

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
WSU Department of Political Science and Philosophy  
Philosophy Program  
Self-Study Document, Fall 2021

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The following is a summary of the self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full, self-study document itself.

**Mission Statement:**

The philosophy program seeks to impart knowledge and skills that fall under the categories of liberal education, methodology, and application. A major in philosophy first and foremost exposes students to the intellectual history of Western Civilization, though it does not limit itself to this tradition. Students in our program complete coursework in at least one major historical period (Ancient, Medieval, or Early Modern), while taking other classes that regularly include thinkers from various historical eras. Students who major in philosophy also learn to apply principles of sound reasoning and train in value theory.

In sum, a philosophy major offers students the opportunity to learn the foundations of an intellectual discipline that forms a central part of a liberal education, while at the same time developing practical, marketable skills including critical thinking skills, communication skills, creative thinking skills, research skills, and the ability to understand the interrelations between various fields/subjects.

**Curriculum:**

Our program offers both a B.A. and a minor in philosophy. Students may also choose to incorporate philosophy as one of their Bachelor of Integrated Studies areas of emphasis.

We currently list 26 courses in our catalog—5 lower division and 20 upper-division. This is an increase of 1 upper-division courses (Environmental Philosophy) since our last review. Our lower-division classes are all offered at least once annually, with four HU general education being offered nearly every semester, including summers, in both online and in-person formats. Our upper-division classes are offered on a rotating basis, with our core courses being offered once every two years. With the addition of our fourth line, we are able to offer all of our upper division courses regularly.

**Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:**

In the past five years, we have changed how we conduct assessment. Previously, we assessed PHIL 1000, PHIL 1120, and PHIL 1250 (our HU general education courses) and all of the courses that comprise the disjunctive breadth distribution in the major. Following the restructuring of our program, and on the advice of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, we now assess the effectiveness of the major through assessing PHIL 4900, our capstone.

In the capstone (PHIL 4900), students are required to write an original philosophical paper and submit a portfolio consisting of three papers in each of our core areas: history of philosophy, value theory, and metaphysics/epistemology. The portfolio papers need not have been written for the corresponding upper division 'core' class (e.g., a paper from Philosophy of Mind that focused on metaphysics would suffice to fill the metaphysics/epistemology requirement.) The portfolio papers are not graded as part of the course but are assessed with our existing assessment instrument.

Our assessment of our general education courses has consistently confirmed that we need no significant pedagogical or curricular changes. Our strategic plan additionally focuses on assessing general education with respect to completion rates and gender diversity. We have a target of 80% pass rates in all general education courses, and the previous five years show pass rates in the high 70%s, and trending in the correct direction.

**Academic Advising:**

All students who sign up to be a philosophy major or minor are directed to the program advisor for an orientation session at which all program requirements are discussed. Students are also provided both a program brochure and a graduation checklist they can use to ensure that they are on track for a timely graduation. Other topics, including course descriptions and career opportunities, are discussed at the student's request. Subsequent to this, all majors and minors are encouraged to meet with the program advisor at least once annually. Finally, all pending graduates are required to undergo a final progress check to ensure that they will have completed all requirements by their graduation date. For final graduation sign-off, students must complete an anonymous exit exam over ChiTester.

**Faculty:**

The philosophy program currently has four full-time tenure-stream faculty, all of whom hold a Ph.D. in philosophy. In addition, the program employs around three adjuncts each semester to expand our general education offerings, especially at the Davis and Farmington campuses. For AY2019-2020, the program hired a one-year visiting instructor to cover two sabbaticals. All faculty within the program are regularly evaluated and have established a record of teaching and research excellence.

**Program Support:**

The department as a whole receives excellent support from the College's Dean's office, including an annual travel budget of roughly \$750 per faculty member, technology support for both our offices and classrooms, and academic advising for all of our students. Our department staff person has been excellent, and our library resources are strong for a program of our size.

**Relations with External Community:**

Our faculty bring philosophy to the community through educational programming in high schools, prisons, and the Weber Children's school, as well as public philosophical events. Our faculty are also members of professional organizations and local non-profit groups.

**Student, Faculty, Contract/Adjunct Faculty and Staff Statistics:**

**Full-Time Faculty Statistics**

Name	Gender	Rank	Tenure Status	Highest Degree	Years of Teaching	Areas of Expertise
Fudge, Robert	M	Full	Tenured	Ph.D.	16	Ethics, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Economics
Greene, Richard	M	Full	Tenured	Ph.D.	20	Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Popular Culture
Willard, Mary Beth	F	Associate	Tenured	Ph.D.	10	Metaphysics, History of Philosophy, Aesthetics
Neiman, Paul	M	Assistant	Tenure-track	Ph.D.	1	History of Philosophy, Philosophy of Love & Friendship.

**Contract/Adjunct Faculty Statistics**

Name	Rank	Tenure Status	Highest Degree	Years of Teaching	Areas of Expertise
Marc Nelson	Adjunct	Not eligible	M.A.	Spring 2012-present	PHIL 1000, PHIL 1120, PHIL 2920
Jason Goltz	Adjunct	Not eligible	Ph.D.	Spring 2014-present	PHIL 1000, PHIL 1120, PHIL 1250
Wilson Underkuffler	Adjunct	Not eligible	Ph.D.	Fall 2018-present	PHIL 1000, PHIL 1120
Dan Molter	Visiting Assistant Professor	Not eligible	Ph.D.	Fall 2019-Spring 2020.	Philosophy of Science
Jeffrey Wood	Adjunct	Not eligible	Ph.D.	Fall 2020	PHIL 1000
Rachel Robison-Green	Adjunct	Not eligible	Ph.D.	Fall 2011-Fall 2020	PHIL 100, PHIL 1120, PHIL 1250

**Staff Profile**

Name	Job Title	Years of Employment	Areas of Expertise
Patricia Burton	Administrative Assistant	September 2020-November 2021	General Office Administration
Carly Bentley	Administrative Assistant	May 2020-August 2020	General Office Administration
Sarah Anderson	Administrative Assistant	January 2018-April 2020	General Office Administration
Nicole Gabor	Administrative Assistant	July 2016-November 2017	General Office Administration

**Student Profile**

Philosophy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
<b>Student Credit Hours Total <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>11,069</b>	<b>11,502</b>	<b>10,574</b>	<b>10,314</b>	<b>6,405</b>
Philosophy	3,890	4,622	4,263	4,180	2,733
Political Science	7,179	6,880	6,311	6,134	3,672
<b>Student FTE Total <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>368.97</b>	<b>383.40</b>	<b>352.47</b>	<b>343.80</b>	<b>213.50</b>
<b>Student Majors <sup>3</sup> (Phil Only)</b>	15	22	22	28	26
minors	17	14	12	15	13
<b>Program Graduates <sup>4</sup> (Phil only)</b>					
Associate Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bachelor Degree	2	3	4	5	1
<b>Student Demographic Profile <sup>5</sup></b>					
Female	5	8	6	7	10
Male	10	14	16	21	16
<b>Faculty FTE Total <sup>6</sup> (Dept)</b>	<b>16.53</b>	<b>14.57</b>	<b>16.08</b>	<b>15.62</b>	n/a
Adjunct FTE	6.59	6.16	6.59	<b>6.35</b>	n/a
Contract FTE	9.94	8.41	9.49	9.27	n/a
<b>Student/Faculty Ratio <sup>7</sup></b>	<b>22.32</b>	<b>26.31</b>	<b>21.92</b>	<b>22.01</b>	n/a

There are also 13 second majors in philosophy in the review period.

### **Results of Previous Program Reviews:**

Our previous program review indicated the need for a fourth line, and encouraged us to develop interdisciplinary team-taught classes. Thanks to Dean Frank Harrold, we now have a fourth full-time faculty member, and we have developed two new classes (SUS Environmental Philosophy and Philosophy of Economics) with an interdisciplinary focus.

### **Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:**

Program Review Team

Dr. Mary Beth Willard (program coordinator), [marybethwillard@weber.edu](mailto:marybethwillard@weber.edu)

Dr. Robert Fudge, [robertfudge@weber.edu](mailto:robertfudge@weber.edu)

Dr. Richard Greene, [rgreene@weber.edu](mailto:rgreene@weber.edu)

Dr. Paul Neiman, [pneiman@weber.edu](mailto:pneiman@weber.edu)

Internal Reviewer

Dr. Jenny Kokai, [jenniferkokai@weber.edu](mailto:jenniferkokai@weber.edu)

External Reviewer

Dr. Chris Weigel, [weigelch@uvu.edu](mailto:weigelch@uvu.edu)