# 3-Year Academic Assessment Plan

## Program Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>B.A. Philosophy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>David Forman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
<td>Todd Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>December 20th, 2018</td>
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</tbody>
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## Contact Person for This Plan

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Todd Jones</th>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. University and philosophy department learning outcomes.

Over the next three years, we plan to
   a) continue to assess both the university and the departments overall learning outcomes
   b) examine and assess specific important areas with potential for improvement in the department

While over the next three years, we will pay close attention to at some specific departmental needs and problems, we also plan to continually examine at the department’s contribution to the university’s overall learning outcomes. It should be noted that it will be comparatively straightforward for the philosophy department to simultaneously evaluate both general education learning outcomes and our own. Most disciplines evolved out of philosophy -- which was originally the term for general scholarly interest. The subject matters still studied in the discipline of philosophy tend to be ones of highly general scholarly interest. So the goals of general education and philosophy overlap substantially.

In section 2 below is a curriculum map, describing philosophy courses that emphasize the the five university general education learning outcomes and ones that emphasize our learning outcomes. The map shows how four of our five line up directly with four of the five university outcomes. Below each category are boxes showing a) courses required by the department that emphasize these specific learning outcomes, b) courses that are not required by the department, but are taught there and have a special emphasis on teaching these learning outcomes, and c) courses that place some degree of emphasis on these outcomes, even if these may not be their central focus. (Note that, while the boxes contain courses that definitely focus on these specific learning objectives, this does not imply that if a course is not listed, it thereby does not give some emphasis to one or another of these objectives. (We cannot list all courses ever taught in the Philosophy Department on this map.))

Here are the Philosophy Department’s student learning outcomes:

*Goal I: To exhibit facility in the theory and practice of argumentation, reasoning, and critical thinking;*

Students shall be able to:

(1) Master the practice of reasoning well, including
   • The ability to construct clear and concise summarizations and assessments of the reasoning in complex passages by
     Extracting their conclusions,
     Distilling the lines of reasoning in support of those conclusions,
     and
     Evaluating how well such reasoning supports those conclusions.
The ability to construct cogent arguments for their own conclusions and to express their reasoning in a coherent and convincing manner.

(2) Demonstrate knowledge of, and competence with, the theory of argumentation and logic through their abilities to:

- Describe different approaches to logical theory, and to articulate their aims and scope,
- Define and apply central concepts and techniques of logical theory,
- Describe major results of logical theory, and sketch how to arrive at those results.

Goal II: To demonstrate an understanding of the classics of Western philosophy from antiquity to the present;
Students shall be able to:
- Identify major works or figures from at least three periods of the history of Western philosophy,
  Articulate and, when appropriate, compare or contrast, the overall philosophical positions taken by these works or figures,
- Summarize the major motivations or arguments for these positions,
- Present objections that have been raised or could be raised to these positions,
- Assess the relative merits of these arguments and objections.

Goal III: To demonstrate knowledge about central problems in major branches of (non-value) contemporary philosophical theory, such as metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of science;
Students shall be able to:
- Identify central issues or debates in at least two core areas of contemporary philosophical theory,
  Articulate and, when appropriate, compare or contrast, different views that might be taken with respect to these issues,
- Summarize major motivations or arguments for these alternative positions,
- Present significant objections that have or could be raised to these positions,
  Assess the relative merits of these arguments and objections.

Goal IV: To demonstrate knowledge about central problems in major branches of value-centered contemporary philosophical theory, such as ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics.
Students shall be able to:
- Identify central issues or debates in an area of contemporary philosophical value theory,
• Articulate and, when appropriate, compare or contrast, different views that might be taken with respect to these issues,
• Summarize major motivations or arguments for these alternative positions,
• Present significant objections that have or could be raised to these positions,
  Assess the relative merits of these arguments and objections.

Goal V: To demonstrate the ability to present arguments and to discuss philosophical ideas clearly in writing and speaking.

Students shall be able to:

• Clearly articulate a thesis and make arguments for it.
• Clearly articulate what objections people might find with these arguments
• Clearly articulate alternatives to the thesis.
• Clearly articulate the merits of these arguments and objections.

Here are the University’s General Education learning outcomes:

Intellectual Breadth and Lifelong Learning

Graduates are able to understand and integrate basic principles of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts, and health sciences, and develop skills and a desire for lifelong learning. Specific outcomes for all students include:
• Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills in at least one major area.
• Identify the fundamental principles of the natural and health sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts.
• Apply the research methods and theoretical models of the natural and health sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts to define, solve, and evaluate problems.
• Transfer knowledge and skills gained from general and specialized studies to new settings and complex problems.
• Demonstrate lifelong learning skills, including the ability to place problems in personally meaningful contexts; reflect on one's own understanding; demonstrate awareness of what needs to be learned; articulate a learning plan; and act independently on the plan, using appropriate resources.

Achieve success in one's chosen field or discipline, including applying persistence, motivation, interpersonal communications, leadership, goal setting, and career skills.

Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Graduates are able to identify problems, articulate questions, and use various forms of research and reasoning to guide the collection, analysis, and use of information related to those problems. Specific outcomes for all students include:
• Identify problems, articulate questions or hypotheses, and determine the need for information.
• Access and collect the needed information from appropriate primary and secondary sources.
• Use quantitative and qualitative methods, including the ability to recognize assumptions, draw inferences, make deductions, and interpret information to analyze problems in context, and then draw conclusions.
• Recognize the complexity of problems, and identify different perspectives from which problems and questions can be viewed.
• Evaluate and report on conclusions, including discussing the basis for and strength of findings, and identify areas where further inquiry is needed.

Identify, analyze, and evaluate reasoning, and construct and defend reasonable arguments and explanations.

Communication
Graduates are able to write and speak effectively to both general and specialized audiences, create effective visuals that support written or spoken communication, and use electronic media common to one's field or profession. Specific outcomes for all students include:
• Demonstrate general academic literacy, including how to respond to the needs of audiences and to different kinds of rhetorical situations, analyze and evaluate reasons and evidence, and construct research-based arguments using Standard Written English.
• Effectively use the common genres and conventions for writing within a particular discipline or profession.
• Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations.
• Collaborate effectively with others to share information, solve problems, or complete tasks.
• Produce effective visuals using different media.
• Apply the up-to-date technologies commonly used to research and communicate within one's field.

Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness
Graduates will have developed knowledge of global and multicultural societies, and an awareness of their place in and effect on them. Specific outcomes for all students include:
• Demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, arts, and geography of world cultures.
• Respond to diverse perspectives linked to identity, including age, ability, religion, politics, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality; both in American and international contexts.
• Apply the concept of social justice.
• Demonstrate familiarity with a non-native language, or experience living in a different culture.
• Function effectively in diverse groups.

Demonstrate awareness of one's own place in and effect on the world.
Citizenship and Ethics

Graduates are able to participate knowledgeably and actively in the public life of our communities and make informed, responsible, and ethical decisions in their personal and professional lives. Specific outcomes for all students include:

- Acquire knowledge of political, economic, and social institutions.
- Identify the various rights and obligations that citizens have in their communities.
- Apply various forms of citizenship skills such as media analysis, letter writing, community service, and lobbying.
- Explain the concept of sustainability as it impacts economic, environmental, and social concerns.
- Examine various concepts and theories of ethics, and how to deliberate and assess claims about ethical issues.

Apply ethical concepts and theories to specific ethical dilemmas students will experience in their personal and professional lives.

2. Curriculum map

Below is the curriculum map describing how department courses aim to meet both of these types of learning outcomes.
### University Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Breadth and Lifelong Learning</th>
<th>Inquiry and Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Citizenship and Ethics</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness</th>
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### Philosophy Department Learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophical Theory</th>
<th>History of Philosophy</th>
<th>Argument Theory</th>
<th>Value Theory</th>
<th>Speaking and writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 342 – Phenomenology</td>
<td>PHIL 401 – Ancient Philosophy</td>
<td>PHIL 114 – Introduction To Symbolic Logic</td>
<td>PHIL 320 – Philosophy of Law</td>
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<td>PHIL 356 – Theories of Culture</td>
<td>PHIL 402 – Medieval Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 345 – Health Care Ethics</td>
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<td>PHIL 425 – Philosophy of Language</td>
<td>PHIL 403 – Early Modern Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 446 – Social and Political Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 430 – Philosophy of Science</td>
<td>PHIL 404 – Nineteenth-Century Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 450 – Ethical Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 432 – Philosophy of the Social Sciences</td>
<td>PHIL 405 – Contemporary Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 452 – Aesthetics</td>
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<td>PHIL 433 – Philosophical Psychology</td>
<td>PHIL 406 – American Philosophy</td>
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<td>PHIL 304 – Just War Theory</td>
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<td>PHIL 434 – Philosophy of Cognitive Science</td>
<td>PHIL 410 – Plato</td>
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<td>PHIL 435 – Philosophy of Mind</td>
<td>PHIL 411 – Aristotle</td>
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<td>PHIL 440 – Theory of Knowledge</td>
<td>PHIL 415 – Kant</td>
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<td>PHIL 431 – History of Scientific Thought</td>
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Curriculum Map (continued)
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### Philosophy Department Learning outcomes

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#### Fulfills Department Requirements

- **Phil 441** — Metaphysics
- **PHIL 459** — Philosophy of Religion
- **PHIL 472** — Selected Topics in Religion

#### Special Emphasis

- **PHIL 302** - Intermediate Critical Thinking and Reasoning
- **PHIL 322** - Inductive Logic and Probability
- **PHIL 402** - Logical Theory
- **PHIL 422** - Advanced Logic
- **PHIL 245** - Contemporary Moral Issues
- **PHIL 203** - Existentialism
- **PHIL 242** - Ethics for Engineers and Scientists
- **PHIL 249** - Environmental Ethics
- **PHIL 135** - Introduction to Ethics

- **PHIL 420** - Logical Theory
- **PHIL 422** - Advanced Logic
- **PHIL 245** - Contemporary Moral Issues
- **PHIL 203** - Existentialism
- **PHIL 242** - Ethics for Engineers and Scientists
- **PHIL 249** - Environmental Ethics
- **PHIL 135** - Introduction to Ethics

- **PHIL 467** - Indian Philosophy
- **PHIL 468** - Chinese and Japanese Philosophy
- **PHIL 247** - Philosophy and Women
- **PHIL 124** - Philosophical Traditions of Asia

#### Some Emphasis

- **All History and Value courses**
- **All Theory courses**
- **All History, Theory, and Value courses**

3. Assessment over the next three years.
Our last three-year assessment plan focused on assessing very broad university and departmental goals. In 2015, we assessed the department’s contribution to the departmental and university goals of improving student reasoning and critical thinking. In 2016, we concentrated on assessing writing and communication. In 2017 we focused on the intellectual breadth and history learning goals.

For the next three year assessment, in addition to continuing to assess general goals, we also planned on assessing some specific departmental issues and goals.

Here are some of the specific outcomes we plan to assess over the next three years:

Year 1 (2018)
Student retention is an increasingly important goal for universities and departments. In 2018 we plan to carefully assess if our departmental retention rates are where they should be. We plan to look especially at whether our graduation rates are where one should expect them to be, given the number of our majors. If not, we plan on looking at what course requirement and/or availability bottlenecks there might be preventing students from graduating in a timely manner.

Year 2 (2019)
Several years ago the philosophy department creating a special “Law and Justice” concentration in addition to it’s traditional major. Informally, it appears that the adding this major creating numerous changes in the number and nature of our philosophy majors. In 2019 we would like to carefully assess what changes this new concentration has made to our department and what new opportunities and challenges this concentration has presented.

Year 3 (2019)
Both the students and the faculty have undergone some demographic changes over the last several years. The number of minority students taking upper division philosophy classes has dramatically increased. Should that necessitate any changes in course form or content? Or does this new population of students have similar needs to the previous one? Among the faculty, we will thankfully have women on the full time faculty for the first time since Dr. Mary Phelps retired in the early 2000s. Most of the faculty will be over 50 years old. What changes, if any, does a more diverse, but aging faculty call for? Are there things that we need to be especially wary of? Are there special opportunities that we should be taking advantage of? The character if the students and faculty of the department will have changed by 2020 and we went to make sure that what we are doing is well-coordinated with these new demographics.

4. Sharing results and closing the loop.
The initial results of each assessment will be shared with the entire department at a department meeting prior to the submission of the yearly assessment report. At the meeting, department members will be given a chance to give additional input regarding students’ progress toward meeting the learning outcomes. At that meeting, we will also propose solutions for any problems uncovered. At a subsequent meeting we will vote on which solutions seem most promising, and we will assign responsibility to particular committees and individual faculty members for implementing those suggestions.