

Colorado State University – Pueblo Academic Program Assessment Report for AY 2014-2015

Due: June 1, 2015

Program: _____ Philosophy minor _____

Date: __ May 29, 2015 _____

Completed by: _____ John O'Connor _____

Assessment contributors (other faculty involved in this program's assessment): _____

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, 2015. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Assessment/ResultsAndReports/Pages/default.aspx>.

Please describe the 2014-2015 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2015-2016 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2014-2015 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2013-2014. 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?
SLO 1: Students will be able to	SLO 1 was last	A rubric (attached)	The set of assessed	Per the assessment	Four of the five students	<u>Strengths</u> : Student work continues to	Because a new full-time philosopher will be hired

recognize, analyze, and logically evaluate arguments encountered in sources ranging from philosophical and academic texts to the popular media.	assessed in Spring 2014.	was used to evaluate writing samples from the history of philosophy courses and from the 491 special topics course.	students consists of the five seniors who completed the philosophy minor this year. Writing samples were drawn from those students' portfolios.	plan, 80% of the students should perform at 'proficient' or better for these SLOs, as measured on the attached rubric.	met the expectations and performed at 'proficient' or better.	demonstrate a strong ability to reason and to explicate philosophical concepts and arguments. This year's assessment shows an improvement in students' ability to handle ideas in their philosophical & historical contexts.	to teach the core philosophy courses (beginning F15), and because to be effective any changes will need to be consistent with faculty teaching style, the improvement plan is programmatic at this point.
SLO 2: Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses [both verbally and] in writing.	Both verbal and written aspects of SLO 2 were last assessed in Spring 2014. This year's assessment handles the written component only.			Given that five seniors completed the minor and therefore were assessed, at least four students would be expected to perform at 'proficient' or better.		<u>Weaknesses:</u> This assessment cycle revealed a need to focus on writing clarity, one aspect of SLO 2.	However, an obvious recommendation would be to change how student drafts are evaluated. Currently we emphasize ideas and arguments in evaluating rough drafts; critiquing writing quality earlier in the process should help.
SLO 3: Students will be able to recognize and assess the relevance of	SLO 3 was last assessed in Spring 2013						Beyond this, we will emphasize the need for development in the noted area of SLO 2 when we discuss this assessment with the new faculty member. We will then work with him/her to develop the additional changes to improve student writing.

philosophical ideas and methods in the historical interplay of philosophy and culture							

Comments:

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, well-reasoned defenses of	SLO 2 was last assessed in Spring 2014. Prior to that it was assessed in Spring 2012.	The main recommendations (stemming from 2012) were for instructors to pay greater attention to the structural desiderata of an academic paper, the importance of	Yes. The recommendations led to revisions of the paper rubric for the four-course history of philosophy sequence. The rubric was revised in 2013	The changes have had a positive effect; student papers have improved in both their adherence to the structural desiderata of academic writing and in their use and treatment of textual support. (This year's concern with SLO

theses both verbally and in writing.		textual justifications, and integration of quotations into the text.	and in 2014. 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.	2 is relegated to issues of writing clarity.)
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.	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.	Student treatment of philosophical historical material has improved.

Comments:

Last year's peer-review comments included a concern that the rubrics used did not clearly indicate how the performance categories mapped on to the SLOs in question. This concern has been addressed; this year's rubric identifies SLOs and allows evaluation of different aspects of each.

Also, last year's assessment revealed a need for program improvement in advising and completion rates. As noted in the report "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." We have recently taken small steps toward improving this situation by hiring a new VAP of Philosophy (beginning in

the Fall 15). However, since the current philosopher is devoting time to the Honors Program, we will not be able to double the course offerings. Even so, this arrangement should make available one or two more upper-level courses per year to well-prepared philosophy students. The programs (Honors & Philosophy) piloted this approach in Sp15 by offering an upper level Philosophy Honors elective and it worked well for students in both. We expect similar results when we repeat this in AY15-16.

Philosophy Minor
Colorado State University-Pueblo
Philosophical Writing & History 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.** *Students will be able to construct and present clear, well-reasoned defenses of theses in writing.*
- **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. .*

Student work assessed: Papers from student portfolio.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Not Present
Presence of thesis (SLO #2)	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 ideas, methods or arguments from the history of philosophy (SLO #1 & #3)	Philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are <i>explicit</i> ; their historical / cultural / philosophical <i>relevance</i> is <i>prominent</i> .	Historical / cultural / philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are <i>explicit</i> .	Historical / cultural / philosophical ideas, methods or arguments are <i>implied</i> .	
Treatment of philosophical ideas, methods or arguments (SLO #1 & #3)	Ideas, methods or arguments are <i>relevant & accurately explained in context</i> .	<i>Usually accurate</i> explanations of relevant ideas, methods or arguments.	Explanations are <i>not usually accurate</i> , or the ideas, methods and arguments employed are <i>not usually relevant</i>	
Quality of reasoning (SLO #1, #2 & #3) [includes student assessment of philosophical / historical / cultural relevance of ideas, methods or arguments].	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 (SLO #2)	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	

