Assessment Plan, Department of Philosophy

2012

Goals

1. Students will study the thought of major figures in the history of Western philosophy and thereby to educate themselves regarding the ideas, values, and philosophical perspectives that shape our civilization, and to a significant degree, provide the context in which the front-line debates of our time occur.

2. Students will investigate the traditional philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and/or social & political thought and to see how these issues stand behind concerns or interests they may have in science and religion, or regarding social issues from abortion to economic justice, or simply in pursuing the nature and meaning of a well-lived life.

3. Students will develop their abilities to read closely, analyze carefully, reason critically, evaluate responsibly, and think creatively.

4. Students will develop their ability to give both oral and written expression to their ideas, arguments and reasoning.

All of the above applies to students majoring or minoring in philosophy as well as those majoring in philosophy and religion; the abilities which philosophy nurtures in the general student should be more fully and expressly developed in these students.

Ways of Meeting Goals

Goals 1 & 2: achieved by taking the appropriate coursework; courses of the sort mentioned in all three of these goals are offered on a regular basis. With regard to Goal 1, majors and minors are required to take a three-course history of philosophy sequence; Philosophy & Religion minors are required to take two of these three classes.

Goal 3: achieved by assigned readings of primary sources and class discussions.

Goal 4: achieved by writing exams and papers, engaging in class discussions, and by oral presentations. Majors are required in their senior year to write a thesis paper for which they give an oral defense before the faculty.

Methods of Assessing Student Learning

Direct Measures: Senior thesis papers; Placement in graduate philosophy programs; Student participation in undergraduate conferences

Indirect Measures: Evaluations from individual classes which include questions concerning students' assessment of learning goals met or not met; Senior surveys

Course Offerings Relative to Goals

Fall 2008

PHIL	110	150	215	285	300	385	490	497
Goal 1	H	L		H	H	L		L
Goal 2	H	L		H	H	H		L
Goal 3	H	M		H	H	H		L
Goal 4	H	L		H	H	M		L

Key:
L Goal met to a low level of depth (relative to other department offerings)
M Goal met to a medium level of depth (relative to other department offerings)
H Goal met to a high level of depth (relative to other department offerings)