The same sort of assurance is demanded, in later life, of those who undertake to lead populations into the Promised Land. “Liquidate the capitalists and the survivors will enjoy eternal bliss.” “Exterminate the Jews and everyone will be virtuous.” “Kill the Croats and let the Serbs reign.” “Kill the Serbs and let the Croats reign.” These are samples of the slogans that have won wide popular acceptance in our time. Even a modicum of philosophy would make it impossible to accept such bloodthirsty nonsense. But so long as men are not trained to withhold judgment in the absence of evidence, they will be led astray by cocksure prophets, and it is likely that their leaders will be either ignorant fanatics or dishonest charlatans. To endure uncertainty is difficult, but so are most of the other virtues. For the learning of every virtue there is an appropriate discipline, and for the learning of suspended judgment the best discipline is philosophy.

For it is not enough to recognize that all our knowledge is, in a greater or less degree, uncertain and vague; it is necessary, at the same time, to learn to act upon the best hypothesis without dogmatically believing it. To revert to the picnic: even though you admit that it may rain, you start out if you think fine weather probable, but you allow for the opposite possibility by taking mackintoshes. If you were a dogmatist you would leave the mackintoshes at home.