



Philosophy

Program Review - Comprehensive Review

2022 - 2023

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Program Context

1. Mission

Share how your program contributes to the College or fits into the College's Mission. For example, what other academic programs and student/academic services does your program engage with? Examples of student/academic services include the Learning Center, Library, STEM Center, SparkPoint, Dream Center, etc. Another example, how does your program fit into any of the College's plans (such as Equity, Technology, Strategic Enrollment, etc.)? If your program has a mission statement, you may include it here.

The undergraduate major in Philosophy is designed to provide a deep understanding of important philosophical issues and a broad knowledge of philosophy's history. The program emphasizes the critical evaluation of classic texts, from ancient times to the present. Students can expect to develop the following skills: to read and think critically, write and speak clearly and persuasively, and conduct research effectively. More broadly, students can expect to be better equipped for civic life, including possessing greater sensitivity to human values in their own and other cultural traditions, establishing more informed personal values, as well as better understanding scientific and technological developments and their impact on humankind. The Philosophy major provides excellent preparation for careers that require clear, careful thinking, rigorous analytical skills, and effective written and oral communication.

The Philosophy department is one of nine disciplines in Cañada's Social Sciences program. The collective mission of the college's Social Sciences is to educate students in human behavior, in its many past and present cultural forms, in individual, group, national and international contexts, and to empower students as democratic participants in a rapidly changing world. There is an emphasis in engaged learning as we educate students to embody holistic knowledge, inspire critical thinking, possess dynamic oral and written communication skills, and become global citizens. Together, this education and training will equip students to make positive changes in their communities.

2. Articulation

Are there changes in curriculum or degree requirements at high schools or 4-year institutions that may impact your program? If so, describe the changes and your efforts to accommodate them. If no changes have occurred, please write "no known changes."

There have not been any articulation changes during this program review cycle that directly impacted philosophy. But there will be articulation changes upcoming in the future, namely the CalGETC transfer pathway required by AB 928. According to the current plan, starting in Fall 2025, there will only be six units required for Humanities GE transfer pattern. If this proposal becomes the new GE pattern, it would create a new headwind on enrollment for the philosophy program. The philosophy department will need to prepare and plan for this structural change in demand during the next three years. And if the change occurs, monitor how big of an impact the change has. Furthermore, if there is a significant impact from this change, it will likely start appearing during the 2024-25 academic year, since students could plan on gaining the CalGETC catalogue rights in their next academic year.

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3. Community & Labor Needs

Are there changes in community needs, employment needs, technology, licensing, or accreditation that may affect your program? If so, describe these changes and your efforts to accommodate them. If no changes have occurred, please write "no known changes". CTE programs: identify the dates of your most recent advisory group meeting and describe your advisory group's recommendations for your program.

There have been dramatic changes to our society in the last three years, reshaping all aspects of our lives. Philosophy becomes more relevant when social patterns are disrupted, as repeatedly shown across human history. To use two of many examples: first, Confucian ethics and Daoist philosophy emerged in response to the so-called Warring States period of ancient Chinese history. Second, the historically influential ancient Greek philosophy emerged when Athens entered a prolonged period of crisis following its defeat to Sparta. Turning to our current local, national, and international contexts, it is acutely more difficult for anyone to be confident about what their personal, professional, or public life will look like in the future.

Philosophy helps us on multiple levels to understand rapid changes and bend those changes toward life-affirming ends. On a personal level, it provides tools to describe, change, or live with various challenges. One Cañada student wrote in response to our college's 2021 Graduation survey: "My Philosophy courses have provided deep insight into the workings of life. It's helped me come to terms with a lot of issues I've had. Nothing I've ever experienced has made me feel more valid and worthy."

On a professional level, the emergence of remote work and the future of increasing automation will increase the number of professions that individuals pursue over their lifetimes. Philosophy provides the general purpose thinking skills and confidence needed to quickly learn new skills. Accordingly, the ability to recognize when to pursue a new career will become increasingly important, for which philosophy's critical thinking skills are especially relevant.

On a public level, philosophy's ethical frameworks serve as important tools for navigating the social and political crises that no longer lie dormant in our local, national, and international communities. Philosophy's ethical frameworks help us to more precisely understand our social and political crises: without nuanced diagnoses, we cannot have effective solutions. They also help us to analyze and prepare for future radical changes that will come with emerging technologies, such as driverless cars and biomedical technologies. At a more fundamental level, philosophy's ethical frameworks provide a robust vocabulary needed to sincerely talk through disagreements. Being comfortable and respectful with disagreement is necessary to avoid the everpresent danger of lapsing into lazy platitudes, which cripple the collective work of making our communities better.

Philosophy at Cañada College has never been more relevant to our students, as we all navigate toward an uncertain future in our personal, professional, and public lives. Philosophy can help our students reshape themselves and their communities toward more life-affirming ends.

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Looking Back

4. Curricular changes

List any significant changes that have occurred over the prior years in your program's curricular offerings, scheduling, or mode of delivery. For decisions made by your department, explain the rationale for these changes. If applicable, how have state policy changes affected your curricular offerings?

The biggest change in mode of delivery for Philosophy course offerings during this review cycle was due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All of Philosophy's face-to-face classes from March 2020 until the end of the Fall 2021 semester were converted to zoom synchronous classes.

Starting with the Spring 2022 semester, Philosophy has sought to bring back as many face-to-face classes as possible. It has been able to offer face-to-face sections of Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 100) and Contemporary Philosophy (PHIL 190). Part of these face-to-face offerings included two hybrid courses: PHIL 190 was offered as a hybrid with once-a-week face-to-face meetings; second, one section of PHIL 100 was offered as an evening hybrid course for College for Working Adults. Unfortunately, college enrollments have made it difficult to return to the level of face-to-face offerings prior to Spring 2020. A face-to-face section of Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 240) was cancelled during the Spring 2020 semester.

The Philosophy department has had success offering Selective requirements for philosophy majors as hybrid courses in Spring semesters. This began in Spring 2020, with Contemporary Philosophy, then Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (PHIL 312) in Spring 2021, and most recently with Contemporary Philosophy in Spring 2022. The move to hybrid offerings has seemed to better meet student demand, allowing the philosophy program to offer a more regular schedule of courses needed for completing degree requirements.

5A. Progress Report - IPC Feedback

Provide your responses to all recommendations received in your last program review cycle.

The IPC recommendation concerning Philosophy's 2019 program review was to provide more summary of its progress on previous goals. To address this recommendation, the 5B section of this program review has been expanded.

5B. Progress Report - Prior Program Goals

Provide a summary of the progress you have made on the program goals identified in your last program review.

Philosophy's 2019 Action plan sought to:

1. continue collaboration with the other Social Science disciplines,
2. improve AA-T course offerings, while maintaining the department's high productivity, and
3. explore different options for tutoring and other forms of student support with the hopes of increasing the overall success rate for students, including closing equity gaps.

With regard to #1: while the pandemic has presented some collaboration challenges, philosophy has continued to host Social Science teas. Of particular note are the social justice teas co-hosted with Political Science Professor Ware.

With regard to #2: the Philosophy department has offered a rotation of courses that allow students to complete degree requirements. Its plan to offer selective requirement courses in Spring semesters as hybrid courses that are cross-listed with Honors has been successful (PHIL 190 and PHIL 312). While the

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program's productivity has gone down, this has been driven by external factors, including a number of which are temporary factors.

With regard to #3: the Philosophy department has had success referring multiple students to serve as tutors in Cañada's Learning Center and Writing Center. Also, the full-time professor, David Eck, has been active in professional development activities. This includes continued participation in the Faculty Learning Program during the 2019-20 academic year and completing Peer Online Course Review (POCR) training from @One during Summer 2020.

Beyond the Action Plan from the 2019 review, philosophy made progress on an item discussed in connection with its SLO assessment. One noted challenge was having students formulate clear judgments on topics, which is a key part of critically assessing one's own beliefs as well others' beliefs. To help address this challenge, the PHIL 100 courses have introduced an earlier discussion post assignment that more directly prompts students to judge differences in philosophical methods. Another intervention related to this challenge has involved creating extra credit surveys for large writing assignments that include direct prompts for students to agree and disagree with particular claims by philosophers. This is discussed in greater detail below for question 9B.

6A. Impact of Resource Applications

Describe the impact to date of previously requested new resources (assignment, equipment, facilities, research, funding) including both resource requests that were approved and not approved. What impact have these resources had on your program and measures of student success? What have you been unable to accomplish due to resource requests that were not approved?

There were a couple of unmet resource requests from the 2019 review cycle.

First, there was an unmet resource request of the SAMSUNG 75" 4K UHD LED TOUCH DISP, Salamander – cart, Media Presentation System 200 (which enables a Wi-Fi connection). This has meant that the Social Science division is unable to host multimodal/Hyflex meetings within the HUB. As one result, there is less community building among social science students and less ability for us to show the space to students. A second unfulfilled resource request from 2019 concerns the request for "increased marketing support for our programs." There is still a lack of scalable marketing options, which is especially trouble for one-person departments. This has a negative impact on student enrollments in social science courses.

6B. Impact of Staffing Changes

Describe the impact on your program of any changes within the last program review cycle in staffing levels (for example, the addition, loss or reassignment of faculty/staff). If no changes have occurred please write "not applicable."

The full-time philosophy professor, David Eck, has been in Academic Senate leadership roles (Vice President, then President) since Fall 2019. This has taken on a very large portion of Professor Eck's time. One impact has been slowing the program's experimentation with multi-modal course offerings. While this has presented a challenge for the Philosophy program, the importance of contributing to the overall well-being and progress of the college is ultimately beneficial to the Philosophy program.

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Current State of the Program

7A. Enrollment Trends

Use the data provided by PRIE to examine your enrollments by department or courses. Describe trends in headcount, FTES, and load. If applicable, describe any other enrollment data that is relevant to your program.

Philosophy's enrollment trends from 2019-2022, like many other programs, have been heavily impacted by external factors. Enrollments increased significantly during the 2020-2021 academic year: 599 headcount overall up from 513 during the prior year (2019-2020) and then declining to 391 enrollments during the 2021-22 academic year.

FTEs and Load have followed the same trajectory as headcount. FTEs grew from 52.9 in 2019-2020 to 62.6 in 2020-2021 and then declined to 40.1 in 2021-2022. Load grew from 428 in 2019-2020 to 480 in 2020-2021 and then declined to 361 in 2021-2022.

I discuss course specific enrollments in the next question.

7B. Significant Changes in Your Program

Have there been any significant changes in enrollment trends or course offerings? For example, has there been a significant increase or drop in FTES or Load? If applicable, consider trends in class cancellation rates and how it might have affected your course offerings. If needed, consider how the pattern of course offerings (times/days/duration/delivery mode/number of sections) affected your enrollment?

As noted above, there have been significant changes in philosophy enrollments over the last three years. The curve of increasing enrollments and then declining enrollments follows a trend similar to many other college programs.

As a smaller program, philosophy is more susceptible to variance in both increases and decreases. For instance, the decreases in 2021-2022 were amplified by the enrollment challenges that the College for Working Adult (CWA) program has experienced. The Philosophy 100 evening hybrid course has struggled with enrollments as the number of students in CWA has dropped. The Introduction to Ethics course (PHIL 240) was cancelled in Spring 2022 semester, though unique conditions at the start of Spring 2022 semester created multiple headwinds for offering face-to-face classes that are likely temporary. Most notable among the factors that suppressed student demand for face-to-face classes: 1) students had to be willing to enroll in face-to-face classes despite the Spring 2022 semester starting during San Mateo county's highest Covid surge, 2) students had to upload vaccine information/waiver to register for face-to-face classes, and 3) masking was required.

Since there are fewer overall sections in a program the size of philosophy, when section cancellations occur, it more significantly impacts overall program enrollments. Offering the Introduction to Ethics course is especially important because it can satisfy a core major requirement or a selective major requirement.

As temporary barriers subside, it will be important to monitor the Philosophy program's enrollments, especially compared to college-wide averages.

7C. Planning for Your Program

What changes could be implemented, including changes to course scheduling (times/days/duration/delivery mode/number of sections), curriculum, marketing, and articulation of pathways that might improve these trends? If applicable, include plans for faculty recruitment and faculty training. NOTE: If other sources of data are used, please upload these documents or provide URLs.

The program plans to trial multiple changes in schedule and modality offerings. The full-time philosophy professor, David Eck, plans to try out some multi-modal course section offerings. This may help strengthen

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and/or maintain enrollments for the Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 240) and the selective requirement courses, such as Contemporary Philosophy (PHIL 190) and Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (PHIL 312). The program will also experiment with offering more hybrid sections—in particular, for the Introduction to Ethics course—based on the recent success of PHIL 190 and PHIL 312 being offered as hybrid courses. The program also plans to add an Honors addendum to the Introduction to Ethics course and then to offer the Ethics course as cross-listed with a Honors section during Fall semesters. In the past three years, cross-listing the PHIL 190 and PHIL 312 courses in the Spring semesters have helped with enrollments. The plan would be to offer Ethics as cross-listed with Honors during the Fall semester, while offering another selective major requirement as cross-listed with Honors in the Spring semester. A curricular change to support more enrollments would be to explore new Open Educational Resources for the philosophy courses as well as adding more Low-Textbook Cost options. The hope is to achieve this when Philosophy updates its curriculum in Fall 2023.

More broadly, the full-time philosophy professor, David Eck, has been working in his capacity as Academic Senate president to help improve scalable marketing solutions for all programs. More specifically, David Eck has worked with other faculty to draft a faculty profile template, shared the template with the Vice President of Instruction, and requested that the item be placed on the District ITS prioritization projects list. The faculty profile proposal is an example of a marketing solution that is scalable: it enables faculty to present in-depth information about their programs and professional skills without having to complete Omni webpage training or to fill-out marketing requests, which then depends on the human resources of a small college marketing department and also makes revisions to the webpage logistically cumbersome. The faculty profile would allow faculty to create robust and engaging webpages without special training, which is especially important for programs, like philosophy, that only have one full-time faculty member. If regular faculty can create these engaging webpages, then they can be more effectively linked to social media marketing campaigns that currently only direct users to more general college webpages.

8A. Access & Completion

Describe the student completion and success rate in your courses and/or program using the data provided by PRIE. Look at your course offerings, in the last program review cycle was it possible for a student to complete your certificates or degrees while only completing courses at Cañada College? How can the college help you improve student completion and success? What changes could be made?

The overall success rate in philosophy courses has slightly improved over the last five years. Five years ago, the success rate was 70%. In the four most recent years, the overall success rate has varied between 73% and 75%.

When looking at success rate across particular courses, the selective major requirements (PHIL 190 and PHIL 312) and Ethics (PHIL 240) have the highest success rate. This probably reflects student interest. The course with the lowest success rate is Introduction to Logic (PHIL 200). As a course in formal reasoning, this is a common challenge. Logic courses in general have a bimodal distribution of student grades—this statistical pattern is due to the nature of formal reasoning. Formal reasoning skills have a steep learning curve, so it is more difficult for students to achieve competence in formal reasoning skills. Logic's success rate did increase to 57.5% in the Fall 2019 semester. But regressed during the next two offerings: 45.5% in Fall 2020 and 50% in Fall 2021. Given the current college-wide enrollment decline, the Philosophy program does not plan to shift Logic to a hybrid modality at this time, as it could endanger our ability to offer the

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course, which is a major requirement. And the success rate in the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 may have been negatively impacted by the lack of campus access for most students, which negatively impacts many of our online students. The Philosophy program will continue to monitor the success rate of PHIL 200. If it does not improve during the upcoming cycle, then it will explore multiple options to improve the amount of feedback to students, which is critical to mastering formal reasoning skills. This could include offering the course as a multi-modal option, which may increase the likelihood of students seeking synchronous feedback while also helping to ensure there are enough student enrollments.

The success rate of Fall semester PHIL 100 online students has improved. This was a point of concern during the last program review cycle, as the Fall 2018 online section only had a success rate of 54.5% and more generally there was a lower success rate in online sections of Fall semesters compared to Spring semesters. During this program review cycle, the lowest success rate for an online section of a PHIL 100 course was 65.5% in Fall 2021. There was no meaningful difference between Fall and Spring success rates in 2019-20 year, with only a 0.6% difference. But there was more than a ten percent difference during the other two academic years. This pattern is evident but to a lesser extent when looking at college-wide averages of online success rates in Fall versus Spring semesters: Cañada's online courses in Spring 2020 had a 6.5% higher online success rate college-wide compared to Fall 2019; Spring 2021 had a 6.4% higher online success rate compared to Fall 2020. So while this pattern is to some extent part of a broader pattern of student success, it will be important for Philosophy to continue to improve the success rate of Fall online courses.

With regard to degree completability: the Philosophy degree has been completable at Cañada College. The three most important major requirements are offered on a regular basis: PHIL 100 every semester, PHIL 200 every Fall semester, and PHIL 240 usually every semester. (Sections of PHIL 240 were not offered during the Fall 2019 semester nor the Spring 2022 semester due to low enrollment.) And finally, each Spring, Philosophy has offered one of its selective course requirements: currently rotating PHIL 190 and PHIL 312 every other Spring semester.

To maintain the completability of the philosophy degrees, the college could help by advocating a lower minimum class size, particularly during periods when college-wide enrollments are low. The college could also help by offering more scalable marketing solutions, such as the faculty online profile request, which enable small one-person departments to share more engaging information about their programs without having to complete Omni webpage training or to fill-out marketing requests.

8B. Student Equity

One of the goals of the College's Student Equity plan is to close the performance gaps for disproportionately impacted students. Use the data provided by PRIE that indicates which groups are experiencing a disproportionate impact in your program. Which gaps are most important for improving outcomes in your program? How can the college help you address these gaps? What changes could be made?

There were three groups of students that show disproportionate impacts. For Philosophy courses, there were equity gaps in the success rates among: 1) Black non-Hispanic students, 2) Pacific Islander students, and 3) students aged between 23 and 28.

Beginning with the last group, *students aged between 23 and 28*: for 2021-22 academic year, 77 students, 61% success rate, -12% success gap with a 11.2% margin of error. So there was at least a 0.8% success gap. This disproportionate impact was the smallest of the three, within less than one percent of the margin

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of error. This equity gap had not appeared in any previous review cycle. As a result, I think the gap is likely an aberration.

The other two student groups both show large gaps among small sets of individuals:

Black Non-Hispanic student equity gaps: for 2020-21, 15 students, 33.3% success rate, -39.7% success gap with a 25.3% margin of error. So there was at least a 14.7% success gap compared to all other students. For 2021-22, 12 students, 41.7% success rate, -31.4% success gap with a 28.3% margin of error. So there was at least a 3.1% success gap compared to all other students.

Pacific Islander student equity gap: for 2019-2020, 11 students, 36.4% success rate, -35.5% success gap with a 29.5% margin of error. So there was at least a 6% success gap compared to all other students.

The most salient factor for these two groups appears to be the small sample size, as evidenced by the 30-40% margins of error. The variance that comes with the small sample sizes is likely the biggest factor that explains the reduced gap for Black non-Hispanic students: going from a minimum 14.7% success gap in 2020-21 down to a minimum 3.1% success gap in 2021-22. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that none of these groups appeared as disproportionately impacted in a previous philosophy review cycle.

In our previous review cycle, there were Hispanic/Latinx students and Filipino students who showed disproportionate impacts in philosophy course success rates. But these patterns did not reappear in the current review cycle.

To help address the equity gaps that did appear as well as prevent other equity gaps from appearing in the future, it is important for the college to recruit more students from different racial and ethnic groups, such as Black non-Hispanics and Pacific Islanders. On a mundane level, this would help avoid the statistical variance that comes with small sample sizes. More importantly, it would provide a more robust peer support network for these students, as they pursue their educational goals.

With direct regard to teaching and learning, the ability to offer more individualized instruction would also help close the noted equity gaps as well as prevent future ones. This most importantly involves further professional development on teaching methods, such as Umoja practices. Reducing class maximums size would also be helpful toward this goal.

8C. Completion – Success Online

The college has a goal of improving success in online courses. Using the data provided by PRIE, what significant gaps do you see in success between online/hybrid and non-online courses? What changes could be made to reduce these gaps? If your program does not offer online/hybrid courses, please write “not applicable”.

The data related to this question is highly noisy due to pandemic related changes in modality of instruction, among other factors. Only two of the semesters during this program review cycle (Fall 2019 and Spring 2022) included actual face-to-face instruction for the Philosophy program. And the data on face-to-face classes from Spring 2022 is still very noisy due to the biased sample of students who returned to face-to-face instruction. These students overall were likely more motivated than the average student during a more typical semester due to a range of factors, including: students had to upload vaccine information/waiver to register for face-to-face classes, students were willing to enroll in face-to-face classes despite the Spring 2022 semester starting during San Mateo county's highest Covid surge, and Middle College students were a greater proportion of the face-to-face students compared to pre-pandemic semesters. These biases within the data as well as other factors makes this set of data perhaps the least helpful during this program review cycle. With these caveats in mind, I will now turn to the data:

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As noted in 8A, the overall success rate in philosophy courses has slightly improved. Five years ago, the success rate was 70%. In the four most recent years, the overall success rate has varied between 73% and 75%. When comparing the “face-to-face” sections to the online sections, the face-to-face success rate dipped below the online success rate in 2019-20 academic year: 64.6% “F2F” compared to 73% fully online. Hybrid classes had a 73.8% success rate. In the next academic year, 2020-21, “face-to-face” classes [actually zoom synchronous classes] were only slightly more successful than online classes: 77.9% success rate in “F2F” compared to 71.2% in fully online sections. Hybrid classes had a 77.7% success rate. In the most recent academic year, 2021-22, the “face-to-face” classes [actually a mix of zoom synchronous and face-to-face classes] were significantly more successful: 84.2% success rate compared to a 70.9% online class success rate. Hybrid classes had a 78.3% success rate.

As a final note on modality, the average success rate of online courses is better when the PHIL 200 sections are separated out, as indirectly discussed above in 8A. When only considering the other online sections (PHIL 100 and PHIL 103), the success rate of online courses rises to 74.9% in 2019-20, 74% in 2020-21, and 73.1% in 2021-22. This doesn’t dramatically change the numbers but does slightly close the gap with hybrid and “F2F” success rates.

The only firm conclusion that I think can be drawn from this data is fairly obvious. When there are major disruptions to teaching and learning, this dramatically reduces the success rate of students. Hence the dramatic dip in success rate of face-to-face classes during the 2019-20 academic year. A more interesting observation from the above data: the success rate of hybrid courses had a more stable and usually above average success rate. But the reasons for this are less clear: the sample of students (enrolling in selective major requirements or in CWA sections) might be as much or more of a factor than the modality. Finally, while the success rate of face-to-face classes was excellent during the 2021-22 year, this data has been influenced to some extent by an atypical sample of students who enrolled in F2F during the Spring 2022 semester, as noted above.

9A. SLO Assessment - Compliance

Are all active courses being systematically assessed over a three-year cycle? Refer to the Program’s /Department’s Three-Year Assessment Plan and describe how the plan is completed across sections and over time.

The Philosophy Department is current in its Student Learning Outcome assessments. The Philosophy department has followed its three-year assessment plan. During the current program review cycle, the program has reviewed SLOs the following courses: during the 2019-20 academic year, PHIL 103, PHIL 190, and PHIL 240; during the 2020-21 academic year, PHIL 100 and PHIL 312; and during the 2021-22 academic year, PHIL 103, PHIL 190, and PHIL 200.

There were no philosophy courses offered during the review cycle that did not have student learning outcomes assessed.

9B. SLO Assessment - Impact

Summarize the dialogue that has resulted from these course SLO assessments. What specific strategies have you implemented, or plan to implement, based upon the results of your SLO assessment?

All philosophy courses emphasize critical thinking skills, especially argument analysis. This emphasis is evident in SLOs that were evaluated in each of the assessed courses:

- For PHIL 100, the reviewed SLO was “Use philosophic methods to analyze complex arguments.”

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- For PHIL 103, the reviewed SLOs were 1) “Identify types of arguments and patterns of reasoning, including deductive arguments, inductive arguments, causal reasoning, analogical reasoning, and fallacious reasoning” and 2) “Represent the form of an argument by translating English statements into a formal language, using truth-functional operators.”
- For PHIL 190, the reviewed SLOs included: “Explain and evaluate at least two major contemporary philosophic theories.”
- For PHIL 200, the reviewed SLOs were: 1) “Represent the form of an argument by translating English statements into a formal language using truth-functional operators and quantifiers” and 2) “Construct proofs to demonstrate validity or invalidity of arguments in propositional and predicate logic, using techniques such as truth tables, truth trees, Venn diagrams, and natural deduction.”
- For PHIL 240, the reviewed SLO was “Evaluate the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of major ethical theories.”
- For PHIL 312 the reviewed SLOs were: 1) “Evaluate claims and arguments in the philosophy of religion (concerning the existence of God, the occurrence of miracles, the possibility of an afterlife, etc.) using the rigorous deductive and inductive techniques of critical thinking” and 2) “Examine religious viewpoints from a critically self-aware perspective.”

In philosophy’s previous review cycle, one noted challenge was having students formulate clear judgments on topics, which is a key part of critically assessing one’s own beliefs as well others’ beliefs. To help address this challenge, the PHIL 100 courses have introduced an earlier discussion post assignment that more directly prompts students to judge differences in philosophical methods. This was the assignment that was used to judge the PHIL 100 SLO “Use philosophic methods to analyze complex arguments.” This earlier discussion assignment has appeared to help students formulate judgments throughout the course rather than just summarizing viewpoints. Another intervention related to this challenge has involved creating extra credit surveys for large writing assignments that include direct prompts for students to agree and disagree with particular claims by philosophers. Adding this optional step has helped some students externalize their agreement or disagreement because they do not need to jump directly into the details behind their viewpoint.

In the previous review cycle, the SLO assessed for PHIL 240 was not met (reviewed in Spring 2017). The particular SLO assessed is no longer active for the course. But when the course was reviewed most recently, PHIL 240 did meet its student learning outcome of “Evaluate the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of major ethical theories.” Eighty-five percent of students met the criterion, which consisted of a quiz that required students to distinguish the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of two major ethical theories: deontology and consequentialism. Just over half of the class earned a perfect score on the quiz.

The only SLO criteria that were not met during this assessment cycle were two from PHIL 190. The main reason for this was that each had a high standard (90% of students needed to earn a passing grade on the assessment method). Thus, students in the class actually performed collectively well to satisfactory on the outcomes: 83% met the “Recognize the social and political contexts of contemporary philosophic

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movements" learning outcome; while 76% met the "Analyze important concepts in contemporary philosophy" learning outcome. Thus, I don't think these results are concerning but more so reflect the ambitious goals for the selective requirement philosophy courses.

Based on the assessment results from this review cycle, the philosophy program does not have any specific new strategies to implement related directly to Learning Outcomes for the next review cycle.

10 PLO Assessment

Describe your program's Program Learning Outcomes assessment plan using your Program/Department's Three Year Assessment Plan Summarize the major findings of your PLO assessments. What are some improvements that have been, or can be, implemented as a result of PLO assessment?

The Social Sciences consists of ten departments: anthropology, communication studies, economics, ethnic studies (newly added since the last program review) geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology, and has three PLOs. Mostly these are one full-time person departments. In order to assess the PLOs efficiently, the Social Science faculty have created a general analytic rubric to be used across the departments to directly measure student writing assignments as a program. (Please note: an analytic rubric is a rubric that provides descriptive feedback along several dimensions or parts, and a general rubric is one that can be used across assignments and/or disciplines). Each department brought five ungraded student writing samples selected by lot from one assignment administered during the semester to create a pool of assignments to draw from (the writing prompt was also attached to each of the samples). The rubric was then used to score a random sample of student writing assignments from the program as a whole. All faculty scored student writing assignments outside of their disciplines.

Rubric scoring. The rubric was organized into three rows, one row for each PLO, and into three columns that included descriptive feedback for each level of competency: "Incomplete", "Acceptable", and "Accomplished." During the 2019-2022 assessment period, the Social Science faculty examined the following PLOs: "Evaluate diverse viewpoints related to the human experience," "Analyze Social Science concepts and theories," and "Produce evidence-based arguments." When evaluating the student writing assignments, the faculty selected one of the five scoring options (0, 0.5, 1, 1.5, or 2) to indicate the students' level of competency ("incomplete" was represented by the scores 0 and 0.5, "acceptable" by 1 or 1.5, and accomplished by a 2). An average score of 1.0 ("acceptable") was desired.

During the three assessment periods, between 2019-2022, 125 papers and exams were assessed. 94% (118/125) of the papers/exams received at least a 1 "acceptable" score. The average score for the PLO "Evaluate diverse viewpoints related to the human experience" was 1.52 which is slightly higher than the previous assessment period. The criterion was met. The average score for the PLO "Analyze Social Science concepts and theories" was 1.46 which is slightly higher than the previous assessment period. The criterion was met. And finally, the average score for the PLO "Produce evidence-based arguments" was 1.62 which is an increase from the previous program review assessment period. The criterion was met.

During the previous assessment period concern was noted that there was some difficulty in the assessment of analyzing social science concepts and theories as some assignments had limited ability to adequately assess this goal, which may have altered the results. During this program review period faculty noted a continued improvement in the selection of student work that fit with the PLOs assessed which assists in accurately assessing the PLOs. However, as the group would like to continue improving the selection of appropriate student writing samples, more detailed tracking of the types of student assignments previously used was proposed. Discussion of the overlap in topics within the disciplines, though from different perspectives, support the continued assessment of PLOs as a group. Also, faculty discussed a benefit to

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using the rubric as a way to improve instruction. The general analytic rubric was viewed as a tool to share and learn from each other, which was viewed as refreshing given the diversity of the social sciences program.

Looking Ahead

Next Step: After completing the fields above, click on STEP 2: Goals & Resource Requests, in the Main Menu, enter your goals (Required) and resource requests (If Applicable).

Supporting Information

General Supporting Documents

[Program Planning and Goals - Narrative Answer 2022.docx](#)

Tables & Graphs

By the way, I attached the document because this interface insisted that I attach something.

