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# From Logic to Rhetoric: A Contextualized Pedagogy for Fallacies



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Abstract: This article reenvisions fallacies for composition classrooms by situating them within rhetorical practices. Fallacies are not formal errors in logic but rather persuasive failures in rhetoric. I argue fallacies are directly linked to successful rhetorical strategies and pose the visual organizer of the Venn diagram to demonstrate that claims can achieve both success and failure based on audience and context. For example, strong analogy overlaps false analogy and useful appeal to pathos overlaps manipulative emotional appeal. To advance this argument, I examine recent changes in fallacies theory, critique a-rhetorical textbook approaches, contextualize fallacies within the history and theory of rhetoric, and describe a methodology for rhetorically reclaiming these terms.

Today, fallacy instruction in the teaching of written argument largely follows two paths: teachers elevate fallacies as almost mathematical formulas for errors or exclude them because they don't fit into rhetorical curriculum. Both responses place fallacies outside the realm of rhetorical inquiry. Fallacies, though, are not as clear-cut as the current practice of spotting them might suggest. Instead, they rely on the rhetorical situation. Just as it is an argument to create a fallacy, it is an argument to name a fallacy. This article describes an approach in which students must justify naming claims as successful strategies and/or fallacies, a process that demands writing about contexts and audiences rather than simply linking terms to obviously weak statements. Rhetoric classrooms demand such a shift in thinking from simplified rules to nuanced interpretations. Fallacies, though largely taught as a-rhetorical terms, can be reenvisioned to powerfully impart the lessons of rhetorical theory.

As they are, though, the textbook style of teaching fallacies encourages students to apply the terms uncritically. Every comparison becomes a false analogy; every appeal to pathos becomes manipulation. When I teach the terms in this way, my students continually identify well-reasoned cause-effect claims as faulty causal claims, otherwise known as the post-hoc fallacy. What are students' common explanations? "The author can't prove it" or "That's not a fact." They are not cultivating a critical skepticism but an overzealous rejection of anything not math or science. With this "got you" logic so common in textbooks, a little knowledge becomes a dangerous thing when even well-supported arguments come under fire for not being "facts." In popular culture, too, *logical* is used interchangeably with *factual* and *fallacy* as if it were synonymous with *lie* even though judging logical validity is different than fact-checking. Writers can rarely achieve such a degree of certainty when arguing complex issues—not because they are poor writers, but because conditions prevent it. So, fallacies are yet another place for students to wrongfully privilege so-called objective ways of knowing over rhetoric.

At the same time, fallacies are a set of highly teachable and analytically generative terms. Using fallacies, students find faults in texts and read more actively. They learn to critique common cultural assumptions, and they have fun doing it. Missteps in texts are often quite humorous. Sitting presidents, for example, bear an uncanny resemblance to Hitler for extreme detractors (an ad hominem attack), and the comedic style of Will Ferrell often rests on the non sequitur reply. This critical shift cultivates empowerment and excitement in the classroom, particularly as students come to see that fallacies are widely used terms. News pundits call out guests for cherry-picking facts, politicians accuse each other of doublespeak, and advertisers purposefully employ misleading data. Within the academy, many departments diagnose problematic reasoning with fallacies, and teachers of the introductory curricula in both philosophy and English rely on these terms. These benefits tell me that ditching fallacies is no more the answer than is continuing to teach them in less effective ways.

In this article, I offer a reenvisioning of fallacies for writing courses. First, I address recent changes in fallacy theory. Second, I critique a-rhetorical textbook approaches to fallacies. Third, I contextualize fallacies within the history of rhetoric to demonstrate why faulty methods continue. Fourth and finally, I create a methodology for rhetorically reclaiming these terms. Ultimately, my students learn rhetorical theory through their work with fallacies, addressing the complexities of interpretation, audience, and context.

## Current Theories of Fallacies

The term "*logical* fallacy" implies formal rules of logical validity. As logical failures, the forms *should* produce fallacious reasoning every time. For example, every attack on a person's character should be an ad hominem fallacy. Many situations, though, would lead one to "logically" question the flawed character of the person speaking —witnesses in court cases, speakers with a history of lying. Who is to say, then, that criticizing a person's character is fallacious or not? This question places fallacies in the realm of rhetoric.

Even current logic research on fallacies suggests a radical shift, a shift that aligns the fallacies with rhetoric more than logic, a shift that suggests "'fallacies' are no longer fallacies" at all (Walton, Reed, Macagno 3). The forms of reasoning typically named "fallacies" by rhetoric textbooks are not objectively illogical or incorrect regardless of content or context. Douglas Walton, author of multiple monographs on fallacies, along with coauthors Chris Reed and Fabrizio Macagno, suggests that as "informal fallacies have been studied more intensively, more and more instances have been recognized where the forms of argument underlying them are reasonable . . . [W]e could not get by without such arguments. . . . [T]he problem is to judge in specific cases" (2). So, the nonprofit Feed the Children might legitimately highlight emaciated children, but it would seem less appropriate in an attack ad against a political opponent. In rhetorical terms, fallacies are situated and contextual rather than universal.

Over time, then, "logical fallacies" have been renamed. The informal logic and critical thinking movements in the late 1970s and 80s called them "informal fallacies" to differentiate them from hardline problems in syllogisms. Walton, Reed, and Macagno's current pragma-dialectical approach dubs them "defeasible reasoning" to demonstrate that when a claim remains unproven, listeners might accept the claim but later reject it upon discovery of contradictory evidence—the focus is on the best available means of making a case at a given moment. Others call them simply "fallacies" or "rhetorical fallacies" (Truncellito 326)—I've even seen "rhetological fallacies" on the web—to shift away from logical validity. I embrace the term *rhetorical fallacy* to reclassify them as problems not in formal logic, but in persuasion. *Rhetorical* emphasizes the crucial audience component while *fallacy*, a term used widely across disciplines and discourses, contains in its very history the shift from logic to rhetoric, from objectivity to subjectivity, from facts to argument that underlies contemporary rhetorical theory and instruction.

In rhetoric and composition research, only a handful of contemporary scholars address fallacies, most prominently James Crosswhite. In *The Rhetoric of Reason,* he writes, "[A]re there really *fallacies* at all? From a rhetorical point of view, the answer might seem to be no. After all, there are no rules to break; there are only audiences—audiences with which one succeeds and audiences with which one fails, to some degree or other" (172). Crosswhite does not abandon a search for validity, but defines it as rhetorical rather than logical by working through Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's concept of *universal audience*. The "general feature of unreasonable argumentation," he writes, is "that a person or group . . . reasons in a way it assumes to be universal, [but] actually reasons in a way that is particular either to an individual or some group of people. To commit a fallacy is to mistake the scope of the effectiveness of an argument" (172). Crosswhite's *Rhetoric of Reason* has certainly influenced the field—it won the 1997 Modern Language Association's Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize. Yet he acknowledges that his theoretical treatment does "not suggest particular curricula for courses in written reasoning" and for the most part his theory has not been applied to fallacies pedagogy (3).

Wayne Booth and Marshall Gregory presented a new fallacy pedagogy in the 1987 textbook *Writing as Thinking, Thinking as Writing*. They offer a list of paired terms in which they connect fallacies with "the more favorable rhetorical term for the same structure" (410). For example, "irrelevant authority" is paired with "authority as valid testimony" (413-4). They argue that "in some contexts the reasoning [fallacies] name can indeed be weak, misleading, or positively harmful, but most of the processes they label may also prove useful and even indispensable. Any writer who writes about controversial topics—and remember that most important topics *are* controversial—will in all sincerity rely on certain reasons that opponents might call fallacious" (409). They draw context to the fore of the discussion, but unfortunately, the text is out-of-print, and most contemporary textbooks have not followed their lead.

## Textbook Approaches to Fallacies

Even when scholars in rhetoric and composition address fallacies, which is rarely, the theory remains largely disconnected from current classroom practices. Fallacies as terms for analysis are usually missing from pedagogy seminars. They do not appear in *Strategies for Teaching First-Year Composition, Cross-Talk in Comp Theory, Teaching Composition,* or *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook.* They appear in only a three page section of *Teaching Argument in the Composition Course* and receive light coverage in *Argument in Composition.* Instead, textbooks currently fill this gap in the field, largely guiding fallacy instruction even though their treatment is arhetorical.

To establish the trends in fallacy instruction, I examined thirteen rhetoric textbooks (listed in Table 1 below), sampling popular multi-edition books and those written by well-known scholars while being sure to include multiple publishers. Ten of the textbooks I surveyed approached fallacies as formal errors. They defined fallacies as clear-cut "errors," "faults," or "mistakes," rooted in an outmoded understanding of the terms as settled and inflexible. The problem with these words is that they imply incorrectness, while a word like *failure*, which I advocate, suggests an issue in outcome or effect, as in the effect on an audience. Fallacies are not "flawed by their very nature or structure," as *Everything's an Argument* suggests (74). Overall, textbooks largely treat fallacies as trump cards in argument instruction, as terms that students can apply when rhetoric fails to be discriminating enough. In short, logic beats rhetoric.

Table 1. Textbooks Define Fallacies Largely as Formal Errors.

| Textbook | Authors | Published | Are fallacies defined as formal errors? |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Critical Thinking* | Barnet and Bedau | (2014) 8th ed | Yes: "errors" (368). |
| *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* | Behrens and Rosen | (2013) 12th ed | Yes: "faulty thinking and logical fallacies" are not "valid" (55). |
| *Norton Field Guide* | Bullock and Goggin | (2010) 2nd ed | Yes: "fallacies" are "arguments that involve faulty reasoning" (296). |
| *Argument!* | Gooch and Seyler | (2012) 2nd ed | Yes: "logical fallacies" are "arguments that do not work," that "fail to meet the standards of sound logic and good sense (71). |
| *Empowered Writer* | Henderson and Moran | (2010) | Yes: "logical, emotional, or ethical fallacies" are "error[s] in reasoning" (269), "mistakes," "flaws," or "misleading or unsound argument" (267). |
| *Everything's an Argument* | Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz | (2013) 6th ed | Yes: "Fallacies of Argument" are "arguments that are flawed by their very nature or structure" (74). |
| *Persuasion* | Pullman | (2013) | Yes: "fallacies" are "common errors in reasoning" (13). |
| *Elements of Argument* | Rottenberg and Winchell | (2012) 10th ed | Yes: "common fallacies" are "faulty reasoning" that "result from the wrong use of evidence . . . and a failure to follow the logic of a series of statements" (308). |
| *Read, Reason, Write* | Seyler | (2012) 10th ed | Yes: "logical fallacies . . . fail to meet standards of sound logic and good sense" (156). |
| *Perspectives on Argument* | Wood | (2012) 7th ed | Yes: "logical fallacies or pseudo-proofs . . . lead an audience astray, they distort and distract, they represent inadequate reasoning or nonreasoning, and they either exaggerate or oversimplify . . . instead of proving" (220). |
| *Aims of Argument* | Crusius and Channell | (2009) 7th ed | No: "fallacy" is "the misuse of an otherwise common and legitimate form of appeal" (325). |
| *Everyone's an Author* | Lunsford, et al. | (2013) | No: "fallacies" are "faulty reasoning . . . that some may consider unfair, unsound, or demonstrating lazy or simpleminded thinking" (295). |
| *Writing Arguments* | Ramage, Bean, | (2012) 9th ed | No: "informal fallacies" are "classes of less conclusive arguments." They "do not contain formal flaws that make their conclusions |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Johnson | | illegitimate no matter what the terms may say" (405). |

There has even been a regression in textbook treatments of fallacies between editions of the same book. For example, the popular *Everything's An Argument* provides conflicting accounts as to whether fallacies are formal errors between the fourth edition (2007) and the sixth (2013). The fourth calls fallacies "controversial" and suggests that they are "*supposedly* flawed by their very nature or structure" (emphasis mine 492). The authors use the terms "*flashpoints* or *hotspots* because they instantly raise questions about the ethics of argument" (492). They also note that "one person's fallacy may well be another person's stroke of genius" (492). By the sixth edition, *supposedly* is removed from the definition as is the extended discussion quoted above (74). Future research might investigate more changes in textbooks within particular cultural moments.

Because many textbooks teach fallacies as errors, there is little room left for interpretation of how they might effectively persuade. In one new textbook, *Everyone's an Author,* the authors place fallacies in their chapter on Analyzing Arguments and strengthen their definition of fallacy by qualifying that only "some may consider [fallacies] unfair, unsound" (Lunsford et al. 295). Yet the treatments of argument and fallacies are still worlds apart. In the argument section, the authors analyze Nonconformity is Skin Deep by David Brooks, in which he claims that "We now have to work under the assumption that every American has a tattoo . . . that everyone in the room is fully tatted up" (qtd. in Lunsford et al. 278). They explain Brook's quote as "sarcasm . . . and exaggeration . . . to make a humorous point" (279). They decipher the rhetorical interactions between tone, style, and content to argue that the text is funny and the strategy seemingly legitimate. Yet, another reader could easily argue the strategy is obnoxious and fallacious. The quote, after all, meets the textbook's own criteria for hasty generalization. By implicitly interpreting the quote as *not a fallacy*, the authors make an analytical argument based on rhetorical principles, yet without cluing in students.

Teaching fallacies as isolated errors rather than as rhetorical strategies privileges outdated logical methods over rhetoric. *The Empowered Writer* makes logic the fundamental concern in argument when the authors say, "Writers need to look closely and objectively at the *way* they argue and ensure that their arguments are always based on logic" (Henderson and Moran 270). *Read, Reason, Write* includes fallacies because "so many 'arguments' fail to meet standards of sound logic and good sense" (156). The scare quotes around argument use irony to categorize fallacies as outside argument. Even when authors set their treatment apart from traditional logic, they undercut the progress in fallacy research, which should change the way scholars see fallacies across disciplines. *The Aims of Argument* recounts a short history of fallacies, voicing "respect [for] this ancient tradition" from Aristotle to Irving M. Copi's *Introduction to Logic,* a standard text in philosophy courses (325). They go on to suggest, "However, our concern is not philosophy but arguments about public issues, where a different notion of fallacy is more useful" (325). Students might leave class believing that the version of fallacies taught in their rhetoric text is not applicable to logical claims, that in philosophy, scholars have more objectively "tried to solve this problem by exposing 'fallacies' [as] errors in reasoning" as this book describes (Crusius and Channell 325). But the "errors" still discussed in introduction to logic classrooms and in Copi's text, like post hoc or slippery slope, are not formal errors (98). Outside of syllogistic errors, the fallacies are the same as in rhetoric classes. The authors undersell their own treatment and limit the realm of rhetoric by carving out the logical tradition as a special case. Interestingly, this textbook and *Writing Arguments* most strongly define fallacies as rhetorical, and both place the terms in appendices. Even though logic gives no stronger solutions than rhetoric, across textbooks, rhetoricians undercut their own credibility in deference to logicians.

While all of the textbooks view fallacies as part of argument broadly, many teach fallacies at odds with rhetorical theory and fail to integrate the terms into the larger goals of the book. Several link fallacies to Aristotle's rhetorical appeals (*Writing Arguments, Everything's an Argument, Perspectives on Argument, Aims of Argument*); however, treating each fallacy as just one kind of appeal misrepresents how much they overlap. *Everything's an Argument* classifies bandwagon appeals as errors in pathos, but these fallacies often come in the form of logos too (e.g. according to 95% of people). Ad hominem attacks often invoke pathos, particularly when making an audience fear someone, yet the textbook calls them universally ethos. Hasty generalizations, such as racist stereotypes, can destroy a speaker's ethos, yet the textbook categorizes them as only logos. The appeals certainly relate to fallacies, but they overlap so much that they become less useful as discrete definitional categories for the terms. The appeals work synergistically in all texts, fallacy or not. These classifications, while relating fallacies to rhetorical concepts, fail to help students in interpreting the full effects of fallacies.

Most textbooks also rarely describe *audience*, a defining feature of rhetorical theory, in their definitions of fallacies. If they do, they often overgeneralize to suggest that audiences reject fallacies similarly. Several cite a royal "we" as in "*We* do not trust someone who misuses logic or reason" (Henderson and Moran 267). Others use "should" to imply a moral or intellectual imperative to match the textbook's evaluation: "To be convincing, an argument should be governed by principles of *logic*" (Behrens and Rosen 55). Here, too, the sentence syntactically omits human

actors to suggest that fallacies stand outside of human interpretation. Who, after all, is being convinced? Fallacies elicit multiple interpretations because, as with all rhetoric, the process relies on "the audience's role in filling in and filling out" (Fahnestock 8). Yet in general, the texts wrongfully teach fallacies as forms that produce errors every time, for every reader.

When textbooks explore the causes of fallacies, they attribute them solely to the author (*Aims of Argument*; *Read, Reason, Write*; *Argument!*). *Read, Reason, Write,* for example, explains that fallacies are caused by an author's ignorance, ego, prejudice, and need for answers (156). These texts at once create an uber-audience, one who has the authority to invalidate rhetorical claims, and an overdetermined author, one who is solely responsible for a disagreement over meaning. As Lisa Ede and Lunsford argue, though, the influence between author and audience is reciprocal. Expectations of an audience shape an author just as roles invoked by an author shape an audience. Authorial power and interpretive license are dependent on one another to co-construct meaning. Readers who rely too heavily on one side of the interpretive spectrum might encounter problems such as an inability to recover exactly what the author meant or the misassumption that the text means anything they say it does.

Analyzing claims as fallacies requires cultural awareness and the ability to judge audience reception. Unfortunately, most textbooks present decontextualized fallacy examples—providing a quote with no information about who said it, to whom, where, or when—necessary pieces of the rhetorical situation. In many of the texts I evaluated, students are asked to name rather random, obviously wrong fallacies in the exercises without requiring strong analysis. Here's an example from *The Empowered Writer*: "In our family, males have always been named "Harold" and females "Gertrude"; therefore, you should name your twins "Harry" and "Gerty" (271). Not a particularly useful subject for teaching the complexities of reasoning. Even when topics are more consequential, fallacy exercises present one answer or a few possible fallacies as answers, but rarely the answer "not a fallacy." Only two texts allowed this possibility, *Writing Arguments* and *The Aims of Argument.* For the remainder, if a student's assessment doesn't coincide with the instructor's answer key, the student is wrong. Authority in rhetoric, though, works against the absolute, singular, monolithic, or undisputed. Authority in rhetoric suggests a position among multiple possibilities, evidence from a wealth of possible sources, and writing strategies from diverse possible moves.

Three textbooks reject fallacies as formal errors and envision them rhetorically to a greater degree: *Writing Arguments, The Aims of Argument,* and *Everyone's An Author. Writing* suggests that "arguments are 'more or less' fallacious, and determining the degree of fallaciousness is a matter of judgment" (405). In their exercises, they ask students to "remember that it is often hard to determine the exact point where fallacious reasoning begins to kick in, especially when you consider different kinds of audiences" (411). *Aims* links fallacies to legitimate appeals, and in the exercises, students have an option to find no fallacy or award "partial credit." Both show ways that the same form can produce compelling claims and questionable claims, but they don't model various interpretations of the same claim in the same context as both a fallacy and a success. In other words, each example they reason through ends up being *either* a fallacy or a successful form, but not both based on different audiences. If a claim's fallacious quality is not embedded in the form and if it is determined by the audience, then effectiveness is always open for debate.

In the textbooks I examined, none had all the components that I advocate in this article, one that fully treats fallacies as part of rhetoric by providing a definition based on current research; by suggesting that fallacies are not formal errors; by demonstrating that fallacies correspond with successful rhetorical strategies; and by showing that to name a fallacy is to make an argument, opening room for disagreement.

One alternative is simply to tell students that fallacies are not real, to reject them as useful terms. In *Argument in Composition,* for example, Ramage et al. voice skepticism about the usefulness of teaching fallacies. But regardless of whether fallacies represent formal errors, naming fallacies and hearing the vocabulary has real rhetorical and political effects. Teaching students *only* that fallacies are unreal gives students no defense against them. Ramage et al. instead advocate judging evidence "within the context of understanding [that] any given audience brings to the argument" (103). Many current textbooks indeed ignore audience in their fallacy discussion, but my approach unites the two, using fallacies to provide a concrete entry into questions of audience. Ramage et al. even note that when viewed "as a heuristic . . . rather than an algorithm, . . . a fallacy may lead us to a fruitful line of inquiry" (101). If I don't teach my students fallacies, someone else will—a logic professor behind on fallacy research, a political pundit who uses the terms to silence, an opponent who appears to have a secret vocabulary. If I teach them more rhetorically, students can employ the terms in more dynamic ways. While these revisions make fallacies harder to teach, what they teach is rhetorical theory itself.

## The History and Politics of Fallacies

I am not the first to critique this tradition of teaching fallacies, but I offer a pedagogical alternative to unchanging textbooks in the final section of this article. In 1970, Charles Hamblin suggested that "After two millennia . . . we still find fallacies classified, presented and studied in much the same old way" (9). Gerald Massey later bemoaned the "shoddy reasoning" of textbook approaches to fallacies because they don't help students apply the vocabulary outside class (489). Contemporary scholars, such as Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor, critique the "logical/analytic approach" (20), in which logic is "the norm of discourse" (Crosswhite Being 388) or the "God [Term] that trumps all other considerations" (Ramage 123). With so many problems, why are fallacies continually taught arhetorically? Why has pedagogy remained relatively stagnant since Aristotle's first inventory of the terms in the *Organon*?

I argue that several historical and political factors in the field have created a context in which textbook authors and instructors embrace the seeming certainty of fallacies: 1) First-year courses are often taught by novice and disempowered instructors who rely on the strictness of fallacies. 2) Fallacies feel like an antidote to the long-running platonic complaint that rhetoric is amoral. 3) Historically, fallacies have made powerful weapons against opponents because they seem to carry the credibility of formal logic. 4) Deeper analysis of fallacies requires analysis of style, and many forms of style have been deprivileged to clarity and objectivity in first-year writing. 5) Fallacies have allowed authors to present liberal politics as more rational than conservative. I expand each of these points further.

First-year writing courses are often taught by new instructors who feel uncertain about rhetoric, seeing themselves instead as experts in literature. Their initiation into freshman writing may occur only weeks before entering the classroom and/or during pedagogy courses concurrent to their first semester teaching. Freshman textbooks become the rhetorical primers for instructors as well as students. Compositionists have commonly lamented that graduate students don't feel prepared to teach writing courses, and even well-trained and experienced teachers of writing often inhabit positions without job security or institutional respect (Crowley). To these audiences, fallacies, with their calculated precision, can feel like a relief. The concepts can be taught with certainty as formulas from logic. Students can work on numbered problems with right and wrong answers just like math or science. Teachers can justify their grading with inarguable terms. The labor conditions of first-year writing directly reinforce the problem of fallacies.

While fallacies offer security to novice rhetoric teachers, they also answer a historical anxiety about the discipline itself. Plato first uses the term *rhetorike* and associates it with deception, lies, and dissembling. In *Gorgias,* he calls rhetoric a pleasant but false art that fools the masses: it is cooking, not medicine; it is cosmetics, not gymnastics; it is appearance, not reality. In *Phaedrus,* Plato's Socrates concedes that if rhetoric must be used it should be tied to the virtue of the speaker and the truth of the message. Though scholars have certainly recuperated *rhetoric*, it commonly remains the deprivileged term in pairings with philosophy, science, and even literature—all of which are argued to approximate some version of truth that rhetoric cannot access. John Ramage, for example, begins *Rhetoric: A User's Guide* by ironically taking on the persona of "the Anti-Rhetoric Spokesperson" who sees rhetoric as dubious: "Real disciplines," he says, "possess intellectual rigor in the form of stringent tests routinely applied to claims and conclusions in order to prove them . . . The practice of rhetoric, on the other hand, lacks gatekeepers and overseers, has no code of conduct, and is an equal-opportunity supporter (nay, puffer) of any claim, no matter how shoddy" (2). The common rhetoric stereotypes Ramage addresses often map onto first-year writing, making the fallacies code-of-conduct an attractive alternative for teachers. Fallacies serve as objective and ethical weapons with which to refute the ancient attack that rhetoric is morally suspect or the contemporary lament that the writing process is purely subjective.

Plato's long-standing indictment of rhetoric directly influenced the first inventory of fallacies by Aristotle. In Benjamin Jowett's introduction to Plato's *Sophist*, he suggests Aristotle merely "gave distinctness" and "brought together" the logical forms Plato critiqued (374). Aristotle mimics Plato's appearance vs. reality dichotomy when he defines fallacies as "arguments which appear to be refutations but are really fallacies," and many of the textbooks I examined repeat this trope (11). In addition, Plato initially used *rhetorike* to vilify a sophist Gorgias, and Aristotle originally names his flawed set of fallacies after the sophists: "Sophistical Refutations." The sophists privileged *kairos*, a focus on rhetoric and knowledge-creation in a specific moment of context, which contemporary scholars have linked to social construction (Carter). Plato critiqued this relativistic concern for individual circumstances for leading away from Truth. Aristotle's condemnation of the Sophists was less severe than Plato's, according to John Poulakos in *Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece,* and Aristotle elevated rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic in the opening line of *The Rhetoric.* Still, though, he applies stricter logical practices to discredit his sophist opponents in the *Organon.* Both place themselves above their sophist rivals by segmenting off rhetoric that they claim is at odds with truth. Current textbooks have also been reluctant to part with this strong version of authority, a potentially politically motivated problem I discuss later.

Other canonical rhetoricians have similarly critiqued rhetoric. Some focus on the stylistic flourishes of language they believe impede transparent thought, such as empiricists John Locke and Francis Bacon, who saw language merely as a faulty vehicle for scientific truth. Because of these complaints, style fell out of favor in rhetoric, becoming a secondary concern to what Paul Butler calls the "mythology of plain style" (54). Today style doesn't make it high on the list of learning objectives in writing classrooms dedicated to clarity, even though clarity is just one form of style (Downs). This history of style and empiricism intertwines with the history of fallacies. According to Booth, "Many freshman English texts have taught . . . that the goal of all thought and argument is to emulate the purity and objectivity and rigor of science, in order to protect oneself from the errors that passion and desire and metaphor and authority and all those logical fallacies lead us into" (1494). Indeed, in fallacy sections of textbooks, some authors suggest students temporarily ignore style to consider logic (Crusius and Channell 335). The privileging of logic and simplicity over rhetoric and interpretation promotes fallacies as unquestioned errors. At the same time, many fill-in-the-blank forms are called fallacies and, as a result, codify style as a problem: metaphor becomes false analogy, juxtaposition becomes false dilemma, style becomes an impediment to clear logical thinking.

Many contemporary critics have worked against this style/meaning dichotomy as explored in Brian Ray's history of *Style* (8-10). Chris Holcomb and Jimmie Killingsworth emphasize that "any change in the manner of expression will have consequences for the meanings expressed" (Holcomb and Killingsworth 2). Kenneth Burke is often quoted for his insights that style creates appetites in the mind of the audience and then satisfies them (*Counterstatement* 31) and that once an audience assents to the form of the claim they are closer to assenting to its content (*Rhetoric* 58). Style is a method of evidence and persuasion, but one that is ignored when evidence is defined solely as facts. While contemporary rhetorical theory accounts for this shift, fallacies remain a hold out—in part, I believe, because science has also become affiliated with liberal politics.

Many contemporary textbooks I surveyed implement a liberal academic ethics at the expense of rhetorical principles. Several textbooks mention 9/11 explicitly in the fallacies section and more than that live under the shadow of Bush-era reasoning. Fallacies—such as "You're either with us or against us" (Henderson and Moran 269), "Those who oppose . . . are enemies of freedom" (Bullock and Goggin 297), and "support our troops" (Lunsford et al. 296, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 406)—mimic justifications used for the second Iraq war. Some newer books now call fallacy on critiques of President Obama, particularly criticism of the Affordable Care Act (Behrens and Rosen 59, Lunsford et al. 297). I'm not suggesting that these examples can't be interpreted as fallacies, but rather that textbook examples, overall, offer a repository of liberal anxieties about the language of the right and its ability to shift American discourse over the 21st century as the following table shows.

Table 2: Textbooks Lean Left with Fallacy Examples.

| Textbook | Unclear Political Affiliation | | Conservative | | Liberal | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Everything's Argument* | 17 | 58.6% | 6 | 20.7% | 6 | 20.7% |
| *Writing Arguments* | 13 | 54% | 6 | 25% | 5 | 21% |
| *Persuasion* | 15 | 83% | 2 | 11% | 1 | 6% |
| *Writing and Reading* | 7 | 58% | 3 | 25% | 2 | 17% |
| *Critical Thinking* | 24 | 55% | 12 | 27% | 8 | 18% |
| *Read, Reason, Write* | 10 | 62.5% | 4 | 25% | 2 | 12.5% |
| *Empowered Writer* | 15 | 68% | 5 | 23% | 2 | 9% |
| *Perspectives* | 28 | 74% | 8 | 21% | 2 | 5% |
| *Everyone's Author* | 7 | 58% | 5 | 42% | 0 | 0% |
| *Elements* | 18 | 64% | 10 | 36% | 0 | 0% |
| *Argument!* | 12 | 43% | 13 | 46% | 3 | 11% |
| *Aims* | 6 | 28.6% | 14 | 66.6% | 1 | 4.8% |
| *Norton* | 0 | 0% | 8 | 100% | 0 | 0% |

The overwhelming majority of textbook fallacy examples that side with a particular political ideology represent conservative positions. In the most extreme version, every one of the fallacy examples offered by *Norton* was a conservative viewpoint. In addition, every time there is a discrepancy in numbers, the favor falls toward liberals. In

Table 2 above, I document the examples given by textbooks, noting language and images presented as fallacies. To label claims liberal or conservative, I followed popular party talking points. For example, I coded support for gun control, affirmative action, emissions regulation, and same-sex marriage as "liberal"; whereas, I coded support for lower taxes, prayer in schools, abortion regulation, and the death penalty as "conservative." For a handful that were politically motivated but not an official party stance, I considered who most often endorses the position. For instance, Norton gives an example of bad statistics taken from a limited sample size that concludes: "70% of Brooklyn residents find tagging offensive" (298). Graffiti art, while not an official liberal value, is defended by liberals more often than by conservatives. "Unclear political affiliation" designates points of view that were not political (e.g. smart students always make A's) or political viewpoints that have offenders on both sides (e.g. name-calling politicians). The trends seem even more extreme in Table 3 below, which removes the unclear political associations and addresses simply the conservative to liberal split.

Table 3: Texts Present More Conservative than Liberal Fallacy Examples.

| Textbook | Conservative : Liberal Raw Numbers | Conservative : Liberal Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| *Everything's Argument* | 6:6 | 50% : 50% |
| *Writing Arguments* | 6:5 | 55% : 45% |
| *Writing and Reading* | 3:2 | 60% : 40% |
| *Critical Thinking* | 12:8 | 60% : 40% |
| *Persuasion* | 2:1 | 67% : 33% |
| *Read, Reason, Write* | 4:2 | 67% : 33% |
| *Empowered Writer* | 5:2 | 71% : 29% |
| *Perspectives* | 8:2 | 80% : 20% |
| *Argument!* | 13:3 | 81% : 19% |
| *Aims* | 14:1 | 93% : 7% |
| *Everyone's Author* | 5:0 | 100% : 0% |
| *Norton* | 8:0 | 100% : 0% |
| *Elements* | 10:0 | 100% : 0% |

Crucially, any strategy that can be used against my opponents can be used against me, which is why I'm working against my own political sympathies here. For example, it is commonly known that 97% of scientists believe climate change is caused by humans. If I use that statistic in an argument, an opponent could accuse me of the bandwagon fallacy and of a faulty appeal to authority. If fallacies are formal errors, the critic is correct. This evidence is scientifically strong, though, because scientists have the right kind of authority and consensus is how they gauge knowledge. As long as fallacies are seen as formal errors, though, the terms can discredit sound reasoning too.

I'm not saying politics don't belong in the classroom. Writing is always politicized, but skewed political motives lead to weaker fallacies pedagogy. Though some textbooks that define fallacies rhetorically also display some bias toward a liberal viewpoint—*Everyone's an Author* and *Aims of Argument*—in general, this inclination correlates with outdated definitions of fallacies as errors. I believe textbook authors often overlook what could be judged as liberal fallacies because as the target audience they fill in gaps in reasoning. Textbooks commonly reproduce only a snippet of claims to demonstrate a fallacy because the underlying theory is that these forms are wrong regardless of context. As a result, they create straw men of many conservative positions and don't recognize liberal "fallacies" because they understand the context. This imbalance presents the political indoctrination that Maxine Hairston critiques (180), and that even sympathizers to politics in the classroom, like Donald Lazere, warn against (195). The approach reinforces a general perception of English not simply as liberal, but as uncritically so, a reputation that can create resistance in more than a few students.

Within this ideological climate, I propose a new pedagogy for fallacies that moves away from Platonic searches for Truth; away from Aristotelian claims that fallacies convince, but shouldn't; away from empirical privilegings of objectivity, and away from politically-driven error-naming.

## Reenvisioning Fallacies Pedagogy

To improve the teaching of fallacies, I turn to rhetorical devices long taught with success in English—appeals, figures, tropes, evidence, all types of rhetorical strategies. If teachers were to think of fallacies as linked to rhetorical strategies, as part of writing methodologies, as devices to be interpreted, even written about, then they become not just something to spot and name but something to explore and explain. Fallacy forms are subsets of common forms of reasoning, which is precisely why they occur with enough frequency to give rise to this vocabulary. When Obama talked about “investments” in the future in March of 2015, Democrats saw this as *strong diction*, but Republicans complained that these “investments” would better be called “taxes” and that Obama’s term was *doublespeak*, one pair of rhetorically successful strategies and failed fallacies. With others, hasty generalization is a subset of generalizing; red herring is a subset of exploring related issues; and ad populum is a subset of appealing to common values. Each rhetorical strategy that can fail can also succeed, and because of the dependence on the rhetorical situation, what one might consider fallacy, another might call persuasion.

Fallacy forms are not innately wrong; they are failed attempts at supplying effective evidence for an audience under specific rhetorical conditions. In judging fallacies, audiences tend to see them as excessive (e.g. Hitler analogies) or deficient (e.g. unsupported data). While a fallacy demonstrates the distance between the views of the author and an audience, a successful rhetorical strategy aligns the positions more closely. The interpreter is a type of Goldilocks, determining too hot, too cold, just right based on personal interpretations—and constructively struggling to negotiate rhetorical extremes.

To complement this comparative goal, I propose the organizing mechanism of the Venn diagram, in which success and failure overlap. Both circles of the diagram present the same strategy, but the categories elicit different audience responses, so they differ in effect, not form. This presentation uses a logical diagram, the Venn, in a distinctly non-logical but highly rhetorical way. Each rhetorical strategy encompasses a persuasive circle—noted by adjectives that describe the strategy as useful, strong, etc.—and an unpersuasive circle, named with fallacy terms. Figure 1 demonstrates several successful rhetorical strategies and overlapping rhetorical fallacies, with a fuller list in the Appendix.

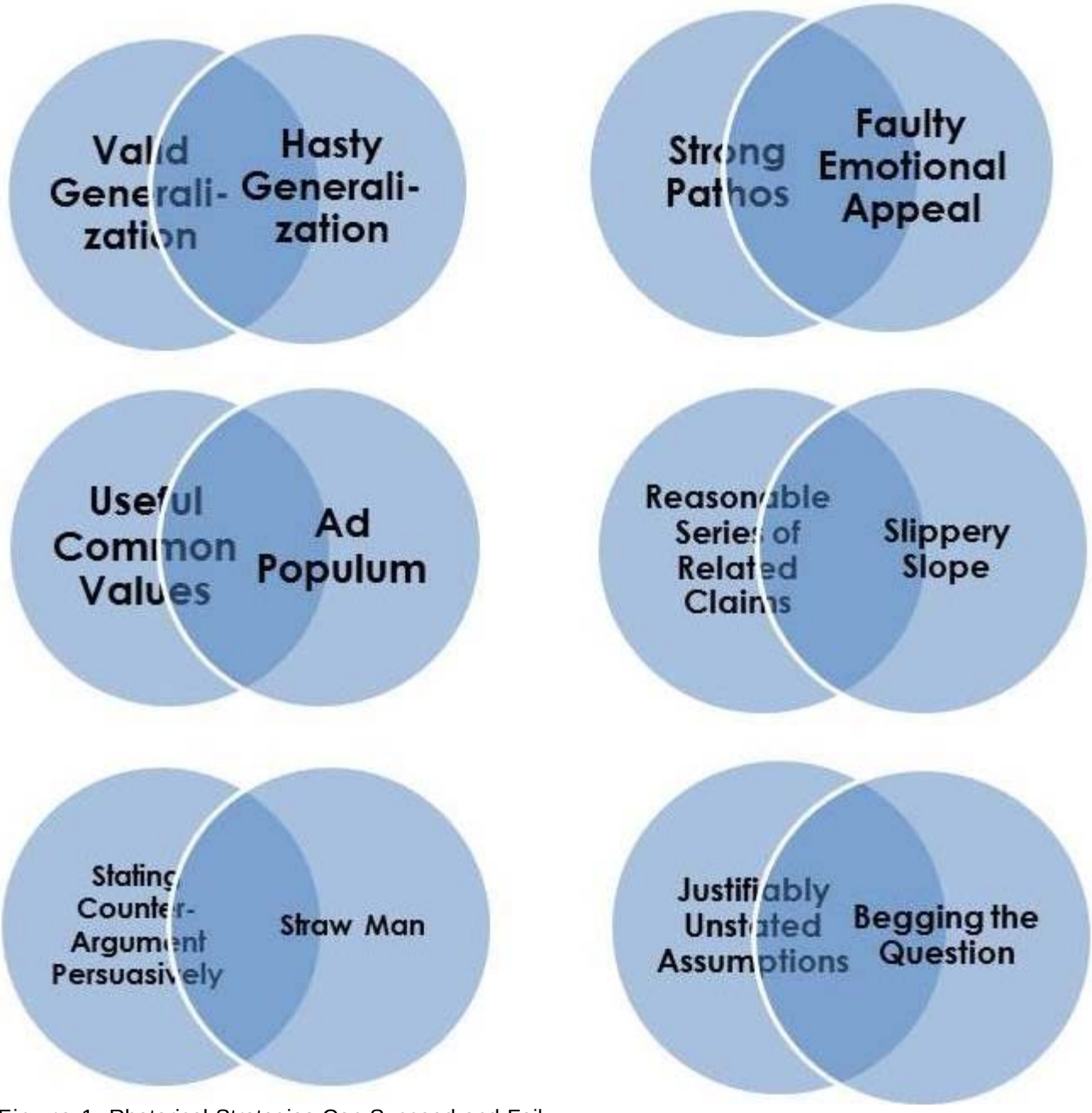


Figure 1. Rhetorical Strategies Can Succeed and Fail.

The overlapping space of the Venn opens multiple positions, demonstrating that claims might succeed *and* fail depending on rhetorical context. It even allows a claim to be somewhat persuasive, having characteristics of both fallacy and success for the same audience. As a point of comparison, a continuum of fallaciousness would avoid diametric pairs, too, but it allows only a singular point of being equally and simultaneously within both positions, the exact middle. To be strongly one position would require a synchronized weakening of the other. A Venn diagram has the visual benefit of demonstrating not just opposition or contiguity, but significant possibility for overlap. At the outer edge of success stand rhetorical claims that might persuade all members of the audience, as when a preacher strikes a powerful chord with parishioners. At the other edge of failure might be a speaker talking to an inhospitable audience, perhaps a manager of a restaurant speaking to disgruntled workers. The statement might even fail for the manager but is a requirement of the job—elucidating self-persuasion, the self-as-audience that Kenneth Burke discusses in *Language as Symbolic Action* (301). Such a rhetorical act would be a complete failure. Wholly successful or wholly failed rhetoric does not mean perfect or defective for all possible audiences—an unachievable universality—it means success or failure for the audiences reached.

Teaching students that fallacies depend on audience in this way can allow instructors to explore several features of rhetorical theory. First, in interpretation, audiences add to the meaning of the text with their own knowledge, a process that is crucial to making meaning. Second, even when individuals identify with the same community, those communities do not interpret monolithically.

Naming specific audiences and contexts allows a critical reader to examine the beliefs and knowledge of a particular discourse community. Bakhtin suggests that utterances always develop in response to other people and other utterances. The audience plays an active role in completing meaning: “when the listener perceives and understands the meaning . . . he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on” (68). He continues, “the listener becomes the speaker” (68). Fallacies do not work in isolation, but instead like all texts, rely on factors outside of the text to complete the process of meaning—the expectations of a certain context, the conventions of a particular genre, the beliefs and values of the audience, and their common knowledge of the topic.

Such a theory of fallacies accounts for why these forms succeed, rather than repeating the standard “they can succeed, but shouldn’t,” an assumption that directs focus to the form itself as an error. The success of a political cliché, for instance, changes based on who is listening. Calling someone a “tax and spend liberal” might fail with many audiences as a hasty generalization or an ad hominem attack. This attack rarely addresses specific reasons against taxation and in an unintended irony simply describes how every government in the world functions. One book, in fact, uses this cliché as a prime example of fallacies (Browne & Keeley 74). However, for many right-wing constituents, this attack continually succeeds. Within this context, the phrase still generalizes, but it serves as short-hand loaded with a long cultural history, emerging from a world view in which taxation is very often flawed and government spending is very often a poor solution. This audience might recall democrat-initiated spending programs like those involved in the social safety net and note frequent calls by republicans for lower taxes. The argument doesn’t have to outline premises supporting the claim because this information already exists in the imaginations of the target audience. It’s a selective memory, certainly, but as Burke suggests, all language selects some meanings and deflects others (*Language* 50). Similar phrases appear across the political spectrum as “bible-thumping Christians,” “tree-hugger,” or “war-hawk.” Don’t get me wrong, I’m not arguing in favor of solely simplistic antagonistic reasoning but rather describing a highly effective trend of using eclipsed reasoning when speaking to the choir.

Bringing things to the mind of the audience in this way is the basic process of communication. As Bakhtin describes, words carry histories because “any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances” (69). Inferring those histories, the cultural associations that impinge on the way readers interpret a text, is an inherent process in meaning-making just as uncovering them is inherent to critical reading. Many theorists have explored this communicative interaction between a word’s current context and its past contexts. I.A. Richards dubbed it *interinanimation*. Kristeva and Barthes focus on *intertextuality*. All these theories suggest that analysis is never about explaining only the things the text explicitly says because each word brings to mind a network of related words, images, and ideas in its audience.

To teach students how to delineate these unstated textual threads, my classes practice drawing out cultural knowledge and researching terms within historical context. When analyzing Malcolm X’s The Ballot or the Bullet, for instance, we discuss the demeaning connotations of the “sit-down philosophy” he criticizes. How does the quoted text (our evidence) connect to the claim (our interpretation that it successfully demeans)? We free-associate, mapping the cultural baggage of *sitting*, including the power loss in phrases such as *sitting duck*, *sitting the bench*, and *sit* as a dog command as well as the physical lowering associated with the act. We also consider alternative receptions: Rosa Parks, less than ten years earlier powerfully *sat* to become a catalyst for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Students’ claims depend on how well they can persuade others that their reading is a convincing outgrowth of the text and its cultural moment. By considering how dissenters might respond, writers make their own claims more effective and explicit. Some of my colleagues use Toulmin’s approach to evidence to help students fill in the gaps of reasoning, in which each claim needs not only evidence to back it up, but also a warrant (an underlying principle that connects the evidence to the claim) and backing (evidence that backs up that warrant). My future research will expand more explicit pedagogies to trace the ellipses between author and audience when analyzing and producing arguments.

In rhetorical analysis, individuals often interpret based on their own impressions of a text and predict receptions by certain communities. Because communities do not think monolithically, interpreters must strike a balance between generalizing about a group’s characteristics while avoiding inflexible generalizations. Communities, after all, are characterized by shifting allegiances, internal conflicts, and fluctuating membership. Because audience is so temporal, Crosswhite calls it “more an event than a collection of people” (139). He continues, we “are constantly becoming one audience or another, constantly abandoning audiences we have been in the past” (139). Rudimentary thinking about audiences is only one step above the master-audience promoted through definitions of fallacies as formal errors. Working with these terms, though, can reveal plurality in audiences.

To illustrate how individuals within a group may interpret differently, I have my students consider Andrew Sullivan’s

iPod World, which contains a series of religious metaphors criticizing devotion to Apple products. He calls iPod owners, “white box worshippers,” who “go to church - those huge, luminous Apple stores . . . the clerics in their monastic uniforms all bustling around, or sitting behind the ‘Genius Bars,’ like priests waiting to hear confessions.” The first student to respond unfailingly says that “religious people” would find these comparisons an offensive false analogy. Alternative interpretations, though, suggest that not all religious people think alike. The “Keep Christ in Christmas” crowd, for example, often criticizes consumerism in the same way Sullivan does. They might appreciate his metaphor as a critique of false idols. Work with rhetorical strategies and fallacies can stimulate debate in the classroom, create complex readings, and problematize simple thinking about audience.

Another key oversimplification that a pedagogy of fallacies must overcome is in evidence. During the middle of the twentieth century, rhetorical theorists broadened the domain of reasoning beyond the scientific, and rhetorical developments in fallacies theory that I have discussed descend from these traditions. Crosswhite theorizes fallacies using Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *The New Rhetoric,* a treatise which expands reasoning to “the credible, the plausible, the probable,” not simply scientific and logical proofs (1). The limited domain of argument, they argue, “rests on the illusion, widespread in certain rationalistic and scientific circles, that facts speak for themselves” (17). Booth similarly takes on these standards of rationality in *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*, arguing against scientific skepticism that doubts everything not objectively proven. In illustration, Booth offers a literary interpretation backed by reasons that lie outside the boundaries of objectivity yet still constitute evidence. His criterion include: “my own strength of conviction,” agreement with others who read the text, “coherence with other kinds of knowledge” such as the tone of the rest of the text, and “teachability,” the ability to teach others why this reading makes sense (118-120). These constitute only a small set of good reasons because they change based on the subject. Booth, Perelman, and Olbrechts-Tyteca worked against a monolithic idea of truth and authority, arguing that an exaggerated focus on science and logic creates epistemological and social problems.

In the list of strategies and fallacies I give students, scientific and statistical methodologies appear alongside stylistic figures, literary devices, emotional appeals, definition from stasis theory, and qualifiers from Toulmin logic (See Appendix). In this way, logic becomes a rhetorical consideration among many elements in discourse. Though I draw from Booth’s theory of rationality, it’s worth noting that in *Modern Dogma,* he warns against the type of consolidated list I just put forth. He argues for establishing principles for stronger or weaker reasoning, otherwise, he says, we’re left with scientific fact versus everything else as “‘mere rhetoric’” (87). In that case, “the whole range of ways to influence men becomes a single indiscriminate conglomeration of devices, to be chosen simply on the basis of likely effectiveness in gaining agreement” (87). As I envision the list of persuasive strategies, these methods are equivalent in the abstract, including science, but are valued as stronger or weaker strategies within a given context: a process that is itself rhetorical. T.R. Johnson argues for this kind of flexibility as central to growth in student writing: “rather than despair over our inability to rise to some impossible, transcendent spot from which to mount critique, we should instead embrace the fact that part of our culture is an array of habits and modes for critical dialogue and interpretation, a vast array of strategies for haggling over value and meaning” (18). The values of the audience ultimately determine the standards of good argument in a particular discourse community, so the question of good evidence is a rhetorical one that is also open to debate.

Even within disciplines that present objective standards, evidence is not static. Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik suggest that adaptability and transformation are essential to rationality. “It is not the truth or solidity of the positions adopted by scientists at any particular moment that makes the natural sciences ‘rational,’” they argue, “It is, rather, the ‘adaptability’ of scientific procedures and principles in the face of new experience and new conceptions. . . . It is the openness of scientists to argument—their readiness if need be, to revise even their most fundamental procedures of argument” (134). Though rationality and validity are privileged over rhetoric when seen as logical terms, they are simply rhetorical considerations that depend on context—the common knowledge, standards, and language of the community. All contexts and evidence are rhetorical.

This relativistic reasoning need not imply an absence of critical skepticism or rhetorical gradation. I empathize with textbooks that want to show students why certain evidence *should* fail, but the wrong place to do that is at the level of fallacy, by implying a structural or formulaic approach to a complex rhetorical issue. Instead, the issue is better broached by discussing context, more specifically, the interaction between multiple contexts. For example, Senate Minority Whip Jon Kyl was for a moment infamous for his claim that over 90% of what Planned Parenthood does is abortion (the number is closer to 3%). He became the object of public ridicule, particularly from Comedy Central satirist Stephen Colbert, when he later released a press release claiming the number “was not intended to be a factual statement” (qtd. in Dwyer). Indeed, this number could carry weight with his conservative base who might see the number as a purposeful hyperbole, as a moral indicator as opposed to a statistical one. In this way, the claim succeeded.

Just because a claim can gain assent in one context, though, does not mean that it falls within the standards of evidence within the context that gives the statement its rhetorical power—within the context that would authorize the evidence and make it persuasive in the first place. In other words, statistics are convincing because they rely on rigorous numeric methodologies. To the extent that Kyl invokes that logos without suitably employing those methods, his statistic fails. To argue otherwise, one would have to "win adherents who seem to us qualified as experts in the questions" of statistics, as Booth explains of dubious claims (124). The question is one of weighing contexts, and the answer ultimately is the same for most claims: fallacy within one context/audience and success with another. We don't have to create falsely rigid fallacies to show students bad statistics; we just have to ask students to consider evidence in context, an inherently rhetorical act. I cite this example, a rather brazen use of bad statistics, to demonstrate that a more relativistic approach to strategies and fallacies does not imply that all claims are created equally. These methods rather acknowledge that most claims—numbers and statistics included—lie in a gray area, in which their truth depends on context and audience.

My reenvisioning of logical fallacies does not seek to remove their critical force as terms of evaluation, but it does seek to remove their *uncritical* force as terms of silencing. Fallacies have been part of a logical tradition often used by dominant groups to silence minorities and opponents: "The poor are irrational." "Women are emotional." "Minorities aren't civilized." This long history of stifling dissent and shutting down debate depends on fallacies' reputation as formal errors. Reclaiming terms like fallacies, then, must include the history of abuse. Alongside a history of silencing, though, stands a history of speaking truth to power. For example, disempowered people combat bogus attempts to malign them with fallacies. Gay rights advocates can use "post hoc causal fallacy" to describe claims that god sends hurricanes as punishment for homosexuality. There are two sides to these terms: they can be used to silence people and they can be used to rebut silencing. The latter side gives me hope that fallacies can be reclaimed.

When reenvisioned in this way, fallacies can complement instruction on rhetoric as epistemic, that is, stressing language as the basis of knowledge and privileging argumentation as the means of knowing. Lunsford's claim that "everything's an argument" is more of a revelation than the nuance lost from such a universal grouping. Indeed, the more nuance that critics take with terms like rhetoric and argument—as in excluding logic—the more that is sometimes hidden or lost. James C. Raymond in "Rhetoric: The Methodology of the Humanities" describes rhetoric as an umbrella category that houses all knowledge and disciplines, which address more limited questions (781). Practically, he explains, "physics can tell us how to build a nuclear reactor, but it cannot tell us whether we ought to build one, whether . . . the costs will outweigh the benefits" (Raymond 781). Students can apply rhetoric across the academy and their lives, and we limit our disciplinary reach by teaching fallacies disconnected from broader rhetorical practices.

Teaching fallacies as isolated errors, like teaching isolated grammatical errors, fails to provide stronger practices. This article, then, contextualizes fallacy instruction within the histories and theories of rhetoric at the same time that it offers context and audience as the guiding principles for fallacies pedagogy. Naming a fallacy is an argument like any other, and from this point of view, I agree with textbooks that argue "fallacies can be powerful tools" (Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz 74). Fallacies, like rhetoric, afford no objective certainty, but even stripped of error status, this recognizable vocabulary provides students with a clear taxonomy of the ways that rhetorical moves can fail for audiences.

## Appendix: Rhetorical Fallacies Correspond with Successful Strategies

* designates terms I teach in Freshman Writing Courses

Ad Ignorantiam / Argument from Ignorance *overlapping* Persuasive Burden of Proof

Ad Hominem *overlapping* Strong Character Evidence*

Ad Populum *overlapping* Useful Common Values*

Anecdotal Evidence / Exception to Rule *overlapping* Strong Illustrative Example

Anthropomorphism *overlapping* Useful Personification

Failed Appeal to Authority *overlapping* Strong Ethos/ Authority*

Failed Appeal to Emotion *overlapping* Strong Pathos*

Failed Appeal to Fear *overlapping* Warrantable Caution

Failed Appeal to Progress *overlapping* Legitimate Appeal to Progress

Failed Appeal to Tradition *overlapping* Legitimate Appeal to Tradition

Bandwagon *overlapping* Useful Popular Opinion / Polling

Begging the Question *overlapping* Justifiably Unstated Assumptions

Irrelevant/Biased Data *overlapping* Legitimate Logos*

Biased Sample *overlapping* Distinct Population Sampled Justifiably*

Cherry-Picking *overlapping* Strong Evidence to Build Case

Complex or Loaded Question *overlapping* Good Rhetorical Question*

Cum hoc *overlapping* Convincing Causal Proximity

Doublespeak / Slanting *overlapping* Strong Diction*

Equivocation *overlapping* Useful Ambiguity

Fallacy of Composition *overlapping* Persuasive Metonymy

False Analogy *overlapping* Convincing Metaphor/Analogy/Simile*

False Claim / Lie *overlapping* Convincing Irony / Sarcasm*

False Dilemma/ Either-Or Proposition *overlapping* Strong Juxtaposition*

False Division / Prejudice *overlapping* Disidentification / Contrast

Forced Hypothesis *overlapping* Reasonable Hypothesis

Guilt by Association *overlapping* Justifiably Noting a Stated Allegiance

Hasty Generalization *overlapping* Valid Generalization*

Limited Definition *overlapping* Strong Definition*

Misrepresentation *overlapping* Useful Hyperbole/Understatement

Narrative Fallacy *overlapping* Strong Narrative*

Non Sequitur *overlapping* Persuasive Humor

Post Hoc *overlapping* Reasonable Causal Chronology*

Quote out of Context *overlapping* Persuasive Use of Quote

Red Herring *overlapping* Legitimate Subissues/Related Issues/Unintended Consequences

Redundancy *overlapping* Strong Repetition / Emphasis

Slippery Slope *overlapping* Reasonable Series of Related Claims*

Smokescreen *overlapping* Strongly Providing Details

Straw Man *overlapping* Stating the Counterargument Persuasively*

Tu Quoque *overlapping* Usefully Identifying Hypocrisy

Weasel Word *overlapping* Reasonable Qualifier*

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Return to *Composition Forum* 32 table of contents.

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