**Audience Based Logical Fallacies**

**Fallacy** - a generic term that indicates an error or weakness in an argument or thought process

**Audience Based Fallacies** - arguments which direct an audience’s attention away from the central argument

1. **Ad Hominem** - an irrelevant attack on an individual or source of an argument instead of responding to substantial issues raised in the argument
   a. **Example**: The Alabama Share Croppers Union (SCU) could not have improved the situation of black sharecroppers in the 1930’s, they were Communists.

2. **Ad Populum** - when the substance of an argument is avoided and an individual instead appeals to popular opinion as the justification of a claim
   a. **Example**: 95% of college students dislike doing homework, therefore, universities should stop making homework mandatory.

3. **Appeal to Tradition** - when someone claims that we should continue to do things the way we have always done them simply because we have always done them that way
   a. **Example**: We should not make public speaking courses mandatory for graduation, we never have in the past so why start now?

4. **Ad Ignorantiam** - attempting to prove an argument is true by claiming that its opposite cannot be proven.
   a. **Example**: There is no evidence that playing football without a helmet is dangerous, therefore it is perfectly safe to play football without a helmet.

5. **Straw Arguments** - attacking a weakened form of an opponent’s argument or an argument the opponent did not make
   a. **Example**: Mary: “I think it’s time for this university to computerize all its functions. Just think, if all the secretaries and all the professors were linked together by computer, access to student records would be more efficient, and students would save time and receive better-quality advising.”
   Jose: “Yeah, but if we computerized everything, it would take forever to teach individuals to use the system, which would end up wasting more time than it saves.”

6. **Ad Verecundiam** - assumes a claim is true because some higher authority of tradition says so (should not be confused with the legitimate use of expert opinion evidence)
   a. **Example**: You should stay in tonight because I’m your father and I say you should!

7. **Ad Misericordiam** - calls for acceptance based not on evidence or reason but on appeals to pity or sympathy

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a. **Example:** My brother was killed by a driver who was texting while driving. Therefore, we should ban all cell phones or remove their texting options.