MISSION STATEMENT
The Department of Philosophy has a longstanding commitment to teaching, research, and service. Recent hires have allowed the department to raise its research profile while continuing to serve the larger university community and to provide students with a wide range of philosophy courses. With respect to the curriculum, the department has three principal aims: (1) to support the University’s general education program; (2) to provide an undergraduate major and minor in philosophy; (3) to provide a graduate program in philosophy, with a particular emphasis in environmental philosophy. The department offers a number of courses that fulfill general education requirements, notably courses in ethics and the history of philosophy. The department’s undergraduate curriculum examines several major figures and developments in the history of philosophy, while also exposing students to recent research and the latest approaches to various philosophical questions. Students are given the opportunity to develop their analytical, critical, interpretive, and evaluative capacities. The department’s graduate curriculum builds on the undergraduate curriculum; students deepen their understanding of the history of the discipline and continue to develop their critical capacities and skills. In recent years, the department has increasingly focused on developing its strengths in environmental philosophy, particularly in forming an MA program devoted to the topic. We believe that concerns related to the environment are among the most important facing citizens today and we aim to equip students with the conceptual tools needed to analyze vexed questions and solve difficult problems relating to the environment.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES
Department Objectives:

1. Prepare non-majors to be better and more productive citizens by teaching them the skills necessary to be critical participants in the larger society. Prepare philosophy majors for graduate-level work in philosophy, as well as for work in other areas well-served by a philosophy education (such as the study of law). Prepare graduate students to do original research and to develop the skills necessary to be productive participants in contemporary philosophical debates and related policy discussions.
2. Offer courses that allow students to develop their abilities to think critically; to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material; to write clear expository prose; to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.
3. Offer courses that present the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought, addressing such topics as: the basis of ethical values, political systems
and ideals, human rights, the human good, the nature of beauty and art, the nature of knowledge and science, the fundamental structure of reality.

4. Equip students with the conceptual resources to grapple with complex issues pertaining to the natural environment.

5. Create a discussion-oriented atmosphere in small classes and seminars to promote development of skills in oral argumentation, listening, and general interpersonal ability.

Alignment with UM Strategic Issues:

UM Strategic Issue #1: Partnering for Student Success
- Department objective 2

UM Strategic Issue #2: Education for the Global Century
- Department objectives 1, 3, 4

UM Strategic Issue #3: Discovery and Creativity to Serve Montana and the World
- Department objectives 1, 3, 4

UM Strategic Issue #4: Dynamic Learning Environment
- Department objective 5

UM Strategic Issue #5: The Planning-Assessment Continuum
- N/A

### STUDENT LEARNING GOALS and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Goals</th>
<th>Analytical and Research Papers; Revisions of Earlier Drafts</th>
<th>In-class Exams (Essay, Multiple Choice, Short Answer, Definition)</th>
<th>Oral Presentations</th>
<th>Classroom Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learn to think critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learn to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Acquire an understanding of the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought.</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal results</th>
<th>Modifications made to enhance learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our students do, over the course of four years, generally improve their abilities to think</td>
<td>Individual instructors regularly review the measurement tools they use in their individual courses and revise them as they see fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult materials. We see this</td>
<td></td>
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<td>from the increased sophistication they display in their analytical papers, in-class exams, oral presentations, and classroom discussions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our students do, over the course of four years, generally learn to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis. We see this primarily from the increased sophistication they display in their analytical papers.</td>
<td>Individual instructors regularly review the writing measurement tools they use in their individual courses and revise them as they see fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students do, over the course of four years, generally acquire an understanding of the</td>
<td>The department regularly reviews its curriculum plan. Recently we voted to expand the range of courses and historical figures that would satisfy the upper-division history requirement for majors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought. We see this primarily from the increased sophistication they display in their analytical papers, in-class exams, oral presentations, and classroom discussions. The department’s curriculum has a significant historical component (see Appendix 1, the Philosophy Undergraduate Curriculum Map).</td>
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</table>

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

We remain aware of some of the difficulties that philosophy as a discipline may face with respect to student assessment. A useful document in this connection has been published by The American Philosophical Association (APA). It notes that a general aim in philosophy courses is for students to increase the level of sophistication in their thinking about a given topic. While this should be discernible in discussion and written work, it does not generally lend itself to “before-and-after measurement.” More generally, according to the APA, “the basic aim of education in philosophy is not and should not be primarily to impart information. Rather it is to help students learn to understand various kinds of deeply difficult intellectual problems, to interpret texts that address these problems, to analyze and criticize the arguments found in them, and to express themselves in ways that clarify and carry forward reflection upon them. The worry is that these kinds of abilities are not amenable (though others might be) to patterns of outcomes measurement typical of [outcomes assessment]. It is not to be expected that student progress in philosophy can either be specified to a degree beyond what is already possible by means of an essay examination or a term paper, or given a purely quantitative expression. It is essential that those values inherent in and specific to the process of teaching and learning in philosophy not be lost. […] The APA calls upon administrators to recognize that philosophy is fundamentally a matter of the cultivation and employment of analytic, interpretive, normative
and critical abilities. Learning outcomes and assessment methods must be devised accordingly. It is recommended that special consideration be given to the means of assessment already in place at an institution.”

At the same time, one concrete step we have taken toward improving our ability to measure assessment was to take part in a general education pilot project, focusing on how to assess the learning goals of one of our introductory general education courses (Intro to Ethics: PHL 110E). See Appendix 2.

APPENDICES
1. Philosophy Undergraduate Curriculum Map
2. General Education Pilot Assessment Report: Introduction to Ethics (PHL 110E)
## Appendix 1. PHILOSOPHY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM MAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to think critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material.</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understanding of the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
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</table>

### Course Key:
1. PHL 101Y: Intro to Philosophy
2. PHL 102Y: Intro to Existentialism
3. PHL 110E: Intro to Ethics
4. PHL 112E: Intro to Ethics and Environment
5. PHL 114E: Intro to Political Ethics
6. PHL 210E: Moral Philosophy
7. PHL 233: Intro to Logic (Deduction)
8. PHL 234: Intro to Logic (Induction)
9. PHL 241N: Hist. & Phil. of Science
10. PHL 261Y: History of Ancient Phil
11. PHL 262Y: History of Modern Phil
12. PHL 301: Knowledge and Reality
13. PHL 311: The Good, Right, Beautiful
14. PHL 316: Historical Figures
15. PHL 321E: Biomedical Ethics
16. PHL 323: Ethics of Climate Change
17. PHL 351: Phil and Feminism
18. PHL 363H: Ancient Greek/Roman Philosophy

### Outcomes Key:
I=Introduced
D=Developed/reinforced, with opportunities to practice
M=Mastery demonstrated
A=Assessment evidence collected
### Student Learning Outcomes

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<tr>
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<th>33</th>
<th>34</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to think critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material.</td>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>D, A</td>
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<td>D, A</td>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>M, A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.</td>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>D, A</td>
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<td>D, A</td>
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<td>M, A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understanding of the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought.</td>
<td>D, A</td>
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<td>D, A</td>
<td>M, A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Key:**

19. PHL 370: Philosophy of Religion  
20. PHL 405: 20th Century Analytic Philosophy  
21. PHL 406: Contemp. Issues Analytic Phil  
22. PHL 412: Ethics and Public Affairs  
23. PHL 422: Environmental Philosophy  
24. PHL 427: Philosophy of Art  
25. PHL 429: Philosophy in Literature  
26. PHL 445: Central Issues in Phil. of Science  
27. PHL 449: History Moral/Political Phil  
28. PHL 450: Contemp. Issues Moral/Political Phil  
29. PHL 455: Phil of Society and Culture  
30. PHL 462: History of Modern Philosophy  
31. PHL 464: Kant  
32. PHL 465: Plato  
33. PHL 466: Aristotle  
34. PHL 467: 19th Century Continental Phil  
35. PHL 468: 20th Century Continental Phil  
36. PHL 499: Senior Seminar

**Outcomes Key:**

I=Introduced  
D=Developed/reinforced, with opportunities to practice  
M=Mastery demonstrated  
A=Assessment evidence collected
Appendix 2. GENERAL EDUCATION PILOT ASSESSMENT REPORT: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (PHL 110E)

[From the main report introduction:] Building upon the pilot assessments on the Natural Sciences that were conducted last year, General Education assessments were conducted in Mathematics and Ethics in the 2015-2016 academic year. In Mathematics, Laura Fern assessed the M 105 and M 115 courses, Regina Souza assessed M 121 and M 151, and Leonid Kalachev assessed M 162. In the area of Ethics, Armond Duwell assessed PHIL 110.

The process for pilot studies began by reaching out to faculty members in these General Education groups, to identify those who were willing to participate in this study. Ideally, we would have 5-7 faculty members for each group, but our numbers have been slightly smaller than this. We had an initial meeting with each group to outline what the assessment pilot would entail. We explained that the assessment should benefit both students and professors. We noted that this is not an evaluation or judgment of the instructors, but rather the learning outcomes of the students.

We outlined five elements that should be included in the General Education reports:

- **Course description:** Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group.
- **Course student learning goals, and how they are connected to the General Education learning goals:** Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable learning goals.
- **Method(s) of assessment, and an achievement target for the assessment(s):** Describe the measurement(s) used, such as a rubric or specific test questions that directly measure the General Education learning goals. Please attach or provide a web link to the rubric, test questions, or other measurements used. For the achievement target, describe the desirable level of performance for your students, and the percentage of students you expected to achieve this.
- **What were the results/findings, and what is your interpretation/analysis of the data?:** Please be detailed, using specific numbers/percentages when possible. Qualitative discussion of themes provided in student feedback can also be reported. Do NOT use course grades or overall scores on a test/essay. The most useful data indicates where students’ performance was stronger and where it was weaker. Feel free to attach charts/tables if desired.
- **Action steps based on the findings:** Given your students’ performance the last time the course was offered, how will you modify the course to enhance learning? You can also address how the course could be improved, and what changes in the course content or pedagogy you plan to make, based upon on the findings. Please include a timeframe for the changes.

This assessment process provided us with an opportunity to look at the goals of general education classes. The pilot project also allowed us to explore ways to obtain feedback from classes without overburdening instructors, as well as have more discussion of how assessment will benefit professors and students.

Each of the faculty members noted above wrote strong reports showing that students were substantially meeting the course learning outcomes related to the General Education outcomes.
As requested, these reports outlined the course learning outcomes, the relationship of the course learning outcomes to General Education learning outcomes, the associated measurements, assessment findings, and follow-up action steps. Each of these reports has been included below on the following pages:

- M 105 (p. 2)
- M 115 (p. 6)
- M 121 (p. 12)
- M 151 (p. 16)
- M 162 (p. 20)
- PHIL 110 (p. 22)

Additional Ethics reports are being completed by Ramona Grey, Mary-Ann Bowman, and G.G. Weix. All of these reports are beneficial for our NWCCU accreditation project that focuses on General Education assessment. We will determine which General Education areas will be assessed in 2016-2017.

**ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR PHL 110.01: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

**Course Description**
This course is an introduction to the major approaches to the study of ethics in the Western tradition. Classical texts from the history of philosophy as well as some of the most influential texts from the last 30 years will be examined. Our objectives are to get a sense of the major approaches to ethics, but most importantly learn how to critically evaluate the quality of moral arguments, even those whose conclusions we might agree with.

**Course Learning Goals**
Upon completion of an Ethical and Human Values course, students will be able to:

1. correctly apply the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied to ethical issues that arise within those traditions or practices;
2. analyze and critically evaluate the basic concepts and forms of reasoning from the tradition or professional practice they studied.

These course goals are identical to the general education goals for ethics.

**Method of Assessment**
The Association of American Colleges and Universities has developed a rubric for assessing ethical reasoning abilities. The rubric has two different areas of assessment that correspond to the two learning goals associated with Ethical and Human Values courses at the University of Montana.

**Application of ethical concepts (learning goal 1):**
Capstone 4: Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/ concepts to an ethical question, accurately, and is able to consider full implications of the application.
Milestone 3: Student can independently (to a new example) apply ethical perspectives/ concepts to an ethical question, accurately, but does not consider the specific implications of the application.

Milestone 2: Student can apply ethical perspectives/ concepts to an ethical question, independently (to a new example) and the application is inaccurate.

Benchmark 1: Student can apply ethical perspectives/ concepts to an ethical question with support (using examples, in a class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting) but is unable to apply ethical perspectives/ concepts independently (to a new example).

Evaluation of ethical concepts (learning goal 2):

Capstone 4: Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/ concepts, and the student’s defense is adequate and effective.

Milestone 3: Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/ concepts, but the student's response is inadequate.

Milestone 2: Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/ concepts but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalized by student and do not affect student's position.)

Benchmark 1: Student states a position but cannot state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different perspectives/concepts.

Over the course of two exams, each of the different areas of assessment were probed twice. Only data from students that completed all exams were included in the findings.

**Findings and Assessment of Findings**

First Assessment of learning goal 1:

5/46 scored below the benchmark, 4/46 scored at milestone 1, 4/46 scored at milestone 2, 20/46 scored at milestone 3, and 13/46 scored at the capstone level.

Second Assessment of learning goal 1:

5/46 scored below the benchmark, 6/46 scored at milestone 1, 6/46 scored at milestone 2, 18/46 scored at milestone 3, and 11/46 scored at the capstone level.
First Assessment of learning goal 2:

3/46 scored below the benchmark, 2/46 scored at milestone 1, 4/46 scored at milestone 2, 16/46 scored at milestone 3, and 21/46 scored at the capstone level.

Second Assessment of learning goal 2:

1/46 scored below the benchmark, 6/46 scored at milestone 1, 7/46 scored at milestone 2, 16/46 scored at milestone 3, and 16/46 scored at the capstone level.

The first assessment of learning goal 1 and the first and second assessments of learning goal 2 occurred on the third exam of the semester. The second assessment of learning goal 1 occurred on the final exam. Surprisingly, the first and second assessment of learning goal 2, which occurred on the same exam, revealed more variation than the first and second assessments of learning goal 1, which occurred on different exams. There are two reasonable explanations for these results. Either there is variation present in the method of assessment, or students encountered more difficulty on one of the tasks than another.

Action Steps

This initial data will be used to measure future achievements in meeting the general education learning goals. Increasing the number of students performing at the capstone level is a priority. In future courses, the benchmarks will be communicated to students, and they will be told that their grades will reflect how well they meet those benchmarks. Additionally, this initial assessment will provide examples that illustrate what it takes to achieve certain benchmarks. In future courses, an example of performance at each benchmark will be provided to students. More clearly communicating expectations to students should increase their performance.