**Annual Assessment Report 2020-2021 AY**

**Department/Program**: Philosophy **Degree**: BA

**Assessment Coordinator**: Carolyn Cusick

We conducted two activities last year. Answers are given to each question for each activity.

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

For the first activity, we assessed the following LOs, with particular attention paid to the two in red:

1. **Appreciate the significance of philosophy and religion in human affairs**
2. Students should be able to explain philosophical areas/topics: Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Value Theory
3. **Understand basic logic underlying ideas, values, and approaches in philosophy and religion**
   1. Students should understand basic logic and employ it to reconstruct, criticize, and evaluate arguments
   2. Students should be able to **defend a specific thesis in writing using logical argumentation and authoritative evidence**
4. **Recognize critical thinking employed in texts, traditions, arguments, and ideas**
   1. Students should be able to **identify and apply critical thinking**
   2. Students should be able to reconstruct dialogues/debates among philosophers and traditions (e.g., empiricism v. rationalism, etc.)

For the second activity, we assessed: all the learning outcomes

1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? Please describe the assignment and the criterial or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.

For the first activity, seven faculty members read half the final essays assigned in PHIL 115 Ethical Theory. The assignment required students to consider an ethical problem through three different ethical theories and argue for a solution through one or some combination of the theories.

For the second activity, we assessed our annual symposium of student papers, Voicing Ideas – the submissions, the review process, and the event itself. At the submission stage, we are assessing our students’ willingness to participate in public philosophy. The review process involves reading their written work; then at the event we evaluate the quality of the oral presentations and the Q&A.

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient. Also indicate your benchmark and indicate the number of students who met that benchmark.

For the first activity, papers were scored on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = poor, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = excellent); 10 papers from 20 students in the course were read. For this course all LOs are expected to be at reinforced stage. So, the benchmark is that we expect six of the papers will score 3 or 4 in each area, with at least two being a 4 and not more than one paper being a 1.

We are not quite hitting the benchmarks insofar as only one paper was unanimously deemed a 4 in only one learning outcome, though no papers averaged less than adequate. (See quantitative data at the end of the report.) For a course where learning outcomes are being reinforced, these papers were close to what we would expect, though faculty were mostly concerned about weaknesses in LO2, in how few papers were good examples of students articulating and defending a thesis. Students were better at explaining ethical theories than they were at carrying a thread of their own throughout the paper and doing that good explaining for a reason beyond the explaining. The papers clearly demonstrated that students value ethics; they were able to articulate the importance of ethical reasoning. They were able to identify and reflect meaningfully on ethical issues in our lives and communities and on why ethical theory matters for reasoning about everyday ethical issues.

For the second activity,

1. Submissions: We exactly met our benchmark of having 15 submissions (which amounts to 10% of majors plus a few who could be enrolled in upper GE) from a variety of different courses and areas of philosophical emphasis.
2. Reviewing Submissions: We mostly exceeded our benchmarks. We expect that choosing which submissions – each of which was read by two faculty members – to accept should be difficult since 2/3 should be acceptable or higher (and 1/3 really should be firm yesses) but only 1/3 unacceptable. While none of the 15 submissions were scored 5 (exceptional) 11 papers (73%) were acceptable or higher and none of the papers were poor (see chart at the end of the report for details).

Eight of the papers scored “should present.” And all 8 were accepted this year. The most ever (or at least in the last 8 years, including last year when we accepted 6 since we went virtual anyhow). Acceptances came also from a variety of areas representing all three options in foci of religious studies, moral philosophy, political philosophy, and philosophy of law. Acceptances also included a good representation of our diverse major too: three women and five persons of color (including two of the women)

1. The Event: We expect that all full-time faculty and at least 20 non-presenting students would be in the audience and that the audience, especially the students, will generate good questions that the presenters answer well.

There were about 65 different people over the course of the event (though the audience rotated between breaks such that at any given time there were between 30 and 40 people) present including the presenters, most of the faculty, two deans, CAH staff member and Dean’s Council Member, at least one alum, some presenters’ family members, and at least a dozen or so students.

Q&A met the benchmarks as well: each presenter received a few questions, almost entirely from students. Most, but not all, questions were asked clearly and were relevant to the presentation. Most, but not all, presenters were able to engage with the questions well enough. The interactions clearly indicated that there is a strong intellectual community among our students even though a few voices speak up more frequently and more forcefully than evenly dispersed questions and comments. Many students demonstrated integrating knowledge from multiple courses, from courses across philosophy and religious studies, as well as understanding the place of philosophical inquiry in their lives. We notice that we were short on metaphysics and epistemology but long on social justice and current events.

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

For the first activity, we suspect students aren’t putting in the time to write multiple drafts of a paper where they get to develop their ideas. We identified some papers where the good ideas arrived at the end, which is common when we recognize writing as a form of thinking. Given more time, or more feedback on drafts, more students would likely improve. We discussed the use of iterative writing practices in our pedagogies.

Questions about the place of 115 in the common courses, and the general sequencing of courses in the program, arose. We plan to schedule future assessment activities on the common courses to monitor the new curriculum closely.

For the second activity, we noted that we should maintain faculty efforts to encourage submissions, using our syllabuses but also giving specific papers feedback that it is a worthy submission and follow up when it’s time to submit. 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). And we are considering having at least two faculty co-coordinators of the event to share the labor and distribution of marketing and representation.

1. If you recommended any changed to Question 4 in your 2018-2019 assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? N/A
2. What assessment activities will you be conducing during AY 2021-22?

Assess final papers for the Fall PHIL 170T course or PHIL 25, or both

Assess Voicing Ideas

1. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

Program Review indicated that we need to align assessment with new program recently changed to meet EO 1071, to assess that common courses are the right ones and whether courses can be appropriately sequenced, so assessment particularly for lower division core course.

This is already underway given assessment of PHIL 115 last year, one of the courses added to the common courses and the plan for this year as well.

Program Review also indicated that we need to revise the SOAP to better define and distinguish department SLOs and re-align them and the assessment schedule with curriculum revisions and vision of the department.

Discussion of a new assessment schedule already began and revision of the SOAP is planned as a department activity, led by the Assessment Coordinator for AY 2021-2022.

APPENDIX:

DATA for the first activity,

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | LO 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1.5 | 2.2 |  |
| P2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2.9 | <2 = 0 |
| P3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 2 - 2.9 = 4 |
| P4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.0 | 3.0 - 3.9= 5 |
| P5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3.0 | 4 = 1 |
| P6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2.9 |  |
| P7 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3.1 |  |
| P8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3.0 |  |
| P9 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3.0 |  |
| P10 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 |  |
|  | 3.3 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 3.7 | 2.2 | 3.5 | 2.7 | 2.985714 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | LO 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P1 | 2 | 3 | 1.5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1.5 | 2.6 |  |
| P2 | 3 | 3 | 1.5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2.8 |  |
| P3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3.5 | 2.9 | <2 = 0 |
| P4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.9 | 2 - 2.9 = 6 |
| P5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 3 - 3.9 = 4 |
| P6 | 3 | 3 | 3.5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 4 = 0 |  |
| P7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 |  |
| P8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3.1 |  |
| P9 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3.5 | 2.6 |  |
| P10 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2.4 |  |
|  | 3.1 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 2.1 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.95714 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | LO 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| P1 | 2 | 3 | 1.5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 2.4 |  |
| P2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3.0 |  |
| P3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3.5 | 2.9 |  | <2 = 0 |
| P4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.6 |  | 2 - 2.9 = 5 |
| P5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3.0 |  | 3 - 3.9 = 5 |
| P6 | 3 | 4 | 3.5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2.9 |  | 4 = 0 |
| P7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3.3 |  |
| P8 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3.1 |  |
| P9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.4 |  |
| P10 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2.5 |  |
|  | 3.1 | 3.3 | 2.75 | 3.5 | 1.8 | 3.3 | 2.75 | 2.92857143 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

DATA for the second activity,

5 exceptional, 0 papers

4 excellent, 4 papers

3 good, 7 papers

2 average /adequate, 4 papers

1 poor / incomplete, 0 papers

The second scale was “should present the paper” and “don’t present the paper”.

Eight papers were scored “present,”

Five “don’t present”

Two maybes, despite that not being an official option