

**EMORY UNIVERSITY**  
**2019-2021 Assessment Report for Educational Programs**  
**Assessment Period Covered: September 1, 2021 – May 31, 2023**

<b>Program:</b> Philosophy	<b>Date Submitted:</b> 20 June, 2023
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**I. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Evince intermediate knowledge of four areas of Philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics/aesthetics, and social/political philosophy.
2. Ability to write essays of publishable quality.
3. Ability to construct and teach coherent and effective undergraduate courses.

**II. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

**FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #1:**

<p><b>Method of Assessment:</b>          Portfolio paper requirement. Students are required to submit ten papers across the four areas of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics/aesthetics, and social/political philosophy) in their first two year in our program (two of the papers cross these areas). Each fall, in September, a committee of three people for each area is formed among present faculty members (not on leave). These committees grade the papers Pass/Fail. For papers that fail, there is a resubmission opportunity the following January.</p>
<p><b>Achievement Target:</b>          80% of class passes</p>
<p><b>Summary of Assessment Results:</b>          In 2021, 47 papers were submitted, 46 of which passed (98%). In 2022, 22 papers were submitted of which 21 passed (96%). Students with papers that did not pass resubmitted papers by the January deadline and ultimately all passed. The average across both years is 99% of papers passing, well above our 80% benchmark.          Notable in both years was that the paper which did not pass was in the area of epistemology.</p>

**Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:**

This data confirms what previous years also indicated, that students were least equipped in the area of epistemology. We have made efforts to address this, by encouraging faculty to teach more in the area. We also made a “Metaphysics and Epistemology” course a requirement for our second undergraduate major, Philosophy, Politics, and Law, which give faculty an opportunity to teach epistemology at an undergraduate level.

The department has discontinued the portfolio paper requirement and replaced it with a coursework distribution requirement in the history of philosophy. As the incredibly high pass rate shows, it had become an automatic pass for students and thus became perceived as a form of busy work. Students were also not provided any substantive feedback on their submissions, which only augmented this perception.

Students are now required to take and pass a course in each of four historical periods: Ancient, Modern, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century, plus a second course in one of these areas (total of five courses). We are currently discussing how best to track completion of the requirement and I would like to build assessment into this. I hope to schedule a meeting with Andrea Barra, Associate Director of Assessment, to discuss this over the summer.

Once we have results from this, the DGS will present trends to the faculty as a whole at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting in the fall semester and we will discuss how best to address them.

**FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #2:****Method of Assessment:**

Publication data solicited from students. Students are asked annually to report any articles they have published in professional journals. This data speaks to their ability to publish.

**Achievement Target:**

3 articles published by the student body per year.

**Summary of Assessment Results:**

As data was not collected for 2021–22, we only have one year’s worth of data: publications by students from 2022–23. We distinguish between articles that have appeared in publication and those which are forthcoming. For 2022–23, our graduate students published 3 articles in recognized journals in the field. In regards to forthcoming work, students reported another 3 articles and 1 book of poetry. We are very happy with student progress in this area. We have been able to maintain a minimum of 3 published articles each year. Tracking forthcoming pieces gives us a further indicator of student effort towards publishing and lets us see if there is a year with lower publication numbers, whether work is nevertheless “in the pipeline.” We feel our current

rate of publication is at a healthy level in the program and something that students know they are encouraged and expected to do while students here.

A concern was raised in our previous assessment report that students were possibly spending too much time on book reviews at the cost of publishing articles in their own voice. This does not seem to be the case as no book reviews were published this year.

**Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:**

Should numbers show that we are not reaching our goals, we will take steps to further support student publishing. Our graduate studies committee includes a member who acts as the graduate programming coordinator, meeting with graduate student representatives in order to discover what areas they feel in need of further instruction. The programming coordinator organizes workshops and speaker events to address these topics throughout the year. In terms of publication preparation, we regularly program workshops for improving publication success (on topics of revising seminar papers into journal articles, selecting the appropriate journal, writing for a professional audience, etc.).

**FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #3:**

**Method of Assessment:**

Ability to construct and teach coherent and effective undergraduate courses. Students in philosophy teach their own courses (serve as instructor of record) for courses in their third and fifth year in our program. All students submit syllabi to the GSC for approval prior to teaching the course. This is handled by one of the officers of the GSC, the teaching coordinator. The teaching coordinator ensures student syllabi satisfactorily pass muster in the following areas before being approved for classroom use (as per the attached 12-point checklist): a) course description and objectives, b) assigned readings and related materials, c) course requirements, d) schedule, e) additional information.

**Achievement Target:** syllabi will not be approved for teaching without satisfactorily meeting the indicated 12 points.

**Summary of Assessment Results:**

While this was done in 2021–22, it was unfortunately not done in 2022–23, as no teaching coordinator was designated on the GSC (which had shrunk from five members to three). We are reimplementing this requirement this year. During our last assessment period, it was noted that we needed to reach students before the syllabus stage and at the moment they are putting together their book orders. That will be implemented this coming year.

In 2021–22, there were 19 student-taught courses and each of their syllabi went through a review process on these 12-points. In 2022–23, there were 20 such student-taught courses.

**Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:**

Any issues with syllabus design will be addressed by the DGS in the teaching of PHIL 777, our pedagogy course which devotes considerable time to syllabus construction. I will also ask the teaching coordinator to track the main issues students are having with syllabi (which of the 12 points they are most often failing to meet) and target those points in 777.

A further point to mention is that our graduate students have mainly taught courses for us at the 100-level. When our students win an award like the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, they have the option of designing their own course. In the past, we have asked that this too be done at the 100-level, but this past year we allowed a DTF student to teach a topics course at the 385 level. There was a fear that topics courses would suffer low enrollment, especially when taught by a student, but in this case (PHIL 385, spring 2023), enrollment was 9, which seems to belie the fear.

**SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #3:****Method of Assessment:**

Ability to construct and teach coherent and effective undergraduate courses to be demonstrated via in class observation. Students in philosophy teach their own courses (serve as instructor of record) for courses in their third and fifth year in our program. Each student teaching in their third and fifth year is required to be observed by their advisor/director. The advisor observes the class with the Class Observations Assessment Form specifying three criteria on a scale of one to five: a) lecture or discussion technique, b) handling of questions, c) conceptual content. After the class, the advisor discusses the class session with the student, but the assessment statistics are kept internal and not shared. The Class Observations Assessment Form is attached.

**Achievement Target:**

75% of class to score 4 or higher in each category.

**Summary of Assessment Results:**

This assessment protocol seems to have dropped out of usage by past DGSs. The pandemic certainly played a role in this. Assessment reporting seems all too easily skipped over in times of stress and demand, like the pandemic. It is my hope as DGS to rebuild a culture of assessment by incorporating meaningful data collection into the activities that we already do as faculty members in keeping the program running. Such is the case with in class observation. I know for a fact that most, if not all, of our students teaching were observed by their directors (or at the very least have been observed at least once by them), but in no cases were the assessment forms used. This is another area where we are seeking a more streamlined process, perhaps by online automation.

On a related note, we have also experienced some confusion over how our TAs and co-teachers are to be evaluated by students. As student evaluations have moved online, we are looking into better incorporating a standard set of questions for TA evaluation and co-

teacher evaluation into Canvas. Currently these are handled by internal forms that do not always make it to the instructor in time for usage or the faculty member is unaware that an extra step has to be taken to generate a co-teacher evaluation. Building this into Canvas online evaluation would surely help remedy this.

**Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:**

Failure to meet our target may require that we establish more ongoing contact with students teaching in the program, the DGS may hold special office hours just for student teachers or a series of informal meetings on teaching practice may be implemented. Students are also to be encouraged to participate in pedagogical activities and training offered by other programs on campus as well.

**III. FACULTY INVOLVEMENT**

**Describe how your faculty members were involved in this year's assessment procedures.**

For learning objective 1 (LO1): All faculty participate in the grading and assessing of our Portfolio papers, working in committees of three, grading the same papers.

LO2 is now based solely on student self-reporting, so there is no faculty involvement.

For LO3, the teaching coordinator oversees all student syllabi. All faculty are required to observe their advisee's teaching.

For all learning objectives, the DGS presents results and trends of assessment scores to the full faculty for discussion at a fall faculty meeting where the main order of business is developing a response to assessment trends.

**IV. What learning outcomes will your program assess next year?**

As our assessment plan has diminished over the course of the pandemic, it has also lost some substance. My goal as incoming DGS is to reinvigorate our assessment plan in ways that delivers usable and actionable data with minimal intrusion in our daily professional activities. We have discontinued the main component of LO1 and have reformulated it as a coursework requirement. We are working on incorporating assessment into this. This may take the form of a committee reading submitted papers from students which they believe best demonstrate their engagement with the history of philosophy. For LO2, everything seems to be working smoothly, but we might be able to get more usable data from the student submissions, perhaps by asking them to categorize their publications into topic areas or historical periods. For LO3, we still make use of a 12-point checklist for overseeing student syllabi, but we need to improve how we incorporate assessment into classroom observation, as there has been little encouragement or compliance over the past two years.

## **V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

I have attached the following:

- a. 12-point Syllabus checklist,
- b. List of student publications from 2022–23.

## **Philosophy Graduate Student Syllabus 12-Point Check List**

### Course Description and Objectives

1. Does the syllabus contain a course description and statement of objectives?
2. Are the description and statement of objectives sufficiently informative and meaningful for students and potential students?
3. Are the description and objectives consistent with the department's OPUS description of the course and are they appropriate in breadth and depth for the course level (e.g. 100 level, 200 level, etc.)?
4. Does the syllabus make clear the class format (e.g., lecture, lecture and discussion, small group work, flipped classroom, etc.)?

### Assigned Readings and Related Materials

5. Are the assigned readings and related materials specified and are they appropriate given the course description and objectives?
6. Are these materials available to students (in hard-copy or electronically) in a manner specified and at overall reasonable cost?

### Course Requirements

7. Are the course requirements—including matters of attendance, readings and related class preparation, quizzes and tests, and assigned papers and projects--clearly stated and feasible?
8. Are course requirements appropriate given the course level, description, and objectives?
9. Are grading criteria and due dates for individual assignments and for the final course grade clearly stated?

### Schedule

10. Does the syllabus contain a clear schedule for required reading and other preparation, for completion of assigned papers and related projects, for quizzes and tests, and for the final exam?

### Additional Information

11. Does the syllabus contain the instructor's contact information and office hours?
12. Does the syllabus contain contact information for the Office of Undergraduate Education and College policies, academic support resources, peer tutoring and writing support, access and disability resources, and Emory's Honor Code?

## PHIL Graduate Student Publications 2022-23

### *Published*

Cabitac, Jason, "Hamann on Creation and the Limits of Reason," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 35: 2 (2021): 196–214

Johnson, Rylie, "Toward a Critique of Fascist Temporality: Deleuze, Heidegger and History," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Fall 2022

Johnson, Rylie, "Shadows of Being: Encounters with Heidegger in Political Theory and Historical Reflection," *Review of Metaphysics*, Spring 2023.

### *Forthcoming*

Hughes, Erica, *Ankle-Deep in Pacific Water* (poetry collection), Haymarket Books, Forthcoming 2024

Kaplan, Leah, "The Hieroglyph's Signature, Event, Context," *Philosophy Today*, Forthcoming, Fall 2023

Kelly, Molly, "Review of Neal DeRoo's *The Political Logic of Experience: Expression in Phenomenology*," *Puncta*, forthcoming.

Smith, Everet, "Antichinismo, Hygiene, and Mestizaje in the work of José Vasconcelos, or, an Incommensurable Whiteness," *Aztlán: Journal for Chicano Studies*, forthcoming Fall 2023