

# Assessment Plan: Philosophy Major

Sanford Levy, Fall 2016-17

## Program Learning Outcomes

Our graduates will:

1. Understand (and be able to explain) the views of important historical figures in philosophy.
2. Write clearly structured papers in support of a philosophical thesis.
3. Identify and avoid formal and informal fallacies.
4. Identify and explain the views and arguments of others in written texts.
5. Analyze arguments.
6. Present critiques that effectively engage with arguments.

## Curriculum Map

<add courses in curriculum, mark with **I** (introduce), **D** (develop), **M** (mastery) >

	Cr	Outcomes					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
PHL 361 History of Ancient & Med. Phil.	3	D					
PHL 362 History of Modern Philosophy	3	D					
PHL 494 Seminar	3		M				
PHL 236 Logic	3			I			
Any 300 level PHL	3				D	D	D

## Student Performance: Data Sources

	Cr	Outcomes					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
PHL 361 History of Ancient & Med. Phil.	3	x					
PHL 362 History of Modern Philosophy	3	x					
PHL 494 Seminar	3		x				
PHL 236 Logic	3			x			
Any 300 level PHL	3				x	x	x

## Response Threshold

*At least 75% of students will be rated "meets expectations" or higher.*

## Schedules

	Year					
Outcome	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1			x			x
2	x			x		
3	x			x		
4			x			x
5		x			x	
6		x			x	

## Process for Assessing the Data

### Annual Assessment Process

1. Data is collected from identified courses.
2. Random samples of collected assignments are scored by two faculty members using prepared scoring rubrics.
3. The assessment coordinator tabulates the scores. Areas where the acceptable performance threshold has not been met are highlighted.
4. The scores are presented to the faculty for assessment.
5. The faculty reviews the assessment results, and makes decisions on how to respond. If an acceptable performance threshold has not been met
  - Gather additional data next year to verify or refute the result.
  - Change something in the curriculum to try to fix the problem.
6. Faculty can respond to assessment results even if the acceptable performance threshold has been met.
7. A summary of the year's assessment activities and faculty decisions will be reported to the Provost's Office in your Department's Annual Assessment Activities report.

## **Annual Assessment Report History and Philosophy 2016-17**

### **Major in Philosophy**

#### **Outcome 1:**

- 1) **What was done?** Based on our assessment plan, we evaluated the course learning Outcome 1: Understand (and be able to explain) the views of important historical figures in philosophy.
- 2) **What data were collected?** We collected a random sample of final papers written by philosophy majors from PHL 361 and PHL 362 taught Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. Papers were evaluated by two faculty members. Each faculty member had four papers to assess.
- 3) **What was learned?** One faculty member thought all of the papers met expectations. The other reviewer thought that two met and two exceeded expectations.
- 4) **How we responded?** We will continue to teach students to analyze arguments through lectures and written assignments. Given the quality of the papers, no particular action is required.

#### **Outcome : 4:**

- 1) **What was done?** Based on our assessment plan, we evaluated the course learning Outcome 4: Identify and explain the views and arguments of others in written texts.
- 2) **What data were collected?** We collected a random sample of eight final papers written by philosophy majors from several upper division courses taught Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. Papers were evaluated by two faculty members.
- 3) **What was learned?** One reviewer evaluated four papers and found three met expectations and one exceeded expectations. A second reviewer evaluated four papers and found two exceeded expectations, one met expectations, and one failed to meet expectations. These papers were all "thesis-defense" papers. In my judgment, they all did a reasonable job in explaining their theses and offering positive support for them. Any weaknesses were in explaining the views and arguments of others. In this case, that means the views and arguments of opponents.
- 4) **How we responded?** We will continue to teach students to explain the views of others in written texts. A great many of the papers our students write are thesis-defense papers. It is important for this sort of paper that students be able explain the views and arguments of opponents. As this is one of the more difficult skills for students to learn, we will continue to place special emphasis on it.