

Argumentation, Objectivity & Bias – May 18-21

The conference Argumentation, Objectivity & Bias, May 18-21, 2016, at the University of Windsor begins with workshops open to the public and not requiring registration:

PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS – Argumentation, Bias & Objectivity

May 18, 2016: Vanier Hall – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. Introduction to Bayesian Argumentation (9am-noon)

Organizer: Frank Zenker (Lund University)

The purpose of this workshop is to assist those familiar with classical logic in acquiring the basic skills to reconstruct natural language arguments in terms of (subjective) probabilities. Particularly Bayes' theorem serves as a normative standard for evaluating arguments as to their being strong or weak; formal measures of argument strength and argument force are reviewed; and subjective probabilities are applied to render more precise what makes some arguments fallacious. The first two hours are "hands-on;" the third provides room for a general discussion of research implications.

2. Addressing Bias (9am-noon)

Organizer: Moira Howes (Trent University)

Contributors: Tim Kenyon (University of Waterloo) and Audrey Yap (University of Victoria)

In this workshop, we address practical methods for reducing social and cognitive biases in our thinking and interactions with others. In contexts of group discussion and decision, some biases can be mitigated through informed preparation and organizational strategies; we will discuss, share, and perhaps role-play some such strategies. We will also explore ways to decrease biased reasoning in the workplace, particularly in cases where biases are motivated by strong emotion, entrenched assumptions, or failures in communication. Participants will also learn strategies for decision-making and communication in cases where pronounced biases persist despite skilled intervention.

3. Objective Agreement: The Voyages of Treaty Canoe (1-3pm)

Organizers: Catherine Hundleby (University of Windsor; settler Canadian of English and German descent) and Tory James (University of Windsor; Oneida of Iroquois Confederacy, Six Nations)

Artist: Alex McKay (University of Windsor; settler Canadian of Scottish descent)

Visual artist Alex McKay and ally Tory James will give a talk and workshop on the Treaty Canoe Project.

Treaty Canoe (1999, 12'x2'x2'), built much like a bark canoe, with red & white cedar, ribbons, and a papier-mâché of treaties replacing the bark skin, is a Settler canoe that speaks to the dilemma and responsibilities inherent in being in this territory we call Canada, occupying other nations' sovereign territory, and being a Treaty Person. The Canoe is a jumping off point in the discussion of the individual and collection obligations in moving forward with both Reconciliation, and finding a Nation to Nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Participants will be able to transcribe treaties and contribute directly to the project, and engage in an open-ended discussion about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Settler/Immigrants.

4. Using Classroom Debates for De-biasing in Critical Thinking Instruction (1-3pm)

Organizers: Jean Goodwin (Iowa State University) and Steven Patterson (Marygrove College)

Contributor: Sarah Heidt (Marygrove College)

This workshop is aimed to help critical thinking and ethics instructors incorporate debates and similar exercises into their courses. Debates have four unique features that make them useful to teach argument production skills. First, debates challenge students to present their arguments to an audience to which they naturally feel accountable--each other. Second, debates foster the key skills of managing open disagreement in a civil fashion. Third, debates focus students on developing well-constructed arguments to represent themselves and their team. And finally, preparing for debates requires students to carefully consider the arguments, points of view and positions of others, thus opening a pathway for de-biasing. While this workshop will briefly highlight scholarship on the learning outcomes of debate exercises, the primary focus will be on practical questions of the why-what-how of teaching critical thinking through debates.

For further conference information see <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/ossa/>

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