

Book Abstracts

Capaldi, Nicholas (1987). *The Art of Deception* (3rd rev. ed.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books. ISBN 0-87975-424-9.

The book focuses on traditional informal fallacies within the context of syllogistic logic. The discussion proceeds from the perspective of someone actively seeking to mislead others, and the techniques are examined within a debate format of presentation, attack, and rebuttal. In addition to exercises and answers, there are special sections on identifying arguments in context as well as a formal analysis and a series of suggestions on how to read a text and present an argument in written form.

Fisher, Alec (1988). *The Logic of Real Arguments*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-30849-6 cloth, ISBN 0-521-31341-4 paper.

This book aims to help college students to think critically about the kind of sustained, theoretical arguments which they commonly encounter in the course of their studies.

The book expounds a novel method for handling such arguments and applies it to numerous instructive examples. The method—which applies to reasoning expressed in natural language—has two distinctive features. It employs what is called the ‘Assertibility Question’, a key question in extracting and evaluating arguments, and it deals fully with the technique of ‘suppositional reasoning’, an important method of reasoning which is commonly ignored by writers in this field.

There is a special chapter on scientific method and an appendix which explains some useful formal logic. The book also contains numerous exercises.

Halpern, Diane F. (1989). *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishing. ISBN 0-8058-0294-0 cloth, ISBN 0-8058-0295-9 paper.

The second edition of Halpern’s *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical*

Thinking uses the latest research, theory, and applied literature on the development of thinking skills while maintaining the readability, integrity, humor, and interest level of the first edition. A general “framework for thinking” is provided in the new edition, guiding readers through the process of identifying the problem type, devising a useful representation, selecting and applying the appropriate skill, and monitoring and verifying the quality of the outcome. The new framework provides a general structure to the book, tying each chapter together. The second edition places greater emphasis on using both verbal and spatial modes of representation to accommodate individual differences in preferred modes of thought and as an aid to extracting meaning from text. *Thought and Knowledge* is a comprehensive introduction to human thinking that provides readers with the basic information and applicable skills to develop their critical thinking abilities, yet it is written in an enjoyable and understandable format.

Ricci, P. (1991). *Fundamentals of Critical Thinking* (2nd ed.). Ginn Press.

The text was designed to combine the best elements of a traditional introductory logic text with some of the more recent developments in critical thinking and evaluative writing.

As an example of one of many innovations included, Euler Circles are used to evaluate categorical syllogisms rather than more customary methods (Venn Diagrams, etc.). These circles allow diagramming of propositions involving the quantifiers “most” and “a few,” without the need to translate to the notoriously vague quantifier “some.”

The chapter on definitions includes a categorization conducive to their retention along with rules of evaluation. Category mistakes and the redefinist fallacy, along with equivocation, are discussed in a chapter on semantic confusions.

For the benefit of students, a practice exam—with answers—is provided after each chapter.