

Weber State University
Annual Assessment of Evidence of Learning

Cover Page

Department/Program: Philosophy
Academic Year of Report: 2014/15
Date Submitted: October 2, 2015
Report author: Robert Fudge

Contact Information:

Phone: x7046

Email: robertfudge@weber.edu

A. Brief Introductory Statement:

Please review the Introductory Statement and contact information for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if this information is current, please place an 'X' below. No further information is needed. We will indicate "Last Reviewed: [current date]" on the page.

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

B. Mission Statement

Please review the Mission Statement for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as "Last Reviewed [current date]". No further information is needed. If the information is not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

C. Student Learning Outcomes

Please review the Student Learning Outcomes for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if they are current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as "Last Reviewed [current date]". No further information is needed. If they are not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

D. Curriculum

Please review the Curriculum Grid for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as "Last Reviewed: [current data]". No further information is needed. If the curriculum grid is not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below

E. Assessment Plan

Please review the Assessment Plan for your department displayed on the assessment site:

<http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if the plan current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.

The site should contain an up-to-date assessment plan with planning going out a minimum of three years beyond the current year. Please review the plan displayed for your department at the above site. The plan should include a list of courses from which data will be gathered and the schedule, as well as an overview of the assessment strategy the department is using (for example, portfolios, or a combination of Chi assessment data and student survey information, or industry certification exams, etc.).

Please be sure to include your planned assessment of any general education courses taught within your department. This information will be used to update the General Education Improvement and Assessment Committee’s planning documentation.

Assessment plan:

Each lower division core and gen ed course will be assessed annually. Each upper division core course will be assessed the first time it is taught, beginning fall 2012, and every other time thereafter, unless initial assessment results suggest additional assessment is necessary. The exception is PHIL4900 Senior Capstone Seminar, which we will continue to assess every spring.

Upper division assessment will be conducted by means of a rubric that addresses each of the course learning outcomes and that can be applied to selected assignments (papers and exams) in student portfolios.

Lower division courses will be assessed by means of embedded test questions and/or paper assignments.

Semester	Core and Gen Ed Courses to be Assessed											
	PHIL1000 Intro to Philosophy*	PHIL1120 Contemporary Moral Problems**	PHIL1250 Critical Thinking*	PHIL2200 Deductive Logic***		PHIL3010 Classical & Medieval	PHIL3020 Modern	PHIL3650 Aesthetics	PHIL4510 Metaphysics	PHIL4520 Epistemology	PHIL4600 Ethical Theory	PHIL4900 Capstone Seminar
Fall 2015												
Spring 2016												X
Fall 2016		X		X				X		X		
Spring 2017	X		X				X					X
Fall 2017									X		X	
Spring 2018						X						X
Fall 2018		X		X								
Spring 2019	X		X									X
Fall 2019												
Spring 2020												X
Fall 2020		X		X				X		X		
Spring 2021	X		X				X					X
Fall 2021						X			X		X	
Spring 2022												X
Fall 2022		X		X								
Spring 2023	X		X									X

* Denotes a lower-division course that is assessed for both general education and course/department learning outcomes.

** Denotes a lower-division course that is assessed for only general education learning outcomes.

*** Denotes a lower-division course that is assessed for only course/department learning outcomes.

F. Report of assessment results for the most previous academic year:

There are a variety of ways in which departments can choose to show evidence of learning. This is one example. The critical pieces to include are 1) what learning outcome is being assessed, 2) what method of measurement was used, 3) what the threshold for ‘acceptable performance’ is for that measurement, 4) what the actual results of the assessment were, 5) how those findings are interpreted, and 6) what is the course of action to be taken based upon the interpretation.

A. Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major

FALL 2014 COURSES

Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major PHIL 2200 Deductive Logic, Fall 2014					
Program Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
Goal 1: Knowledge How: Critical Thinking	Be able to translate English expressions into logical notation	Students were tested on this skill on three exams during the course of the semester; students were required to complete weekly graded homework assignments.	64% (9/14) of students passed the first exam with a C or higher; 64% (9/14) of students passed the second exam with a C or higher; 71.4% (10/14) of students passed the final exam with a C or higher. 57% (8/14) of students passed the class.	Pass rates declined somewhat from the assessment conducted in Spring 2013. The numbers for Fall 2014, however, include three students who did not sit for either the second or third exam. Of students who sat all three exams, 88% (8/11) passed the course.	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
	Be able to prove the validity of arguments using the methods of categorical logic, propositional logic, and predicate logic	Students were tested on this skill on three exams during the course of the semester; students were required to complete weekly graded homework assignments.	64% (9/14) of students passed the first exam with a C or higher; 64% (9/14) of students passed the second exam with a C or higher; 71.4% (10/14) of students passed the final exam with a C or higher.	Pass rates declined somewhat from the assessment conducted in Spring 2013. The numbers for Fall 2014, however, include three students who did not sit for either the second or third exam. Of students	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time

**Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major
PHIL 2200 Deductive Logic, Fall 2014**

Program Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
			57% (8/14) of students passed the class.	who sat all three exams, 88% (8/11) passed the course.	

SPRING, 2015 COURSES

PHIL 1000 Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2015					
Program Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
Goal 1: Knowledge Of: Historical Knowledge	Identify the main ideas associated with at least three major historical philosophers	One hundred one students were administered a 25 question quiz on the history of western philosophy during the second week of the semester, based on a video lecture	Students averaged 74% on the quiz (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 2: Knowledge Of: Topical Knowledge	Demonstrate knowledge of discipline-specific terminology	Nine questions from Exam 1	Students averaged 81% on these questions (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 3: Knowledge How: Critical Thinking	Distinguish between and assess different kinds of arguments	Three questions from Exam 1	Students averaged a 76% on these questions (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 4: Knowledge How: Reading Comprehension	Identify and summarize the competing philosophical positions contained within a passage or text	Two essay questions from the final exam	Students averaged 94% on one question and 97% on the other (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 5: Knowledge How: Critical Thinking	Evaluate the reasoning contained within a philosophical passage or text	One essay question from Exam 2	Students averaged 78% on this question (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).

PHIL 1250 Critical Thinking, Spring 2015

Program Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
Goal 1: Knowledge How: Critical Thinking	a. identify and reconstruct arguments contained within passages	a. two questions on exam 1 on identifying and rewriting arguments in "standard form"	Students averaged 71% and 72% on these questions (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
		b. five questions on exam 1 on constructing Beardsley diagrams (a diagrammatic way of representing arguments)	Students averaged an 7.2 out of 10 (proficiency is 70% or higher)		
	b. determine whether an argument commits a logic fallacy and, if so, identify which one and explain how it is committed	Exam on logic fallacies	Students averaged an 81% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met expectations of learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
	c. identify cognitive and perceptual errors that might be affecting an author's reasoning with an argumentative passage	Exam on logic fallacies	Students averaged a 81% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met expectations of learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
	d. formulate and evaluate competing hypotheses for phenomena in need of explanation, so as to make an informed judgment about the hypotheses' comparative strengths	Three questions on exam 3 concerning causal reasoning	Students averaged an 86% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met expectations of learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time

**Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major
PHIL 4900 Senior Capstone Seminar, Spring 2015**

Measurable Learning Outcome Students will...	Method of Measurement Direct and Indirect Measures*	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
<u>Topical Knowledge:</u> Demonstrate an understanding of the basic issues and terminology in the following areas: logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.	Measure 1: Students complete a set of exams over ChiTester covering each of the four areas being assessed.	Measure 1: Each exam will be passed by at least 80% of students within two attempts of taking it.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 passed all the exams on the first attempt.	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated adequate understanding of issues and terminology in the four areas being tested.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.
	Measure 2: Students complete a Capstone paper on a topic of their choice.	Measure 2: At least 80% of students will successfully complete Capstone paper.	Measure 2: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 passed the Capstone paper, averaging a 7.83 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0)..	Measure 2: Students successfully demonstrated adequate understanding of topic on which they were writing.	Measure 2: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.
<u>Critical Thinking:</u> Demonstrate the ability to distinguish between and assess the strength of arguments and explanations.	Measure 1: Reasoning skills evaluated in capstone paper on a topic of their choice.	Measure 1: At least 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to construct and defend plausible arguments in support of their main thesis.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 demonstrated the ability to construct and defend plausible arguments in support of their main thesis, averaging a 7.67 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0).	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated critical thinking skills.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.

**Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major
PHIL 4900 Senior Capstone Seminar, Spring 2015**

Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*				
<u>Reading Comprehensions:</u> Demonstrate the ability to explain, interpret, and evaluate philosophical texts.	Measure 1: Explicative, interpretive, and evaluative skills are evaluated in capstone paper on a topic of their choice.	Measure 1: At least 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to accurately explain, interpret, and evaluate philosophical texts.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 demonstrated the ability to accurately explain, interpret, and evaluate philosophical texts, averaging a 7.83 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0).	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated explicative, interpretive, and evaluative skills.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.
<u>Writing:</u> The ability to present ideas clearly and with minimal grammatical and other writing errors.	Measure 1: Writing skills assessed in capstone paper.	Measure 1: At least 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to present ideas clearly and with minimal grammatical and other writing errors.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 demonstrated the ability to present ideas clearly and with minimal grammatical and other writing errors, averaging a 8.17 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0).	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated the ability to present ideas clearly and with minimal grammatical and other writing errors.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.
<u>Writing:</u> The ability to conduct research in accordance with generally accepted standards within the discipline.	Measure 1: Students will demonstrate ability to research, document, and cite sources in capstone paper.	Measure 1: At least 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to research, document, and cite sources in capstone paper.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 demonstrated effective research skills, averaging a 7.83 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0).	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated effective research skills.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.

Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major PHIL 4900 Senior Capstone Seminar, Spring 2015					
Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*				
<u>Writing:</u> The ability to write in a way that reflects careful attention to language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning.	Measure 1: Writing skills assessed in capstone paper.	Measure 1: At least 80% of students will demonstrate the ability to present ideas clearly with careful attention to language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning.	Measure 1: Six out of six students taking the course in spring 2015 demonstrated the ability to present ideas clearly with careful attention to language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning, averaging a 7.50 on a 10-point scale (proficiency is anything higher than 7.0).	Measure 1: Students successfully demonstrated the ability to present ideas clearly with careful attention to language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning.	Measure 1: No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time.

b. Evidence of Learning: High Impact or Service Learning

If you provide students with high impact or service learning opportunities briefly describe those opportunities and explain how you assess their impact on student learning. This [excerpt](#) from George D. Kuh provides a brief overview of high-impact practices.

The philosophy program offers no high impact or service learning courses.

c. Evidence of Learning: General Education Courses

PHIL 1000 Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2015: General Education Learning Goals					
General Education Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
Goal 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse philosophical traditions, as well as key themes, concepts, issues, terminology, and ethical standards in philosophy.	Demonstrate knowledge of discipline-specific terminology, themes, concepts, and issues from diverse philosophical traditions	Nine questions from Exam 1	Students averaged 81% on these questions (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 2: Students will analyze cultural artifacts within philosophy. (For our purposes, this will be interpreted as involving logical analysis of philosophy texts.)	Distinguish between and assess different kinds of arguments	Three questions from Exam 1	Students averaged a 76% on these questions (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of philosophical issues in written, oral, or graphic forms	Identify and summarize the competing philosophical positions contained within a passage or text	Two essay questions from the final exam	Students averaged 94% on one question and 97% on the other (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time

PHIL 1120 Contemporary Moral Problems, Fall 2014: General Education Learning Goals					
Program Learning Goal	Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Students will...	Students will...	Direct and Indirect Measures*			
Goal 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse philosophical traditions, as well as key themes, concepts, issues, terminology, and ethical standards in philosophy.	Demonstrate knowledge of discipline-specific terminology	Students assessed on a writing assignment (Term Paper)	Students averaged an 86 out of 100 (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 2: Students will analyze cultural artifacts within philosophy. (For our purposes, this will be interpreted as involving logical analysis of philosophy texts.)	Distinguish between and assess different kinds of arguments	Students assessed on a writing assignment (Term Paper)	Students averaged an 82 out of 100 (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of philosophical issues in written, oral, or graphic forms	Identify and summarize the competing philosophical positions contained within a passage or text	Students assessed on a writing assignment (Term Paper)	Students averaged an 80 out of 100 (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
		Final Exam, Question 13	87% of students answered correctly (proficiency is 70% or higher)		

Additional narrative (optional – use as much space as needed):

PHIL 1250 Critical Thinking, Spring 2015: General Education Learning Goals				
Measurable Learning Outcome Students will...	Method of Measurement Direct and Indirect Measures*	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Goal 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse philosophical traditions, as well as key themes, concepts, issues, terminology, and ethical standards in philosophy.	Fallacies exam, which pulled examples from a variety of philosophical traditions and tested their knowledge of key philosophical terminology	Students averaged an 81% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 2: Students will analyze cultural artifacts within philosophy	Fallacies exam, which pulled examples from a variety of philosophical traditions and tested their knowledge of key philosophical terminology	Students averaged an 81% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time
Goal 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of humanities materials in written, oral, or graphic forms.	Three essay questions on exam 3 concerning causal reasoning	Students averaged an 86% (proficiency is 70% or higher)	Students met the expectations of the learning outcome	No curricular or pedagogical changes needed at this time

*At least one measure per objective must be a direct measure; indirect measures may be used to supplement direct measure(s).

G. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure

For all classes except the Capstone Seminar, individual faculty compiled data from their exams and papers and presented this data to the Philosophy Program Director to store. Exams, papers, and raw data, including all rubrics used, will be stored by individual faculty.

Exam information for the Capstone Seminar is stored on ChiTester; capstone paper information is stored by the individual faculty member.

The next page contains the assessment rubric used for all upper-division classes.

Assessment Rubric for Upper-Division Philosophy Courses

	0	1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10	Score
Topical Knowledge	Pervasive and fundamental misunderstandings.	Rudimentary understanding, but much room for improvement.	Strong grasp of material, but not demonstrating mastery.	Mastery of topic demonstrated.	
Critical Thinking	Arguments are absent or consistently poor.	Attempt to formulate arguments, but still in need of considerable development.	Arguments are generally strong, but some improvement can still be made.	Very strong, well-focused arguments.	
Reading Comprehension	Student demonstrates pervasive misunderstanding of philosophical texts.	Some understanding of texts demonstrated, but crucial points overlooked or misunderstood.	Strong grasp of texts, but still room for improvement.	Mastery of texts.	
Writing: Mechanics	Pervasive writing errors.	Though not pervasive, writing quality not up to college level.	Writing is good, but some improvement still need.	Few to no writing issues.	
Writing: Research Standards	No references present and no attempt to satisfy research requirements of assignment.	References incomplete or incorrectly formatted and little to no attempt to satisfy research requirements.	References are complete, but some errors; good attempt to satisfy research requirements.	Complete and appropriate references; research requirements fully satisfied.	
Writing: Attention to language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning	Writing lacks philosophical sophistication.	Some attention paid to philosophical writing, but still room for much improvement.	Good level of philosophical sophistication demonstrated in writing.	Writing demonstrates a strong grasp of language, logic, and subtleties of reasoning.	
Historical Knowledge (History Courses Only)	No understanding or fundamental misunderstanding of historical figures demonstrated.	Knowledge of historical figures is rudimentary.	Knowledge of historical figures demonstrates some sophistication.	Knowledge of historical figures is accurate and demonstrates both depth and breadth.	

Appendix A

Most departments or programs receive a number of recommendations from their Five-Year Program Review processes. This page provides a means of updating progress towards the recommendations the department/program is acting upon.

Date of Program Review: 2011	Recommendation	Progress Description
Recommendation 1	Change mission statement to include “provides training in clear and accurate exposition as well as oral communication skills.”	We made the change
Recommendation 2	Increase staffing to allow for more upper-division offerings.	This same recommendation was made in our 2006 program review, and we will continue to actively advocate for an additional philosophy hire. To date, we have been unsuccessful in bringing this about.
Recommendation 3	Consider assessing advising.	We have begun doing so through our subsequently established graduation exit interview.

Additional narrative:

Appendix B

Please provide the following information about the full-time and adjunct faculty contracted by your department during the last academic year (summer through spring). Gathering this information each year will help with the headcount reporting that must be done for the final Five Year Program Review document that is shared with the State Board of Regents.

Faculty	
Headcount	6
With Doctoral Degrees (Including MFA and other terminal degrees, as specified by the institution)	4
Full-time Tenured	2
Full-time Non-Tenured (includes tenure-track)	1
Part-time	3
With Master's Degrees	1
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-Tenured	
Part-time	1
With Bachelor's Degrees	0
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Other	
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Total Headcount Faculty	6
Full-time Tenured	2
Full-time Non-tenured	1
Part-time	3

Please respond to the following questions.

- 1) Based on your program's assessment findings, what subsequent action will your program take?
 - There is a need to break down assessment data more "finely" in our deductive logic class assessment. Specifically, we will take greater pains to report assessment outcomes on assignments more closely tied to each of the learning outcomes, rather than more general information on overall course outcomes.
 - Based on overall assessment requirements, as well as our satisfaction with past assessment results, we have scaled back our assessment plan, such that our lower-division courses will be assessed every two years.

- 2) Are there assessment strategies within your department or program that you feel are particularly effective and/or innovative? If so, what are those strategies and what do you learn about your students by using them?
 - Our assessment mirrors the kind of assessment we already perform in our classes, so we don't consider our efforts particularly innovative and no more effective than what we already do in-class, except perhaps insofar as a use a common assessment rubric for our upper-division core courses.