

Department of Philosophy

Learning Objectives and Assessment Plan for the BA Major

Learning Objectives

The major in philosophy is designed to enable students to:

1. Have a good understanding of the basic topics, history, and methods of philosophy.
2. Understand how philosophical analyses and theories are developed, defended, and used.
3. Understand and use methods of logical analysis; recognize, evaluate, and correct the logical structure of reasoning in philosophical work on both historical and contemporary issues.
4. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate philosophical texts; identify, analyze, and evaluate the philosophical content in other kinds of writing.
5. Write good analytical and persuasive essays using philosophical argumentation. Write good essays addressing philosophical topics.

Assessment Plan

Direct measures: As a formative measure, students' final paper from the major seminar, PHL 300, will be reviewed by faculty for achievement of learning objectives 1-5 using a rubric developed for each objective. As additional formative measures, student major papers and exams in selected philosophy logic and theory subjects will be also be reviewed using the rubric for each objective. As guidelines in review of student work, faculty will consider using "Rubrics for Major" listed below.

Indirect measures: Selected questions from the senior survey, enrolled student survey, and alumni survey in which students self assess learning for questions related to each program learning objective. Student award/ scholarship data and post-graduate career data will also be reviewed.

Assessment Data Review Process

Annual faculty committee review of student learning. At the end of each academic year, faculty will gather to review student learning toward achievement of program learning objectives. Faculty will gather data from direct and indirect measures as part of this review.

Rubrics for Philosophy Major- for discussion

I. General Philosophical Literacy: Students should demonstrate that they are able to successfully navigate the historical and disciplinary branches of philosophy and different philosophical approaches, showing knowledge of the breadth and depth of the discipline.

1. Demonstrates how to locate a particular topic within its relevant larger philosophical context.
2. Uses conceptual frameworks including epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and other philosophical specializations.
3. Explains this history or genealogy of ideas and concepts.

II. Argumentation Skills: Students should display acuity and expertise in logical reasoning and philosophical analysis.

1. Recognizes different forms of argumentation.
2. Identifies the presupposed or unacknowledged premises.
3. Critiques arguments.
4. Constructs sound and persuasive arguments.
5. Recognizes and uses different kinds of support in shaping arguments in different philosophical areas.

III. Research Skills: Students should demonstrate their ability to effectively navigate both the library and on-line research tools.

1. Demonstrates ability to use standard reference works (e.g., Encyclopedias and Dictionaries of Philosophy).
2. Uses online databases (e.g. Philosopher's Index, JSTOR, Project Muse, etc)
3. Locates and evaluates relevant scholarly books and articles.
4. Distinguishes between primary and secondary sources.

IV. Communication Skills: Students should display their ability to communicate complex arguments and concepts effectively, both orally and in writing.

1. Presents arguments in a clear and straightforward manner.
2. Clearly identifies and communicates the central ideas.
3. Listens and responds to questions carefully and thoughtfully.