Fallacy Examples (from Patrick Hurley, A Concise Introduction to Logic)

Name_____________________________

Following the classifications of fallacies Anthony Weston offers in Chapter X of A Rulebook for Arguments, identify which fallacy, if any, most closely fits each of the following examples.

1. You should go out with me. My ship’s been out at sea for six months, and I haven’t seen a girl in all that time.

2. Well, I don’t like Hollings, but either I vote for him or I vote for Miller, and you know what I think about Miller.

3. It’s no wonder there is so much divorce, crime, and political corruption in our nation today. Have you seen what’s on TV these days?

4. I can’t understand why people talk about how beautiful California is. Las summer I spent three days in Los Angeles, and I can tell you, California is not beautiful. There are too many people, too many cars, too much concrete, not enough fresh air, and not enough peace and quiet.

5. I find the proposal to permit students to take part in the development of the college curriculum utterly ridiculous. How can students be in a position to judge which courses are worthwhile and which are not before they have had those courses? It’s preposterous!

6. Simpson, it has come to my attention that some of the employees want to form a union. Their representative tells me that they are not satisfied with their working conditions. Well, some people are never satisfied and never think of anyone but themselves. You can tell them from me that it will be a cold Fourth of July before we cater to the whimperings of malcontents.

7. I know my paper is late, Professor Hart, but you should still accept it. My roommate was sick last night, and my folks will kill me if I flunk this course.

8. I don’t know why you get down on me for smoking pot. You guys have 3 or 4 martinis every night.

9. Max: Are you going out with that cheerleader this weekend?
   Fred: Yep.
   Max: Wow! What did she say when you asked her out?
   Fred: She didn’t say no.
   Max: Well, what did she say?
   Fred: She didn’t say anything.

10. A: Do you see what I’m saying?
    B: No, how could I? We can only see what is visible.
11. Sure I was speeding, officer, but so were you! How else could you ever have caught me?

12. My opponent argues that women do not have the right to choose abortion. That means he denies that women have the right to control their own bodies, and he thus endorses a kind of sexual discrimination. Well, we’ve worked too long and too hard to ensure equality between the sexes to revert back to that kind of unjust treatment of women.

13. We haven’t heard any sounds from the rubble of that collapsed building, so we figure that no one remains alive inside.

14. Reports of extraterrestrials, visitors from Mars, and so on are numerous but not one report is worth believing. All of them come from people who lack credibility, as is clear from the fact that they make these incredible claims!

15. Studying philosophy is a dangerous thing to do. It makes you critical, which in turn makes you skeptical of religious beliefs. And once you’ve begun to lose faith in your religion, it’s a small step to atheism and immorality, and a life of immorality is damned.