

Annual Assessment Report
Department of Philosophy
May 2018

The department of Philosophy held its annual assessment meeting on May 2, 2018. During this meeting we discussed the email and rubric sent to us by the Assessment Committee. In general, we are quite satisfied that the courses offered to Hendrix students by the department are meeting the stated learning goals of the department (see the rubric analysis in appendix 1). For both the majors in philosophy and in philosophy and religious studies as well as the minors in philosophy, the first learning goal is excellently achieved through the required three-courses in the history of philosophy. In addition to these course, other courses offered by the department investigate traditional philosophical areas of interest and some specifically focus on the relation of one of these areas to contemporary issues and concerns. These courses meet the second learning goal of the department. Since our courses are taught in a Socratic style with small enrollments, our students are nurtured in developing their abilities to critically read and respond to philosophical texts both in an oral and written manner, satisfying the third and fourth learning goals.

With the recent added requirements of a course in logic or critical reasoning and one in ethical theory or ethical issues, we have explicitly assured that those majors who wish to continue the study of philosophy in graduate school are well prepared. (Previously this occurred through the advising process.) The breadth and depth of the philosophy course offerings also permit those majors and minors, who do not wish to pursue graduate studies, to become acquainted with some of the big questions and proposed answers and so enables them to live a fulfilling life in whatever trajectory they choose.

The philosophy department is proud of its ability to contribute to the general liberal arts learning goals of Hendrix College (see appendix 2). In particular, the philosophy department is involved in several important college initiatives. Doing more than our fair share, we have enthusiastically participated in The Engaged Citizen Program for all in-coming students. Further, we support and contribute to the Environmental Studies and Neuroscience interdisciplinary programs, as well as to the Gender Studies and Asian Studies programs.

In response to your request for a discussion of our new 100-level courses, the rationale for this change was discussed in last year's report. Basically, we dropped our previous 100-level course, Introducing Philosophical Questions, since its title did not indicate the specific area of philosophy that was to be discussed, since this changed depending of the professor teaching that section. We had hoped that first year students would take specific 200-level courses where the content was clearly enunciated in the Catalog description. We explicitly stated that these courses were appropriate for first year students (as is the case in the English Department). Unfortunately, this message did not work, and advisors were reluctant to place first year students into 200-level courses. Observing this situation, we introduced five new 100-level courses where their titles indicate the subject matter to be examined in each course. We decided further to model these courses on the general first-year experience courses, currently The Engaged Citizen. This meant limiting the enrollment to 15 first-year students. The addition of these courses has been quite successful. Most of these courses have reached their enrollment limits. More importantly the courses have been pedagogically successful.

Looking towards the future, we plan to reexamine the senior survey and its implementation. In particular, many graduates now take a gap year after Hendrix, and so we do not have a means to assess how their undergraduate degree in Philosophy or in Philosophy and Religious Studies impacts their decisions. The senior survey also needs to be updated according to our newer learning goals. We also plan to modify our practices concerning the Senior Thesis, Senior Seminar, and Capstone.

Appendix 1

FALL 2017-18

		GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4
PHIL 201 A1	Civil Discourse	on sabbatical			
PHIL 200 K1	Sp Fcs: Mark Twain	M	M	H	H
PHIL 200 C1	Sp Fcs: Scottish Philosophy	H	H	M	M
PHIL 200 O1	Sp Fcs: Persons Over Time	M	H	H	H
PHIL 225 01	Ethics and Medicine	M	H	H	H
PHIL 245 01	Logic	NA	NA	H	M
PHIL 285 01	Ancient Philosophy	H	H	H	H
PHIL 306 01	Nineteenth Century Philosophy	H	H	H	H
PHIL 310 01	Feminist Thought	H	M	H	H
PHIL 390 01	Philosophy of Mind	on sabbatical			
PHIL 487 01	Senior Seminar	H	H	H	H
PHIL 497 01	Senior Thesis	M	M	H	H

SPRING 2017-18

PHIL 113 01	How Should We Live	M	H	M	H
PHIL 114 01	What is Real?	M	H	H	H
PHIL 200 O1	Persons Over Time	M	H	H	H
PHIL 200 Z1	Native American Phil	M	M	H	H
PHIL 225 01	Ethics and Medicine	M	H	H	H
PHIL 245 01	Logic	NA	M	H	M
PHIL 255 01	Women Philosophers	H	H	H	H
PHIL 302 01	17th and 18th Century Philosophy	H	H	M	M
PHIL 350 01	Philosophy of Science	H	H	H	H
PHIL 370 01	Faith and Reason	H	H	H	H
PHIL 490 S1	Topics: Poverty Studies	M	M	H	H

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)
NA	Not applicable to this course

Learning Goals

1. Students will study the thought of major figures in the history of 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.

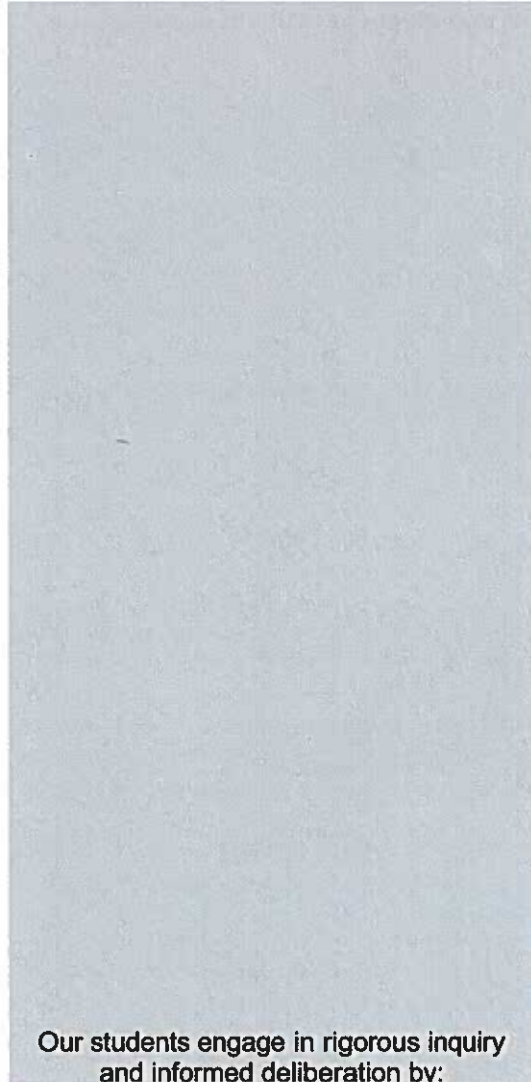
2. Students will investigate the traditional philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and/or social & political thought and to see how these issues stand behind concerns or interests they may have in science and religion, or regarding social issues from abortion to economic justice,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

Appendix 2

Philosophy Learning Goals (x means contributes)



Our students engage in rigorous inquiry and informed deliberation by:

		1. Students will study the thought of major figures in the history of 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.
I1	· investigating and researching underlying causes and connections	x	x		
I2	· synthesizing evidence from multiple sources	x	x		
I3	· designing ways to answer their questions	x	x		
I4	· acquiring the skills to evaluate arguments and evidence critically			x	

15	· developing independent, nuanced, and thoughtful analyses				x	
16	· making connections among different bodies of knowledge	x		x		x
17	· communicating their findings effectively and persuasively through written, oral, experiential, visual, or other appropriate methods					x
18	· reflecting on their studies and being prepared to engage with the world based on their inquiry and deliberation	x		x		x

Hendrix College students actively and reflectively engage with multiple communities by:

MC1	· understanding the past, present, and future needs of the earth and of humanity, and of the challenges of our interdependence			x		
MC2	· considering ethical conundrums from conflicting perspectives	x		x		
MC3	· bringing their experiences in the wider community back to the classroom to enhance their course of study					

The Hendrix College community supports these goals by:

C1	· fostering an awareness of different cultures through a commitment to diversity and inclusion	x		x		
C2	· providing opportunities for students to confront the diverse challenges and needs of our shared communities in order to inspire them to lead lives of service			x		

The college community provides opportunities for students to develop as whole persons in their personal and professional lives by:

WP1	· guiding students in examining their abilities and strengths				x	
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WP2	· helping them recognize how their skills can work for them and for the good of others, both now and in the future	x	x		
WP3	· providing tools and opportunities to prepare our students for their prospective professional lives			x	x
WP4	· striving to inspire students to lead lives of accomplishment as both leaders and team members				
WP5	· encouraging their development into individuals who are independent, responsible, and attentive to their own mental and physical well-being		x	x	
WP6	· nurturing their life-long love of learning, both about themselves and about the world as curious, creative, and active participants in life and in their communities.	x	x	x	