PHIL 100 Class exercise #1 **Argument? conclusion?**

Regarding each passage: (A) Does it contain an argument? (B) If so, what is its conclusion?

#1 …. an educated public can keep health care costs down (college grads take better care of themselves), raise levels of economic development (they create more jobs and companies) and increase tax receipts (they make more money and pay more taxes). … college graduates smoke less, give blood more and volunteer far more frequently than high-school graduates. (They also have far lower rates of incarceration and rely less on government entitlement programs.) If we want a better, richer, healthier society than we have today, the evidence suggests that the best way to get there is to have more college graduates.

"Forgive Us our Student Debts" by Jon Gertner, The New York Times Magazine, June 11, 2006, p. 68

#2 [Ted Slavin's] blood was key in the creation of the first-ever hepatitis B vaccine. Though he died 21 years ago, Slavin is worth keeping track of. Not because his cells produced extremely valuable proteins that were important for scientific research. But because Slavin's relationship to those cells was unique: they weren't just part of his body; they were his business, his property. Slavin was one of the first people in history to decide that contrary to the way things usually work in science, he would maintain complete control over any blood and tissues removed from his body. He would determine who used them for research, how and, most important to Slavin, who made money from them.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/magazine/16tissue.html

#3 Is chocolate bad for the heart?

No, chocolate contains beneficial antioxidants called flavonoids, which may actually reduce the harmful effects of LDL ("bad") cholesterol. It may even lower blood pressure, according to one recent small study from Germany. Some lab studies suggest that cocoa flavonoids may also reduce the growth of cancer cells. An ounce of dark chocolate has about the same amount of flavonoids as half a cup of brewed black tea, another good source. But don't look to chocolate as a proven way to prevent heart disease and cancer. If you simply add chocolate to your diet, you're likely to gain weight, which *is* bad for your heart.

The fat in chocolate has little effect on blood cholesterol. Though it is highly saturated, the fat is mostly stearic acid, which does not boost cholesterol.

UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, February 2004, p. 2

#4 To the Editor:

An Oct. 4 letter says New York City "must quickly develop a plan to retain the middle-class population." The city can start by abolishing rent control.

By decreasing the profitability of supplying units occupied by renters, these controls spawn condo conversions and prompt builders to construct fewer rental units and more units for sale to owner-occupiers. People who can't afford to buy housing are unnecessarily disadvantaged.

Rent control also encourages empty nesters, who enjoy below-market rents for their three- and four-bedroom apartments, to stay put rather than move into smaller units, thus discouraging younger families with children from moving to the city.

Donald J. Boudreaux; Fairfax, VA., Oct. 4, 2006

The writer is chairman of the economics department at George Mason University.

The New York Times, October 9, 2006, p. A 22

#5 [W]hile the chasm between the lavish pay packages dished out in America's executive suites and the wages of the minions below may jar archetypal notions of fairness, economists point out that not all inequality is bad. While it may have nasty side effects, some inequality is needed to spur growth.

"Clearly, perfect egalitarianism wouldn't lead to much effort or output," said Lawrence Katz, an economist at Harvard. "If you're just talking about making the pie as big as we could, it is not clear what level of inequality is best."

Like any other difference in prices, economists say, income inequality allows people and companies to better allocate investments of money and effort. Pay differences encourage the best and brightest into the most profitable lines of work, and the most profitable companies to hire them. Inequality, according to this view, provides an incentive to work extra hard to come out on top. (viewed 8/25//08)

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/19/business/yourmoney/19view.html?scp=2&sq=Porter%20equal%20pay&st=cse

#6 To the Editor:

Mark Helprin argues that intellectual property should be granted the same protections as physical property. While the symmetry of this argument holds some aesthetic appeal, there is no economic rationale.

The economic rationale for perpetual protection of physical property is that such property cannot be used by two people at the same time. Society will not get any more holes if you take my shovel. And my incentive to invest in a shovel will depend upon my confidence that the government will protect my rights to its future use.

The economic rationale for treating intellectual property differently is that once discovered, intellectual property can be used by many people at the same time. If I invent a better way to tie my shoes, my use is not compromised by others tying their shoes in the same way. But this must be balanced against the benefit of incentives that encourage me to discover new ways to tie a shoe. … Michael J. Orlando; Denver, May 21, 2007

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/27/opinion/l27copyright.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted=print (viewed 6/2/07)

2 excerpts from "The Global Delusion" by John Gray,
The New York Review of Books, April 27, 2006 (vol. 53 # 7):

#7 There can no longer be any reasonable doubt that the global warming the world is experiencing today is a side effect of fossil fuel use. The extraction and consumption of hydrocarbons has been integral to industrialization and remains so … A clear correlation exists between industrialization over the past 150 years and rising greenhouse gases.

#8 Standard models assume that globalization means that one way of doing business will be imposed on everyone, but this is not supported by Suzanne Berger's research on many companies in different parts of the world. … Drawing on a five-year study by the MIT Industrial Performance Center, Berger presents a wealth of evidence about the different strategies adopted by five hundred international companies to survive and prosper in the global market. The result is a consistently enlightening analysis that explores the many different ways in which companies respond successfully to global competition. The computer company Dell is strongly focused on distribution and outsources all manufacturing of components overseas, for example in India, while Samsung makes almost everything itself; but both are rapidly growing, profitable businesses. General Motors is finding it difficult to adjust to high-wage labor, while Toyota—which has kept production at home or in other advanced countries—is doing well. Faced with similar challenges, companies can thrive or fail in different ways.