

Slippery Slope Arguments

Douglas Walton

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Authors



Douglas Walton

University of Windsor

Abstract

A "slippery slope argument" is a type of argument in which a first step is taken and a series of inextricable consequences follow, ultimately leading to a disastrous outcome. Many textbooks on informal logic and critical thinking treat the slippery slope argument as a fallacy. Walton argues that used correctly in some cases, they can be a reasonable type of argument to shift a burden of proof in a critical discussion, while in other cases they are used incorrectly. Walton identifies and analyzes four types of slippery slope argument. Walton presents guidelines that show how each type of slippery slope argument can be used correctly or incorrectly, using over fifty case studies of argumentation on controversial issues. These include abortion, medical research on human embryos, euthanasia, the decriminalization of marijuana, pornography, and censorship, and banning of American flag burning.

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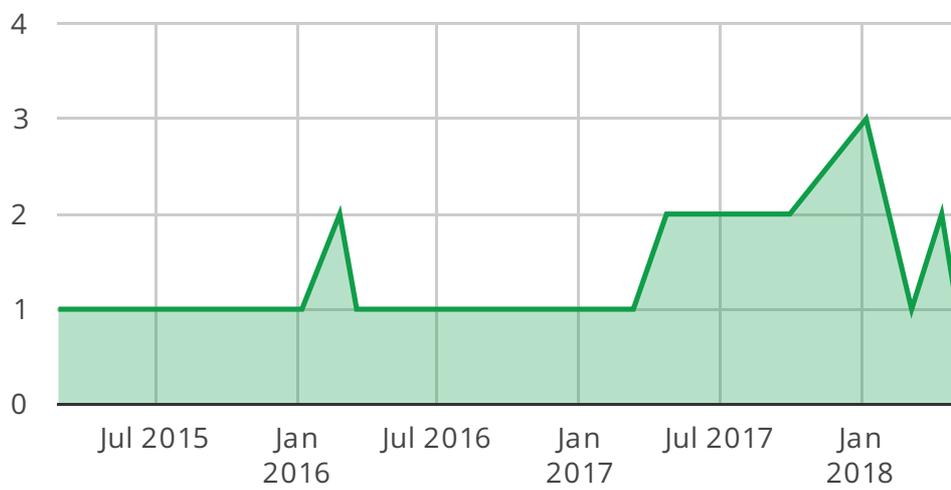
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