

**Assurance of Student Learning Report
2022 – 2023**

Potter College of Arts & Letters

Department of Political Science

Philosophy (745)

Scott Lasley, Department Head // Michael J. Seidler, Program Coordinator

Is this an online program? Yes No

Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.

Student Learning OUTCOME 1: Students will be able to effectively *collect and analyze evidence* in the discipline of Philosophy in support of a position.

Instrument 1 | Analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 & Spring 2023 semesters.

Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME 1.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning OUTCOME 2: Students will be able to demonstrate effective *written communication skills* appropriate for the discipline of philosophy.

Instrument 1 | Analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters.

Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME 2.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning OUTCOME 3: Students will be able to demonstrate *critical thinking skills* in their written work.

Instrument 1 | Analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters.

Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME 3.

Met

Not Met

Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)

Given the weaknesses in student work identified below, our goals for the coming year focus primarily on work with individual students, to insure that all of them reach at least the upper-milestone [3] level. This will obviously depend, at least in part, on the caliber of students actually taking the course, and on their individual exertions. Specifically, though, we will work on (i) sharpening the focus of each project, developing its individual parts, and articulating the stages of the argument; also, (ii) on ensuring that even theses with mainly descriptive or expository goals contain rigorous comparisons and critical assessment. These two interventions will mainly be the responsibility of individual faculty mentoring particular students, who will consult as needed with other faculty also familiar with particular students' work.

Student Learning Outcome 1

Student Learning Outcome	<i>Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the discipline of Philosophy in support of a position.</i>		
Measurement Instrument 1	DIRECT: analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. These involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who directed one or two theses apiece.		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> , CRITERIA for student success = capstone level (4) or upper milestone level (3) with respect to topic selection, existing knowledge, research, and/or views, analysis, and conclusion.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	40%
Methods	Three Philosophy faculty members each read the five theses used as our Measuring Instrument, and evaluated them according to the shared rubric. Since each of us had mentored at most one or two theses, we were also evaluating theses directed by the other two faculty members. Our individual reviews were followed by a joint, face-to-face session to talk about the results of our readings, and to devise an appropriate response for the upcoming year.		
Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)			
<p>The program faculty met in person to discuss the five papers, individually and collectively, and to evaluate the outcomes of last year’s action agenda. Overall, our goals were achieved, meaning that (1) our written procedures were clarified to students, and (2) the latter were better informed about work-flow expectations. Moreover, (3) there was more insistence on proof of progress throughout the exercise, including submission of a draft well in advance of the final deadline. Also, (4) we insisted that comments on the penultimate version were actually utilized to improve the final product. In several cases, as a result, (5) there was a notable improvement in philosophical rigor of the submissions.</p> <p>Despite these interventions, outcomes varied in quality. Two of the five theses submitted and evaluated were excellent [<i>capstone level: 4</i>]: well-researched, well-written, and well-argued (our three rubrics). Two more were acceptable but lacking in various respects [<i>lower milestone level: 2</i>]: of insufficient clarity, organization, and/or rigor of argument. One submission was inadequate [<i>benchmark level: 1</i>]: a mediocre descriptive essay without sufficient attempt to take a position supported by argument. This means that – despite the actions taken last year – we did not reach the performance level we would like to achieve.</p> <p>Accordingly, our aims for the coming year will focus primarily on work with individual students, to insure that all of them reach at least the upper-milestone level [3]. This will obviously depend, at least in part, on the caliber of students actually taking the course, and their individual exertions. Specifically, though, we will work on (i) sharpening the focus of each project, developing its individual parts, and articulating the stages of the argument; also, (ii) ensuring that even theses with mainly descriptive or expository goals also contain rigorous comparisons and critical assessment. The two interventions will be made primarily by individual faculty mentoring particular students.</p>			
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)			
See previous entry.			
Next Assessment Cycle Plan (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome)			
We will implement the proposed ‘actions’ noted above ([i] and [ii]) during the upcoming two academic semesters (fall and spring).			

Rubric for Student Learning **OUTCOME 1:**

Students will be able to effectively [collect & analyze evidence in support of a position](#) (appropriate for the discipline of Philosophy).

Categories	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
TOPIC SELECTION	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic within the field of philosophy that addresses potentially significant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a focused and manageable / doable topic within the field of philosophy that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic within the field of philosophy that while manageable / doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.	Identifies a topic within the study of philosophy that is too general & wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.
EXISTING KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH, AND/OR VIEWS	Synthesizes in-depth info from relevant sources representing various points of view / approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view / approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view / approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view / approaches.
ANALYSIS	Organizes & synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and / or is unrelated to focus.
CONCLUSION	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.	The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupported conclusion from inquiry findings.

Student Learning Outcome 2

Student Learning Outcome	<i>Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate for the discipline of philosophy.</i>		
Measurement Instrument 1	Analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. These involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who directed one or two theses apiece.		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> , CRITERIA for student success = capstone level (4) or upper milestone level (3) with respect to topic selection, existing knowledge, research, and/or views, analysis, and conclusion.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	40%
Methods	Three Philosophy faculty members each read the five theses used as our Measuring Instrument, and evaluated them according to the shared rubric. Since each of us had mentored at most one or two theses, we were also evaluating theses directed by the other two faculty members. Our individual reviews were followed by a joint, face-to-face session to talk about the results of our readings, and to devise an appropriate response for the upcoming year.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.			<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)			
<p>The program faculty met in person to discuss the five papers, individually and collectively, and to evaluate the outcomes of last year's action agenda. Overall, our goals were achieved, meaning that (1) our written procedures were clarified to students, and (2) the latter were better informed about work-flow expectations. Moreover, (3) there was more insistence on proof of progress throughout the exercise, including submission of a draft well in advance of the final deadline. Also, (4) we insisted that comments on the penultimate version were actually utilized to improve the final product. In several case, as a result, (5) there was a notable improvement in philosophical rigor of the submissions.</p> <p>Despite these interventions, outcomes varied in quality. Two of the five theses submitted and evaluated were excellent [<i>capstone level: 4</i>]: well-researched, well-written, and well-argued (our three rubrics). Two more were acceptable but lacking in various respects [<i>lower milestone level: 2</i>]: of insufficient clarity, organization, and/or rigor of argument. One submission was inadequate [<i>benchmark level: 1</i>]: a mediocre descriptive essay without sufficient attempt to take a position supported by argument. This means that – despite the actions taken last year – we did not reach the performance level we would like to achieve.</p> <p>Accordingly, our aims for the coming year will focus primarily on work with individual students, to insure that all of them reach at least the upper-milestone level [3]. This will obviously depend, at least in part, on the caliber of students actually taking the course, and their individual exertions. Specifically, though, we will work on (i) sharpening the focus of each project, developing its individual parts, and articulating the stages of the argument; also, (ii) ensuring that even theses with mainly descriptive or expository goals also contain rigorous comparisons and critical assessment. The two interventions will be made primarily by individual faculty mentoring particular students.</p>			
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)			
See previous entry.			
Next Assessment Cycle Plan (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome)			
We will implement the proposed 'actions' noted above ([i] and [ii]) during the upcoming two academic semesters (fall and spring).			

Rubric for Student Learning **OUTCOME 2:**

Students will be able to demonstrate [effective written communication skills](#) (appropriate for the discipline of Philosophy).

Categories	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate <u>mastery of the subject</u> , conveying the writer's understanding, and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content <u>to explore ideas</u> within the context of the discipline and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through <u>most of</u> the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in <u>some parts</u> of the work.
SOURCES & EVIDENCE	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate to philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and / or relevant sources to support ideas appropriate for philosophy and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
CONTROL OF SYNTAX & MECHANICS	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity & fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The writing has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Student Learning Outcome 3

Student Learning Outcome	<i>Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in their written work.</i>		
Measurement Instrument 1	Analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. These involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who directed one or two theses apiece.		
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> , CRITERIA for student success = capstone level (4) or upper milestone level (3) with respect to topic selection, existing knowledge, research, and/or views, analysis, and conclusion.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	40%
Methods	Three Philosophy faculty members each read the five theses used as our Measuring Instrument, and evaluated them according to the shared rubric. Since each of us had mentored at most one or two theses, we were also evaluating theses directed by the other two faculty members. Our individual reviews were followed by a joint, face-to-face session to talk about the results of our readings, and to devise an appropriate response for the upcoming year.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.		<input type="checkbox"/> Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)			
<p>The program faculty met in person to discuss the five papers, individually and collectively, and to evaluate the outcomes of last year's action agenda. Overall, our goals were achieved, meaning that (1) our written procedures were clarified to students, and (2) the latter were better informed about work-flow expectations. Moreover, (3) there was more insistence on proof of progress throughout the exercise, including submission of a draft well in advance of the final deadline. Also, (4) we insisted that comments on the penultimate version were actually utilized to improve the final product. In several cases, as a result, (5) there was a notable improvement in philosophical rigor of the submissions.</p> <p>Despite these interventions, outcomes varied in quality. Two of the five theses submitted and evaluated were excellent [<i>capstone level: 4</i>]: well-researched, well-written, and well-argued (our three rubrics). Two more were acceptable but lacking in various respects [<i>lower milestone level: 2</i>]: of insufficient clarity, organization, and/or rigor of argument. One submission was inadequate [<i>benchmark level: 1</i>]: a mediocre descriptive essay without sufficient attempt to take a position supported by argument. This means that – despite the actions taken last year – we did not reach the performance level we would like to achieve.</p> <p>Accordingly, our aims for the coming year will focus primarily on work with individual students, to insure that all of them reach at least the upper-milestone level [3]. This will obviously depend, at least in part, on the caliber of students actually taking the course, and their individual exertions. Specifically, though, we will work on (i) sharpening the focus of each project, developing its individual parts, and articulating the stages of the argument; also, (ii) ensuring that even theses with mainly descriptive or expository goals also contain rigorous comparisons and critical assessment. The two interventions will be made primarily by individual faculty mentoring particular students.</p>			
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)			
See previous entry.			
Next Assessment Cycle Plan (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome)			
We will implement the proposed 'actions' noted above ([i] and [ii]) during the upcoming two academic semesters (fall and spring).			

Rubric for Student Learning **OUTCOME 3:**

Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills (appropriate for the discipline of Philosophy).

Categories	Capstone (4)	Upper Milestone (3)	Lower Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
EXPLAN OF ISSUES	Issue / problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant info necessary for understanding.	Issue / problem to be considered critically is stated, described and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue / problem to be considered critically is stated, but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and / or backgrounds unknown.	Issue / problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
EVIDENCE: SEL'G & USING INFO TO INVESTIGATE PT OF VIEW OR CONCLUSION	Info is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Info is taken from sources with enough interpretation / evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Info is taken from source(s) with some interpretation / evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Info is taken from source(s) without any interpretation / evaluation.
STUDENT'S POSITION (THESIS / HYPOTHESIS, PERSPECTIVE)	Specific position is imaginative, taking into account an complexities of the issue. Other points of views are synthesized.	Specific position takes into account the complexity of an issue, acknowledging other points of view.	Specific position acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position is stated, but simplistic & obvious.
CONCLUSIONS & RELATED OUTCOMES (IMPLIC'S & CONSEQU'S)	Conclusions & related outcomes are logical & reflect students' informed evaluation & ability to place evidence & perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of info, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences, implications) are identified clearly	Conclusion is logically tied to information (bec info is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences, implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the info discussed; related outcomes (consequences, implications) are oversimplified.

CURRICULUM MAP Philosophy

Program name:	Philosophy
Department:	Political Science
College:	Potter College of Arts and Letters
Contact person:	Michael Seidler
Email:	michael.seidler@wku.edu

KEY:

I = Introduced

R = Reinforced/Developed

M = Mastered

A = Assessed

			Learning Outcomes		
			LO1:	LO2:	LO3:
			Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the discipline of Philosophy in support of a position.	Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate for the discipline of philosophy.	Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in their written work.
Course Subject	Number	Course Title			
PHIL	101	Enduring Questions: Truth & Relativism	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	102	Enduring Questions: the Good & the Beautiful	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	103	Enduring Questions: the Committed Life	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	214	Logic, Argument, & Practical Reasoning	I/A		I/A
PHIL	215	Symbolic Logic	R/A		R/A
PHIL	315	Philosophy of Religion	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	330	Philosophy of Science	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	332	Philosophy of Mind: Minds & Machines	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	334	Philosophy of Language	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	404	Metaphysics & Epistemology	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	415	Advanced Logic	M/A		M/A
PHIL	331	Early Analytic Philosophy	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	341	Plato & Aristotle	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	342	Skeptics, Stoics, & Epicureans	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	343	Medieval Philosophy	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	344	Early Modern Moral Philosophy	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	345	Descartes & Hume	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	346	Kant & Idealism	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	347	Leibniz and Locke	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	348	20th Century Philosophy	R/A	R/A	R/A
PHIL	406	Existentialism	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	440	Readings in Ancient / Medieval Philosophy	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	450	Readings in Modern / Contemporary Philosophy	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	202	Racial Justice	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	207	Philosophy & Popular Culture	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	208	Philosophy of Public Space	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	211	Why Are Bad People Bad?	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	212	Philosophy & Gender Theory	I/A	I/A	I/A
PHIL	305	Aesthetics	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	322	Biomedical Ethics	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	323	Social Ethics	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	324	War and Peace	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	333	Marx & Critical Theory	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	344	Early Modern Moral Philosophy	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	350	Ethical Theory	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	426	Philosophy & Old Age	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	427	Philosophy of Law	M/A	M/A	M/A
PHIL	496	Senior Seminar (1 hr)	A	A	A
PHIL	499	Independent Research in Philosophy	A	A	A