CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF
PHILOSOPHY

COLLOQUIUM SERIES

"Thinking about Cognitive Environments"

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Critical thinking is often taught with some emphasis on categories and operations of cognitive biases taught to individual students who are expected to carry these operations individually. The underlying thought is that knowledge of biases equips students to reduce them—this should, in other words, help them to reason better. There are however empirical grounds to doubt the effectiveness of this common and intuitive approach.

In this work, I develop a broader view of critical thinking strategies that offers us in return a broader view on reasoning. Reasoning well also means to use and modify our environment in specific ways to facilitate what is sometimes seen as a mostly if not uniquely individualistic activity. Based on previous work, I present a four-level taxonomy that enables a useful diagnosis of biasing factors and situations, and illuminates more strategies for effective bias mitigation located in the shaping of situational factors and reasoning infrastructure. While I do not reject the usefulness of usual individualistic strategies taught in critical thinking courses, I also suggest that we should expand our toolbox when it comes to teaching reasoning strategies.

Friday, September 30th, 2016
Room: 218 Paterson Hall
Time: 11:30 a.m.