Philosophy 240: Symbolic Logic Hamilton College
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Class 4: Truth Functions (§6.2)

I. **Introduction**
Consider: Either Palin or Biden is known to have plagiarized a speech but Palin plagiarized if and only if her new baby is really her daughter's child.
Translated into Propositional Logic: $(P \lor B) \cdot (P \equiv D)$
We know the values of the component propositions P, B, and D

P is false
B is true
D is false

But what is the value of the complex proposition?
Definition: the *truth value of a complex proposition* is the truth value of its main connective.

II. **Basic truth tables**
We can derive the truth value of a complex proposition given the truth values of its component propositions using the basic truth tables for each connective.

Negation
Note that while '2+2=4' is true, its negation, '2+2≠4' is false.
Also, while '2+2=5' is false, its negation, ' 2+2≠5' is true.
We summarize these results using a truth table.

~	p
F	T
T	F

The column under the 'p' represents all possible assignments of truth values to a single proposition.
The column under the '~' represents the values of the negation of that proposition in each row.
A truth table for a complex proposition containing one variable has two lines, since there are only two possible assignments of truth values.

Conjunction
Consider: ‘He likes logic and metaphysics.’
This statement is true if ‘He likes logic’ is true and ‘He likes metaphysics’ is true.
It is false otherwise.

p	·	q
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	F	T
F	F	F

Note that we need 4 lines to explore all the possibilities:
When both are true (row 1),
When one is true and the other is false (rows 2 and 3), and
When both are false (row 4).
With 3 variables, we need 8 lines, and with 4 variables, we need 16 lines.
How many rows would one need for 5 variables?
For n variables?

Disjunction
Consider: ‘She can get an A in either history or physics.’
We use an inclusive disjunction, on which this statement is false only when both component statements are false.

p	∨	q
T	T	T
T	T	F
F	T	T
F	F	F

Material Implication
Consider: ‘If you paint my house, then I will give you $500.'
When will this statement will be falsified?
It’s true if both the antecedent and consequent are true.
It’s false if the antecedent is true and the consequent is false.
If the antecedent is false, we consider this statement as unfalsified, and, thus, true.

p	⊃	q
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	T	F

The Material Biconditional
Consider: ‘Supplies rise if and only if demand falls.’
This is true if the component statements share the same truth value.
It is false if the components have different values.

p	≡	q
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	F	T
F	T	F

III. **Determining the truth value of a complex proposition**

The basic truth tables can be used to evaluate the truth value of any proposition built using the formation rules.

1. Assign truth values to each simple term.
2. Evaluate any negations of those terms.
3. Evaluate any connectives for which both values are known.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3, working inside out, until you reach the main operator.

So, consider:
(A ∨ X) · ~B, given that A and B are true and X is false

First, assign the values to A, B, and X:

(A	∨	X)	·	~	B
T		F			T

Next, evaluate the negation of B:

(A	∨	X)	·	~	B
T		F		F	T

Since you know the values of the disjuncts, you can next evaluate the disjunction:

(A	∨	X)	·	~	B
T	T	F		F	T

Finally, you can evaluate the main connective, the conjunction:

(A	∨	X)	·	~	B
T	T	F	**F**	F	T

So, the proposition is false.

Returning to the problem from the beginning of the lesson: (P ∨ B) · (P ≡ D)

(P	∨	B)	·	(P	≡	D)
F	T	T	**T**	F	T	F

The proposition is true

Consider these further examples:

1. $A \supset (\sim X \cdot \sim Y)$, given that A is true and X and Y are false

A	⊃	(~	X	·	~	Y)
T	**T**	T	F	T	T	F

The proposition is true

2. $[(A \cdot B) \supset Y] \supset [A \supset (C \supset Z)]$, given that A, B, and C are true, and Y and Z are false.

[(A	·	B)	⊃	Y]	⊃	[A	⊃	(C	⊃	Z)]
T	T	T	F	F	**T**	T	F	T	F	F

The proposition is true.

IV. **Exercises A**. Assume A, B, C are true and X, Y, Z are false. Evaluate the truth values of each:

1) $Z \supset \sim B$
2) $(B \equiv C) \supset \sim A$
3) $B \supset (A \vee C)$
4) $X \vee (A \cdot Y)$
5) $A \vee \sim A$
6) $Y \vee \sim Y$
7) $A \cdot \sim A$
8) $(A \supset Z) \vee (\sim X \supset B)$
9) $[X \cdot (A \vee C)] \vee \sim[(X \vee A) \cdot (X \vee C)]$

V. **Exercises B**. Translate to propositional logic, and use your knowledge of the truth values of the component sentences to determine the truth values of the given complex propositions.

1) Mark Twain wrote *Huckleberry Finn* and Shakespeare wrote *Moby Dick*.
2) If Dickens was not American, then Proust was German.
3) It’s not the case that Hemingway wrote both *The Old man and the Sea* and *The Great Gatsby*.
4) Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* if and only if Robert Frost didn’t write ‘The Wasteland’.
5) The assertion that neither Dostoevsky wrote both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamozov* nor Tolstoy wrote *War and Peace* is false.

VI. **Solutions**

Answers to Exercises A

1) T
2) F
3) T
4) F
5) T
6) T
7) F
7) T
8) F

Answers to Exercises B

1) False
2) False
3) True
4) True
5) True