



Program Name	Date Completed
Philosophy and Religious Studies minor	5/27/2026
Report Completed By	Report Contributors
Ryan Strickler	
Brief Statement of Program Mission and Goals	
<p>The goals of the Philosophy and Religious Studies (PHRS) Program are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide general education and elective courses, as well as an academic minor in philosophy and religious studies; 2. To sharpen students’ critical thinking skills and to develop the abilities to speak and write in a clear, analytical manner; 3. To develop students’ understanding of philosophical methods and ideas, including their historical-cultural origins and contemporary applications; 4. To develop students’ understanding and cross-cultural appreciation of the origins, practices, and societal impact of both religion as a construct and the world’s many past and present religions; 5. To cultivate the habit of reflection that will allow students to apply their critical thinking skills in their personal and professional lives 	

Table I Closing the Loop

Report on at least one data-informed change to your curriculum during AY 2025-2026 that was implemented to improve student learning, in response to prior assessment cycles or other data.

A. Describe issues or SLOs addressed in the AY 2025-2026 cycle. Paste SLOs verbatim below.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical, academic, and religious texts to the popular media 2. Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing. 3. Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical and religious ideas in the historical interplay of philosophy, religion, and culture.



4. Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses.

B. In which prior academic year and semester was this SLO last assessed to generate data that informed the change(s) this year?

SLO's 1 and 2 were addressed in the 2024-2025 academic year; SLO's 3 and 4 were addressed in the 2023-2024 academic year

C. What were the recommendations for change in the previous cycle?

- Develop strategies to motivate students (particularly those in the gen ed courses that may not be interested in philosophy) to deeply engage with the material
- Teaching information literacy and high quality sourcing to support the claims students are making
- Clear grading (using a rubric where appropriate) and prompt returning of grades
- Providing more opportunities for hands on and experiential learning

D. How were the recommendations for change acted upon?

These recommendations were communicated to the Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty with the encouragement that they incorporate it into their pedagogy. In addition, faculty have participated in pedagogical professional development opportunities through the academic year, including a regular monthly teaching 'brown bag lunch.' I communicated these goals, moreover, through the feedback I provided faculty when I observed their courses through the year.

In addition, we have had a great deal of informal, internal conversation regarding AI, which have made questions of motivation, information literacy, and the need for experiential learning (points 1, 2, and 4 above) much more pressing. Faculty have been experimenting with different techniques in an effort to figure out the best way to meet these goals – blue book exams and reading quizzes, transitioning from out of class writing assignments to in class assignments, role playing and simulations in the classroom, and the like.



E. How did the change(s) implemented impact student learning? If the change was not effective, what are the next steps or new recommendations?

Judging from the program evaluation data collected this cycle (across the essays, evaluations, and senior survey), it seems like our instructors are encouraging students to engage with the material. The depth of the engagement, judging from the essays, may be a bit of a mixed bag, but that's always going to be the case, and the course eval data suggests students are broadly learning a good deal from the courses.

The essays also show students drawing from broadly high quality sources – peer reviewed articles, high quality think tanks, government data sources, and the like. At the same time, circling back to the AI point in section D, faculty have expressed concern about how much trust and stock we can put, as well as how much learning is occurring, with out-of-class writing assignments moving forward. This is particularly a pressing issue for our online courses.

From reading the course evaluations (beyond the data reported on here), it appears that prompt grading is still inconsistent. This will be communicated to our faculty. What's more, we are planning on revising our Extended Studies courses next year (to, again, account for AI), and part of the revision can be to incorporate a tighter grading schedule/plan.

A strong spot for our program in the past year has been the experiential learning opportunities we have offered. We have been able to regularly offer advanced independent study projects (PHIL 495) for select students, where they work closely and meet regularly one on one with an instructor. In addition to facilitating engaged, one-one-one learning, it has allowed our minor students to pursue inquiry in topics where we cannot offer a full class. In addition, one of our (relatively) new instructors, Bill Dohle, has been experimenting with role playing and other experiential techniques in his religious studies (PHIL 107). Class observations are not part of the data we collect for program assessment, but I got to observe this in action in the fall, and the students were collectively quite engaged and had a lot of fun as they were learning.

As indicated in the 2026 assessment below, revising our pedagogy, learning outcomes, and even assessment metrics to account for AI technology is going to be a big focus for the next academic year.

Enter Comments on Table I Closing the Loop Below

--



Program Name	Date Completed
Philosophy and Religious Studies minor	5/27/26
Report Completed By	Report Contributors
Ryan Strickler	

Table II Annual assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in AY 2025-26

1. Include information to share assessment processes, results, and recommendations for improved student learning. Copy this table for each assessed outcome.

A. Program SLO(s) assessed in this cycle. Copy the SLOs verbatim from the assessment plan.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical, academic, and religious texts to the popular media 2. Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing. 3. Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical and religious ideas in the historical interplay of philosophy, religion, and culture. 4. Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses.
B. Semester and year this SLO was previously reported on before this cycle.
2024-2025
C. Describe the assessment method for this SLO(s).
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing Samples: A call for writing samples from ten PHRS minors was made, from PHRS classes they took (if any) from the 2025-2026 academic year. Four writing samples were collected. 2. Course Evaluations: evaluation data from two Intro to Religious Studies (PHIL 107), one Western Religions (PHIL 140), and one Eastern Religions (PHIL 130) class are used 3. Senior Survey: An online survey link was emailed out to three graduating PHRS minors. They also received a follow up email one week later. One senior responded.



<p>D. Described student group(s) assessed. Provide the number of students or number of artifacts assessed.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing Samples: writing samples from four students who are minors in the PHRS program 2. Course evaluation: 3. Senior survey: One senior out of three responding
<p>E. Explain the expected proficiency level and proportion of students who should reach this level.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing Samples: At least 80% of students completing the minor should be proficient or better in each SLO, according to the rubric. 2. Course Evaluations: Across evaluated courses, an average of at least 80% of students should “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the two items above. 3. Senior Survey: At least 80% of graduating students participating in the Senior Survey will “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the items above.
<p>F. Provide Assessment results and number of students who met defined proficiency level.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing Samples: Overall, the samples were strong. As indicated by the scoring sheet in the appendix, 100% of students were proficient or better on the metrics assessed. There were three metrics where only 75% of students (3 of 4) were proficient or better. These metrics were connected to SLOs 2 and 3 2. Course Evaluations: The average percentage of students across course evaluations that agreed with “Encouraged Critical Thinking” was 85%. The average for “Learned from Course” was 89% 3. Senior Survey: The responding student agreed or strongly agreed with the first three SLOs above. For the fourth, they put “neither agree nor disagree”. I would argue that this may be due to the fact it could be an awkwardly worded SLO, rather than a fundamental deficiency in their education
<p>G. Describe what the results or trends indicate about student performance.</p>
<p>Considering all the data, I think our courses are strong. Students are being challenged, and they are learning. That being said, we can work to push our students to a) learn more depth with the philosophical concepts and texts (SLO 3), as well as b) engage in stronger argumentation (SLO 2). Fostering stronger reading comprehension and writing skills is a university-wide goal. One professor has experimented with regular reading quizzes this year as a way to foster stronger reading retention.</p>



H. Describe program level changes/improvements planned for next AY (2026-2027?) which are informed by this assessment.

In order to ensure our courses continue to achieve the SLOs listed above given the growth of AI technology, the PHRS program next year will closely examine, and revise as necessary, our curriculum, pedagogical practices, and even our learning outcomes and program assessment. We will have a new program coordinator next year that will lead this process. In addition, at the departmental level a major focus will be updating pedagogy, assessments (particularly how we assess with writing and our relationship to writing), and the structure of, and our relationship to, online courses to adapt to new AI technologies. While I think the student outcomes assessed with this report are generally positive, these efforts will help ensure they continue to be positive.

Enter Comments on Table II AY 2026 Assessment Below

Course Eval Data: Percent "Agreeing" or "Strongly Agreeing"

	Fall 2025		Spring 2026		AVERAGE
	<i>PHIL 107</i>	<i>PHIL 130</i>	<i>PHIL 140</i>	<i>PHIL 107</i>	
Q11: Encouraged Critical Thinking and Analysis	100%	50%	100%	91%	85%
Q18: Learned from Course	100%	75%	100%	82%	89%

Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Writing Assessment Rubric: SLO1 and SLO2

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

SLO1: Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical, academic, and religious texts to the popular media

SLO2: Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing.

	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	% Proficient or Better
<i>Presence of thesis (SLO2)</i>	Exemplary	Exemplary	Emerging	Exemplary	75%
<i>Presence of philosophical ideas, methods or arguments (SLO1)</i>	Proficient	Exemplary	Exemplary	Proficient	100%
<i>Treatment of philosophical ideas, methods or arguments (SLO1)</i>	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Exemplary	100%
<i>Quality of reasoning (SLO1, 2) [includes assessment of others' arguments as well as presentation of student's own].</i>	Proficient	Proficient	Exemplary	Exemplary	100%
<i>Writing style & execution (SLO2)</i>	Proficient	Emerging	Proficient	Exemplary	75%

Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Writing Assessment Rubric: SLO3 and SLO4

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

SLO3: Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical and religious ideas in the historical interplay of philosophy, religion, and culture.

SLO4: Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses.

	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	% Proficient or Better
<i>Presence of ideas, arguments, and/or constructs from the history of philosophy, religion, and/or religious studies (SLO #3)</i>	Emerging	Exemplary	Exemplary	Proficient	75%
<i>Discussion of philosophical or religious ideas, arguments, and/or constructs (SLO #3 & #4)</i>	Proficient	Proficient	Exemplary	Exemplary	100%
<i>Application of philosophical methods and quality of reasoning (SLO #4)</i>	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Exemplary	100%

Notes:

- Greater engagement with philosophical texts...inconsistent. They all looked like they learned something
- In text citation

**Academic Program Assessment Plan:
Philosophy and Religious Studies (minor)**

**Department of History, Political Science, and Philosophy
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Colorado State University-Pueblo**

Plan revised by Ryan Strickler, Associate Professor & Philosophy Coordinator (June 2024)
Primary Contact for Assessment: Ryan Strickler

The Relation of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Program to College Mission and Departmental Expectations

The Philosophy and Religious Studies Program advances the mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences mission to offer “students opportunities to become ethical, socially responsible, engaged learners who are prepared to assume leadership in a dynamic global context.”¹ Furthermore, the Philosophy and Religious Studies Program advances the expectations of the Department of History, Political Science, and Philosophy to develop “critical thinking, research skills, and oral and written communications, along with a deeper understanding and ability to operate within and between different cultures”¹. This is because the Philosophy and Religious Studies program, as quoted from the goals and outcomes below:

- “sharpen(s) students’ critical thinking skills;”
- helps students understand the “historical-cultural origins and contemporary applications” of major philosophical ideas and intellectual traditions;
- fosters “cross-cultural appreciation of the origins, practices, and societal impact” of major global religions, and;
- develops abilities to “recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments” as well as “construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing.”

Philosophy and Religious Studies Program Description

Students in the Philosophy and Religious Studies program explore the methods, ideas, problems, and history of philosophy. They also interrogate beliefs, behaviors, structures, and historical impact of many of the world’s past and present religions through a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Further, the minor trains students to think and write with rigor, clarity, and precision. Since these qualities are valuable in virtually any discipline, the minor supports a wide range of majors or career tracks, including history, politics, law, literature, the arts, the sciences, business, healthcare, and technology.

Students can take one of two tracks. In the philosophy track, students study the great thinkers, from Plato to the present, across Western and non-Western intellectual traditions. The religion track has students understanding the tenets, history, and impact of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and other religions across cultures.

¹ 2023-2024 Academic Catalog

Philosophy and Religious Studies Program Goals

1. To provide general education and elective courses, as well as an academic minor in philosophy and religious studies;
2. To sharpen students' critical thinking skills and to develop the abilities to speak and write in a clear, analytical manner;
3. To develop students' understanding of philosophical methods and ideas, including their historical-cultural origins and contemporary applications;
4. To develop students' understanding and cross-cultural appreciation of the origins, practices, and societal impact of both religion as a construct and the world's many past and present religions;
5. To cultivate the habit of reflection that will allow students to apply their critical thinking skills in their personal and professional lives

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical, academic, and religious texts to the popular media (from goal 2, goal 3, goal 4, and goal 5);
2. Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing. (from goal 2, parts of goal 3, and goal 5)
3. Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical and religious ideas in the historical interplay of philosophy, religion, and culture. (from goals 3 and 4)
4. Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses. (from goals 3 and 5)

Outcomes Assessment Activities

1. Writing Sample Analysis: Each academic year, the coordinator of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Program collects writing samples from each student with a declared minor. Faculty from each class in the program will provide writing samples from a major course assignment, with the goal of providing a sample that is representative of the students' work. These writing samples will be evaluated by the Philosophy and Religious Studies coordinator; other faculty from the Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Geography may also be involved as necessary. They will be evaluated against the attached rubric, on the cycle indicated by the Assessment Plan Summary. At least 80% of students completing the minor should be proficient or better in each SLO, according to the rubric.
2. Course Evaluation Questions: Evaluation questions from core courses for the Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor, will be used to evaluate student learning outcomes. This will be done on a rotating cycle; one year, the Philosophy Track core courses will be

evaluated, and the next year, the Religious Studies core courses will be evaluated. The items that will be evaluated are:

- “Q11: Encouraged critical thinking and analysis” (SLO 1, 2, and 4)
- “Q18: Learned from the course.” (SLO 1 and 3)

Across evaluated courses, an average of at least 80% of students should “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the two items above.

3. Senior Survey: A survey will be disseminated to graduating seniors that have completed the minor. In addition to a variety of closed and open-ended items that probe strengths of the program and areas for improvement in programming or curriculum development, the survey includes the following four items, with a 5-point response scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”:

- “The Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor has improved my ability to analyze and evaluate arguments I encounter across a variety of sources, from academic texts to popular media.” (SLO 1)
- “The Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor has improved my ability to develop and defend my own arguments, both verbally and in writing.” (SLO 2)
- “The Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor has improved my understanding of philosophical and religious ideas, and their relevance, across history and across different cultures” (SLO 3)
- “The Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor has improved my understanding of, and ability to use, different methods of and approaches to understanding ethics, knowledge, the self, the divine, and other philosophical topics” (SLO 4)

Each of these items corresponds to a specific SLO. At least 80% of graduating students participating in the Senior Survey will “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the items above.

Assessment Timeline

All four SLOs will be assessed each year using the activities above. With regard to the Course Evaluation Questions component, the Philosophy Track core courses (PHIL 102, PHIL 201, and POLS 370) will be assessed in academic years that end in an odd number (ie, 2024-2025, 2026-2027, etc.). The Religious Studies core courses (PHIL 107, PHIL 120, HIST 432) will be assessed in academic years that end in an even number (ie, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, etc.).

Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Writing Assessment Rubric: SLO1 and SLO2

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

SLO1: Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical, academic, and religious texts to the popular media

SLO2: Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
<i>Presence of thesis (SLO2)</i>	Thesis is explicit, precise, and clear.	Thesis is explicit.	Thesis is implied or underdeveloped	
<i>Presence of philosophical ideas, methods or arguments (SLO1)</i>	Philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are explicit; their historical, cultural, and/or religious relevance is prominent.	Historical / cultural / philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are explicit.	Historical / cultural / philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are implied.	
<i>Treatment of philosophical ideas, methods or arguments (SLO1)</i>	Arguments are relevant & well- explained / analyzed.	Mostly accurate explanations or analyses of relevant arguments.	Explanations are not usually accurate, or the ideas, methods and arguments employed are not usually relevant	
<i>Quality of reasoning (SLO1, 2) [includes assessment of others' arguments as well as presentation of student's own].</i>	Reasoning is generally good (i.e. strong or valid) and well-explained.	Reasoning is generally good.	Reasoning is not generally good (i.e. work is characterized by weak reasoning).	
<i>Writing style & execution (SLO2)</i>	Clear, compelling, grammatically correct language; fluid, easy-to-follow organization of ideas	Consistently clear language; sequencing of ideas poses no barrier to communication	Sometimes vague, confusing or hard to follow. Significant grammar issues may be present	

Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Writing Assessment Rubric: SLO3 and SLO4

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

SLO3: Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical and religious ideas in the historical interplay of philosophy, religion, and culture.

SLO4: Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
<i>Presence of ideas, arguments, and/or constructs from the history of philosophy, religion, and/or religious studies (SLO #3)</i>	Philosophical and/or religious ideas, arguments, and/or constructs are explicit; their relevance and context in relation to the claim being made is clear.	Philosophical and/or religious ideas, arguments, and/or constructs are explicit.	Philosophical and/or religious ideas, arguments, and/or constructs are Implied, or their relevance to the claim being made is unclear	
<i>Discussion of philosophical or religious ideas, arguments, and/or constructs (SLO #3 & #4)</i>	Ideas, constructs, and/or arguments are relevant & accurately explained in context.	Usually accurate explanations of relevant ideas, constructs, and/or arguments.	Explanations are not usually clear or accurate, or the ideas, constructs, and/or arguments employed are not usually relevant	
<i>Application of philosophical methods and quality of reasoning (SLO #4)</i>	Reasoning is generally good (i.e. strong or valid) and well-explained. Methods are philosophically well suited to topic.	Reasoning is generally good. Methods are appropriate.	Reasoning is not generally good (i.e. work is characterized by weak reasoning), or the methods are not philosophically appropriate.	