

**SAMPLE
STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT***

**Department of Philosophy and Religion
B.A. and B.S. in Philosophy**

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the faculty in philosophy are to:

1. develop in majors the ability to read, understand, critique, and generate philosophical arguments
2. provide majors with a familiarity with history of philosophy, value theory, and epistemology/metaphysics
3. enable majors to bring philosophy and philosophical reasoning to bear on realworld problems

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of requirements, philosophy majors should demonstrate:

1. the ability both to analyze and critique philosophical arguments of others and to generate philosophical arguments of their own. Specifically, majors should be able to demonstrate that:

- they can (1) present and explain each premise of a philosophical argument, (2) evaluate the argument's validity and soundness, (3) explain any problems that are found, and (4) suggest ways to remedy the problems.
- they can construct and present an argument in a way that allows the audience to analyze and critique the argument.

2. familiarity with history of philosophy, value theory, and epistemology/metaphysics. Specifically, majors should be able to demonstrate that:

- they can describe the role of some central concepts of value theory and epistemology/metaphysics--like moral wrong, knowledge, or identity--in contemporary philosophical thought.
- they can describe the role of central philosophical concepts in significant periods of the history of philosophy.

3. the ability bring philosophy and philosophical reasoning to bear on real-world problems. Specifically, majors should be able to demonstrate that:

- they can use philosophy to address problems in situations where the premises are unclear or implicit.
- they can present philosophical arguments in a premise/conclusion format, both in writing and in conversation.
- they can analyze an issue, define key terms, and draw clear and reasonable conclusions.

SOURCES OF DATA FOR REVIEWING OUTCOMES

Portfolios of student work*:

- one paper from each student from PHI 494, 495, and 496 (to be collected every semester)
- selected questions on exams from required courses (to be collected every semester)
- papers from Applied Ethics and from other courses that may focus on real-world problems (to be collected every year)

Outcome #1: Students' ability both to analyze and critique philosophical arguments of others

and to generate philosophical arguments of their own.

- Portfolio of student work: one paper from each student from PHI 494, 495, and 496
- Essay questions on exams from same courses.

Outcome #2: Students' familiarity with history of philosophy, value theory, and epistemology/metaphysics.

- Portfolio of student work: selected portions of exams from required courses
- Portfolio of student work: required presentation in PHI 144

Outcome #3: Students ability bring philosophy and philosophical reasoning to bear on real-world problems.

#3a: To demonstrate that students can use philosophy to address problems in situations where the premises are unclear or implicit

- Student work on papers in PHI 495 and 496

#3b: To demonstrate that students can present philosophical arguments in a premise/conclusion format, both in writing and in speaking

- Oral presentations of students in PHI 496
- Student papers selected from PHI 494, 495, 496

#3c: To demonstrate that students can analyze an issue, define key terms, and draw clear and reasonable conclusions

- Portfolio of student work: papers from Applied Ethics and from other courses that may focus on real-world problems

*The portfolio in this case is what is called a best-case or snapshot portfolio, a random sample of students' work representing what is considered the best-case data for assessing a particular outcome. The student work is to be collected and used by a small assessment committee as a way of judging the program's effectiveness in enabling majors to attain the stated outcome.

OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS

Outcome #1: Students' ability both to analyze and critique philosophical arguments of others

and to generate philosophical arguments of their own.

Evaluated: Spring, 2005.

20 student papers were evaluated by a faculty committee, using a performance matrix. Results were as follows:

Analyze and critique philosophical arguments of others: 10 performed excellent; 5 performed acceptable; 3 moderate but acceptable; 2 unacceptable.

Generate philosophical arguments of their own: 13 excellent; 1 acceptable; 6 unacceptable.

Findings: *Overall, performance was judged to be acceptable to excellent, but that additional practice on generating arguments in earlier courses could better prepare students for this requirement.*

Action: *Syllabus of PHI 232 was amended, requiring students to write several philosophical original philosophical arguments and submit them to other students for peer evaluation. Student performance on this goal will be reevaluated in Spring 2009.*

Outcome #2: Students' familiarity with history of philosophy, value theory, and epistemology/metaphysics.

Evaluated: fall, 2007. A list of critical concepts were created, and samples of student papers and presentations in PHI 241 were examined to ascertain if students work demonstrated familiarity with those concepts.

31 samples were examined: of the 31, all demonstrated a high level of familiarity with all concepts except value theory . 15 of the 31 were weak on this concept.

Action: Additional readings were added to PHI 241, and the concept was included on several in-class quizzes, to highlight its importance in the minds of students. Student performance on this concept will be reevaluated in Spring 2009.

Outcome #3:

Scheduled to be evaluated in Fall 2008.

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