

Colorado State University – Pueblo Academic Program Assessment Report for AY 2013-2014

Due: June 2, 2014

Program: _____ Philosophy minor _____

Date: __ May, 14 2014 _____

Completed by: _____ John O'Connor _____

Assessment contributors (other faculty involved in this program's assessment): Steven Liebel, Assistant Professor, Political Science _____

Please complete this form for each undergraduate, minor, certificate, and graduate program (e.g., B.A., B.S., M.S.) in your department. Please copy any addenda (e.g., rubrics) and paste them in this document, and submit it to the dean of your college/school as per the deadline established. The dean will forward it to me as an email attachment before June 2, 2014. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Assessment/ResultsAndReports/Pages/default.aspx>.

Please describe the 2013-2014 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2014-2015 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2013-2014 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2012-2013. Thank you.

I. Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessed in this cycle, processes, results, and recommendations.

A. Which of the program SLOs were assessed during this cycle? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What method was used for assessing the SLO? Please include a copy of any rubrics used in the assessment process.	D. Who was assessed? Please fully describe the student group(s) and the number of students or artifacts involved.	E. What is the expected achievement level and how many or what proportion of students should be at it?	F. What were the results of the assessment?	G. What were the department's conclusions about student performance?	H. What changes/improvements to the <u>program</u> are planned based on this assessment?
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SLO 1: Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical and academic texts to the popular media.	SLO 1 was last assessed in Spring 2013.	Two faculty members used a common rubric (attached) to evaluate papers from the history of philosophy courses.	We assessed the work of our three seniors who completed the philosophy minor this year. Writing samples were drawn from those students' portfolios. Student presentations were evaluated live.	Per the assessment plan, 80% of the students should perform at 'proficient' or better for these SLOs, as measured on the attached rubrics. Given that only three students completed the minor and therefore were assessed, at least two students would be expected to perform at 'proficient' or better.	Two of the three students met the expectations and performed at 'proficient' or better.	<p><u>Strengths:</u> Student work demonstrates a strong ability to reason and to explicate philosophical concepts and arguments in their philosophical context.</p> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u> This assessment cycle revealed two main weaknesses. 1) Although two of the three students scored proficient on SLO 4, we would still like students to display a greater understanding of the significance of the methods themselves. 2) Use of visual aids (e.g. slides) during presentations helped audience comprehension but also hindered presenters from displaying their full</p>	<p>To address weakness 1, in the history of philosophy courses we will a) devote more discussion time to meta-questions concerning the significance of the philosophical methods studied. We will also b) ensure that in the research and paper-drafting phases students receive the guidance necessary to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the methods being used.</p> <p>To address weakness 2 we will improve the presentation rubric and (as before) use it as a teaching tool to facilitate student recognition and internalization of standards.</p>
SLO 2: Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing.	SLO 2 was last assessed in Spring 2012.	The verbal portion of SLO 2 was evaluated with a separate presentation rubric (attached).					
SLO 4: Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and	N/A						

epistemological analyses.						command of the argument.	

Comments:

This year's assessment also revealed a need for program improvement in two areas not directly related to student performance.

- 1) The SLOs in the Philosophy curriculum map aren't numbered to correspond to the SLOs as identified in the rest of the Philosophy assessment plan. To avoid future confusion, the map will be revised in the next revision of the assessment plan.
- 2) This year's lower number of graduating Philosophy minors points to a completion problem. In response we will improve our advising efforts so students will be better able to plan their schedules in advance. But there is also a more significant issue of course scheduling that no amount of student planning will resolve. With only a single full-time philosopher available to offer the required advanced classes, Philosophy minors have limited scheduling options and often face intractable schedule conflicts with required major courses.

II. Follow-up (closing the loop) on results and activities from previous assessment cycles. In this section, please describe actions taken during this cycle that were based on, or implemented to address, the results of assessment from previous cycles.

A. What SLO(s) did you address? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What were the recommendations for change from the previous assessment?	D. Were the recommendations for change acted upon? If not, why?	E. What were the results of the changes? If the changes were not effective, what are the next steps or the new recommendations?
SLO 2: Students will be able to construct and present clear,	SLO 2 was just assessed in this cycle (Spring 2014). Prior to that it was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors were to pay greater attention to the structural desiderata of an academic paper, the 	Yes. In addition to the prescribed changes to class time and critique of student drafts, the	The changes have had a positive effect; student papers have improved in both their adherence to the structural desiderata of academic writing and in

well-reasoned defenses of theses both verbally and in writing.	assessed in Spring 2012.	<p>importance of textual justifications, and integration of quotations into the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion and instruction concerning textual support in an academic paper was to a) pay greater attention to the mechanics involved, and b) use examples to demonstrate the pitfalls of over-reliance on, or misuse of, quotations. These issues were to have been emphasized in draft critiques as well. 	recommendations led to revisions of the paper rubric for the four-course history of philosophy sequence. The new rubric communicates the standards and desiderata of academic writing better than did the previous rubric. As a result, it is being used as both a teaching and an assessment tool.	their use and treatment of textual support.
SLO 3: Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of philosophical ideas and methods in the historical interplay of philosophy and culture	SLO 3 was last assessed in Spring 2013. It was not assessed this cycle (Spring 2014).	The instructor of the history of philosophy courses was to ensure a) that students' annotated bibliographies contained appropriate sources for background material <i>and</i> b) that in the research and drafting phases students received the guidance necessary to develop more nuanced and historically appropriate readings of the background material.	Yes, the recommendations were acted upon.	Although SLO 3 was not assessed in the current cycle, papers from this year's students do appear to have improved in their treatment of background material. SLO 3 will be assessed next Spring, at which point we will be better able to evaluate the results of current efforts.

Comments:

Philosophy Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Philosophical Writing & Methods Rubric

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

- *SLO 1: Students will be able to recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical and academic texts to the popular media.*
- *SLO 2 {writing component}: Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses in writing.*
- *SLO 4: Students will be able to apply philosophical methods to conduct ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological analyses.*

Student work assessed: Papers from student portfolio.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
Presence of thesis	Thesis is <i>explicit, precise, and clear.</i>	Thesis is <i>explicit.</i>	Thesis is <i>implied</i> and/or <i>unsophisticated.</i>	
Presence of philosophical methods, ideas or arguments	Philosophical methods, ideas or arguments are <i>explicit</i> ; their philosophical <i>relevance is prominent.</i>	Philosophical methods, ideas or arguments are <i>explicit.</i>	Philosophical methods, ideas or arguments are <i>implied.</i>	
Treatment of philosophical methods, ideas or arguments	Methods, ideas or arguments are <i>relevant & accurately applied / explained.</i>	<i>Usually accurate</i> application / explanation of relevant methods, ideas or arguments.	Applications / explanations are <i>not usually accurate</i> , or the methods, ideas and arguments employed are <i>not usually relevant.</i>	
Quality of reasoning [to include student application of philosophical methods].	Reasoning is <i>generally good</i> (i.e. strong or valid) and <i>well-explained.</i>	Reasoning is <i>generally good.</i>	Reasoning is <i>not generally good</i> (i.e. work is characterized by <i>weak</i> reasoning).	
Writing style & execution	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	

Philosophy Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Verbal Presentation

Intended learning outcomes assessed with this instrument:

- *SLO 2 {verbal component}: Students will verbally be able to present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses.*

Student work assessed: in-class presentations.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
Reasoning in support of thesis	Presentation provides <i>strong support</i> for a <i>clearly articulated</i> main thesis.	Presentation provides <i>some support</i> for thesis.	Presentation provides <i>limited</i> support for the thesis.	Presentation provides <i>no support</i> for or <i>lacks a thesis</i> .
Organization	Presentation arranged so the listener can easily follow the progression of ideas; no material is superfluous.	Presentation not always arranged so the listener can easily follow the progression of ideas, or some material is superfluous.	Arrangement of material begins to pose a significant barrier to listener comprehension.	
Articulation	Ideas are presented with clarity / precision; manner of speaking facilitates listener comprehension.	Articulation lacks some clarity / precision but poses no significant barrier to listener comprehension.	Articulation begins to pose a significant barrier to listener comprehension.	