Part I: Assessment Plan

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of Philosophy

Philosophy

M.A.

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Submitted to the University Assessment Panel by:

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1. Introduction

The terminal M.A. program in philosophy has a strong reputation as among the top such programs in the nation. It has focal strengths in the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy, including epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophical logic, and political philosophy. Two central aims of the program are, first, to prepare graduates for entry into nationally ranked doctoral programs in philosophy and, second, to prepare graduates to teach at community colleges. Most graduates apply to doctoral programs, and they continue to be highly successful in securing admission: over the past decade, roughly 89% of graduates who applied to doctoral programs in philosophy have been admitted, with full funding. Indeed, recent graduates have been admitted to some of the nation's most selective philosophy Ph.D. programs, most of which share the M.A. program's emphasis on contemporary analytic philosophy. The program also provides a strong foundation for further study in fields other than philosophy and cultivates critical thinking, reading, and writing skills transferable to a variety of careers outside the academy.

Demand for the department's M.A. program remains strong. The philosophy department receives the third-highest volume of graduate applications in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the number of annual applications has remained stable even during the tumultuous years of the pandemic. The program's students come from around the nation and several other countries.

In 2014, the department undertook a major overhaul of its M.A. assessment plan, following the addition of area requirements to the degree program and changes to the structure of the comprehensive examination. Since that time, the program has undergone just one significant curricular change: in 2019, the department eliminated the requirement that M.A students take one course in the history of philosophy, although it continues to offer graduate courses in this area. The change to the curriculum calls for changes to the assessment plan. Consequently, the assessment plan set out in Section 2, below, is a new assessment plan, to be implemented beginning in fall 2022. As detailed in that plan, the department expects its graduates to demonstrate proficiency in formal logic; to demonstrate proficiency in philosophical writing; to demonstrate knowledge of the major subfields of analytic philosophy, which are also the subfields most prominently represented among top-ranked US Ph.D. programs; and to demonstrate in-depth knowledge in a subfield of their choice, as evidenced by their performance on a required comprehensive examination.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Graduates of the M.A. program will be prepared for:

I. Entry into a nationally ranked Ph.D. program in philosophy
II. A position teaching philosophy in a community college

Graduates will exhibit preparation for these career tracks by demonstrating:

1. **Proficiency in formal logic**
2. **Proficiency in philosophical writing**
3. **Knowledge of metaphysics and epistemology**
4. **Knowledge of ethics and social/political philosophy**
5. **Knowledge of the related areas of philosophy of science, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind**
6. **In-depth knowledge of one major area of contemporary philosophy**

3. Curriculum Map

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes					
	1. Proficiency in formal logic	2. Proficiency in philosophical writing	3. Knowledge of metaphysics and epistemology	4. Knowledge of ethics and social/ political philosophy	5. Knowledge of philosophies of science, language, and mind	6. In-depth knowledge of major area of contemporary philosophy
PHIL 505	P					
PHIL 502		P			P	D
PHIL 504		P			P	D
PHIL 510		P	P			D
PHIL 530		P		P		D
PHIL 550		P		P		D
PHIL 561		P			P	D
PHIL 564		P			P	D
PHIL 570		P	P			D
PHIL 602		P			P	D
PHIL 604		P			P	D
PHIL 611		P	P			D
PHIL 612		P	P			D
PHIL 631		P		P		D
PHIL 642		P		P		D
PHIL 651		P		P		D
PHIL 660		P			P	D
PHIL 663		P			P	D
PHIL 698		D				P
Note. Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.						

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4. Assessment Methods

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

For each of the assessment methods listed in the tables below, on each performance outcome listed in the column entitled "Description," student performance is assigned one of the following three scores:

2 = Meets expectation for master's-level performance
1 = Partially meets expectation, but does not satisfy expectation for master's-level performance
0 = Does not meet expectation in any significant respect

| Assessment Method | Explanation | | | | | SLOs Covered |
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	
Examinations in PHIL 505	Students demonstrate proficiency in formal logic by completing a set of examinations in which they: a. Identify the metalogical relationships among the concepts of validity, consistency, logical truth, and logical equivalence b. Accurately perform truth-functional computations to identify logical properties of formulas in propositional logic c. Symbolize the logical form of English sentences expressing truth-functional compounds, monadic quantification,	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on each of the six performance criteria on the attached rubric (Appendix A).	An average score, among program graduates collectively, of 1.75 on each of the six performance criteria on the rubric.	Every fall semester	Instructor of PHIL 505	1

	polyadic quantification with and without identity, and numerical quantity d. Construct derivations (by natural deduction) to prove validity in propositional logic, logical truth in propositional logic, validity in first-order predicate logic, and validity in first-order predicate logic with identity e. Construct truth trees to identify the logical properties of formulas and sets of formulas in propositional logic, first-order predicate logic, and first-order predicate logic with identity f. Construct interpretations to identify logical properties of formulas and sets of formulas in first-order predicate logic with and without identity					
Essays written in all graduate courses that fulfill area requirements for the M.A.	Students complete philosophical essays of at least 3,500 words in which they: a. Provide strong and cogent arguments in support of philosophical theses b. Critically engage opposing views and arguments c. Display independent or creative thought	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on each of the three performance criteria numbered 3, 4, and 5 on the attached rubric (Appendix B).	An average score, among program graduates collectively, of 1.75 on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric (on the two highest-scoring essays submitted).	Every semester	All instructors of graduate courses that fulfill area requirements for the M.A.	2, 3, 4, 5

Essays written in PHIL 510, PHIL 570, PHIL 611, and PHIL 612	Students complete philosophical essays in which they: a. Demonstrate knowledge of an appropriate body of relevant literature in metaphysics and epistemology b. Provide clear, accurate, and thorough explanations of the philosophical views discussed	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on each of the two performance criteria numbered 1 and 2 on the attached rubric (Appendix B).	An average score, among program graduates collectively, of 1.75 on each of the two performance criteria on the rubric (on the two highest-scoring essays submitted).	Every semester that one of the four courses listed to the left is taught (typically every semester)	All instructors of the four courses listed to the left	3
Essays written in PHIL 530, PHIL 550, PHIL 631, PHIL 642, and PHIL 651	Students complete philosophical essays in which they: a. Demonstrate knowledge of an appropriate body of relevant literature in ethics and social/ political philosophy b. Provide clear, accurate, and thorough explanations of the philosophical views discussed	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on each of the two performance criteria numbered 1 and 2 on the attached rubric (Appendix B).	An average score, among program graduates collectively, of 1.75 on each of the two performance criteria on the rubric (on the two highest-scoring essays submitted).	Every semester that one of the five courses listed to the left is taught (typically every semester)	All instructors of the five courses listed to the left	4
Essays written in PHIL 502, PHIL 504, PHIL 561, PHIL 564, PHIL 602, PHIL 604, PHIL 660, and PHIL 663	Students complete philosophical essays in which they: a. Demonstrate knowledge of an appropriate body of relevant literature in the philosophies of science, language, and mind b. Provide clear, accurate, and thorough explanations of the philosophical views discussed	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on each of the two performance criteria numbered 1 and 2 on the attached rubric (Appendix B).	An average score, among program graduates collectively, of 1.75 on each of the two performance criteria on the rubric (on the two highest-scoring essays submitted).	Every semester that one of the eight courses listed to the left is taught (typically every semester)	All instructors of the eight courses listed to the left	5
Comprehensive examination (PHIL 698)	Students complete a multi-question written examination, covering a diverse range of	A score of 2 (= "meets expectation") on	An average score, among program graduates	Every semester	Members of the grading committees of	6

| | topics in one major area of contemporary philosophy, in which they:
a. Demonstrate understanding of the central philosophical issues in the area and their significance
b. Demonstrate mastery of the important philosophical views and arguments concerning these issues and how they relate to one another
c. Identify proponents (authors and their works) of these views and arguments | each of the three performance criteria on the attached rubric (Appendix C). | collectively, of 1.75 on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric. | | each comprehensive exam | |

Note. [a] Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. [b] Program-level target is expressed as the average of all program graduates.

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Student Learning Outcome					
	1.Proficiency in formal logic	2.Proficiency in philosophical writing	3.Knowledge of metaphysics and epistemology	4.Knowledge of ethics and social/political philosophy	5. Knowledge of phil. of science, language, and mind	6. In-depth knowledge of one major area of contemporary philosophy
Examinations in PHIL 505	S, D					
Essays written in PHIL 510, 570, 611, and 612		S, D	S, D			F
Essays written in PHIL 530, 550, 631, 642, and 651		S, D		S, D		F
Essays written in PHIL 502, 504, 561, 564, 602, 604, 660, and 663		S, D			S, D	F
Comprehensive Examination						S, D
Placement data (external)	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment						