2008

Mission

Engaging in philosophy is a process of coming to terms with oneself, and thus with one's place in the world. This process requires developing skills of conceptual analysis, logical reasoning, and critical thinking. These skills are intrinsically valuable throughout one's life and apply to a wide variety of professions, including law, medicine, education, journalism, business, public policy, and government.

The mission of the Occidental Philosophy Department is to help students develop these skills, so that they are in good position to reflect critically on their beliefs, to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of alternative beliefs, to integrate their views into a coherent perspective, and to understand how philosophical ideas have shaped their culture and history. In all these ways, studying philosophy helps to promote responsible citizenship, social and economic justice, and the recognition of and respect for differences among groups and between individuals.

Goals/Outcomes for Majors

Goal 1. Students will demonstrate the ability to think and write clearly about complex philosophical issues.

Outcome 1.1: Students will be able to analyze arguments in philosophical texts. (see alignment grid; all classes except 225and 325)

Outcome 1.2: Students will be able to write both expository and critical essays on advanced philosophical subjects. (see alignment grid; all classes except 225 and 325)

Goal 2. Students will demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the core areas of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and ethics.

Outcome 2.1: Students will be competent in logic. (225, 325)

Outcome 2.2: Students will be able to write advanced essays in the core areas of philosophy. (see alignment grid)

Goal 3. Students will be familiar with the major historical areas and figures of philosophy, including ancient, modern, and contemporary.

Outcome 3.1: Students will have an understanding of philosophical ideas within their historical and cultural contexts. (see alignment grid)

Outcome 3.2**:** Students will be able to write essays on representative figures and traditions in the history of philosophy. (see alignment grid)

Goal 4. Students will develop the ability to apply philosophical methods in a variety of contexts at the personal, interpersonal, and social levels.

Outcome 4.1**:** Students will be able to apply the methods of philosophy to issues and problems that individuals, communities, or governments face in the modern world.

Alignment of Outcomes with the Major

1.1 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 100 level classes, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 200 and 300 level classes and *Mastered* in 300 and 400 level classes.

1.2 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 100 level classes, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 200 and 300 level classes and *Mastered* in 300 and 400 level classes.

2.1 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 225, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 225 and 325 and *Mastered* in 225 and 325.

2.2 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 200 level classes and *Developed and practiced with feedback*, and *Mastered* in 300 and 400 level classes.

3.1 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 100 level classes, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 200 and 300 level classes and *Mastered* in 300 and 400 level classes.

3.2 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 200 level classes, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 200 and 300 level classes and *Mastered* in 300 and 400 level classes.

4.1 This outcome will be *Introduced* in 200 level classes, *Developed and practiced with feedback* in 200 and 300 level classes and *Mastered* in 300 level classes

I = introduced
D = developed and practiced
M = mastered

Course	Goal 1		Goal 2		Goal 3		Goal 4
	Out 1.1	**Out 1.2**	**Out 2.1**	**Out 2.2**	**Out 3.1**	**Out 3.2**	**Out 4.1**
101	I	I	n/a	I	I	n/a	I
205	I	I	n/a	I	I, D	I, D	I
210	I, D	I, D	n/a	I, D	I, D	I, D	n/a
225	n/a	n/a	I	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
230	I, D	I, D	n/a	I, D	I, D	I, D	I, D
235	I	I	n/a	I	I, D	I, D	I, D
300	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
305	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	n/a
310	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
312	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
315	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
325	n/a	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
330	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	D, M
340	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	D, M
345	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
350	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
355	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
360	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
365	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
370	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
375	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
380	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	n/a
385	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	n/a	n/a	n/a
397	D, M	D, M	n/a	D, M	D, M	D, M	D, M
490	M	M	n/a	M	M	M	M

Assessment Cycle and Procedure

We will have a five year assessment cycle. Using our various assessment rubrics (see attached documents), we will assess the outcomes for one goal each year, making our determinations on an examination of the writing of both introductory students and senior majors. In 2008-09, the first year in which we implement our newly designed assessment plan, we will assess the outcomes of our first goal. The assessment will be done at an end

of the year meeting, and all members of the department not on sabbatical for the spring semester will take part in the assessment.

Our "formative assessment process" uses the writing of introductory students to assess the development of their philosophical skills. Each year we will randomly choose 10 papers from each of the three central introductory classes (Philosophy 101, 210, and 230), two of which (210 and 230) are required for the philosophy major. At our end of year meeting, using our assessment rubrics, we will assess the outcomes for a single goal.

Our "summative assessment process" uses the writings of graduating senior majors to assess the development and mastery of their philosophical skills Graduating senior majors will submit a writing portfolio in the final semester of their senior year. Each student's portfolio will include her/his senior comprehensive essay plus two other essays, each from a different 300 level philosophy class. The three papers together will satisfy a distribution requirement, such that each of the three major subareas of philosophy (metaphysics and epistemology; moral and political philosophy; history of philosophy) is covered. We will keep the portfolios for two years, using each portfolio in our assessment meetings for two years running.

At the beginning of the spring of every second year we will send an **alumni/alumnae survey** (see attached document) to the graduating majors of the previous two years. The data collected from the survey will be used as part of the assessment that will take place in the end of year meeting for that year.

Process by which we came up with this document

Caro Brighouse and Kory Schaff drafted the department's initial assessment plan in 2006-07. It was presented and discussed at several department meetings, and then revised. Saul Traiger, as chair in 2006-07, forwarded the document to the appropriate committee. Since then, Caro Brighouse and Marcia Homiak have further revised and clarified the department's assessment plan.