WKU

PHILOSOPHY

ASSURANCE of STUDENT LEARNING

Philosophy Program Self-assessment

Drs. Michael Seidler, Audrey Anton, and Landon Elkind

Summary Table of SLO Achievement

STUDENTS	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3
1	4	4	4
2	4	4	4
3	3	3	3
4	3	3	3
5	2	3	2

SLO 1: levels 3/4 (four-of-five students) = 80%
SLO 2: levels 3/4 (five-of-five students) = 100%
SLO 3: levels 3/4 (four-of-five students) = 80%

CONCLUSION: all three SLOs met for AY 2023-2024.

CURRICULUM MAP Philosophy

Program name:	Philosophy
Department:	Political Science
College:	Potter College of Arts and Letters
Contact person:	Michael Seidler
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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 Beaut	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 Philo	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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Assurance of Student Learning Report
2023-2024</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Potter College of Arts & Letters</td><td colspan="2">Department of Political Science</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Philosophy (745)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Scott Lasley, Department Head / Michael Seidler, Program Coordinator</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Is this an online program? ☐ Yes ☒ No</td><td colspan="2">Please make sure the Program Learning Outcomes listed match those in CourseLeaf . Indicate verification here
☒ Yes, they match! (If they don't match, explain on this page under Assessment Cycle)</td></tr>
</table>

*** Please include <u>Curriculum Map</u> as part of this document (at the end), NOT as a separate file.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages. Add more Outcomes as needed.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Program Student <u>Learning Outcome 1</u>: Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the discipline of Philosophy in support of a position.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instrument 1</td><td colspan="3">Analysis of (five) senior theses from <u>Fall 2023</u> & <u>Spring 2024</u> semesters.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.</td><td>☒ Met</td><td>☐ Not Met</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Program Student <u>Learning Outcome 2</u>: Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate for the discipline of philosophy.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instrument 1</td><td colspan="3">Analysis of (five) senior theses from <u>Fall 2023</u> & <u>Spring 2024</u> semesters.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.</td><td>☒ Met</td><td>☐ Not Met</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Program Student <u>Learning Outcome 3</u>: Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in their written work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instrument 1</td><td colspan="3">Analysis of (five) senior theses from <u>Fall 2023</u> & <u>Spring 2024</u> semesters.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.</td><td>☒ Met</td><td>☐ Not Met</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Assessment Cycle Plan:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Our general process for program assessment, we expect, will remain the largely the same, <u>with the following adjustments</u>: (1) We will discuss as a philosophy faculty whether to have a general rule requiring capstone theses to be revisions of previous course papers, and, if we permit novel papers to count as capstone theses, whether these will be subject to further requirements. (2) Each professor will enforce a schedule for readings, drafts, and/or regular meetings as applicable so as to facilitate responses to any emergent student problems (academic and personal) and to ensure satisfactory <u>and timely</u> completion of a satisfactory capstone paper. (3) We will explore arranging a meeting or meetings with all of the students enrolled in PHIL 496 with one or more philosophy faculty. Currently, students take Phil 496 as individuals and work one-on-one with select faculty. A joint meeting (or two) would make the whole experience feel more like a course taken 'together', as in other classes. Such encounters could also result in students consulting and helping one another during the process, and also enriching their philosophical education by exposing them to others' research projects (and areas of philosophy that they may not otherwise be familiar with), and opening up possibilities for other means of assessment of graduating philosophy majors as a whole should we wish to implement those.</td></tr>
</table>

Program Student Learning Outcome 1

Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will be able to effectively collect and analyze evidence in the discipline of Philosophy in support of a position.
Measurement Instrument 1	**DIRECT**: analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. One Spring thesis involved the removal of an 'X' (incomplete) from the Fall term. The assessment review involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who each directed one or two theses during the academic year.
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*, 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	80%

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 both Zoom and face-to-face sessions to discuss 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.	☒ Met	☐ Not Met

Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn't, and plan going forward)

Results: The results met the target for SLO 1. This is because all five of the students reviewed were high achievers during their time in the major. Two of the five turned in stellar performances [capstone level 4, in all three SLOs]. Two accomplished a solid but lower-than-expected performance [capstone level 3, in all three SLOs]. And one students came in at an adequate but definitely lower-than-expected level [capstone level 2 and/or 3, in various combinations / categories].

Conclusions: Overall, the program met its target for SLO 1. Further, none of the student outcomes warrant serious concerns about the program or methods of assessment. It might have been predicted that, based on prior student performance in philosophy courses, we might have had more 4s in all SLOs in this year's program self-assessment. But some of the students faced serious obstacles to student success that occurred outside the classroom. Specifically, two students suffered the illness and death of a parent or close relative during their work on the senior project, an experience that directly impacted on their concentration and motivation (and time). And a third, excellent student was simply too overwrought during their final semester due to personal, work-related, and other reasons. In other words, life interfered in various ways. This often happens, of course, leaving one to do (only) the best that one can under the circumstances. Clearly, too, it is no reflection on the program or its pedagogy.

Plans: We will follow the assessment adjustments in the Assessment Cycle Plan above and continue our past practices to meet the program targets for SLOs.

Program Student Learning Outcome 2				
Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will be able to demonstrate effective written communication skills appropriate for the discipline of philosophy.			
Measurement Instrument 1	DIRECT: analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. One Spring thesis involved the removal of an 'X' (incomplete) from the Fall term. The assessment review involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who each directed one or two theses during the academic year.			
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*, 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**	100%
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 both Zoom and face-to-face sessions to discuss 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.	☒ Met		☐ Not Met
Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn't, and plan going forward)			

Results: The results met the target for SLO 2. All five of the students reviewed were high achievers during their time in the major. Two of the five turned in stellar performances [capstone level 4, in all three SLOs]. Three accomplished a solid but lower-than-expected performance [capstone level 3].

Conclusions: Overall, the program did a commendable job reaching its target for SLO 2. Further, none of the student outcomes warrant serious concerns about the program or methods of assessment. All of the students are excellent or strong writers, and this showed clearly in their capstone papers. It is a critical outcome of our program that graduating students are writers of a high quality, and we find that philosophy majors are fairly commonly excellent or superb writers (especially as compared with their non-philosophy major peers). The philosophical vital practice of making multiple drafts and revising earlier drafts in thoughtful response to instructor feedback, when students can implement them in a PHIL 496 context (e.g. they are not prevented from doing so by life circumstances outside anyone's control), both seem strongly correlated with markedly improved writing.

Plans: We will follow the assessment adjustments in the Assessment Cycle Plan above and continue our past practices to meet the program targets for SLOs.

Program Student Learning Outcome 3

Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in their written work.
Measurement Instrument 1	**DIRECT**: analysis of (five) senior theses from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. One Spring thesis involved the removal of an 'X' (incomplete) from the Fall term. The assessment review involved all three Philosophy faculty members, who each directed one or two theses during the academic year.
Criteria for Student Success	Drawing from AAC&U VALUES rubric for *Inquiry and Analysis*, 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	80%

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 both Zoom and face-to-face sessions to discuss 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.	☒ Met	☐ Not Met

Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn't, and plan going forward)

<u>Results</u>: The results met the target for SLO 3. This is because all five of the students reviewed were high achievers during their time in the major. Two of the five turned in stellar performances [capstone level 4, in all three SLOs]. Two accomplished a solid but lower-than-expected performance [capstone level 3, in all three SLOs]. And one students came in at an adequate but definitely lower-than-expected level [capstone level 2 and/or 3, in various combinations / categories].

<u>Conclusions</u>: Overall, the program met its target for SLO 3. Further, none of the student outcomes warrant serious concerns about the program or methods of assessment. It might have been predicted that, based on prior student performance in philosophy courses, we might have had more 4s in all SLOs in this year's program self-assessment. But some of the students faced serious obstacles to student success that occurred outside the classroom. Specifically, two students suffered the illness and death of a parent or close relative during their work on the senior project, an experience that directly impacted on their concentration and motivation (and time). And a third, excellent student was simply too overwrought during their final semester due to personal, work-related, and other reasons. In other words, life interfered in various ways. This often happens, of course, leaving one to do (only) the best that one can under the circumstances. Clearly, too, it is no reflection on the program or its pedagogy.

<u>Plans</u>: We will follow the assessment adjustments in the Assessment Cycle Plan above and continue our past practices to meet the program targets for SLOs.

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 unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings.

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 mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and this shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts 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.

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.