Department: Philosophy

Assessment Coordinator: Ryan Wasserman

Departmental Mission

In support of the missions of Western Washington University and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the mission of the Philosophy Department is to provide outstanding undergraduate education in philosophy, to benefit professional and nonprofessional communities through our scholarship and service, and to foster life-long learning in our students by contributing to Western’s excellent liberal arts education. The department offers a variety of courses in traditional areas of philosophical study, including ethics, epistemology, logic, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy. Through a collaborative study of these topics, our faculty helps students develop the skills that we value as a department—skills like critical thinking, critical reading, analytic writing, and effective speaking.

Department Student Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, (Department or Program) majors will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge in the core areas of ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy
2. Demonstrate mastery of symbolic logic
3. Think critically
4. Read critically
5. Write analytically
6. Speak effectively
### Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Degree Program</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exams, papers, and other assignments in our 400-level epistemology, ethics, and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Generally speaking, professors are very pleased with students’ knowledge in the core areas of ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy. Exams, papers, and other assignments in our 400-level epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics courses, as well as our history of philosophy courses, received good marks. Average grades in these courses ranged from a B- (in Phil 366) to a B+ (in Phil 364 and 410). However, all of the reporting professors pointed out that these grades are determined by both knowledge and skills—including writing skills and critical thinking skills—and that students tend to struggle more with skills than with knowledge. As one professor put it, “Although they continue to struggle with providing careful critical analysis and evaluation of the positions and arguments presented to them in class... as far as sheer reporting goes... I’d give them pretty high marks.” Similar comments were made by all of the other reporting professors—when it came to assessing student knowledge, professors’ comments ranged from “very good” to “excellent”.</td>
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<td>epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics courses (410, 420, 430), as well as those</td>
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<td>in the history of philosophy sequence (364, 366, 367)</td>
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