

# Rhetoric



Origins & Devices

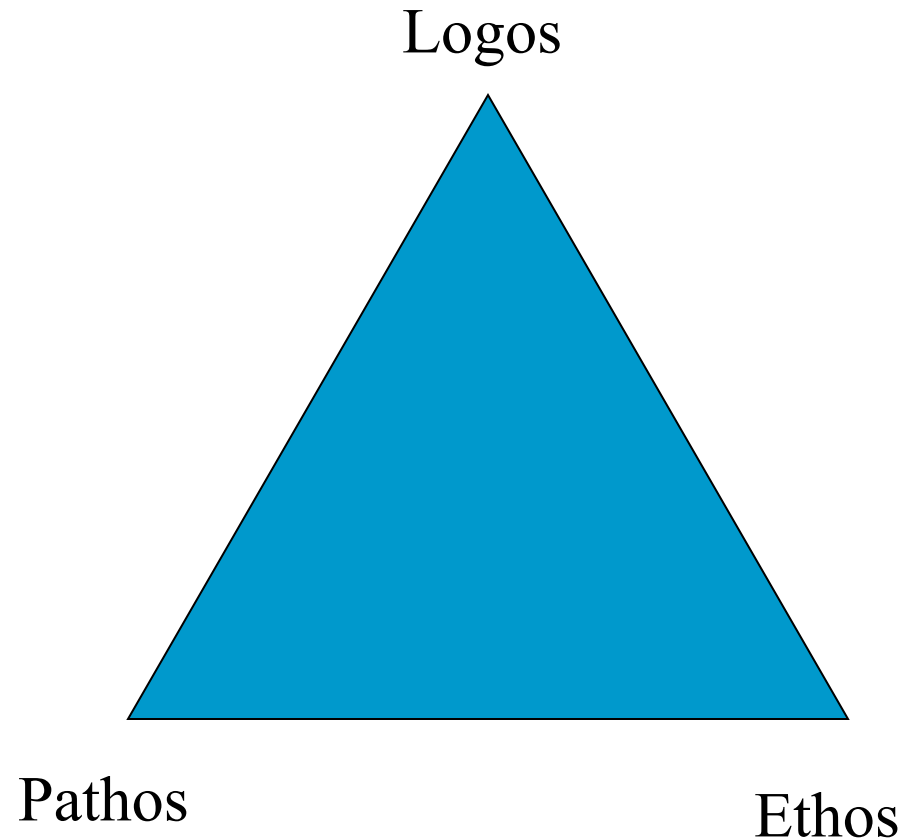


# Rhetoric

- Aristotle (384-322 BC), student of Plato, is considered the father of the modern study of rhetoric
- The art of speaking or writing effectively
- The study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion

# The rhetorical triangle/pyramid

- Logos – appeal to logic
- Pathos – appeal to emotions
- Ethos – appeal to ethics





# Deductive reasoning

- Deductive arguments are supposed to be air-tight.
- Good deductive argument – both premises are true and conclusion must be true – there is certainty
- The classic example of a deductively valid argument is:
  - (1) All men are mortal.
  - (2) Socrates is a man.Therefore:
  - (3) Socrates is mortal.



# Inductive Reasoning

- Inductive arguments needn't be as rigorous as deductive arguments in order to be good arguments.
- Good inductive argument – if premises are true, conclusion may or may not be true, but it is likely – there is doubt



# Logical Fallacies

- A logical fallacy is, roughly speaking, an error of reasoning. When someone adopts a position, or tries to persuade someone else to adopt a position, based on a bad piece of reasoning, they commit a fallacy.



## Ad hominem/Personal Attack

- A general category of fallacies in which a claim or argument is rejected on the basis of some irrelevant fact about the author of or the person presenting the claim or argument.
  1. Person A makes claim X.
  2. Person B makes an attack on person A.
  3. Therefore A's claim is false.
- Ex. Sue: “Doctor Samuels says that the the vitamins are good for you.”

James: “Doctor Samuels was arrested for speeding. He doesn’t know what is good for you.”



# Tu quoque

- The tu quoque fallacy is committed when a person's claim is considered false because it is inconsistent with that person's words or actions.
- *"He cannot accuse me of fraud because he was just successfully sued for fraud."*
  - *Person 1: It should be illegal to make clothing out of animals.*
  - *Person 2: But, you are wearing a leather jacket.*





# Ad baculum or Appeal to fear

1. Y is presented (a claim that is intended to produce fear).
  2. Therefore claim X is true (a claim that is generally, but need not be, related to Y in some manner).
- This line of "reasoning" is fallacious because creating fear in people does not constitute evidence for a claim.



# Post hoc (ergo propter hoc)

1. A occurs before B.
  2. Therefore A is the cause of B.
- The Post Hoc fallacy derives its name from the Latin phrase "Post hoc, ergo propter hoc." This has been traditionally interpreted as "After this, therefore because of this."
  - Ex: Sam fell on the stairs before class. His bruised knee is from the fall.



# Slippery slope

■ The Slippery Slope is a fallacy in which a person asserts that some event must inevitably follow from another without any argument for the inevitability of the event in question.

■ Event X has occurred (or will or might occur).

1. Therefore event Y will inevitably happen.

■ This sort of "reasoning" is fallacious because there is no reason to believe that one event must inevitably follow from another without an argument for such a claim.

1. "You can never give anyone a break. If you do, they'll walk all over you."



# False dilemma

- A False Dilemma is a fallacy in which a person uses the following pattern of "reasoning":
  1. Either claim X is true or claim Y is true (when X and Y could both be false).
  2. Claim Y is false.
  3. Therefore claim X is true.
- This line of "reasoning" is fallacious because if both claims could be false, then it cannot be inferred that one is true because the other is false. That this is the case is made clear by the following example:
  1. Either  $1+1=4$  or  $1+1=12$ .
  2. It is not the case that  $1+1=4$ .
  3. Therefore  $1+1=12$ .



# False authority

- An Appeal to Authority is a fallacy with the following form:
  1. Person A is (claimed to be) an authority on subject S.
  2. Person A makes claim C about subject S.
  3. Therefore, C is true.
- This fallacy is committed when the person in question is not a legitimate authority on the subject. More formally, if person A is not qualified to make reliable claims in subject S, then the argument will be fallacious.



# Source Cited

Labossiere, Michael C. *The Nizkor Project*, 1991-2009. 9 Jul. 2009.  
< <http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/>>.