



Training Exercises PT5 (Discourse)

Issue 1: *Discussion*

Get together in your discussion group.

- (I) Installing CCTV in all public transport is morally permitted.
- (II) Health insurances should be allowed to use the data from fitness trackers to adjust the insurance fees of their insurees.
- (III) Eating meat when you can healthily survive without meat is morally forbidden.
- (IV) Internet access should be free to everybody.

For each of the above claims, proceed as follows:

- (a) For each of the above statements, select two people from the group who are going to discuss the statement.
- (b) Decide who of you will argue for and who argues against the claim. (If you both have the same opinion about the statement, one of you is going to pretend to have a different opinion.)
- (c) Each of you writes a tabular argument for the position that was assigned to you.
- (d) Exchange your arguments and try to engage in a discussion that follows the protocol from the slides. Try to do at least three iterations for each argument. (It might get a bit ridiculous but that's fine.)

Issue 2: *But Why?*

You saw different methods to show that an argument is not suitable to support its conclusion. But *why* do they work? *Why* do they actually show that the argument in question is not suitable to support its conclusion? Answer this question for

- (1) the method of showing that there is at least one false premise
- (2) the method of showing that the argument's inference does not work
 - (i) for deductive arguments
 - (ii) for defeasible arguments
- (3) the method of showing that there is a defeater

Hint: Recall what arguments are there for and which properties of arguments are important.

Issue 3: *Completing the Example from the Video*

On slide 10, you saw the following argument:

Argument:

- P1: If the system is completely obscure to an attacker, then an attacker cannot know how to attack.
- P2: If attackers cannot know how to attack, then the system is secure.
- P3: If a system that is designed to be obscure is secure, then Security through Obscurity is sufficient for securing a critical system.
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- C: Therefore, Security through Obscurity is sufficient for securing a critical system.

This argument was tried to be attacked by:

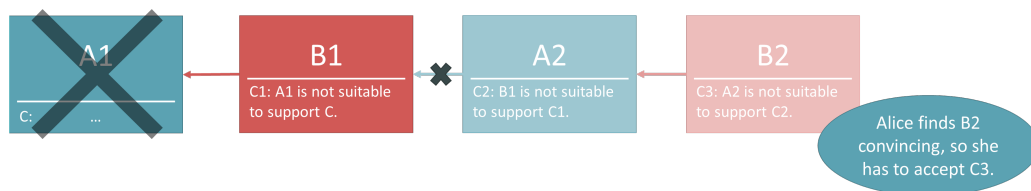
Argument:

- P1': The argument's premises can be true, while the conclusion can be false.
- P2': If P1, then C.
-
- C': The argument is not valid.

Give more reason to believe in P1'.

Issue 4: *Looooonger Discussions*

You saw how a discussion can resume if one is persuaded by one of the arguments of their discussion partner. Recall the second possibilities you saw where Alice could not come up with an alternative argument:



This is a minimal working example where the chain of discussion was just long enough such that we could show you what might happen. Draw this picture such that Alice does not agree with Bob's second attack (B2), but only with his fourth (B4). Assume that we keep with possibility 2, i.e. that she cannot find an alternative to A4 and has to accept B3. How does the picture change and how could

the discussion go on then?

Issue 5: *Credence Loss*

What could happen in a discussion that could make someone lower their credence in a belief? Can the bare-bones protocol capture this? Why or why not?

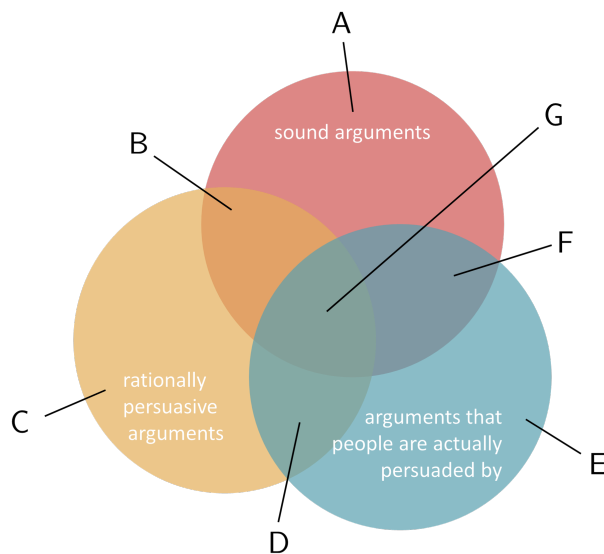
Hint: There is more than one way in which it can come about that someone lowers their credence as the result of a discussion.

Issue 6: *Shifting the Burden of Proof*

You saw that arguing that a premise is implausible shifts the burden of proof. Draw a protocol of a discussion in which Bob shifts the burden of proof back to Alice and Alice answers to this shift.

Issue 7: *Venn Life*

In the video you saw the following Venn diagram:



Think of examples for each position (A–G) in the Venn diagram.

Issue 8: *Attacking Arguments*

Show that the following arguments are not suitable to support their conclusion:

Argument: A

- P1: Precise thinking is like martial arts for the mind.
P2: If something is like martial arts of any kind, then it is meant to attack people.
P3: If something is meant to attack people, then it is bad.
-

C: Therefore, precise thinking is bad.

Argument: B

- P1: The Corona virus emerged either naturally or it was manufactured.
P2: According to some conspiracy theories, the virus was manufactured.
P3: Conspiracy theories are false.
-

C: Therefore, the Corona virus emerged naturally.

Argument: C

- P1: Nuclear power is a CO₂-neutral energy source.
P2: CO₂-neutral energy sources are good for the environment.
-

C: Therefore, nuclear power is good for the environment.

Argument: D

- P1: Many long-term political endeavours of the all parties have proven as futile during the whole Corona crisis.
P2: The Corona crisis happens over an extended period of time.
P3: If many political endeavours of a party have proven as futile over an extended period of time, you should not vote for them.
C1: Therefore, you should not vote for any party.
P4: If you should not vote for any party, you should not vote at all.
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C: Therefore, you should not vote at all.

Argument: E

- P1: Most grandparents are happy if they are visited by their grandchildren.
P2: You should make your grandparents happy.
-

C: Probably, you should visit your grandparents.

Argument: F

- P1: For the production of smartphones rare earths are needed.
P2: The mining of rare earths is often surrounded by great conflict and suffering.
P3: If P1 and P2, then the production of smartphones involves great conflict and suffering.
C1: The production of smartphones involves great conflict and suffering.
P3: If the production of something involves great conflict and suffering, then you should not buy it if you do not absolutely need to.
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- C: Therefore, you should not buy smartphones.

Issue 9: *Friendly Attack*

Practice your argument skills in your group.

1. Take an argument from one of your group members.
2. Try to come up with a plausible attack against this argument.
3. Hand out an own argument to have it attacked. (This can be an entirely new argument, or an improved version of an argument that you or another group member has given previously. It can either be an argument that you believe in if you want to test it, or an argument in which you deliberately hid a weakness.)

Issue 10: *Comeback*

On exercise sheet PT3, you were to come up with an argument for something you very firmly believe in. Go back to this argument and think of at least three (reasonably plausible) ways to attack it, and defend your own argument against those attacks. I.e. come up with three arguments that give prima facie¹ plausible reason why your argument is not suitable to support its conclusion and then again, give arguments that show that these arguments, in turn, are not suitable to support their conclusion.

¹Remember: “Prima facie” means “on first glance”.