PRACTICE EXAM #2

**Identification**

**(for each of the following arguments or argumentative situations identify what fallacy is being committed Note: there will be no unused fallacies from the list)**

**(hint: be sure to pick the fallacy that BEST FITS the argument. Give priority to those fallacies with more specific requirements. You must use every fallacy once!)**

**Fallacies**

1. If a state trooper is justified in using an unmarked car in order to catch speeders, and if there is nothing wrong with deceiving a friend about his or her surprise birthday, then how can you say that “deception is morally wrong.”

**Misuse of a Principle**

1. JOY: Did you know that interference from in-laws is the number one cause of divorce in this country?

TERESA: Really? How do you know?

JOY: I heard it on *Oprah* yesterday.

**Appeal to Irrelevant Authority**

1. AMIR: Woah Barbara, maybe you should do some more research before investing so much money in those high risk stocks.

BARBARA: YOLO! (“you only live once”)

**Fallacy of Popular Wisdom**

1. CELESTE: I’ve thought about this for a long time, and I’ve come to the conclusion that sane people do not commit suicide.

CHRIS: What about your friend, Laura, who surprised you and everyone when she committed suicide? *She* was certainly not insane.

CELESTE: Well, she certainly seemed sane, but I guess we didn’t know the real story.

**Question-Begging Definition**

1. People who are homeless in our city must be happy with their situation right now. There haven’t been any protest marches or any loud voices of dissent about how the city is handling homelessness for some time.

**Arguing from Ignorance**

1. TERRY: You know, Julie, with all this stuff about AIDS, you really should be more careful about who you sleep with.

JULIE: Me be careful? You’ve had at least a half dozen partners since Christmas!

**Two-Wrongs Fallacy**

1. Did you vote for Bush for president because he is a Republican or because of his stand on stem cell research?

**False Alternatives**

1. I don’t see why you don’t want to take your husband’s name when you get married. The vast majority of Americans obviously think it should be done that way. It’s hard to believe that that many people could be wrong!

**Appeal to Common Opinion**

1. JUDGE: I have heard contradictory testimony from the two principal witnesses in this case. I can only conclude that the truth must lie somewhere in between.

**Fallacy of the Mean**

1. ROY: Why should I do what the Bible says?

DOROTHY: Because the Bible is the inspired word of God.

ROY: But how do you know that the Bible is actually divinely inspired?

DOROTHY: Because it says in the third chapter of II Timothy that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

**Arguing in a Circle**

1. PROFESSOR LANG: It doesn’t make much sense any more to prepare for a specific vocation during college. In a technological age, change happens so rapidly that job training usually becomes obsolete within eight years. I suggest that we maintain a strong nonvocationally oriented, liberal arts curriculum. That way, our students will be prepared to go in a number of different vocational directions.

PROFESSOR REID: I’m not so sure, John. I think there are a lot of technological jobs that last longer than eight years.

**Trivial Objections**

1. What’s wrong with you taking my name when we get married, Kim? It would really be embarrassing to me if we got married and you refused to take my name. In fact, I don’t think I would want to be part of a relationship in which you would show me that kind of disrespect.

**Appeal to Force or Threat**

1. MAXINE: Give me some time to think about this, Gene. Whether to have sex with someone is a very important decision. I want to try to make a rational decision about this.

GENE: Look, Maxine! Having sex with someone isn’t something people make rational decisions about.

**Is-Ought Fallacy**

1. Why are you signing up for classes again? You’ve failed multiple courses before and even dropped out. Face it, you’re just not smart enough for college.

**Genetic Fallacy**

1. A time-share salesperson: “You mean that after we flew you down here to Florida at no cost to you, put you up in a Gold Crown resort for three days with all meals provided, and took you to Disney World, you’re not going to buy one of our time-shares?”

**Manipulation of Emotions**

1. You shouldn’t complain about not being able to find a parking place near your classroom. When I went to college, we weren’t even allowed to have cars on campus.

**Red Herring**

1. It’s supposed to be in the low twenties tonight, so surely we’re not going to the football game, are we?

**Question-Begging Language**

1. Because the Democratic Party supports a program of national health insurance, I assume that our Democratic representative, Congressman Boucher, supports such a program.

**Fallacy of Division**

1. I am quite confident that the Board of Trustees will exercise superior judgment and skill in handling the affairs of this institution. After all, each of the members of the board has demonstrated superior judgment and skill in handling his or her own personal and business affairs.

**Fallacy of Composition**

1. Professor Beamer, are you sure you want to openly oppose this new curricular proposal? You know that both the president and the dean are pushing it pretty hard, and you don’t have tenure yet!

**Appeal to Self-Interest**

1. MOTHER: I think it would be a good idea for us to encourage the children to watch less television and to get more physical exercise.

FATHER: You think I’ve let the kids become a bunch of lazy, unhealthy television addicts, don’t you?

**Attacking a Straw Man**

1. Rachel, I just can’t vote for him, even though I agree with what you say about the two candidates. It’s just that we have always been Democrats. I’m not sure that I could live with myself if I voted for a Republican.

**Appeal to Tradition**

1. PARISHIONER TO PRIEST: You’ve never been married, so why should I listen to your advice concerning my marital problems? How could you possibly know what you’re talking about?

**Poisoning the Well**

1. One of Senator Fisher’s constituents asks, “Are you planning on supporting our troops and voting for the president’s defense budget?”

**Complex Question**

1. MR PARKER: My political opponent, Representative Ritchie, is not telling the truth when he says that he has never missed a single roll-call vote in the House of Representatives during his long tenure. According to the *Congressional Record,* Mr. Ritchie missed either roll-call votes during his first term.

MR RITCHIE: Mr. Parker, is the *Congressional Record* the only piece of reading material that they allowed you to read at the mental hospital where you were a patient during my first term?

**Abusive Ad Hominem**

1. Grades don’t really give us much information about a student. If a prospective employer or graduate school were to find from a transcript that a student got a B- in a particular course, very little could be inferred about the particular character or quality of his or her work in that course. Hence, I think that we ought to go to a simple pass-fail system.

**Drawing the Wrong Conclusion**

1. I didn’t betray your confidence. I just thought your parents should know what you told me.

**Distinction Without a Difference**

1. SUSAN: Congressman, in spite of the landmark Supreme Court decision prohibiting state-sponsored prayer in public schools, there is still prayer going on in the schools. It seems to me that the spirit of the court decision is still being violated after all these years. The state is still sponsoring the prayer, even though schools claim that it is the students who initiate it. There are prayers in assemblies, before athletic games, even before classes. And the teachers and coaches are participating in them. It’s almost like there is more prayer than there was before. What do you think can be done about it?

CONGRESSMAN CREED: I think that as long as there are math tests in school, there will always be prayer in school.

**Resort to Humor or Ridicule**

1. Yes, I subscribe to *Playboy*, but I do it for the great articles in there. There was a great piece last month about Iraqi veterans suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder.

**Rationalization**

1. I don’t care what the university report on video games says. I know that playing violent video games *does* encourage people to commit violent crimes.

**Ignoring the Counterevidence**

1. HENRY: I’ve gone off my diet. It just wasn’t working.

RICHARD: But I thought it was working really well. Haven’t you already lost about twenty pounds?

HENRY: Sure, I’ve lost weight, but my social life hasn’t improved one bit!

**Using the Wrong Reasons**

1. Just as you can know that the wind exists because you can *feel* it, even though you cannot *see* it, God exists, because even though you cannot *see* him, you can *feel* his presence.

**Equivocation**