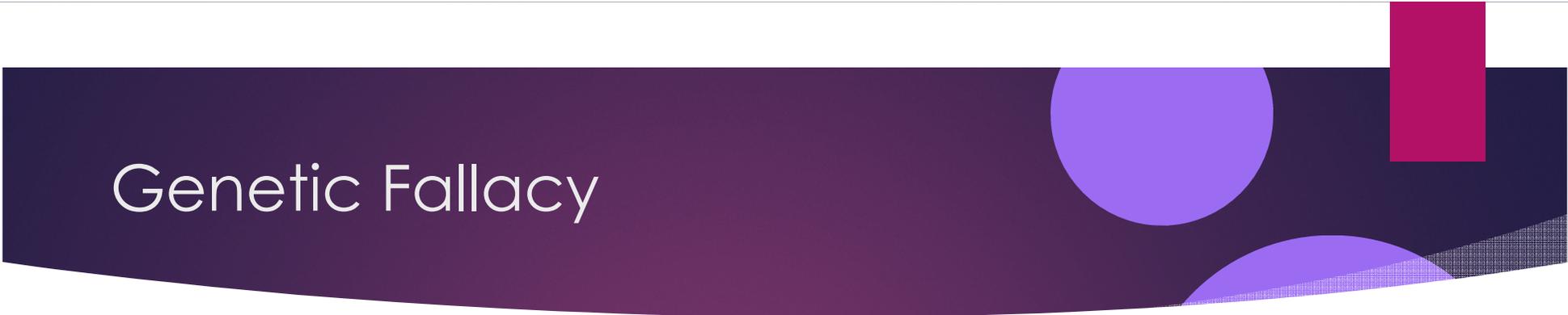




5 Additional Logical Fallacies (Week 2)

Straw Man

- ▶ A straw man argument is one that misrepresents a position in order to make it appear weaker than it actually is, refutes this misrepresentation of the position, and then concludes that the real position has been refuted. This, of course, is a fallacy, because the position that has been claimed to be refuted is different to that which has actually been refuted; the real target of the argument is untouched by it.



Genetic Fallacy

- ▶ The genetic fallacy is committed when an idea is either accepted or rejected because of its source, rather than its merit.

Slippery Slope

- ▶ Slippery slope arguments falsely assume that one thing must lead to another. They begin by suggesting that if we do one thing then that will lead to another, and before we know it we'll be doing something that we don't want to do. They conclude that we therefore shouldn't do the first thing. The problem with these arguments is that it is possible to do the first thing that they mention without going on to do the other things.

Equivocation

- ▶ The fallacy of equivocation is committed when a term is used in two or more different senses within a single argument.
- ▶ For an argument to work, words must have the same meaning each time they appear in its premises or conclusion. Arguments that switch between different meanings of words equivocate, and so don't work. This is because the change in meaning introduces a change in subject. If the words in the premises and the conclusion mean different things, then the premises and the conclusion are about different things, and so the former cannot support the latter.

Ad Populum - Bandwagon

- ▶ The bandwagon fallacy is committed by arguments that appeal to the growing popularity of an idea as a reason for accepting it as true. They take the mere fact that an idea suddenly attracting adherents as a reason for us to join in with the trend and become adherents of the idea ourselves.