

Philosophy Program Assessment  
May 2016

1. Based on input from EPC, the assessment plan for Philosophy has been overhauled. I've attempted to make clear the connections between program goals, learning objectives, and measurable learning outcomes, by bringing each set of goals/objectives/outcomes together in the presentation of the material.

I've also attempted to streamline the aspects of the original assessment plan that I've retained. There are specific deletions where the wording seemed unnecessary and restrictive. For instance, a requirement pertaining to goal #1, that in addition to passing PHIL 114, all exams taken in this course must also be passed, has been deleted.

2. All philosophy majors are currently on track to graduate in a timely fashion, having acquired (so far) the basic competencies noted for philosophy majors in the assessment plan of the program.

3. Mike Gorr and I have discussed some outlier cases of students. In general, from my review of samples of exams and papers, although there are minor differences in approaches to grading across philosophy courses taught by Mike and me, there is also a stable continuity of consistent expectations across various courses and iterations of particular courses in the Philosophy program.

However, we will revisit in the Fall semester the issue of basic requirements for students to pass a philosophy course, in view of a recent situation.

4. There is ongoing discussion about whether to drop the thesis requirement for Philosophy. At this time, the plan is to make more explicit and emphasize crucial deadlines for thesis progress in PHIL 402. The course in general needs more structure.

5. There is some discussion of dropping "Medieval" from the title of PHIL 230: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. At this time, I've decided not to do this.

6. The revised assessment plan – sent along with this brief report – itself is not focused broadly enough on assessing how the program supports the College's mission beyond the Philosophy major itself. Most of our students are not majors in Philosophy. So one upshot of this year's assessment and revision of the overall plan is that we need to go back and revise again for next year. We've simplified for now in order to streamline and clarify the various parts of the assessment plan. But it's now a bit too narrowly focused on philosophy majors. We want to assess what we actually do, which is support other majors just as much if not more than our own, and provide a place in our classes for putting things together from various courses.

So next year's assessment plan will broaden the scope of our assessment, with a view to the things we do for the larger academic community at Wells, as outlined in the program priorities report for Philosophy.