

# PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT SPEAKER SERIES



COLLEGE OF ARTS

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CHANGING LIVES  
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## IS AN APPEAL TO POPULARITY ALWAYS A FALLACY OF POPULARITY?

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**Room: ROZH 106**  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2**  
**11:30-1:00**



### ABSTRACT

Is a claim true just because a large number of people believe it? Virtually all informal logicians think such reasoning is fallacious. I claim that an appeal to popularity is not, *prima facie*, an error in reasoning. Many examples of appeal to popularity cited by informal logicians fail, but often this is because of reasons distinct from popularity—reasons that are often masked by classifying an appeal to popularity as fallacious just because it appeals to majority opinion. My view is motivated by Condorcet's Jury Theorem. Its conditions for success—binary, competence, and independence—provide legitimate and useful criteria for the evaluation of appeals to popularity, and I propose that they be adopted in a general way within informal logic, replacing the idea there is a fallacy of popularity.