Assessment Plan: BA/BS in Philosophy
Drafted by Beata Stawarska, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Alignment

The University of Oregon values a liberal education that "prepares students for full participation as citizens in a free, democratic society, and enables the full development of human potential."[1] The university mission statement emphasizes "a commitment to undergraduate education, with a goal of helping the individual learn to question critically, think logically, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically." In addition, the university mission is to establish "a framework for lifelong learning that leads to productive careers and to the enduring joy of inquiry."[2]

The Department of Philosophy advances these aims by encouraging students to become engaged, reflective citizens and lifelong learners, and by providing them with opportunities to develop the skills of critical reflection, written and oral communication, and creative problem-solving. The study of philosophy also strengthens the ability to reason, enlarges the imagination, and refines aesthetic sensitivity. These skills prepare our majors for graduate study in philosophy and other disciplines, as well as for careers in government, law, the non-profit sector, or business.[3]

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the program, philosophy majors will be able to:

1) Delineate the history of Western philosophy and differentiate the main schools of thought, key authors, debates, terms, and methods, that emerged in the history of philosophy.

2) Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through use of a broad range of research methods, including collaborative projects and scholarly essays that deal with primary and secondary sources in the literature and are written in an academic format.

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[1] University of Oregon Academic Plan (draft), p. 1, http://provost.uoregon.edu/files/2011/10/Academic-plan-10_13_09-draft-3-w-10-12-11-noted.pdf, link accessed on March 6, 2012.
[2] University of Oregon Mission Statement, http://pages.uoregon.edu/uosenate/UOmissionstatement.html, site accessed on March 6, 2012.
[3] See "About Philosophy at the University of Oregon," http://philosophy.uoregon.edu/, and "About the Undergraduate Program," http://philosophy.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/, sites accessed on March 6, 2012.

3) Present and assess views that differ from one's own, particularly perspectives relative to gender, race, class, and culture, including non-Western philosophical perspectives, within an inclusive classroom environment.

4) Compare, contrast, and critique representative authors from various philosophical traditions and historical periods.

5) Engage in philosophical inquiry that examines a broad range of topics such as human nature, the self and the community, political authority, morality, knowledge and reality, the arts, literature, film, the internet…

6) Define and explain the various sub-disciplines within the field of philosophy, such as ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of language, philosophical psychology, philosophy of law, environmental philosophy, social and political philosophy, and others, such as they are approached in within various philosophical fields of focus: Continental European, American and Latin American, Asian, feminist, critical race theory, and analytic.

Assessment Procedure

Survey: Our summative assessment process includes an exit survey of graduating seniors, using the above criteria for learning objectives, to be given at the end of spring term. We will also send an alumni/alumnae survey to graduated majors after 3 years. The data collected from the surveys will be used as part of the assessment that takes place at the end of year meeting.

An example of a 'Direct measure': Our formative assessment process uses writing portfolios submitted by all graduating seniors of three papers: one from an upper division author's course, one from an upper division gender/race/class/culture course, and one from any course of their choice. The students submit their best papers in each case, with one of the papers constituting an example of their best work over 4 years. For the review, Undergraduate Studies Committee randomly selects up to 10 of the portfolios and reviews them.