



ASSESSMENT PLAN

PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

(Program of Study / Major / Degree Level, etc.)

Program Contact: Peter Carruthers (Chair) Phone: ext. 5-5705 E-mail: pcarruth@umd.edu

Date submitted to Academic Unit Head: approved by faculty 09/13/06

Program Goals:

All philosophy programs (undergraduate and graduate) aim to: (1) equip students with an understanding of a range of philosophers and philosophical problems, while encouraging as deep a critical engagement with those philosophers and problems as is feasible in the time available; (2) promote respect for the norms of: clarity; careful analysis; critical reflection; rational argument; sympathetic interpretation and understanding; and impartial pursuit of truth; (3) promote independence of thought and a critical and analytical approach, not only to theories and concepts, but also to the assumptions on which they are based; (4) equip students with the core skills involved in: careful reading, comprehension and compression of textual material; clear thinking; sound argumentation; and the clear and well-organized expression of ideas; (5) provide excellent teaching which is informed and invigorated by the research activities of faculty; (6) facilitate an awareness of the application of philosophical thought to other academic disciplines or to matters of public interest, encouraging students to apply philosophical skills more widely where appropriate.

In addition, the principal aims of the philosophy major include: (7) fostering competence in reasoning techniques, including, but not limited to, formal logic; (8) developing an ability to present fairly, yet critically, the views and arguments of pre-twentieth century philosophers; (9) ensuring that students have a broad understanding of key philosophical concepts and doctrines in value theory (understood to include ethics, aesthetics, and political philosophy), and metaphysics and epistemology (understood to include philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion); (10) fostering the ability to write clearly and in an organized fashion; (11) fostering the ability to make out a reasoned case in support of one's views; (12) encouraging tolerance and respect for diverse viewpoints; (13) providing an exciting and intellectually challenging engagement with philosophical ideas and arguments.

Relevance of goals to the mission statements and/or strategic plans of the University, College, or Program as applicable:

The Philosophy Department's goals cohere very closely with the University's goals concerning the development of critical reasoning and research skills, and also with the University's goals concerning oral and (especially) written communication.

| Student Learning Outcomes (list the three-to-five most important) | Assessment Measures and Criteria (describe one or more measures for each outcome and criteria for success) | Assessment Schedule (initial year, and subsequent cycle) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Students should be competent in formal techniques, including, but not limited to, formal logic. | 80% of graduating majors should have obtained B's or better in the Department's required logic courses. | 2007-8, and every three years thereafter. Faculty on the undergraduate Teaching and Curriculum Committee will collect data and report. |
| 2. Students should be able to present critically, yet sympathetically, philosophical views that differ from their own. | Term papers of graduating majors in history of philosophy courses will be evaluated on this dimension using criterion-based grading (using a rubric devised by Teaching and Curriculum Committee). 80% should score at 'satisfactory' or above on this criterion. | 2007-8, and every three years thereafter. Faculty on the undergraduate Teaching and Curriculum Committee will review 20 samples and report. |
| 3. Students should be able to write clearly and in an organized fashion (appropriate to the content and context, and appropriate for a graduating major). | Term papers of graduating majors in 400-level courses will be evaluated on this dimension using criterion-based grading. 80% should score at 'satisfactory' or above on this criterion. | 2007-8, and every three years thereafter. Faculty on the undergraduate Teaching and Curriculum Committee will review 20 samples and report. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>4. Students should be able to make out a reasoned case in support of their views (appropriate to the content and context, and appropriate for a graduating major).</p> | <p>Term papers of graduating majors in 400-level courses will be evaluated on this dimension using criterion-based grading. 80% should score at 'satisfactory' or above on this criterion.</p> | <p>2007-8, and every three years thereafter. Faculty on the undergraduate Teaching and Curriculum Committee will review 20 samples and report.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|