

PHI 169

Critical Reasoning

Marcello Di Bello

*Lehman College
CUNY*

Fall 2014



What is
Critical
Reasoning?

An awareness
that *information and*
arguments can be
misleading

A set of skills that
help us *identify*
misleading information
and arguments







Time Magazine's Changes (1)



Cover Credit: Photograph by Jill Greenberg / Corbis Outline. Inset, Sebelius: Jacquelyn Martin / AP

U.S.

[View Large Cover](#) | [Buy This Cover](#)



**Europe, Middle East
and Africa**

[View Large Cover](#) | Vol. 174, No. 12



Asia

[View Large Cover](#) | Vol. 174, No. 12

Time Magazine's Changes (2)



Cover Credit: Photograph by Zachary Scott for TIME. Styling by Gillean McLeod. Set design by Brandon Klein

U.S.

[View Large Cover](#) | [Buy This Cover](#)



**Europe, Middle East
and Africa**

[View Large Cover](#) | Vol. 178, No. 5



Asia

[View Large Cover](#) | Vol. 178, No. 5



The Ice Bucket Challenge

Should We Donate? YES!

Quotations from
ASL Association
Website

Since 1985, through our Translational Research Advancing Therapies … the ALS Association has funded more than \$99 million in research and clinical management projects. This unrelenting focus has resulted in some of the greatest ALS research discoveries to date.

We are presently funding close to 100 active research projects, selected through a peer review process involving top ALS scientists.

From the earliest stages, the ALS Association has recognized novel approaches that have led to significant ALS research findings…

Quotations from

Should We Donate? NO!

“Why the Ice Bucket Challenge is bad for you”
by Scott Gilmore

When we decide where to spend our charitable dollars, we need to consider three factors.

1. Where is the greatest need?
2. Where will my dollars have the greatest influence?
3. What is the most urgent problem?

The ALS challenge fails all three of these tests.

ALS research is not an especially great need in public health. It is classified as a rare disease and, thankfully, only about 600 people die from it every year in Canada. … [it] is not even close to the top 20 most fatal diseases according to StatsCan (the top three being cancer, at 72,000 deaths per year; heart disease, at 47,000; and cerebrovascular disease, 13,000).



NYPD's Zero-Tolerance and Stop and Frisk

Is NYPD doing the right thing? NO!

The NYPD's stop-and-frisk practices raise serious concerns over racial profiling, illegal stops and privacy rights. ...The police are stopping hundreds of thousands of law abiding New Yorkers every year, and the vast majority are black and Latino.

An analysis by the NYCLU revealed that innocent New Yorkers have been subjected to police stops and street interrogations more than 4 million times since 2002, and that black and Latino communities continue to be the overwhelming target of these tactics.

From the NYCLU website

Is NYPD doing the right thing? YES!

Broken Window Theory:
Targeting small and petty crimes, such as public urination, drinking in public, or sitting in a park after hours, can prevent major crimes from happening.

See *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities* (1996) by Kelling & Coles

It is up to you to decide
what to think

Critical Reasoning can help you
arrive at a better conclusion

How?

This is precisely what you
will discover in this course

Topics of the Course

The Death Penalty

I don't think you should support the death penalty to seek revenge. I don't think that's right. I think the reason to support the death penalty is because it saves other people's lives.

(George W. Bush)

izquotes.com

It's racist

Blacks who kill whites are much more likely to be executed than whites who kill blacks. Forty percent of Death Row inmates are black.

It targets the poor

More than 90 percent of those charged with capital crimes are too poor to hire an experienced lawyer.

It kills the innocent

Since 1900, more than 400 innocent people have been given a death sentence. At least 23 of the innocent were executed.

It doesn't stop crime

States without the death penalty have lower murder rates. As Texas outpaced the nation in executions from 1982-91, violent crime in the state grew nearly 46 percent — much faster than the national rate.

It's barbaric

At least 10 of the people executed since 1976 were under 18 at the time of the crime. Even more "cruel and unusual" were the 3 executions of mentally retarded convicts in 1995. Executions can be torture: one electrocution required 3 jolts delivered over 14 minutes.

Campaign to End the Death Penalty
P.O. Box 25730, Chicago, IL 60625

You Will Decide the Other Topics of the Course

Please Choose TWO of the
Topics in the Following Slides

Courtroom Arguments in the OJ Simpson Case

Was OJ Simpson
guilty or innocent?

Why did the jury
acquit him?

What arguments
did the defense
and the prosecutor
advance?



The Obama/Romney Debate



What did they say and what didn't they say?

What arguments did Obama and Romney advance during the presidential debate?

Capitalism and Economic Inequalities

Is capitalism the source of prosperity and wealth?

Is capitalism responsible for widening economic inequalities?

Should the rich be taxed more?

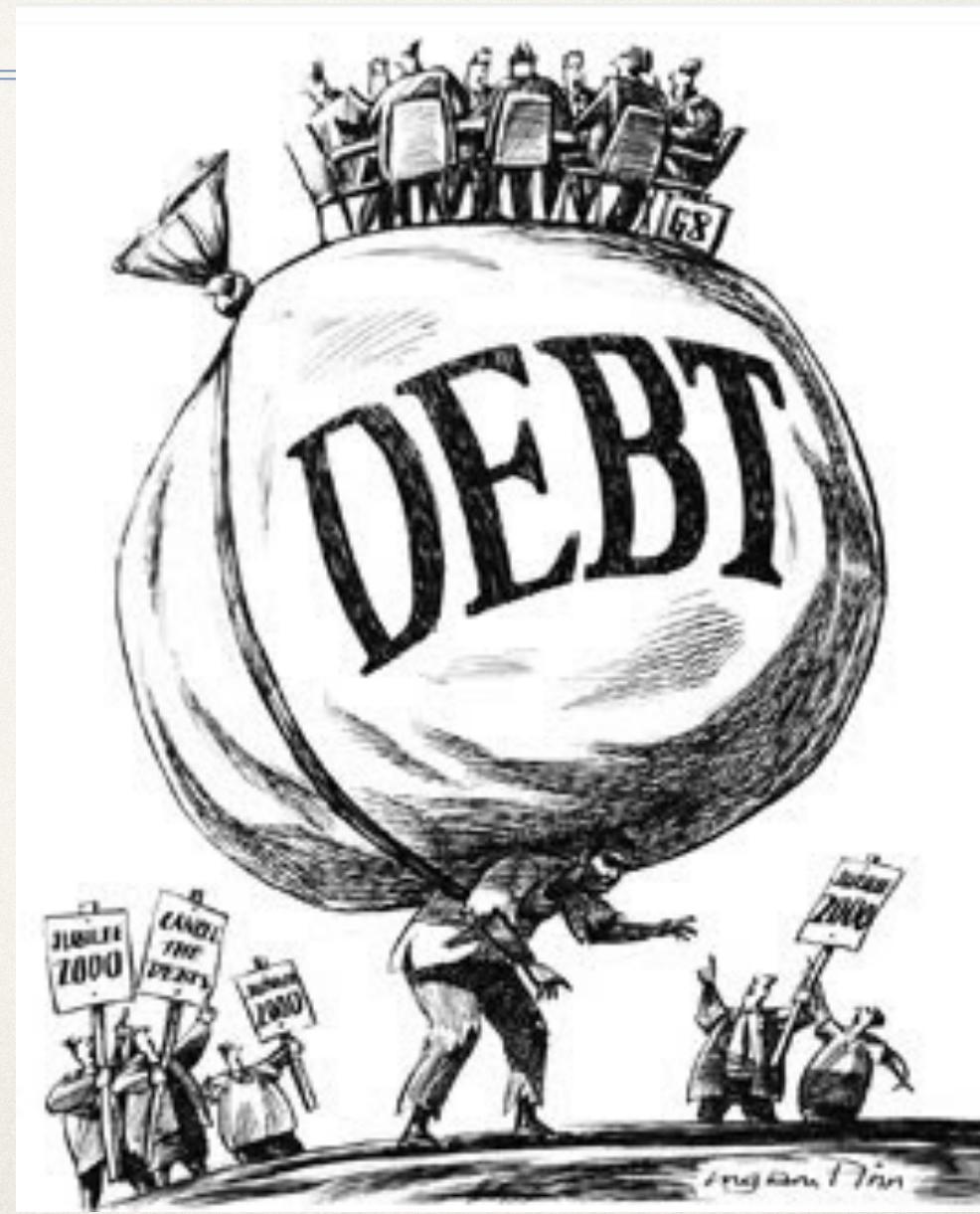


Public Debt and the Welfare State

Should the government spend less in order to reduce its public debt?

Should the government spend more and provide more services to its citizens, especially those who cannot afford health care and education?

Neither of the two?



The War on Terror and Drones

Should the US government wage war against countries that it considers a threat to national security?

Should drones be used to target and kill individuals in foreign countries?



Vegetarianism

Should we stop
eating meat and
become
vegetarians?

Does the meat
industry pose an
environmental
threat to our
planet?

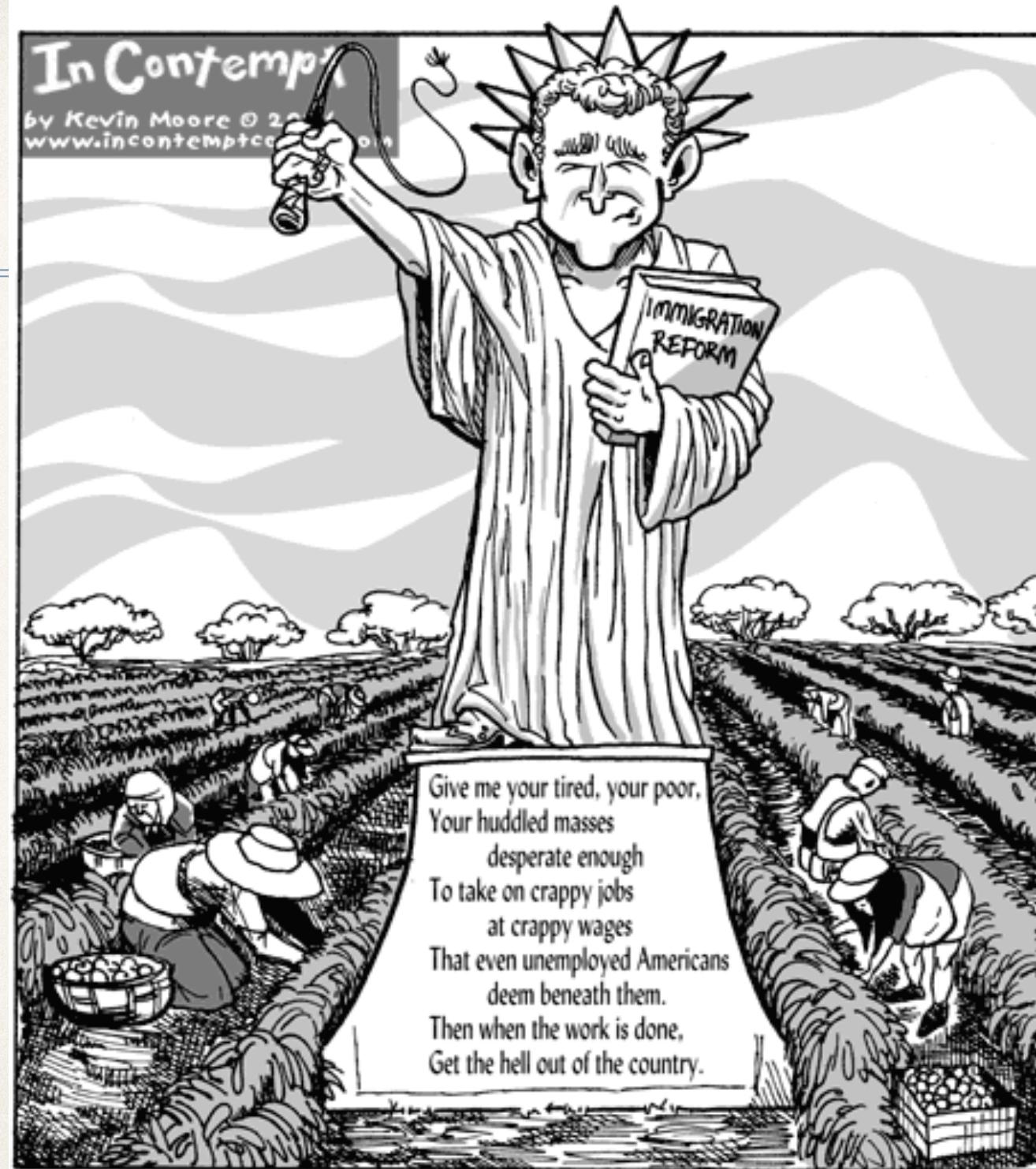


Immigration

Should restrictions
on immigration be
relaxed?

Do people have the
right to travel from
one country to
another?

Do immigrants
threaten American
society?



Same Sex Marriage

Should homosexual couples be allowed to marry and have the same rights as heterosexual couples?

Do homosexual couples pose a threat to our society?

If so, what kind of threat exactly?



Other Topics

- ✿ Please explain anything else you would like to discuss in this course, for example, NYPD's stop-and-frisk, gender inequality, affirmative action, etc. —anything that interests you.

Reading for next Monday

- ✿ Read Beccaria's argument against the death penalty.
The reading is available on the course website.