Rhetorical Analysis: Logical Fallacies
Rhetorical "sleight of hand"—logical inconsistencies
(equivocation, presumption, relevance)

Appeals to false authority	Writers who may not actually have the knowledge, authority, or credentials to provide an authoritative (reliable) conclusion. For example, an actor who testify before Congress based on playing a role.
Dogmatism	Falling back on the party line; using pat answers and positions from a particular faction or political group.
***Ad hominem* attacks**	Attacking the character or personal attributes of an opponent rather than the issue at hand. For example, references to New Jersey Gov. Christie's weight.
Bifurcation	Reducing complex issues to simple either-or choices; forcing a choice between one side as completely right and the other side as all wrong. For example, you're either for or against Second Amendment gun rights.
Scare tactics (loaded language; mob appeal; bandwagon)	An argument that makes its appeal chiefly by raising fears that may or may not be reasonable. For example, Muslims want to establish Sharia law in America and do away with our Constitution.
Appeals to pathos (epithets)	An argument that makes its case by appealing to our sentiments and pushing our emotional reactions. For example, an anti-hunting campaign using photos of baby seal puppies crying over their slaughtered mothers' bodies.
Hasty generalizations	Drawing conclusions from one or two instances or examples; insufficient evidence. For example, my two Norwegian students are good geology students, therefore Norway's schools have good earth science departments.
Sweeping generalizations	Starting with a preconceived idea and sweeping individuals into my preconception. For example, you're from Norway so you must be good at geology.

False Cause	Assuming that because two events or phenomena occur close together in time, one is the cause of the other. For example, two people at work became ill after having a flu shot, so the flu shot makes people get sick.
Equivocation **(willful or ambiguity)**	Using vague language to avoid straightforward answers. For example, Pres. Clinton's infamous, "It depends on what the meaning of the word *is* is." The recent term "truthiness" is another example of equivocation and evasiveness.
Straw men	Easy or the habitual targets that are used to win an argument—easy to knock over but really evades a more complex issue. For example, the welfare mom who keeps having kids to collect more welfare; or the greedy rich not paying their fair share of taxes.
Slippery-slope arguments	A type of scare tactic warning: Take one step off the path and we will slide all the way down the hill. The projected chain of events may not be accurate or so necessarily so. For example, will allowing people of the same gender to marry really result in marriages between people and animals?
False analogy	Analogies—comparisons—are a good rhetorical strategy, but make sure the comparison is accurate and not an exaggeration. For example, calling a military action "another Vietnam"—is it *really*? Is calling for gun control measures *really* like the Nazi Party's takeover of Germany?
Hypostatization **(personification)**	This long term means giving agency to non-persons or avoiding agency (the ubiquitous "they"). For example, saying our schools are failing to educate students. (*Who* is failing, and how?)