

Assessment of Student Learning Plan: Philosophy Department

Review of 2014-15 Academic Year

A. College, Department or Program, Date

<i>College</i>	CAHS
<i>Department or Program</i>	PHILOSOPHY
<i>Date</i>	MAY 31, 2015

B. Department or Program Chair: Julien Murphy

**(person responsible for completing this form)*

C. Degree or other Program: BA

D. Assessment of Student Learning

1: Has your department identified any Student Learning Outcomes? (What are students able to do by the end of your program?)

- a. *List the most important student learning outcomes (3-5) that have been agreed upon in your department. Then, identify which student learning outcome (1-2) was assessed this past year. See Appendix A for definitions and examples.*

The Philosophy Department completed a 9 year review (Self-Study) for NEAC.

Below is the information on our assessments and learning outcomes:

Student Learning Outcomes for the Philosophy Major (knowledge, skills, dispositions)

- Students will gain knowledge of the history of philosophy, its major historical moments, and its recent movements, and learn how to critically and productively engage with this past.
- Students in the entry-level courses (100-level and EYE) courses will understand the discipline of philosophy and its role in the humanities.
- Students will learn the skills of philosophical reading, close textual analysis, arguments, rhetorical and strategies.
- Students will improve their writing and critical thinking skills

Student Learning Outcomes for the 200 – level courses in the Philosophy Major (knowledge, skills, dispositions)

- Students will understand how critical analysis is tethered to historical, social and economic contexts
- Students will acquire more precision and rigor in examining philosophical work
- Students will improve their ability to formulate their own question or problem related to the course material
- Students will know how to inspect the presuppositions of theory and practice. These deep and focused inquiries contribute both to the disciplines with which they engage and to philosophy as a whole.

Student Learning Outcomes for the 300 – level courses in the Philosophy Major (knowledge, skills, dispositions)

- Students can contextualize philosophy in a historical narrative and see the importance of historical perspective and understand that all outlooks are limited by a historical moment, and to engage dynamically with the past
- Students can demonstrate multiple ways of understanding the relationship of philosophy to other disciplines
- Students can better formulate key questions about the major arguments in philosophical texts

Student Learning Outcomes for the 400 – level courses in the Philosophy Major (knowledge, skills, dispositions)

- Students can do preliminary philosophical research
- Students can use library information retrieval systems and scholarly digital search engines
- Students can critically evaluate secondary sources
- Students can lead a focused seminar discussion of a primary or secondary text
- Students can produce and present their own research
- Students can show evidence of independent scholarly self-directed study
- Students can analyze concepts, definitions, presuppositions, arguments and problems
- Students can distinguish fine differences among views and identify common ground between opposing positions.
- Students can synthesize a variety of views or perspectives into a unified whole.

Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes

Course goals and learning outcomes are stated on each syllabus. Achievement of these goals and outcomes is measured in a variety of different ways, e.g., mid-term and final exams, term papers, quizzes, short assignments, role playing, oral presentations, prompts given out at the beginning and end of semesters. All professors in our department stress the use of multiple graded essay assignments as a key means of evaluating student progress.

Students report that courses have been successful in teaching them how to think clearly and distinctly in handling difficult matter, as well as in learning to write succinct essays on difficult subjects.

Courses are reviewed for part-timers by a departmental review subcommittee at the end of each academic year. Courses for full-time faculty are reviewed by a peer committee during post-tenure reviews every four years. More frequent reviews are scheduled if a teaching problem is identified by students or faculty.

The department periodically reviews the issue of which, if any, courses should be prerequisites for others in order to balance a tiered curriculum for the major with the needs of general education students. Flexibility of course offerings is a scheduling goal in order to ensure that our program is accessible to working, non-traditional students and student athletes.

Students completing the USM philosophy major have been successful in attaining admission to graduate school in both philosophy and other areas and also in being admitted to law school. Our majors have also go on to work for non-profit organizations, health care companies, schools, and small businesses.

2: How and When will the Learning Outcomes be assessed?

- a. *Briefly describe the forms of evidence that were utilized this past year to demonstrate students' accomplishment of the learning outcome(s) selected, and when you implemented the assessment.*

Our program is writing intensive. The majority of graded work in our classes centers on many written scholarly papers. The Faculty relied on collective discussions of our evaluations of students' written work including the collective faculty assessment of this year's senior theses and defenses. The aim of the faculty is to establish some base-line writing requirements to improve the quality of written work.

3: How did you use the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning?

- a. Briefly describe your unit’s process for using the assessment data to improve student learning, and state what improvements or changes are being planned based upon the assessment results.

E. Are there “community engagement” activities integrated in your departmental curriculum?

- a. Please indicate which of the components, listed below, are included in your program’s curriculum, and then indicate if the activities are required or optional for students in your major.

<u>Community Engagement Activity</u>	<u>Included</u>	<u>Required/Optional</u>
Student Research (related to a community-based problem)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Student-Faculty Community Research Project	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Internship, or a Field Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Independent Study (community-related project)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> O	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Capstone Course (community-related project)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Service-Learning (a component of a course)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Study Abroad, or an International Program	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (advisory boards, committees, conference presentations)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> R <input type="checkbox"/> O
Other Activities (not mentioned above): Student leadership in the philosophy club, the SYMPOSIUM. Occasional participation by students in THINKING MATTERS		

- b. Please list the courses (i.e. EDU 400) that have a “community engagement” activity in your program:

Entry-level courses:

Mid-level courses:

Upper-level courses: