1. Assessing arguments

Look at these arguments with the person next to you. Are they good arguments? If not, what's wrong with them?

A.   P1. All dogs go to heaven.
      P2. Charlie is a dog.
      C. Charlie will go to heaven.

B.   P1. If the moon is made of green cheese, then cows jump over it.
      P2. The moon is made of green cheese.
      C. Cows jump over the moon.

C.   P1. If it's raining, then the streets are wet.
      P2. The streets are wet.
      C. It's raining.

D.   P1. All apples are fruits.
      P2. Some fruits are red.
      C. Some apples are red.

E.   P1. If today is Friday, tomorrow will be Saturday.
      C. Tomorrow will be Saturday.

F.   P1. If Utilitarianism is right, we should always act so as to maximize happiness.
      P2. Sometimes we should *not* act so as to maximize happiness.
      C. Utilitarianism is wrong.

Now that we've looked at some arguments, we can introduce some terminology:

An argument is **valid** iff it's impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false.
      -Validity is a property of the argument's *form*.
      -It doesn't matter whether the premises or conclusion are *true*.

An argument is **sound** iff (a) it's valid, and (b) the premises are true.
      -It doesn't matter whether you *know* if the premises are true.

An argument can also be **convincing** (for a person S) if it's valid, and before understanding the argument, S believes the premises but not the conclusion.

Are arguments 1-5 valid? Are they sound?

2. Reconstructing arguments

You will have to reconstruct arguments as part of your quizzes and papers for this class. Sometimes you have to fill in missing premises in order to make a valid argument.

A. Put these informal arguments in premise/conclusion form. Are they valid? Sound?

"Anyone who goes to Harvard is a total jerk. I know because I met my roommate's brother, who goes to Harvard, and he is a total jerk."

"You shouldn't feed chocolate to the dog. Chocolate makes him sick."

B. Another partner exercise:

Nozick writes, "We learn that something matters to us in addition to experience by imagining an experience machine and then realizing that we would not use it."

Construct an argument in premise/conclusion form using the experience machine as an argument against hedonic utilitarianism.

24.04J / 17.01J Justice
Spring 2012