

BEL 313 Introduction to Critical Thinking
Offprint 5, FOMAT, UiTM Perak, Malaysia

ARGUMENTATIVE FALLACIES by *Teech Airil*

TEST TWO a.k.a. ASSIGNMENT TWO (20% of total grade)

1. Work in pairs, as all groups have already decided through the whole class vote.
2. The cover page of the Test must correspond with your textbook colour (based on the group that you are in).
3. Make sure you word process Test Two, please. The page limit is FIVE pages only (except for the threesome group with EIGHT).
4. Your final report **MUST** contain at least five fallacies that you have found in only one article.
5. You can use the same fallacy type again and again, from the article (for example, all of them are Ad Hominem arguments) or you can also mix and match fallacies.

The deadline is as explained by your Course Tutor 😊

* On the next page you will find a practical example that must be read together with Offprint 4.

** The full reference to Offprint 4 is: USA Today (2008) The Futurist magazine releases top ten forecasts for the next 20 years, p. __

*** Follow the format given exactly, paragraph spacing 1.5 lines, using Times New Roman 12, fully justified.

****** WARNING:** Assignments that do not follow the given format to the letter will be returned and marks will possibly be deducted. You have been warned!!!

“Bioviolence will become a greater threat as the technology becomes more accessible. Emerging scientific disciplines (notably genomics, nanotechnology, and other microsciences) could pave the way for a bioattack. Bacteria and viruses could be altered to increase their lethality or to evade antibiotic treatment” (from paragraph 4, page 1).

The quotation above contains three fallacies namely **scare tactics**; **post hoc, ergo propter hoc** and **straw man** arguments. The author of this article suggests that bioviolence will become a greater threat to us in the future and this is a clear ‘scare tactic’ as no proof or facts have been forwarded by the author to support this argument. This is followed by the phrase ‘as the technology becomes more accessible’. This phrase coupled with the beginning part suggests that bioviolence and technology are two things that are interconnected and thus, they cause each other to happen. Again, no proof is given to support this idea and this is a case of a ‘post hoc, ergo propter hoc’ fallacy.

In the second sentence, the idea is again repeated in almost the same format whereby the author states that science could pave the way for a bioattack. This is an example of another ‘scare tactic’ because again, the author did not provide any clear proof that this incident would happen in the future. The same sentence could also be seen as a ‘post hoc, ergo propter hoc’ fallacy, whereby scientific development is connected to the possibility of a bioattack incident in the future without any strong proof to support the idea.

In the final sentence, the use of the words ‘altered’ and ‘lethality’ all suggest that this is a ‘straw man’ argument that exaggerates reality and coercing the reader to believe that bacteria and viruses could be changed in a certain way and to become more dangerous to us. On the other hand, no credible proof is provided to suggest that this is actually possible and that this possibility presents a clear and present danger to the citizens of the world. This exaggeration could also be construed as another ‘scare tactic’ that would force the reader to believe ideas that have been forwarded by the author of this article.

-EXAMPLE ENDS-