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#LogicalFallaciesFriday



Logical proofreading for the modern media landscape

Helping you spot psychological manipulation through bad logic — regardless of political leaning.

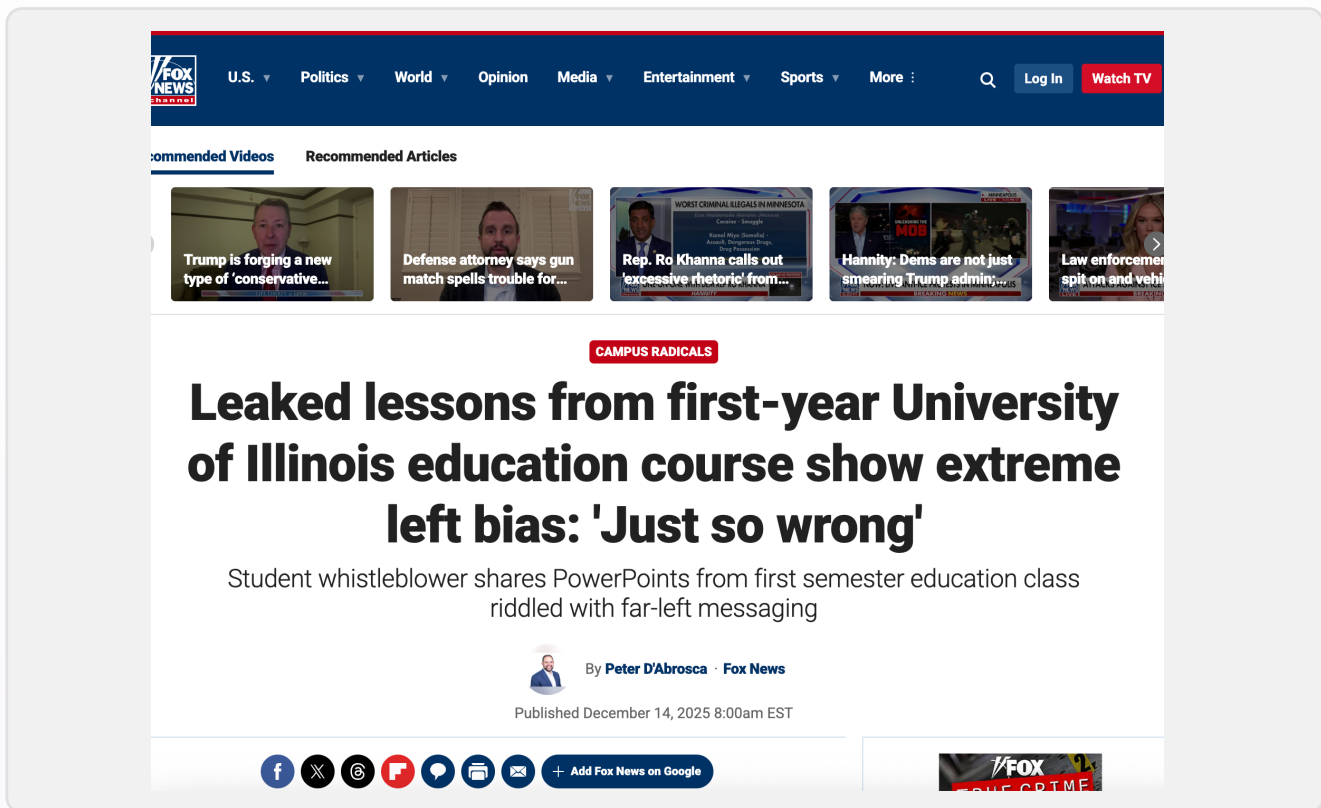
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1 of 19

THIS WEEK'S ARTICLE

Leaked lessons from first-year University of Illinois education course show extreme left bias: 'Just so wrong'



Source: Fox News

Author: Peter D'Abrosca

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/leaked-lessons-from-first-year-university-illinois-education-course-show-extreme-left-bias-just-so-wrong>

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2 of 19

BQ

LOGICAL FALLACY

Begging the Question

"Leaked lessons from first-year University of Illinois education course..."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

Course materials at a public university aren't secret documents. The word "leaked" assumes something was hidden or wrong before proving it. Normal class content gets framed as a scandal.

Begging the Question: Assuming your conclusion is true as part of your argument, instead of actually proving it.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Poisoning the Well

"...show extreme left bias: 'Just so wrong'"

— From headline

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

The headline tells you the course has "extreme left bias" before showing any evidence. You're told how to feel before you see the facts.

Poisoning the Well: Attacking a source before presenting their argument, so the audience is already biased against it.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Appeal to Emotion

"Just so wrong"

— From headline

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

An emotional reaction is placed in the headline as if it were news. This sets the tone before readers see any facts. Feelings aren't arguments.

Appeal to Emotion: Using emotional reactions instead of logical reasoning to make a point.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Poisoning the Well

"A whistleblower student provided Fox News Digital with PowerPoint presentations..."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

"Whistleblower" means someone exposing illegal or unethical activity. Sharing class materials isn't whistleblowing. The word frames the student as a hero before any wrongdoing is proven.

Poisoning the Well: Attacking a source before presenting their argument, so the audience is already biased against it.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Straw Man

"...teaches future educators to examine students through frameworks of racial and sexual oppression."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

The university says the course "examines how identity, power and privilege impact equity." The article reframes this in scarier language. That's not quoting—it's rewriting.

Straw Man: Misrepresenting someone's position to make it easier to attack.

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7 of 19



LOGICAL FALLACY

Appeal to Motive

"...he talks about how you need to be political and really, what he meant was you need to be liberal."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

The student claims to know what the professor secretly meant. But the professor's actual words aren't quoted—just the student's mind-reading. That's not evidence.

Appeal to Motive: Dismissing an argument by questioning someone's hidden intentions instead of addressing what they actually said.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Genetic Fallacy

"...cited the American Civil Liberties Union and National Education Association, claiming 2024 marked a 'record year for anti-LGBT+ legislation.'"

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

The article names these organizations as if that alone discredits the claim. But is the claim about legislation true or false? That question is never addressed.

Genetic Fallacy: Judging a claim based on where it comes from, rather than whether it's actually true.

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9 of 19



LOGICAL FALLACY

Genetic Fallacy

"The presentation referenced the Human Rights Campaign and Trevor Project in materials encouraging educators to affirm LGBTQ+ identities."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

Same pattern: organizations are named as if listing them proves bias. No argument is made for why affirming students would be wrong—just that these groups support it.

Genetic Fallacy: Judging a claim based on where it comes from, rather than whether it's actually true.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Appeal to Emotion

"I just think to push that on young children is just so wrong."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

"Just so wrong" is a feeling, not a reason. The student doesn't explain what specifically is harmful or why. An emotional reaction is presented as if it were an argument.

Appeal to Emotion: Using emotional reactions instead of logical reasoning to make a point.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Straw Man

"I just think to push that on young children..."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

This is a college course for adults training to be teachers. The course isn't being "pushed on young children"—it's teaching educators about these topics. That's not the same thing.

Straw Man: Misrepresenting someone's position to make it easier to attack.



LOGICAL FALLACY

False Dichotomy

"...focusing on 'equity and justice' rather than standardized best practices."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

This frames it as either/or: you get equity OR best practices. But why can't a course teach both? The article never explains why these are opposites.

False Dichotomy: Presenting only two options when more possibilities exist.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Appeal to Emotion

"...helping students understand 'privileged identities' and 'minoritized identities'..."

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

Scare quotes around academic terms suggest they're silly or made-up. But the article never explains what's wrong with these concepts—just that they sound suspicious.

Appeal to Emotion: Using emotional reactions instead of logical reasoning to make a point.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Cherry-Picking

[One anonymous student is quoted throughout the entire article]

— Structural observation

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

A class has many students. The article quotes just one— anonymously—and presents their view as the full story. Were other students asked? We don't know.

Cherry-Picking: Selecting only the evidence that supports your conclusion while ignoring the rest.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Cherry-Picking

[Slides from weeks 5 and 12 are quoted from a full-semester course]

— Structural observation

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

A 15-week course is reduced to a few selected slides. Without seeing the full curriculum, readers can't judge if the course is actually unbalanced.

Cherry-Picking: Selecting only the evidence that supports your conclusion while ignoring the rest.



LOGICAL FALLACY

Red Herring

"The university defended the course, stating it 'examines how identity, power and privilege impact equity in education...'"

— From article

WHY THIS IS A FALLACY

The university's response appears at the end but is never engaged with. The article doesn't explain why this defense fails—it just moves on, creating false balance.

Red Herring: Including irrelevant information that distracts from the main issue or creates an illusion of fairness.

What We Found

Most Prevalent Patterns

Poisoning the Well — Sources are labeled before their claims are presented

Genetic Fallacy — Claims dismissed based on who made them, not whether they're true

Appeal to Emotion — Feelings presented as arguments

Cherry-Picking — One student, selected slides, no broader context

Apparent Functional Intent

Mobilize. The article is structured to generate outrage rather than inform. Evidence is thin (one anonymous student, a few slides), but framing is heavy.

Remember: Spotting bad logic doesn't mean the conclusion is wrong—only that the reasoning doesn't support it.

TRY IT YOURSELF

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19 of 19