



## Department of Philosophy 2022 Assessment Report

All areas shaded in gray are to be completed by the department/program.

This document will be posted online and must be [accessible electronically](#) (including appendices).

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Philosophy has a longstanding commitment to teaching, research, and service. 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, in ethics, cultural and international diversity, democracy and citizenship, history, literary and artistic studies, natural science. 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 program focuses on environmental philosophy. 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 ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

After listing each departmental objective, indicate which of the five [Priorities for Action](#) the objective supports. In this section, you may also briefly describe any innovative or noteworthy programs/initiatives that support the Priorities for Action.

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. This objective supports the following priorities for action: Priority 1 Place student success at the center of everything we do, Priority 2 Drive Excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research, and Priority 4 Partner with place.
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. This objective supports the following priorities for action: Priority 1 Place student success at the center of everything we do and Priority 2 Drive Excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.
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, and the fundamental structure of reality. This objective supports the following priorities for action: Priority 1 Place student success at the center of everything we do, and Priority 2 Drive Excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.

4. Equip students with the conceptual resources to grapple with complex issues pertaining to the natural environment. This objective supports priorities for action Priority 1 Place student success at the center of everything we do, Priority 2 Drive Excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research, and Priority 4 Partner with place.
5. Create a discussion-oriented atmosphere in small classes and seminars to promote development of skills in oral argumentation, listening, and general interpersonal ability. This objective supports the following priorities for action: Priority 1 Place student success at the center of everything we do, and Priority 2 Drive Excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Student Learning Outcomes	Analytical and Research Papers; Revisions of Earlier Drafts	In-class Exams (Essay, Multiple Choice, Short Answer, Definition)	Oral Presentations	Classroom Discussion	<Measurement Tool>
1. Be able to think critically, and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material.	X	X	X	X	
2. Be able to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.	X	X	X	X	
3. Have an understanding of the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought.	X	X	X	X	

### RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
Our students do, over the course of four years, generally improve their abilities to think critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult materials. We see this from the increased sophistication they display in their analytical papers, in-class exams, oral presentations, and classroom discussions.	Individual instructors regularly review the measurement tools they use in their individual courses and revise them as they see fit.

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
<p>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.</p>	<p>Individual instructors regularly review the writing measurement tools they use in their individual courses and revise them as they see fit.</p>
<p>Our students do, over the course of four years, generally acquire an understanding of the 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).</p>	<p>The department regularly reviews its curriculum plan.</p>

## **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.”

## **APPENDICIES**

1. Curriculum maps for Philosophy BA, Philosophy and Law BA, and Environmental Philosophy BA.

2.

3.

## UM Curriculum Mapping Template Philosophy BA

Required Course (Name and Number)	Ability to think critically and to read, comprehend, and analyze conceptually difficult material.	Ability to write clear expository prose and to combine verbal argumentation with conceptual analysis.	Understanding of the history of ideas and texts that have shaped Western philosophical thought.	Outcome 4:	Outcome 5:	Outcome 6:	Outcome 7:
1 PHL 210 Moral Philosophy	I, A	I, A	I, A				
2 PHL 233: Intro to Logic (Deduction)	I, A	I, A					
3 PHL 261Y: History of Ancient Phil	I, A	I, A	I, A				
4 PHL 262Y: History of Modern Phil	I, A	I, A	I, A				
5 PHL 309E - The Art of Living	D, A	D, A	D, A				
6 PHL 316 - Historical Figures in Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
7 PHL 317E - Law and Morality	D, A	D, A	D, A				
8 PHL 319E - Law and Discrimination	D, A	D, A	D, A				
9 PHL 321E - Philosophy & Biomedical Ethics	D, A	D, A	D, A				
10 PHL 323 - Ethics of Climate Change	D, A	D, A	D, A				
11 PHL 327L - Aesthetics and the Arts	D, A	D, A	D, A				
12 PHL 365 - Philosophy of Mind	D, A	D, A	D, A				
13 PHL 400 - Advanced Writing in Philosophy	D, A, M	D, A, M	D, A				
14 PHL 403 - Early Wittgenstein	D, A	D, A	D, A				
15 PHL 404 - Later Wittgenstein	D, A	D, A	D, A				
16 PHL 407 - Epistemology	D, A	D, A	D, A				
17 PHL 415 - Issues in the Anthropocene	D, A	D, A	D, A				
18 PHL 422 - Environmental Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
19 PHL 423 - Science and the Environment	D, A	D, A	D, A				
20 PHL 424 - Environmental Aesthetics	D, A	D, A	D, A				
21 PHL 427 - Topics in Philosophy of Art	D, A	D, A	D, A				
22 PHL 429 - Philosophy and Literature	D, A	D, A	D, A				
23 PHL 445 - Central Issues in Philosophy of Science	D, A	D, A	D, A				
24 PHL 448 - Philosophy and Animals	D, A	D, A	D, A				
25 PHL 449 - History of Moral and Political Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
26 PHL 450 - Contemporary Moral/Political Theory	D, A	D, A	D, A				
27 PHL 451 - Justice	D, A	D, A	D, A				
28 PHL 456 - Iris Murdoch's Ethics	D, A	D, A	D, A				
29 PHL 462 - Early Modern Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
30 PHL 464 - Kant	D, A	D, A	D, A				
31 PHL 465 - Plato	D, A	D, A	D, A				
32 PHL 466 - Aristotle	D, A	D, A	D, A				
33 PHL 467 - 19th Century Continental Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
34 PHL 468 - 20th Century Continental Philosophy	D, A	D, A	D, A				
35 PHL 469 - Rousseau	D, A	D, A	D, A				
36 PHL 470 - Hegel	D, A	D, A	D, A				
37 PHL 471 - Kierkegaard	D, A	D, A	D, A				
38 PHL 472 - Thoreau	D, A	D, A	D, A				
39 PHL 473 - Nietzsche	D, A	D, A	D, A				
40 PHL 478 - Critical Theory	D, A	D, A	D, A				

**KEY:**

I = Introduced

D = Developed/reinforced, with opportunities to practice

M = Mastery

A = Assessment evidence collected