



SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY

Saint Louis University  
Program Assessment Plan

**Program (Major, Minor, Core): Philosophy Master of Arts (Research)**

**Department: Philosophy**

**College/School: College of Arts and Sciences**

**Person(s) Responsible for Implementing the Plan: Theodore Vitali (Chair) and Scott Ragland (Dept. Assessment Coordinator)**

**Date Submitted: Nov. 15, 2015**

Program Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Mapping	Assessment Methods	Use of Assessment Data
<p><i>What do you expect all students who complete the program to know, or be able to do?</i></p>	<p><i>Where is the outcome learned/assessed (courses, internships, student teaching, clinical, etc.)?</i></p>	<p><i>How do students demonstrate their performance of the program learning outcomes? How does the program measure student performance? Distinguish your direct measures from indirect measures.</i></p>	<p><i>How does the program use assessment results to recognize success and "close the loop" to inform additional program improvement? How/when is this data shared, and with whom?</i></p>
<p>1. Students will analyze and defend a philosophical position on a philosophical problem.</p>	<p>Master's Thesis</p>	<p>Students demonstrate the outcomes in a thesis. Members of thesis defense committee complete "Master's Rubric" (attached) after reviewing the thesis.</p>	<p>Student results are sent from the assessing professors to the OA coordinator, who compiles data for all the master's students as a group. OA Coordinator reports results to a department meeting so that faculty can discuss whether changes are needed to the program; also reports to the chair and associate dean in the annual OA report. These reports are archived so that comparisons can be made year-to-year to observe trends in the results.</p>

2 Students will gather sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Master's Thesis	Same as above.	Same as above.
3. Students will interpret sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Master's Thesis	Same as above.	Same as above.
4. Students will synthesize sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Master's Thesis	Same as above.	Same as above.

- 1. It is not recommended to try and assess (in depth) all of the program learning outcomes every semester. It is best practice to plan out when each outcome will be assessed and focus on 1 or 2 each semester/academic year. Describe the responsibilities, timeline, and the process for implementing this assessment plan.**

This process will be conducted annually, in the event that there are any M.A. students completing a thesis (in some semesters or academic years, there are none). The OA Coordinator will be responsible to make sure that the groundwork is properly laid at the beginning of the term (i.e. all relevant students are identified and their thesis committees given the rubric). Individual committee members will score the thesis immediately after the oral defense. The OA Coordinator will collect the data and present it to the department. Results will be included in the annual department report to Associate Dean Donna Lavoie.

- 2. Please explain how these assessment efforts are coordinated with Madrid (courses and/or program)?**

Coordination of these learning outcomes with Madrid is not required, because the Madrid does not offer graduate courses.

- 3. The program assessment plan should be developed and approved by all faculty in the department. In addition, the program assessment plan should be developed to include student input and external sources (e.g., national standards, advisory boards, employers, alumni, etc.). Describe the process through which your academic unit created this assessment plan. Include the following:**

During the fall of 2015, this program was developed by Scott Ragland, the department OA coordinator, in consultation with Bill Rehg, Dean of Philosophy and Letters and Kathleen Thatcher. It was discussed and approved by the philosophy faculty at their October 30, 2015 department meeting.

- a. Timeline regarding when or how often this plan will be reviewed and revised. (This could be aligned with program review.)

The plan will be reviewed annually by the OA coordinator. If coordinator would like to recommend changes to the program, these will be reported to the chair and discussed at a department meeting early the following year.

- b. How students were included in the process and/or how student input was gathered and incorporated into the assessment plan.

Students were not incorporated in the development of this plan. However, the OA coordinator would like to meet with the Philosophy Graduate Student Association to discuss the program at some point during the spring term of 2016. If they recommend changes, these could end up as suggestions for revision in the May 2016 OA report.

- c. What external sources were consulted in the development of this assessment plan?

University of Portland Philosophy Learning Outcomes (<http://college.up.edu/philosophy/default.aspx?cid=6556&pid=2486>)

Pepperdine Philosophy and Religion Program Learning Outcomes (<http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/religion-philosophy/undergraduate/philosophy/learning-outcomes.htm>)

American University in Cairo Philosophy Assessment Plan

Saint Peter's University Philosophy Department Assessment Plan

Due to its similarity to our own institution, we modeled our plan closely on Saint Peter's.

- d. Assessment of the manageability of the plan in relation to departmental resources and personnel.

The time commitment involved for the faculty conducting the assessment is very manageable. It does not require them to do any "new" grading, but simply to report on how the student's paper (which they will be reading anyway) fares with respect to the rubric. The OA coordinator will need to organize and analyze the data, but this should be manageable.

## Master's Thesis Assessment Rubric

Name of Professor:

Term:

Name of Student:

Title of Student's Thesis:

Learning Outcome	Fails to Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
1. Students will analyze and defend a philosophical position on a philosophical problem.	Student fails to understand key aspects of chosen problem, or fails to articulate a clear position, or fails to consider or respond to relevant criticisms of the position, or merely engages in superficial analysis or facile argumentation more common in undergraduate papers.	Student clearly articulates a philosophical problem, takes a clear position on that problem, and defends own position against relevant and plausible lines of criticism. This is all done at a level of depth and sophistication greater than would be expected at the undergraduate level.	Student's portrayal of the problem, novelty of thesis, and/or depth of analysis make a publishable contribution to existing literature on the subject.
2. Students will gather sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Student fails to include necessary sources for the topic or includes irrelevant sources.	Student includes all and only relevant primary and secondary sources. and accurately interprets those writings. The student's paper is a good snapshot of the current state of discussion.	Student includes groundbreaking research into primary sources or synthesizes information in novel ways that advance the current discussion of the topic.
3. Students will interpret sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Student significantly misinterprets sources	Student's interpretation of sources is accurate and plausible on all significant points.	Student offers a compelling interpretation of sources that is novel or groundbreaking in some way.
4. Students will synthesize sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Student's synthesis misrepresents the current state of the debate on the topic or fails to adequately connect to the student's defense of own position.	Thesis presents an accurate, unified snapshot of the current state of discussion and the student's own argument clearly draws on or relates to this snapshot.	Thesis portrays the current state of discussion in a way that is not only accurate and unified, but also novel—opening up new possibilities for research or argument. The student's own position draws on this portrayal.

Department of Philosophy  
Summary Timeline of Multi-Year Assessment Plan

N.B Assessment of Core Contribution can be conducted as needed on a timeline to be determined by the College of Arts and Sciences.

2015-16

Assessment of Major

Learning Goal:

- 1. Students will synthesize knowledge of two different periods of Western philosophy*

Assessment Methods: Exam question in Phil 460 and rubric.

Assessment of Thesis M.A.

NB: Non-thesis M.A. is for Philosophy and Letters students and is assessed by P&L

Learning Goals:

- 1. Students will analyze and defend a philosophical position on a philosophical problem.*
- 2. Students will gather sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*
- 3. Students will interpret sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*
- 4. Students will synthesize sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*

Assessment Method: Rubric applied to Master's Thesis by committee members.

Assessment of PhD

Learning Goals

- 1. Students will make a scholarly contribution to the field of philosophy.*

Assessment Method: Rubric Applied to Dissertation by committee members.

- 2. Graduate student teachers teach philosophy effectively.*

Assessment Method: Annual review of all 4<sup>th</sup>-Year Grad student teachers by faculty

2016-17

Assessment of Major

Learning Goals:

- 2. Students will correctly employ principles of logical reasoning in philosophical analysis.*
- 3. Students will analyze and defend a philosophical position on a philosophical problem.*
- 4. Students will gather sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*
- 5. Students will interpret sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*

*6. Students will synthesize sources relevant to a philosophical problem.*

Assessment Method: Capstone Papers and rubric.

Assessment of Thesis M.A.: Same as previous year

Assessment of PhD: Same as previous year

2017-18

Assessment of Minor

Learning Goal: *Students will articulate and evaluate a philosophical argument.*

Assessment Method: Identify students in their last class to complete minor. Have instructor apply rubric to a relevant assignment from the course.

Assessment of Thesis M.A.: Same as previous year

Assessment of PhD: Same as previous year