CRITICAL THINKING

Lecture #1

Statements

Professor David Emmanuel Gray

CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

What is a Statement?

Statements are the building blocks of an argument.

> **Statement:** An assertion that something is or is not the case; a statement is always either true or false.

Keep in mind that this does not imply that you or I correctly *know* whether a statement is true or false. That is a different matter.

I will use "statement" (Vaughn) and "proposition" (Copi and Cohen) interchangeably.

Types of Statements: *Simple & Compound*

Simple statement: A statement that involves *only one* individual claim or assertion.

Compound statement: A statement that involves *more than one* claim or assertion. A compound statement may therefore be understood as being composed of multiple statements—which may themselves be simple and/or compound.

Simple Statements: *Positive & Negative*

Positive (affirmative) statement: A simple statement claiming that something is *true*.

Logic is a fun class.

Negative statement: A simple statement claiming that something is *false*.

Logic is **not** an easy class.

Compound Statements: *Conjunction*

Conjunctive statement: A compound statement claiming the truth of *all* its statements.

Logic is fun **and** logic is hard.

Such a statement is false if *any one* of its statements is false. We call the statements contained within a conjunctive statement the **conjuncts**.

Compound Statements: *Conjunction*

Notice there are a lot of *other* ways to express the *exact same logic* within a conjunctive statement:

Logic is fun **and** hard.

Logic is **both** fun **and** hard.

Logic is fun, **also** it is hard.

Logic is fun **but** hard.

Logic is fun, **yet** it is hard.

Logic is fun, **though** it is hard.

These certainly have different *connotations*, but they all have the same *logical* content.

Compound Statements: *Disjunction*

Disjunctive statement: A compound statement claiming the truth of *at least one* of its statements.

Logic is fun **or** logic is hard.

Such a statement is false if *every one* of its statements is false. We call the statements contained within a disjunctive statement the **disjuncts**.

Compound Statements: *Disjunction*

Notice there are a lot of *other* ways to express the *exact same logic* within a disjunctive statement:

Logic is fun **or** hard.

Logic is **either** fun **or** hard.

Logic is fun **unless** it is hard.

} As before, these may have different connotations, but they are all logically identical.

Compound Statements: *Implication*

Hypothetical statement: A compound statement of the form "if ... then ...".

> **If** you take an aspirin, **then** your headache will go away.
>
> **If** you arrive after I have called your name, **then** you will be marked as tardy.

How would you show that a hypothetical statement, like either one of the above, is false?

Compound Statements: *Implication*

A hypothetical statement asserts that there is a special relationship between the "if" statement (called the **antecedent**) and the "then" statement (called the **consequent**). It claims that whenever the antecedent holds, then the consequent *must* hold as well.

So the truth or falsity of a hypothetical is just the truth or falsity of this relationship, and it is *only* false when the antecedent (the "if" part) is true while the consequent (the "then" part) is false.

Remember this—it will become *very* important later on in the course!

Compound Statement Indicator Words

Common Conjunctive Indicators

and	but	while
both … and …	yet	however
also	though	furthermore

Common Disjunctive Indicators

or	either … or …	unless

Common Hypothetical Indicators

if … then …

Classifying a Statement: *Instructions*

Now we can start looking at statements to break down their logical structure concerning the assertions and claims they make. A statement is classified as follows:

Indicate whether it is a simple or a compound statement.

If it is simple, indicate whether it is negative or positive, or

If it is compound, indicate whether is it conjunctive, disjunctive, hypothetical, or some combination of these.

Do not forget to indicate the type of simple statements that make up any compound statements.

Statement #1

Consider the following statement:

I will not study logic tonight.

What is its logical structure?

Statement #2

Consider the following statement:

If I study logic tonight, then I will not go to the mall.

What is its logical structure?

Statement #3

Consider the following statement:

I will not study logic tonight, but I will take a nap.

What is its logical structure?

Classifying a Statement: *Illustration*

Our goal is to dig even deeper in the analysis of statements. For instance, consider the following:

> If I stay home and I study logic, then I will either get a good grade in class or be grumpy.

There is a lot going on here!

Overall it is a compound hypothetical ("if ... then ..."), but the antecedent is a compound conjunctive ("and") with simple positive conjuncts, while the consequent is a compound disjunctive ("either ... or ...") with simple positive disjuncts.

Next Class…

We will hold our first weekly workshop of the semester, practicing this form of statement analysis. Please do look over the **problem set**, so you can start practicing before then.

Ideally, you should come to the workshop having looked over the problem set and being prepared to ask either your workshop partners or me for help on doing problems like these.

Remember this week's extra credit: come to my office (CMUQ 1039, next to men's prayer room) and introduce yourself to me!