**Philosophy Department**

**Major Assessment Report**

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| **learning outcome(s) assessed**  We did 2 assessment activities of the major, covering **all four** general SLOs.   1. PHIL 170T LO1 history & theory, LO2 logic arg., LO3 critical thinking 2. Voicing Ideas Symposium all LOs with emphasis on LO2 argumentation and LO4 service |
| **assignment used and method of assessment used**  PHIL 170T  Assess senior seminar final papers from 170T course, focused on the following aspects of 3 of our Learning Outcomes. Quickly read through 11, of the 17 enrolled, final papers to see whether and how well they demonstrate presence of the Learning Outcomes selected above. Then, score each paper for *each* LO (papers will get 3 scores each) on the following scale:   * + - * **1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = excellent** * **Appreciate the significance of philosophy and religion in human affairs**   + Students should be able to describe the history of (Philosophical and Religious) ideas from Parmenides to the 21st Century so as not to repeat past errors   + Students should be able to explain philosophical areas/topics: Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Value Theory * **Understand basic logic underlying ideas, values, and approaches in philosophy and religion**    + Students should understand basic logic and employ it to reconstruct, criticize, and evaluate arguments   + Students should be able to defend a specific thesis in writing using logical argumentation and authoritative evidence * **Recognize critical thinking employed in texts, traditions, arguments, and ideas**   **Benchmark:** For 170T all LOs are expected to be at advanced stage. Although, papers we already heard at Voicing Ideas were removed as they could not be anonymous. Those were some of the best papers of the semester, encouraged to apply. So the benchmark has to be adjusted downward a little. We expect that five of the papers will score 3 or 4 in each area, with at least one being a 4 and none being a 1.  Voicing Ideas Symposium  There are three parts to this assessment: the submissions, the review process, and the event. This occasion engages all our learning outcomes at various stages.   1. For the submission stage, we are assessing our students’ willingness to participate, which should demonstrate especially LO4.1 “Value the global and local diversity of philosophical and religious interpretations a. Students should be able to contribute an act of service that involves engaged dialogue.”    1. Submissions Benchmark: 15 submissions, which amounts to 10% of majors plus a few who could be enrolled in upper GE 2. The review process generally covers all learning outcomes because we are reading their written work for all the components of being able to describe and explain things in the disciplines as well as identifying and employing logic for argumentation.    1. Reviewing Submissions Benchmarks: Should be difficult to choose. We want       1. \_\_34\_% to be firm yesses (anything above a 6)       2. \_\_33\_\_% acceptable (6)       3. \_\_33\_\_% to unacceptable (below a 6)       4. then have to rank the firm yesses to fit the time available for the program 3. At the event, again LO4 takes center stage because “Students should be able to practice tolerance and dialogue.” During Q&A their skills at understanding history and topics in philosophy and religious studies while evaluating arguments, openly and tolerantly, really come into play. LO2 also includes defending a thesis and engaging in oral debate. Those are both assessable during Voicing Ideas.    1. Benchmarks: all full-time faculty and at least 20 non-presenting students in the audience; audience, especially students, generate good questions; presenters answer questions well |
| **What did you discover?**  PHIL 170T   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | LO 1 CC | LO 1  JR | LO1 average | LO 2 JR | LO 2  CC | LO2 average | LO 3 JR | LO 3  CC | LO3 average | | Paper a | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | | Paper c | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | Paper d | 2.5 | 3 | 2.75 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | | Paper f | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | Paper g | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.5 | 3 | 4 | 3.5 | | Paper j | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | Paper l | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 | 3 | 3.5 | | Paper m | 4 | 3 | 3.5 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | | Paper n | 2.5 | 1 | 1.75 | 1 | 2.5 | 2 | 1 | 2.5 | 1.75 | | Paper o | 4 | 3 | 3.5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | | Paper q | 2.5 | 3 | 2.75 | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.25 |   For LO1 (explain history and theories in phil & religion)  Seven papers were 3 or above; one was a 4 – meets, even exceeds, benchmark  Three papers were between 2 & 3  One was below 2 – just about meets benchmark since one was just a 1.75 average  For LO2 (understand and employ logic and argumentation, defend thesis in writing)  Three papers were 3 or above, none 4 or higher – below benchmark  Eight are between 2 &3  none below 2 – meets benchmark  For LO3 (recognize critical thinking)  Five papers are 3 or above, none above 4 – almost meets benchmark but none above 3.5  Five are between 2 & 3  One was below 2 – meets benchmark since none were 1. One was just a 1.75 average  Averages for each learning outcome were similar (LO1: 2.98, LO2: 2.59, LO3: 2.68) but also demonstrate slightly stronger skills with understanding the history and theories of philosophy than with writing their own arguments.  Most papers had a clear thesis and counted as an argument in defense of that. Some were very weak arguments. Some were much too much summary. Most could use more structure and organization.  The length of the paper seemed to result in students being repetitive or summarizing too much.  We noted that many bibliographies were missing things that had been referenced in the text of the essay. Citations skills aren’t particular to any learning outcome but might matter for LO1.    Voicing Ideas Symposium   1. Submissions:    1. Received: 15 submissions, which means we hit our benchmark! For the first time in at least 5 years. This is an excellent demonstration of fulfilling the Learning Outcome that “Students should be able to contribute an act of service that involves engaged dialogue.”    2. Submissions came from a variety of courses (as near as we can figure given that we didn’t require them to disclose). We approximate that five papers were originally written for 118, one from 150, one from 152, five from 170T, one from an independent study, and two written specifically for this submission. We’ve had some good representation from religious studies in the past, but none this year. This isn’t worrisome for just one year, especially with staffing changes happening.    3. This can be explained largely by having followed through on some of the recommendations from previous years.       1. some faculty included in syllabus clear indication of an assignment that could result in an appropriate submission       2. faculty specifically encouraged students to submit, generally in classes and specifically to some individuals, verbally, in emails, and written on the specific paper suggested as a worthwhile submission       3. an active Philosophy Club helped encourage each other, even to some degree, working together on revisions before submission       4. a good Faculty Organizer helped    4. We do not have clear data on whether submissions came from Spring ’17 or Fall ’17 but maybe we should be careful to get submissions from the entire last year. It’s easy to remember to encourage students at the end of Spring ’18 for next year, since it is still on our minds. But they have to still be committed almost a year later to go back and submit. Then in the Fall we have to remember that Voicing Ideas is a possibility to encourage them to submit. 2. Reviewing Submissions:    1. Papers were scored on two scales.       1. On the first scale (with more fineness of grain offered by judges giving a score from 1 to 5), the papers scored as follows: 9.3, 9, 8, 7.5, 7.5, 7, 7, 6.8, 6, 6, 6, 5.5, 5.5, 5, and 5. That’s an average of 6.74.          1. Eight of them (53%) were deemed worthy of inclusion.          2. Three (20%) were just at the cut off line          3. Four (27%) were below the cut off line, but only slightly below. , with the other four (5.5 and 5) being just slightly below the cut off line.       2. The second scale was -2 to 2, with anything above 0 being worthy of inclusion. This score asked reviewers to voting only "accept" or "decline to accept."  On the second scale, the papers scored as follows: 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 0.5, 0, 0, 0, -1, -1, -1, -1. That’s an average of 0.5          1. four (27%) received perfect scores of 2. And eight (53%) received scores that were deemed worthy of inclusion. That’s a total of 80% solid yesses.          2. three (20%) were exactly at the cut off line.          3. four (27%) were deemed not worthy of inclusion.    2. By both scales we surpassed our benchmarks. The more precise scale had us surpasses them a little less definitively, but above them nonetheless. From this we can conclude that at least this portion of our students are demonstrating fulfillment of the Learning Outcomes.    3. 6 were accepted this year, the most in last 5 years for sure.    4. Acceptances came also, as far as we can tell, from a variety of courses: two from 118, one from 150, was one from 152, one was from 170T       1. While there was a variety of topics covered (philosophy of science, existentialism, aesthetics, political philosophy), not all the options were represented, as there was no particularly law-focused paper and the religious studies topic was largely political philosophy as well.       2. Good variety of representation of our diverse major too: two women, some persons of color.    5. Far exceeded student audience, along with some friends and family members, while falling slightly below on faculty attendance. The room was SRO, even after we brought in an additional 7 chairs beyond the 50 already in the room. There was a rotation of audience members during the breaks between the three sessions, so we estimate that at least 75 different people attended the event, including 7 faculty (4 or 5 there the entire time).    6. Far exceeded benchmarks for Q&A as well: each presenter received between 4 and 8 questions, almost entirely from students. Each presenter received at least one, never more than 2, faculty questions.    7. Both the presenters and the audience were excellent demonstrations of advanced accomplishment of many of our learning outcomes, especially:   4. a. & c. : “Students should be able to contribute an act of service that involves engaged dialogue” and “Students should be able to practice tolerance and dialogue”  2. a. b. & c. : “Students should be able to defend a specific thesis using logical argumentation and authoritative evidence” “Students should be able to engage in oral debate” “Students should be able to openly and tolerantly explore ideas concerning religious belief, ethical commitment, and worldviews”   * + 1. All faculty agree that the oral presentation skills of the participants were stellar, including some presenters who worked without any notes. And they did very well to reply to questions and interact with the audience.     2. All faculty agree that Q&A was quite fantastic.        1. Some students asked multiple questions in the day, demonstrating an ability to engage with a variety of philosophical topics.     3. In the presentations and especially in the questions, and answers, many students demonstrated that they integrating knowledge from multiple courses, from courses across philosophy and religious studies.     4. The Philosophy Club members did a lot to not only be active participants themselves but to encourage others to attend as well. |
| **What changes did you make as a result of the data?**  PHIL 170T  The following is recommended:   * Work on developing abilities with various length papers, developing bigger ideas as well as more detailed argumentation. * They just need to proofread, need to spend more time writing as too many might have been written in only a day or two. Maybe papers of this length need more development built into the syllabus. Or maybe we need more development in other courses before getting to the senior seminar. * We need to work on developing the relationship between comprehending what others say and defending own view, in organized way. They need to be able to use their logic and critical thinking skills outside of logic class. We need to look at the place of advanced logic in our curriculum, as this is the class two years into a temporary change in our logic requirement.   Voicing Ideas Symposium   * Let’s keep up with our encouragement to submit, using our syllabuses but also give specific papers feedback that it is a worthy submission and follow up when it’s time to submit. * Let’s praise Phil Club and keep them active. They do well to encourage each other and when one or two admit they are submitting, others follow and feel more comfortable doing so. * We could consider an audience assessment/evaluation form and possibly finding a way to use some scholarship money for prizes (if we can get students to apply, or work on timing issues). |
| 1. **What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2017-2018 AY?**   We will assess PHIL 25 and/or PHIL 45, which was scheduled for this academic year but got pushed back because of curriculum changes coming from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and changes to articulation agreements with community colleges over pre-law students.  Continue to assess PHIL 170T and Voicing Ideas possibly also 199  We would like to determine a way to assess separately and comparatively the three options in the major (general philosophy, pre-law, and religious studies) in the courses they most commonly share.  We might focus some assessment on the large format intro level classes (Phil 1, Phil 2, Phil 10, Phil 20) happening more regularly now. |
| 1. **What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?** 2. Revise SOAP    1. Still underway 3. Look more closely at Religious Studies Option and all Department Major requirements, focusing on reviewing our major advising practices.    1. We clarified for ourselves – and for the new CAH Advisors – the major and the sorts of regular misunderstandings that arise for students. We discussed the most common barriers to students completing the program and ways to advise students early so as to best overcome or avoid those barriers.    2. We still plan to use Phil Club to survey students about major advising, about their needs and preferences, what’s working and what’s not, especially with the CAH Advising Center now firmly established.    3. We lost a faculty in Religious Studies, so our priority became a new hire. This, though, prompted careful discussion about the fire so as to not only ensure teaching coverage but have this new hire fit into the overall curriculum of the philosophy major.    4. We have been focusing on our Learning Outcomes being shared across all in the major, that covers three options and maintaining the coherence of one philosophy major with three options for emphasis. 4. Hire in Philosophy of Science    1. We did this.    2. Our new faculty member can explore the pros and cons for themselves and the students to increase our participation in the Cognitive Science Program but they will teach related courses in our department and in GE. 5. Develop a department colloquium, to increase collegiality and model for students the activities of an intellectual community.    1. We did this – had three lectures last year, with some student attendance.    2. We are continuing this year and hoping that the more it is established, the more student attendance we’ll see    3. We have also focused on Directed Readings with groups of faculty and students: four last year, one already beginning, and a couple more in the works.   **Additional Guidelines:** If you have not fully described the assignment then please attach a copy of the questions or assignment guidelines. If you are using a rubric and did not fully describe this rubric (or the criteria being used) than please attach a copy of the rubric. If you administered a survey please consider attaching a copy of the survey so that the Learning Assessment Team (LAT) can review the questions. |