

**Assessment of Student Learning in the Philosophy Major
Academic Year 2009-2010
Formal Report (Due July 1, 2010)**

(1) Goals. State the purpose or mission of your major.

The purpose of the Philosophy Major is stated in three Philosophy Department goals:

- Department Goal 1: Students will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of major concepts and intellectual traditions within the field of philosophy.
- Department Goal 2: Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize the principles of critical thinking and formal logic in order to produce a sound and valid argument, or to evaluate the soundness and validity of the arguments of others.
- Department Goal 3: Students will demonstrate their ability to complete research on a philosophy-related topic, analyze objectively the results of their research, and present arguments to support their point of view.

These Philosophy Department learning goals represent our allegiance to Millikin University's commitment to an educational experience that "integrates theory and practice." Because this claim is ripe for misunderstanding, it merits considerable commentary.

The Philosophy Department vigorously opposes any understanding of "theory-practice" that would co-opt "practice" for things like labs, practica, internships, or other vocational experiences *and limit the meaning of that concept to those sorts of activities only*. If the term "practice" is defined in that way, then philosophy does not do anything practical...and we are proud to admit that fact, for we can do nothing else so long as we remain true to our discipline! We have absolutely no idea what a "philosophy internship" or "philosophy practicum" or "philosophy lab" would even be. While some of our courses include readings that address "practical" or "applied issues," often under the label of "applied ethics" (e.g., lying, abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, etc.), what this amounts to is simply bringing critical thinking skills to bear on concrete issues. We certainly are not going to have capital punishment labs or an abortion practicum!

More importantly, we find the impulse to define "practice" in a limited and territorial fashion to be a misguided and dangerous understanding of practice and, by implication, of philosophy, and, by further implication, liberal education in general.

There is a widespread view of philosophy in which philosophical study is viewed as purely theoretical, as purely speculative, and as having no practical relevance whatsoever. "The Thinker," a figure deep in thought and apparently doing nothing, best represents this image. We contend that this view is a serious mischaracterization of philosophical study. Philosophical study is not a form of purely detached speculation and contemplation. Rather, philosophical study is a kind of activity, a kind of doing. And it is practical in what we believe to be the most important senses, the senses that lie at the heart of Millikin's mission. Serious philosophical study is a rigorous activity that trains the mind and facilitates the development and growth of skill sets that are essential to *any* occupation or vocation, to *any* effort to engage in meaningful democratic citizenship in a global environment, and to *any* attempt to develop a life of meaning and value. These skills sets include:

- The ability to problem solve by thinking critically and analytically about philosophical puzzles and issues, puzzles and issues that often require students to wrestle with ambiguity and think from different perspectives and points of view.
- The ability to comprehend dense and difficult readings, readings that often focus on the perennial questions of human existence.
- The ability to convey ideas clearly and creatively in both written and oral form.

These skill sets are always practical. For example, in any field of inquiry or vocation, individuals will have to problem solve, think critically, assess arguments or strategies, communicate clearly, spot unspoken assumptions that may be driving a certain position, understand the implications of adopting a certain point of view or principle, etc. Since we encourage the development and growth of the skill sets that are essential to doing any of these things well, and hone their development in each and every class, philosophical study is inherently practical. As the Times of London noted (August 15, 1998), "Their [philosophy graduates'] employability, at 98.9%, is impressive by any standard...Philosophy is, in commercial jargon, the ultimate 'transferable work skill'".

In philosophy, our emphasis on the development and growth of skill sets is an emphasis on *how* to think well, not an emphasis on *what* to think. Again, this focus is perfectly consistent with Millikin's mission to "deliver on the promise of education" through the three prepares. In terms of professional success and post-graduate employment, the vast bulk of knowing what to do is learned on site; you learn "on the job." The skill sets we aim to develop are skill sets that will allow students to do what they do in their jobs *well*. And this applies to any and all jobs.

Millikin began with an allegiance to philosophy as a discipline and that allegiance continues. When the MPSL plan was developed, the Philosophy Department faculty suggested that the central questions we ask each day in class, "Who am I?", "How can I know?" and "What should I do?" are primary questions each student needs to engage. The faculty embraced this idea, and these three questions continue to form the heart of

our general education program. Again, when we laid the groundwork for a major overhaul of the general education program in 2007, the Philosophy Department faculty proposed that along with writing and reflection, ethical reasoning be made one of the central “skill threads” developed in the University Studies program. The “practice” of delivering the University educational curriculum that we now aim to assess cannot take place without philosophical activity. Again, the practical relevance of philosophical activity could not be clearer.

A final aspect of our commitment to the practicality of philosophy that we would highlight is our contribution to Millikin’s moot court program. Although moot court is not a Philosophy Department program and is open to all interested (and qualified) students at the university, many of the students involved have been (and currently are) philosophy majors (minors). In addition, Dr. Money has been the faculty advisor for our moot court team since 2004. The simulation is educational in the best and fullest sense of the word. Beginning six weeks prior to the actual competition, Dr. Money meets with the participating students between 2-4 hours per week in the evenings. During these meetings, the students collectively analyze the closed-brief materials, work on the formulation of arguments representing both sides of the case, practice oral delivery and presentation of those arguments, and practice fielding questions from the other participants. During the competition, each team is given thirty minutes for argument and each team member must talk for at least ten minutes. Each team argues twice on each of the first two days, alternating between representing the petitioner and the respondent. Those teams that make the semi-final round argue an additional time, with one final argument made by those teams reaching the finals. Teams are judged on their knowledge of the case, their ability to formulate and present compelling arguments, and their ability to respond on their feet to difficult questions from the justices hearing the case. We have had great success since Dr. Money assumed leadership of this program. Over the past six years, Millikin students have performed exceptionally well. At the 2005 competition, Millikin teams took **first** and **second** place in the competition, having to face each other in the final round of competition. In addition, one of our three student justices won the award for “**most outstanding justice.**” We continued our success at the 2006 competition where one of our teams took **third** place in the competition. In addition, one of our student justices was elected to serve as **Chief Justice** for the 2007 competition. Millikin students continued to excel at the 2007 competition. Millikin teams took **second** and **third** place and the Millikin student serving as Chief Justice was re-elected for the 2008 competition. At the 2008 competition, Millikin teams once again performed well, taking **first** and **third** place in the competition. In 2009 Millikin teams again took **first** and **second** place, and a Millikin student was honored as “**most outstanding attorney.**” In 2010, Millikin teams again took **first** and **second** place, and a Millikin student was again honored as “**most outstanding attorney.**” Many of Millikin’s core educational skills are facilitated in this simulation: critical and moral reasoning, oral communication skills, collaborative learning, etc. More importantly, however, these are the very same skill sets that are facilitated and emphasized in every philosophy course. Whether we call the activity

“moot court” or “Introduction to Philosophy,” the same skills sets – skills sets that are inherently practical – are being engaged and developed.

Philosophy services Millikin University’s core goals and values. Close examination of the Millikin curriculum and its stated mission goals confirms that philosophy is essential to the ability of Millikin University to deliver on “the promise of education.” This mission has three core elements.

The first core element of Millikin’s mission is “to prepare students for professional success.” If philosophy is the “ultimate transferable work skill,” then we prepare students for work in a variety of fields. Instead of preparing students for their first job, we prepare them for a lifetime of success—no matter how often they change their careers – something the empirical evidence suggests they will do quite frequently over the course of their lifetimes.

The second core element of Millikin’s mission is “to prepare students for democratic citizenship in a global environment.” Our focus on philosophy of law, political philosophy, and value questions in general reveals our belief in and commitment to the Jeffersonian model of liberal education. In order to engage meaningfully in democratic citizenship, citizens must be able to ask the following kinds of questions and be able to assess critically the answers that might be provided to them: What makes for a *good* society? What are the *legitimate* functions of the state? How *should* we resolve conflicts between the common good and individual rights? Might we have a *moral* obligation to challenge the laws and policies of our own country? These are philosophical questions; not questions of the nuts and bolts of how our government runs, but questions about our goals and duties. Confronting and wrestling with these questions prepare students for democratic citizenship.

The third core element of Millikin’s mission is “to prepare students for a personal life of meaning and value.” Clearly this is exactly what philosophy does. That Millikin’s mission includes this goal along with the first distinguishes us from a technical institution. We are not a glorified community college willing to train students for the first job they will get, and leaving them in a lurch when they struggle to understand death, or agonize over ethical decisions, or confront those whose ideas seem foreign or dangerous because they are new. Millikin University wants its students to be whole: life-long learners who will not shy away from the ambiguities and puzzles that make life richer and more human. Philosophy is the department that makes confronting these issues its life’s work.

Philosophical study, then, is exemplary of Millikin’s promise to prepare students for professional success, prepare them for democratic citizenship, and prepare them for a life of personal value and meaning. The Philosophy Department learning goals, then, match well with Millikin’s University-wide learning goals:

- University Goal 1: Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
- University Goal 2: Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
- University Goal 3: Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The accompanying table shows how Philosophy Department goals relate to University-wide goals:

Philosophy Department Learning Goal	Corresponding Millikin University Learning Goal Number(s)
1. Students will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of major concepts and intellectual traditions within the field of philosophy.	1, 2, 3
2. Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize the principles of critical thinking and formal logic in order to produce a sound and valid argument, or to evaluate the soundness and validity of the arguments of others.	1, 2, 3
3. Students will demonstrate their ability to complete research on a philosophy-related topic, analyze objectively the results of their research, and present arguments to support their point of view in a variety of venues, including an individually directed senior capstone thesis in philosophy.	1, 2, 3

In sum, so long as we reject any hidebound understanding of “practice,” philosophical study reveals itself to be inherently practical. The skill sets it develops and the issues it engages facilitate professional success, democratic citizenship, and the development of a personal life of value and meaning. It seems to us that the daily *practice* of delivering on the promise of education should be the goal of every department and program at Millikin University. This, we do.

Given our emphasis on skill set development, it is no accident that philosophical study is excellent preparation for law school. Accordingly, our Department has developed a “pre-law track” for those of our majors who are interested in law school. It is extremely important to emphasize that gaining admission to law school is not a function of gaining substantive content knowledge as an undergraduate. This is vividly illustrated by

pointing out the fact that the undergraduate major with the *highest acceptance rate* to ABA approved law schools is physics. Law schools require no specific undergraduate curriculum, no specific undergraduate major, and no specific undergraduate plan of study for admission. Law schools select students on the basis of evidence that they can “think like a lawyer.” Philosophy prepares students to think in this way. In fact, a recent study by the American Bar Association shows that, after physics, the major with the highest acceptance rate to law school is **PHILOSOPHY**.

While our primary emphasis is on content neutral skill set development, we do not want to short-change the substantive content of philosophical writings. We develop the above mentioned skill sets by reading and discussing topics and issues central to the human condition. For example:

- Who am I? How can I know? What should I do? The Millikin core questions are essentially philosophical questions!
- Does God exist? If God exists, how is that fact consistent with the existence of evil in the world?
- Do human beings possess free will? Or is human behavior and action causally determined?
- What is the relation between mental states (mind, consciousness) and brain states (body)?
- What justification is there for the state? How should finite and scarce resources be distributed within society?
- Are there universal moral principles? Or are all moral principles relative either to cultures or individuals?
- What does it mean to judge a work of art beautiful? Is beauty really in the eye of the beholder?

The description of the philosophy program that appears in the Millikin Bulletin is crafted to emphasize the relevance of philosophical study to students with diverse interests and goals. According to the 2000-10 *Millikin University Bulletin*,

The Philosophy Major is designed to meet the requirements of four classes of students: (a) those who have no professional interest in philosophy but who wish to approach a liberal education through the discipline of philosophy; (b) those who want a composite or interdepartmental major in philosophy and the natural sciences, behavioral sciences, humanities, or fine arts; (c) those who want an intensive study of philosophy preparatory to graduate study in some other field, e.g., law, theology, medicine, or education; (d) those who are professionally interested in philosophy and who plan to do graduate work in the field and then to teach or write....Philosophy also offers a “pre-law track” within the Philosophy Major. According to the American Bar Association, after physics, the major with the highest percentage of acceptance into ABA approved law schools is philosophy. We have developed a track within our Philosophy Major to provide

students with the courses that emphasize the skills and the knowledge content that will make it both likely that they will get into law school and that they will succeed both there and later as lawyers. (p.74)

While a significant number of our majors go on to pursue graduate study in philosophy and aspire eventually to teach, most of our majors go on to pursue other careers and educational objectives. Accordingly, the successful student graduating from the philosophy major might be preparing for a career as a natural scientist, a behavioral scientist, an attorney, a theologian, a physician, an educator, or a writer, or might go into some field more generally related to the humanities or the liberal arts. Whatever the case, he or she will be well prepared as a result of the habits of mind acquired in the process of completing the Philosophy Major. (See "Appendix One" for post-graduate information of recently graduated majors.)

There are no guidelines provided by the American Philosophical Association for undergraduate study.

(2) Snapshot. Provide a brief overview of your current situation.

The Philosophy Department has three full-time faculty members: Dr. Jo Ellen Jacobs, Dr. Robert Money, and Dr. Eric Roark.

Dr. Jacobs has taught in every category of the University Studies sequential program. She teaches two sections of honors IN140 each fall, serving up to 40 students. He also helps deliver the first week introduction to ethical reasoning program. Her logic course serves students who need to develop their quantitative reasoning skills and meets the quantitative reasoning requirement of the University Studies. The Ancient World Wisdom course introduces majors to Asian and Western philosophy, as well as students who want to understand the fundamentals of global studies. Other courses complement the large number of fine arts students at Millikin. Historical studies students may select among a range of Dr. Jacobs' classes. A large number of humanities students supplement their majors with many of the upper division courses and seminars taught by Dr. Jacobs.

Dr. Money serves 40 first-year honors students each fall by offering two sections of Honors University Seminar. He also coordinates the "first week" introduction to ethical reasoning, a program that impacts on all incoming freshmen. Dr. Money regularly teaches an honors seminar in humanities, typically in the spring semester. He serves philosophy majors and minors, and the general student body, by offering a variety of philosophy courses. He serves political science majors and minors, and the general student body, by offering a variety of courses either as political science courses (e.g., Constitutional Law) or as cross-listed courses (e.g., Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Law). All of these are 300-level courses. He serves students who need to meet the

Historical Studies requirement by offering both Modern Philosophy and Contemporary Philosophy on a regular basis. He serves pre-law students as Director of the Pre-Law Program, and as faculty advisor to the Moot Court Team.

Dr. Roark teaches two sections of IN140 each fall, serving 40 students. He also helps deliver the first week introduction to ethical reasoning program. Dr. Roark also teaches the business ethics course required within Tabor's MBA program. During his first year, Dr. Roark taught IN203, Honors Seminar in Humanities, twice. We anticipate that he will continue making regular contributions to the honors program going forward. Dr. Roark taught an applied ethics course on "just war theory" during his first year. He is scheduled to teach PH217, Bioethics during the fall 2009 semester and PH219, Environmental Ethics during the spring 2010 semester. He is already making substantial contributions to the delivery of our new ethics minor. In addition, Dr. Roark teaches a variety of courses within the philosophy program. Our students will benefit immensely from the increased diversity of course offerings that our three-person department will be able to offer going forward.

Dr. Jacobs retired at the end of the fall 2009 semester. Her position has been filled with the hiring of Dr. Michael Hartsock. Dr. Hartsock begins at Millikin this coming fall (2010) semester.

As of the spring 2010 semester, the Philosophy Department had 30 majors and 13 minors. This is the first time that the second year that the philosophy program has had over 30 students involved as either majors or minors. The department has grown considerably over the past decade. This growth is all the more impressive given that few students come to Millikin (or any college) as announced philosophy majors.

The Department sponsors the Theo-Socratic Society.

Along with Interdepartmental courses such as IN140, IN203, IN250, and IN350, Philosophy Department faculty teach over 12 different courses from 100- through 400-level, including one course in the MBA Program.

In terms of new initiatives and improvements, the Philosophy Department recently expanded to three faculty members starting fall 2008. This addition required that we review our curriculum to ensure that our curriculum is aligned with the teaching interests and abilities of the philosophy faculty. Significant changes were made. Most significantly, we created an "ethics minor" within our program. As part of this new program, we will be teaching three additional courses under the broad category of "applied ethics." These courses include PH215, Business Ethics; PH217, Bioethics; and PH219, Environmental Ethics. We have intentionally designed two of these "applied ethics" courses to connect to other major academic units. PH215, Business Ethics, connects to Tabor; PH217, Bioethics, connects to the pre-med, medical technology, and nursing programs. We believe that the ethics minor will be a way to attract more

students to philosophy. Early indications are that this is, indeed, the case. We have gone from 4 minors in spring 2008 to 13 minors in 2009. The ethics minor also coheres with and reinforces the recently revised University Studies program, which emphasizes three skill sets over the course of the sequential elements: reflection, writing, and *ethical reasoning*. Every course that we offer in the area of value theory generally, including the applied ethics courses, engage students in all three of these skills.

The learning goals of the ethics minor program are as follows:

1. Students will use ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on issues that impact their personal lives as well as their local, national, and/or global communities; and
2. Students will be able to express in written form their understanding of major ethical concepts and theories and demonstrate competency in the application of those concepts and theories to specific topics (business, medicine, environment, politics, etc.).

We believe it to be self-evident that ethical reasoning and reflection on ethical issues and topics are indispensable for the kind of intellectual and personal growth our students need if they are to find professional success, participate meaningfully in democratic citizenship in a global environment, and create and discover a personal life of meaning and value. Hence, the ethics minor coheres well with the stated goals of Millikin University – indeed, it flows from it.

The Philosophy Department rotates or modifies the content of its upper-level seminars on an ongoing basis. The Department also makes some modifications in its normal courses, rotating content in and out. Doing so allows philosophy faculty to keep courses fresh and exciting for the students, and helps to keep faculty interest and enthusiasm high. For example, Dr. Money had taught the PH 381 seminar as a course on Nietzsche, as a seminar on personal identity, as a course on the intelligent design-evolution controversy, and as a course on ethical naturalism. Similarly, Dr. Jacobs has taught the same course as a seminar on philosophy and literature, the aesthetics and ethics of class, and the politics and aesthetics of food. The title of the course is the same, but it is a new course nonetheless. This type of “internal evolution” takes place frequently within the Department.

A number of changes have occurred in the philosophy curriculum in the last several years. In addition to the creation of the ethics minor (see above), the Department constructed an “ethics track” within the major. In addition, the Department modified the history of philosophy sequence, changing from a requirement that students take 3 out of 5 courses in the Department’s historical sequence to a requirement that students take 3 of 4. PH302, Medieval Philosophy, was eliminated. In addition, the entire history sequence is now taught only at the 300 level; cross-listing of those courses as 200/300

level courses was eliminated. (See "Appendix Two" for an overview of requirements within the major.) Finally, both minors are now aligned at 18 in terms of the total credit hours required to complete them. Given the retirement of Dr. Jacobs, we will once again be reviewing our internal curriculum this summer (2010). We expect to make several key changes in order to better align our curriculum with the expertise of our faculty and needs of our students. Next year's assessment report will include a review of those changes.

(3) The Learning Story. Explain the typical learning experience provided through your major. How do students learn or encounter experiences leading to fulfilling your learning outcome goals?

It is important to emphasize that we do not require that our majors complete the Philosophy Major by following a formal and rigid sequential curricular structural plan. While there are required courses within the major, these courses (with one exception) need not be taken in a specific sequential order. Given the context within which the Philosophy Department operates, the demand for that kind of "structural plan" is unrealistic. More importantly, given the nature of philosophical activity and philosophical teaching, the demand for a structural plan is *inappropriate*. What this shows is that assessment efforts cannot demand a "one size fits all" approach. Assessment demands must respect disciplinary autonomy, as well as the practical realities of "the situation on the ground." Assessment of philosophy may be a worthy goal, but it must be assessment of *philosophy*. Respect for disciplinary autonomy comes first and assessment tools must be constructed that respect that autonomy. The following makes clear why the demand for a "structural plan" in the Philosophy Major is both impractical and inappropriate.

A structural plan in philosophy is impractical. Students rarely come to Millikin as declared philosophy majors, since few have even heard of this discipline in high school. Students switch to or add philosophy as a major, often during their second or even third year at Millikin, because they recognize the quality of the teaching provided by our faculty, the way philosophical study develops the skill sets essential to any quality educational experience, and because of the power of the questions philosophy forces students to ask and wrestle with, questions that form the heart of a life of meaning and value—one part of Millikin's stated mission "to deliver on the promise of education."¹

In light of the peculiar nature of our discipline and the nature of "recruitment" to our major, we cannot insist on a rigid formal sequential curricular pathway for our majors.

¹ During the 2005-2006 academic year, one senior student declared a major in philosophy *during his senior year*! He had to take courses in the summer in order to complete the major. It is wildly implausible to suppose that he could complete the major by following some structural plan of study. Yet, the fact remains that he was an outstanding student, who produced high quality exemplary work. An electronic copy of his senior thesis is posted on our website (Jordan Snow).

While we might prefer our majors start with PH110 (Basic), then move on to PH213 (Logic), then complete the history sequence in order (PH300, 301, 303 and/or 304), then take PH381 (seminar), and finally end with PH400 (senior thesis), this preference is completely unrealistic. The only situation in which we could realistically expect its implementation would be with those very few incoming freshmen students who declare philosophy as a major during summer orientation and registration. Even with these students, however, we would be limited by the small size of our Department and our faculty's commitment to making substantial contributions to other portions of the university curriculum (e.g., University Studies, the honors program, etc.). In light of these realities on the ground, we simply could not guarantee that the needed courses would be offered with the degree of regularity that would make it possible to implement a rigid formal sequential curricular pathway. So, this kind of "stepping stone" curricular plan is impractical for us to implement.

Fortunately, implementation of a curricular structural plan is also unnecessary. Many of our courses involve a mix of students, both majors and non-majors. Teaching a group of students who are from various backgrounds is always a challenge. However, students who are good at reading, writing, and thinking can succeed in philosophy courses at the upper division level, even if they've never had a philosophy course before. (The same principle underlies the institution's commitment to the viability of IN250 and IN350 courses.) In physics or French it is highly unlikely that a student beginning the major or a student from another discipline could enter an upper level course and succeed. However, in philosophy, first year undergraduate students in PH110 Basic Philosophical Problems and graduate students in graduate school seminars read many of the same texts, e.g., Plato's *Republic*, Descartes' *Meditations*, etc. We regularly have students from history, English, or music who do as well or better than philosophy majors in the same courses. This somewhat peculiar feature of philosophical inquiry and activity explains (and completely justifies) why we do not insist on a formal rigid sequential curricular pathway for our majors. High quality intellectual engagement with philosophical issues and philosophical texts does not require that we follow a stepping stone model.

The only exception to our curricular flexibility is the philosophy capstone course: PH400 Senior Thesis. That course can only be taken during the senior year. In that course, philosophy faculty work one-on-one with each of our senior majors to help them produce some of the best work of their career at Millikin. The student is responsible (in consultation with a faculty adviser) for choosing the topic. Hence, we insist that this particular course come at the end of the student's undergraduate philosophical exploration. We want our students to have exposure to a wide range of philosophical issues, topics, and texts before they select a topic of personal interest for in-depth exploration in their senior theses.

To summarize, philosophy majors do not fulfill a formal sequential curricular plan because such a plan is both impractical for us to implement and unnecessary given the nature of philosophical study.

Students in the Philosophy Major learn to think critically. All members of the Philosophy Department have been recognized as outstanding teachers. Students respond to their philosophy education for three key reasons: (1) philosophy faculty are passionate about the subject matter that they teach, and that passion is contagious; (2) philosophy faculty are rigorous in their expectations, and establish high expectations for their students, encouraging the students to have high expectations for themselves; and (3) philosophy faculty employ an intense, discussion-driven format in which students are engaged, challenged on many of their core beliefs and assumptions, and encouraged to take charge of their own education and their own thinking.

All philosophy faculty employ written forms of evaluation, including in-class essay examinations, take-home essay exams, and papers.

The learning experience provided through the Philosophy Major is strongly interactive in nature. For example, Dr. Jacobs uses group oral presentations in her Aesthetics class because of the nature of the students in the class. With a large number of arts students, she has discovered that they learn well when placed in groups that include one or more philosophy or humanities students and a variety of different art students. Each group presents the material for one day's class reading. They often draw on their training in the arts in using a variety of settings and techniques for presenting the material.

In each of Dr. Jacobs's classes, students write a one-page paper each day on the reading to be covered in that period. This practice helps them focus on the reading at hand and prepares them for a fruitful discussion. They often learn what it is that they don't understand about the reading – always a useful place to begin a discussion. Either a student writing tutor or Dr. Jacobs responds to each paper, but only four are randomly graded throughout the semester. Students also have the option of turning in a "portfolio" of all their daily writing, if they feel that the randomly graded papers do not reflect their true grade for this work.

Similarly, Dr. Money employs written assignments as the primary basis for assessing student learning. Dr. Money has also made extensive use of e-mail communication and the Moodle forum feature to extend class discussions after class, eliciting sophisticated discussion from undergraduates and extending their philosophy education into the world beyond the classroom.

Students are expected to read challenging texts, and philosophy faculty use those texts, and subsequent discussions of those texts, to help students spot the assumptions behind arguments – especially the unstated assumptions that inform a particular

outlook or worldview. The philosophy curriculum is unlike nearly every other in that the texts for freshman students are the same as those for seniors, and indeed for graduate students. Freshmen may read fewer pages than seniors, but the difficulty is in the texts themselves; there are no “beginner” philosophy texts, *per se*.

The Philosophy Department uses all primary texts. These texts raise challenging questions related to Millikin’s core questions: Who am I? How can I know? What should I do? These are essentially philosophical questions, and every philosophy course addresses at least one of them. Students can take away varying levels of understanding, but all are called upon to work with the most profound philosophical writing available, so that from the beginning they can be thinking in the deepest way they can.

As noted above, the fact that philosophy texts lend themselves to different levels of interpretation and understanding allows philosophy faculty to engage students who may be along a varying continuum of intellectual abilities, including non-majors and majors alike. The discussion driven format of philosophy courses exploits the varying degrees of student intellectual abilities for collective benefit – often more advanced students expose less advanced students to central issues and ideas in a way that can be easily understood by the less advanced student. Class discussion is not simply vertical (between students and teacher), but quite often horizontal as well (between students). Some of our most effective learning takes the horizontal form.

The key experiences in the philosophy curriculum, along with encounters with challenging texts (as mentioned above), include intensive engagement with philosophy professors, engagement with fellow students, reflection and digestion of ideas, and presentation of the students’ own ideas in written form. The overall learning experience in the Philosophy Major, then, is one of intellectual engagement (with a great deal of one-on-one engagement outside of class as well), in which students are challenged to think critically about core beliefs and assumptions, and are expected to be able to present critical and creative ideas regarding those core beliefs and assumptions in oral and, especially, written form.

The Philosophy Major requires 30 credits to complete.

The Philosophy Major includes four required courses (12 credits):

- **Philosophy 110, Basic Philosophy.** This course gives students an initial glance at both the kinds of texts they will encounter and the kind of teaching style that informs and characterizes the Philosophy Major.
- **Philosophy 213, Logic.** This course is essential for critical thinking.
- **Philosophy 381, Seminar in Philosophy.** This course gives Philosophy majors (or advanced Philosophy students) a chance to learn in a small setting, usually 12-15 students. It is the most discussion-driven of all Philosophy

courses. Moreover, this course allows students truly to lead the direction of the course. The course goes where students' questions in response to readings take the course. Philosophy faculty also use the course to "rotate in" materials and subjects that are of current interest.

- **Philosophy 400, Senior Thesis.** This independent research paper allows students to pursue in depth a topic of their choosing, and to bring together the research and writing skills that they have acquired over the course of their Philosophy Major at Millikin.

The Philosophy Department also has a history sequence. Students must take three out of the following four courses (9 credits):

- **Philosophy 300, Ancient World Wisdom;**
- **Philosophy 301, Golden Age of Greece;**
- **Philosophy 303, Modern Philosophy;**
- **Philosophy 304, Contemporary Philosophy.**

The Department is committed to facilitating students' understanding of philosophical issues and problems in their historical context, i.e., presenting students with a "history of ideas." Doing so gives philosophy faculty a chance to expose philosophy students to many of the seminal works in philosophy.

In addition, the Department offers a range of electives, many under the umbrella of "value theory": political philosophy, ethical theory and moral issues, meta-ethics, aesthetics, and the like. These elective courses provide philosophy students with a chance to encounter a range of normative issues, and challenge them to think not only in descriptive terms (e.g., what is the case) but also in normative terms (e.g., what *should* be the case). Students are required to take three electives (9 credits).

An overview of the requirements for completion of the Philosophy Major is offered as an appendix to this document (see Appendix Two).

(4) Assessment Methods. Explain your methods and points of data collection for assessing fulfillment of your key learning outcomes, and for assessing effectiveness.

Student intellectual growth is assessed in every class, on every assignment, and in every course. In addition, there is the assessment that comes from the close relationship between philosophy faculty and philosophy majors. Philosophy faculty interact with philosophy majors a great deal, meeting with them to discuss class materials, life issues, and the like. These "advising" moments are also moments of assessment. Philosophy faculty assess each student's character development during his or her four years as a philosophy major at Millikin. Finally, philosophy faculty keep copies of particularly good papers and exams that are shared anonymously with

students who are having trouble understanding and assessing their own growth and learning as philosophy majors.

We believe that given the peculiar nature of our discipline and the nature of “recruitment” to our major, the natural point for formal “data” collection and analysis is PH400, Senior Thesis. At the end of the student’s career, the writing of the senior thesis provides an important key opportunity for assessing the student’s growth and learning over the course of the Philosophy Major. The senior thesis provides us with an opportunity to assess our effectiveness in delivering on each of our key learning goals. There are three “aspects” or “elements” in the development of a senior thesis.

First, philosophy faculty members meet with students over the course of a semester. Early in the semester, these weekly meetings involve students reporting on their progress, trying out various formulations of a central thesis or idea for exploration, finding and locating sources to be used, etc. (Learning Goal 3). Later in the semester, these weekly meetings involve students bouncing arguments and ideas off of the other seniors and faculty, polishing up arguments and ideas, providing feedback to the other students, etc.

Second, students complete a substantial written essay (generally, between 25-30 pages). This essay is the basis for their course grade. We assess the quality of the written work by employment of the “writing rubric for senior thesis” (see Appendix Three) in conjunction with our own intuitive trained judgments regarding the quality of the writing, the difficulty of the subject matter, etc. (Learning Goals 1 and 2).

Finally, each student makes a formal presentation of their senior thesis to philosophy majors and faculty members. We assess the quality of the oral presentation by employment of the “rubric for assessment of oral communication” (see Appendix Four) (Learning Goal 1).

The senior thesis, therefore, provides us with an opportunity to assess student learning in relation to all three of our learning goals. It is, therefore, the artifact that we will collect and analyze.

While we have chosen to focus on the senior thesis, we want to emphasize that we assess student learning (we call it “grading”) on multiple assignments in every class as they work to complete the major. **We assess student learning in every class, on every assignment. In this context, grading is assessing student learning.** The fact that we have assigned each student a grade in each course is already to engage in an extensive assessment of “student performance in all other courses.” For example, one of our Departmental Learning Goals (#2) is: Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize the principles of critical thinking and formal logic in order to produce a sound and valid argument, or to evaluate the soundness and validity of the arguments of others. Each philosophy major must complete PH213, Critical Thinking: Logic. Here,

each student spends an entire semester doing nothing but working on mastering the principles of critical thinking and formal logic and applying them. The grade earned in the course signifies our "assessment of student learning" relative to that specific learning goal. While we also assess this learning goal in reference to the arguments constructed in the student's senior thesis, the point is that our students are assessed on each learning goal continuously in numerous courses as they work to complete the major.

Perhaps an even more powerful illustration of the continuous and pervasive nature of our assessment of student learning can be seen in reference to Departmental Learning Goal #1: Students will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of major concepts and intellectual traditions within the field of philosophy. The following appeared in my letters of recommendation for three philosophy majors who applied to law school during the 2009 fall semester:

I want to emphasize the extent of my familiarity with Kenny's academic work. To this point, I have had Kenny in eight philosophy courses. He has excelled across a wide range of assignments including reading quizzes, oral presentations, in-class exams, take-home essay exams, and research papers. His writing, in particular, is outstanding. His papers and exams are models of analytical clarity and compelling reasoned argumentation. **Across the eight courses he has taken with me to this point, Kenny has written a total of thirty-eight (38) essays of 4-8 pages in length. His average grade on these assignments is an **outstanding 95%**.** Among his better written work to date were his essays in Modern Philosophy, the most difficult upper division course that I teach. Two of his essays for that course focused on Hume's critique of natural theology in the *Dialogues on Natural Religion* and Kant's "Copernican revolution" in philosophy as set forth in the *Critique*; difficult topics to say the least! Kenny demonstrated his digestion of these difficult readings as well as his ability to offer clear analysis and creative evaluations of the central claims made by each thinker. (Letter for Kenny Miller)

Across the six courses he has taken with me to this point, Justin has written a total of twenty-nine (29) essays of 4-8 pages in length. His average grade on these assignments is an excellent **92.93%.** (Letter for Justin Allen)

I want to emphasize the extent of my familiarity with Dustin's academic work. To this point, I have had Dustin as a student in seven of my classes. In each course, Dustin has earned an "A." He has excelled across a wide range of assignments including reading quizzes, oral presentations, in-class exams, take-home essay exams, and research papers. His writing, in

particular, is outstanding. His papers and exams are models of analytical clarity and compelling reasoned argumentation. **Across the seven courses he has taken with me to this point, Dustin has written a total of thirty-two (32) essays of 4-8 pages in length. His average grade on these assignments is an astonishing 95.66%.** (Letter for Dustin Clark)

The point is that this degree of familiarity with our students and the depth of our assessment of their learning are substantial and pervasive. This is the **NORM** in our Department. Thus, it should be abundantly clear that while we have elected to focus on the senior thesis, we assess student learning continuously and rigorously.

(5) Assessment Data

Assessment data on key learning outcomes will be collected each academic year. The “artifacts” to be collected include the following:

1. All majors will submit a copy of their senior thesis. The senior thesis will offer a basis to assess student learning in the Philosophy Major in relation to all three stated learning goals. First, it (along with the oral presentation) will allow us to assess a student’s ability “to express in written and oral form their understanding of major concepts and intellectual traditions within the field of philosophy.” (Goal 1) The presentation of arguments in the writing will allow us to assess the student’s “ability to utilize the principles of critical thinking and formal logic in order to produce a sound and valid argument, or to evaluate the soundness and validity of the arguments of others.” (Goal 2) Finally, the senior thesis and weekly advisory sessions will allow us to assess our student’s ability “to complete research on a philosophy-related topic, analyze objectively the results of their research, and present arguments to support their point of view in a variety of venues. (Goal 3).
2. Philosophy faculty will continue to track the post-graduate placement of our majors. Acceptance into quality postsecondary educational programs is evidence that we are fulfilling our educational mission. (Goals 1, 2, and 3). Information on the post-graduate placement of graduates since 2000 is included in Appendix One.

(6) Analysis of Assessment Results

Eight students completed PH400 during the 2009-2010 academic year. These students were:

- #1
- #2
- #3

- #4
- #5
- #6
- #7
- #8

Assessment of student learning in the Philosophy Major focuses on the following:

- 1) The written senior thesis produced by each graduating philosophy major.
- 2) The oral defense of the senior thesis provided by each graduating philosophy major.
- 3) The post-graduation placement of each graduating philosophy major, if known.

Analysis of assessment results for each key learning outcome goal, with effectiveness measures established on a green-light, yellow-light, red-light scale, occurs for each academic year. We see no reason to reinvent the wheel. We correlate letter grades with this "colored-light" schema. A grade of "A" or "B" correlates to "green." A grade of "C" correlates to "yellow." And a grade of "D" or "F" correlates to "red."

A. Written Senior Thesis

Regarding the written product, the supervising faculty member will generate a brief evaluative summary for each thesis supervised during the academic year (included below). This summary will indicate the name of the student, the title of the senior thesis, the grade earned on the senior thesis, and an indication of the basis for the grade assigned. We employ the "Rubric for Senior Thesis" as a general guideline for grading. (The rubric is included as Appendix Three to this report.) In general, if a student earns an A or B on the senior thesis, this will be taken to indicate a "green light" in terms of assessment of student learning. If a student earns a C, this will be taken to indicate a "yellow" light in terms of assessment. Finally, if a student earns a D or an F, this will be taken to indicate a "red" light in terms of assessment. Finally, any additional information deemed relevant to the assessment of the student's work may be included.

Electronic copies of all senior theses will be obtained and stored by the Chair of the Philosophy Department. In addition, electronic copies of all senior theses will be posted on the Department's webpage. This invites a "public" viewing of our students' work. To see the quality of their work, visit our website!

The data for philosophy seniors completing PH400 during the 200-2009 academic year is provided below.

Student: #1

Thesis Title: "Error Theory and Evolution"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

#1's thesis involves a substantial extension of ideas and essays that he generated in PH381, Seminar in Philosophy (where the focus was on naturalism in ethics) and PH311, Metaethics. The first part of the thesis focuses on laying out the basic components of error theory and defending it from certain key objections or criticisms. The second part of the thesis focuses on providing an evolutionarily grounded explanation for why human beings would evolve to make this sort of pervasive error.

#1 begins with an overview of contemporary error theory, drawing from John Mackie and Richard Joyce. Error theory holds that all moral judgments, though cognitive, are false. It comes to this position by defending both a conceptual and substantive claim. The former, the conceptual claim, is that ordinary moral judgments embody a commitment to a form of objectivity such that moral reasons for acting apply to and are authoritative for all agents, irrespective of their subjective preferences, desires, goals, interests, etc. The latter, the substantive claim, argues that there are no such objective reasons of that kind and, hence, no moral reasons. As such, ordinary moral judgment proceeds on the basis of a presupposition that does not, in fact, obtain. So, for example, the ordinary moral judgment, "It would be wrong for Jim to molest children" purports to ascribe to Jim a reason to refrain from a certain kind of action – namely, molesting children. Error theory holds that this judgment embodies a commitment at the conceptual level to reasons for acting (or, in this case, not acting) that are not a function of the agent's desires, preferences, goals, interests, etc. The judgment describes the application of this sort of reason to Jim. However, since there are no such reasons of that kind, the judgment is false.

After presenting the basic outline of error theory, #1 seeks to defend error theory from certain objections. One prominent objection to error theory (pursued by fellow major #2) is that the error theorist is wrong at the conceptual level: ordinary folks making moral judgments do not mean those moral judgments in a way that requires the invocation of an institutionally transcendent categorical imperative. The critic argues that ordinary folks are often implicitly relativizing their moral judgments to some institutional framework. #1 presents several rejoinders to this sort of criticism, including the fact that "people use moral judgments about other cultures, which could only be possible when we view morality as objective and universal." Another criticism #1 anticipates is that error theorists are too prone to generalize from a very limited sample. So, for example, just because people error theorists know mean moral judgments in objective ways does not mean "the folk" do. Fellow major #2 pursues this line of criticism by employment of empirical experiments that are set up to gauge the way "the folk" mean moral judgments. #1 pursues several lines of response to this criticism, including one that insists on the importance of situational objectivism, and one that would try to rework error theory in a way that it could admit not all moral

judgments are false, while still remaining philosophically interesting. (After all, the view that some moral judgments are false is not very philosophically interesting.)

#1 also reviews and defends an explanation for why we make the error that error theorists accuse us of making when we make moral judgments. Drawing from a range of contemporary philosophers (Joyce, Nichols, Stich, etc.), #1 defends the view that there are plausible explanatory reasons for why agents who make the sort of error in judgment that error theorists believe “the folk” make when they engage in moral judgments might be favored by natural selection. Emphasizing that natural selection selects for “what works” (i.e., in terms of reproductive success) and not truth, #1 argues for a evolutionary-pragmatic explanation for why we would make (and continue to make) false moral judgments.

Overall, #1’s thesis is well organized, well written, well argued. Moreover, the thesis combines a wide range of sources demonstrating a firm grasp of the contemporary metaethical landscape. Finally, his thesis blends both passionate philosophical arguments with a sensitivity to the weaknesses of his own position. A well crafted thesis.

Student: #2

Thesis Title: “The Conceptual Error of Error Theory”

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

#2’s thesis involves a substantial extension of a paper he generated in PH381, Seminar in Philosophy (where the focus was on naturalism in ethics) and an exam essay he generated in PH311, Metaethics. #2 argues that there is a conceptual error in the most widely presented versions of the view in metaethics known as error theory. Error theory holds that all moral judgments, though cognitive, are false. It comes to this position by defending both a conceptual and substantive claim. The former, the conceptual claim, is that ordinary moral judgments embody a commitment to a form of objectivity such that moral reasons for acting apply to and are authoritative for all agents, irrespective of their subjective preferences, desires, goals, interests, etc. The latter, the substantive claim, argues that there are no such objective reasons of that kind and, hence, no moral reasons. As such, ordinary moral judgment proceeds on the basis of a presupposition that does not, in fact, obtain. So, for example, the ordinary moral judgment, “It would be wrong for Jim to molest children” purports to ascribe to Jim a reason to refrain from a certain kind of action – namely, molesting children. Error theory holds that this judgment embodies a commitment at the conceptual level to reasons for acting (or, in this case, not acting) that are not a function of the agent’s desires, preferences, goals, interests, etc. The judgment describes the application of this sort of reason to Jim. However, since there are no such reasons of that kind, the judgment is false.

#2 argues that the conceptual claim by the error theorist is not plausible. His argument turns on two main claims. First, #2 defends the claim that the meaning of a judgment or concept is determined by the way in which it is used by the linguistic community. Here, #2 was influenced by the later Wittgenstein. Second, #2 argues that empirical evidence is relevant to determining how moral concepts (like right, wrong, etc.) are used and that the evidence does not support the error theorist's claim that all moral judgments embody a commitment to objective reasons for acting.

As part of his argument, #2 reviews the distinction Foot (and others) makes between an institutional categorical imperative on the one hand, and an institutionally transcendent categorical imperative on the other hand. It is the latter sort of categorical imperative (or reason for acting) to which the error theorist argues ordinary moral thought is committed. Moreover, if the error theorist is going to maintain that **all** moral judgments are false, then all moral judgments must be committed to institutionally transcendent categorical imperatives as their source or ground. #2 mounts a sustained argument against this conceptual claim by using empirical evidence to suggest that ordinary moral thought means at least some moral judgments to involve institutional categorical imperatives. These moral judgments, then, can be true even if there are no institutionally transcendent categorical imperatives. Hence, contrary to the position defended by error theory, not all moral judgments are false.

The thesis brings together multiple areas of philosophical investigation and reflection including metaethics and philosophy of language. In addition, it serves as the location wherein #2 could combine and then substantially extend some of his prior philosophical interests. Finally, the thesis stands as a compelling example of what our best students are able to produce. It has a central thesis supported by clear arguments, is organized, and is well written grammatically. #2 has always produced outstanding work for us. His senior thesis is no exception.

Student: #3

Thesis Title: "Pascal's Wager: The Problem with Gambling on God"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Roark)

In his senior thesis, Pascal's Wager: The Problem with Gambling on God, #3 introduces a number of convincing objections to Pascal's well-known work defending the rationality of believing in the existence of God. #3 begins by nicely outlining Pascal's argument defending the view that our only rational choice is to 'bet' that God exists. Pascal argues that the benefits of betting on God –assuming God exists- (the gains of heaven) obviously outweigh any benefits of betting against God –assuming God does not exist (the gains of getting to live a life that one desires without a care for eternal judgment). It should be noted that the style of #3's paper is a model for a well done thesis paper. He clearly outlines the position he is considering (along with the assumptions of the author's position he is examining), next he systematically outlines his own position,

finally he argues for his position. This process consumes roughly one-third of #3's paper, but the clearly presented paper structure is worth the cost in terms of space.

The first argument that #3 raises against Pascal's position is the frequently referenced 'many-Gods-argument'. This argument utilizes the idea that there are many possible notions of God and 'betting' on the existence of God won't necessarily be very helpful if a person bets on the wrong God. Thus, the utility that Pascal suggests is found in believing in the existence of God is greatly reducing given the many possible versions of God. #3's primary original contribution to scholarship concerning 'Pascal's Wager' is his argument from Universalist Unitarianism (U.U.). #3 argues that if a person believes in God because of benefits that he or she gets, then the version of God with the most utility-offerings would be a U.U. conception of God. Why? Because under a U.U. conception of God, God judges that *everyone* goes to heaven (no matter what they believe or what they have done). This is extremely important. A U.U. God does not make believing in Him a necessary condition of admittance to heaven. Thus, if one accepts a U.U. version of God, then there is no pragmatic (heaven-based) reason for believing in God at all (because this version of God lets everyone into heaven regardless of belief or action). This argument offered by #3 really is quite novel and a contribution to Pascal scholarship.

Beyond the argument from a U.U. God, #3 explores the distinction between practical rationality (PR) and theoretical rationality (TR). PR is the notion of rationality that covers making choices that are best to meet one's end or goals. For example, if one wants to get to New Orleans from Illinois, she ought to travel south. Traveling south is the choice most likely to meet the goal of getting to New Orleans. TR is the notion of making choices that matches up with the best available evidence. #3 points out that Pascal's argument assumes a notion of PR, but that there are situations wherein a person could be rational by rejecting PR in favor of TR.

#3 ends his paper with a discussion of the moral considerations of Pascal's Wager. #3 raises a number of good questions concerned with the morality of God basing a decision like the judgment of a person's soul on whether the person believed in the existence of the judging God. For example, what if a person had never learned of the 'true God'? Would it be moral for God to dam this person to eternal hell? Presumably it would not. Further, there is something to be made for the case that actions speak louder than words and that a moral God would judge people based upon actions and not beliefs.

Student: #4

Thesis Title: "From Theology to Neurology: Our Evolution as an Intelligent/Social Species and Implications Thereof"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

#4's thesis seeks to bring together a wide range of concepts, issues, and line of thought from a range of areas of inquiry: philosophy, psychology, neurophysiology, and theology. While interconnected interdisciplinary thinking is to be encouraged, one of the dangers of this sort of approach is that it ends up either biting off more than can be chewed, or treats too superficially or quickly concepts or issues deserving of more attention. In places, the thesis runs into these difficulties. If one is going to cover the number of areas and domains #4 tried to cover, the tendency to simplify is almost unavoidable.

The paper is not without its merits. It is clear that #4 has enjoyed investigating a wide range of domains during his time of study here at Millikin. Moreover, some of the items discussed in his thesis have clear implications for (or are clearly relevant to) classic well documented debates within philosophy. One of the more obvious is the issue of whether 'pure reason' can serve as a motive to action. Hume famously answered 'no.' Kant 'yes.' This perennial issue has its contemporary voices as well. The thesis certainly has within it elements that would lend themselves well to a more sustained treatment of this sort of issue. The use of evidence from neurology as well as the case study of Phineas Gage would be well suited for this sort of contextualization. #4's defense of morality as fundamentally about social cognition makes it look as if he defends the Kantian position. However, he acknowledges the need for a link between the rational and the emotional. My understanding is that #4 would propose that there are certain affective-emotional states or capabilities which require a pre-existing affective part of the brain (limbic system) but which are not reducible to that pre-existing affective element. In short a motivated affect or an emergent affect. This is an interesting spin on the classic debate. Unfortunately, it is not pursued in great depth and the reader is left to make the connection on his or her own, rather than being guided by the thesis in the consideration of it.

One of the primary weaknesses of the thesis given its goal and basic orientation was that it did not address explicitly the classic philosophical concern with the "is-ought gap" and the issue of whether one can derive a normative conclusion from a set of purely empirical premises. It is not clear why the fact that our brain has evolved in a certain way (with certain capabilities, functions, etc.) entails (or even supports) the normative claim that continued development in a certain direction "ought to be" (or is 'good,' 'right,' 'desirable,' etc.).

Student: #5

Thesis Title: "Rights Based Utilitarianism"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Roark)

In his, Rights Based Utilitarianism #5 offers a conceptual model of how individuals 'normally conceptualize morality'. Traditional utilitarian accounts of morality suggests

that we ought to do the action which maximizes the social good or utility, but #5 puts a spin on this traditional utilitarian account by suggesting instead that, "one should act to maximize net benefit insofar as one does not violate the natural rights of others". After spelling out his revised utilitarian proviso, #5 then takes time to clarify his understanding of natural rights. This clarification of natural rights includes discussions of: the content of natural rights, the grounding of rights, the relation between free will and natural rights, and the impact of positive and negative liberties and natural rights. #5 then engages in an interesting and productive discussions concerning the relation between rights based utilitarianism and Rawls's 'veil of ignorance'. The 'veil of ignorance', #5 argues, is a plausible notion and supports the idea that people would, under principles of justice, accept rights based utilitarianism, as opposed to a more typical account of utilitarianism.

One substantive concern with the paper at this point can be traced back to the thesis statement. #5 had claimed that he is not pursuing any normative claims about 'how people should engage in moral reasoning'. However, some of #5's discussion seems to be concerned chiefly with defending (as opposed to merely articulating) a particular conception of morality. To be clear, #5's defense of various normative claims is well-presented and plausible. But his work seems to go beyond the mere presentation of a conceptual model. This is not a criticism of the depth that #5 covers, only the original presentation of what would be covered throughout the paper.

#5 then turns his attention to re-evaluating what the notion of 'net benefit' ought to mean to utilitarian analysis. (Again, this is another place in the paper where #5 goes beyond a mere conceptual model and defends normative claims). #5 has some particularly interesting and helpful things to say about the notion of 'health' as opposed to well-being. The paper then takes the direction of meta-ethics. #5 offers a sharp and creative interpretation of his rights based utilitarianism as a type of non-cognitive constructivism. After his discussion of metaethics, #5 seems to retreat a bit from his original thesis statement. His primary contribution now, which he has plausibly offered, is to 'provide a worthwhile addition to the field of utilitarianism'. No longer is any mention made of offering a conceptual model of how individuals normally conceptualize morality.

Student: #6

Thesis Title: "The Value of Fiction"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

Of all the theses that I supervised this year, this thesis stands as the thesis that takes its author the furthest from his comfort zone (analytical reflection on propositions) while simultaneously keeping him anchored deeply in his comfort zone (that analytical reflection will defend comics!). When #6 first came to me to get some advice about his project, I was not sure what he intended to do. What was apparent, however, was his

very explicit desire to try and write a more analytical type of thesis. The impulse to write an analytical thesis was not #6's natural impulse; but he recognized it and intentionally decided to do it anyway. This sort of creative risk-taking is something we want to encourage in our students.

The thesis is in large part focused on a set of questions that can be raised about propositions generally, and moral propositions specifically. The thesis focuses on the issues raised by asking the following sorts of questions:

1. Is the proposition representational?
2. Is belief the only way to accept a representational proposition?
3. If belief is not required in order to accept a representational proposition, what other sources of acceptance are there?

#6 argues that these questions lie at the core of the metaethical dispute between moral realists and moral error theorists. #6 sets out to explore a combination in which the proposition is representational and accepted, but not believed. While this may seem to be in line with error theory, #6 argues that a similar approach is endorsed in science, a domain generally acknowledged by error theorists as realistic, particularly in its use of models. For example, the scientific proposition that "an atom is a central nucleolus regularly orbited by electrons" is (a) representational, (b) false (hence not to be accepted because it is believed), and (c) worthy of acceptance because of the contribution that it makes to "continuing the story" and, thereby, encouraging wonder, inquiry, investigation, creativity, etc.

#6 then argues for an extension of his framework's application to philosophical activity itself. #6 argues that we can profitably view philosophical activity as generating propositions that are representational, false and hence not to be believed, but are nonetheless worthy of acceptance. #6 argues that we should abandon an orientation under which philosophical activity is understood primarily as truth-stating. Instead, philosophical propositions, while admittedly representational, can be accepted because of the way in which they encourage wonder, inquiry, imagination, and creativity. In short, when we encounter a philosophical proposition like "Physical objects exist independently of any perceiver," we should (a) acknowledge that the proposition is representational, but (b) resist the temptation to think that acceptance of the proposition turns on believing it (and hence on truth). Instead, if we should accept the proposition, it is because the proposition advances values such as wonder, inquiry, imagination, and creativity. Truth and, hence, philosophical victory is beside the point; telling the story and the effects of doing so is the point.

Finally, #6 extends this to his larger JMS project by using it as the basis for defending the value of fiction generally, and comics specifically. Thus, the proposition "Superman is vulnerable to kryptonite" is (a) representational, (b) false (hence not to be accepted because it is believed), and (c) worthy of acceptance (if it is) because of the

contribution that it makes to “continuing the story” and, thereby, encouraging wonder, inquiry, investigation, creativity, etc.

#6 worked very hard on the project. He worked hard to incorporate his philosophy thesis into his larger James Millikin Scholar project. In order to do this, he was extremely disciplined in his work. We met regularly (once every two weeks) to review drafts, talk about concepts and ideas, etc. His commitment and discipline paid off with a strong thesis.

Student: #7

Thesis Title: “Redefining God: An Attempt to Understand God in Modern Times”

Grade: ■ (Yellow Light) (Dr. Roark)

#7, in his senior thesis Redefining God, argues that a new definition of God should accompany modern scientific and theoretical advancements. At the center of these advances, #7 argues, is a better understanding of our universe. Along these lines, #7 sets out and explains the string-theory inspired eleven dimensional theory of the universe. The tenth and eleven dimensions are most curious as #7 suggests that we ‘know nothing about them’, but some scientists suspects that they exists because their existence enables the mathematics involved in demonstrating string theory to be true. Consistent with this eleven dimensional view of the universe, #7 offers a traditional definition of God, that being God is: omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. #7 makes the case that if God is omnipotent then God must be an eleventh dimensional being. And if God is an eleven dimensional being then our knowledge of God is extremely limited, since we essentially know nothing about the eleventh dimension. One query here that is worth making that would have been more helpful for #7 to explore is the idea of God as an eleven dimensional being using His power to make himself know as a being that humans can more readily understand. If God is all-powerful then one element of this omnipotence would be the ability to manifest Himself in ways that are comprehensible to humans. #7 argues that the eleventh dimension aspect of God make it, ‘impossible for us to fully comprehend God’, but if God is all-powerful it seems at least possible that He uses his power to manifest His being and comprehension thereof to human beings. #7 makes some interesting points about the limits of human cognition in being able to grasp and distinguish an eleventh dimensional God from say a tenth dimensional God. Further, this epistemic failing potentially leads humans into epistemic uncertainty in ever being able to identify the ‘true God’ from an imposter, or lesser, God lacking omnipotence. This is a fair point and one that has been introduced in literature surrounding the philosophy of religion before. But a similar reply to one offered above can be given, that being: wouldn’t a truly omnipotent being have some way of offering a person epistemic certainty of His identity? Perhaps not, but this is one area for further exploration for #7.

#7 then pursues some commonly explored 'contradictions of God'. For instance, #7 considers the infamous puzzle asking if it is possible for God to create a rock so big that He cannot lift it. Whatever answer is given to this question seems as if a limitation of God's power is stated. But how can this be if God is omnipotent? #7 nicely uses his previous treatment of the eleven dimensions to address this question. The suggestion made by #7 is that an eleven dimension being God might have a different 'rulebook' by which to play and that it might simply be that case that what appears a contradiction to humans is a real possibility for God. #7 then considers other paradoxes involving free will and the problem of evil.

One additional point of inquiry that could have been explored is the greater epistemic and metaphysical significance in respect to human psychology of a God who, as an eleventh dimensional being can at will, 'change the rules of the game'. If God can simply transcend the laws of contradiction at will and presumably any other 'law' of logic, then while we may be in awe of God we have no hope of comprehending Him. Humans cannot understand things that fall outside the basic laws of logic. And if we cannot understand God, then it seems to be fruitless and counterproductive to worship or try to answer questions like 'what would God do'? A being that can be ANYTHING without regard to any regularity or logical structure is likely in our minds NOTHING. To be clear this is not a point about the existence of God, but instead a point about the role that the God #7 presents can potentially play in our unique human psychology and epistemic position. This role, considering the eleventh dimension picture of God that #7 puts forward, could have been explored at greater length.

Student: #8

Thesis Title: "Rethinking Justice: Naturalism's Solution to America's Prison Problem"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

The thesis draws indirectly and directly from some of the issues and concepts that we discussed as part of PH381, Seminar in Philosophy (naturalism in ethics). In the thesis, #8 exploits what #8 takes to be certain key elements of philosophical ethical naturalism as the basis for a sustained criticism of the approach that tends to dominate the U.S. cultural perspective on punishment: retribution.

Drawing from the work of Shaun Nichols, #8 defends a naturalistic account of moral judgment and reasoning under which moral judgment is the product of both a normative theory (generally taught by culture) and an affective mechanism (generally thought to be innate and favored by natural selection). #8 grounds this account in historical figures like David Hume as well as contemporary philosophers like Nichols. With this as the framework, #8 then argues for a distinction between criminals who are affectively normal but working with a defective normative theory on the one hand, and criminals who are affectively defective (e.g., sociopaths). This distinction and the

naturalistic framework that contextualizes underlies #8's primary thesis: namely, that the U.S. should move away from a retributive theory of punishment toward a rehabilitative model. The vast majority of criminals are not affectively defective; hence, their crimes (wrong actions) are the result of an inappropriate or incorrect normative theory intersecting with the normal affective mechanisms. Correcting the normative theory would then "liberate" the affective mechanism to fire in the "moral" way. There are, of course, some criminals with defective affective mechanisms. Until we reach the point in time where we can modify the affective mechanism (e.g., via drugs, surgery, etc.) so as to "normalize" it, we must deter these individuals from committing further crimes.

Thus, the crux of the thesis is that the rehabilitative model should be embraced because it addresses the underlying causes of non-compliance (e.g., defective normative theories) in populations that could otherwise be contributing members of society. Those who are not capable of rehabilitation (e.g., sociopaths, due to defective affective mechanisms) can be isolated (or put to uses for which they can be trusted, etc.). Thus, the heart of #8's view is that the causes of non-compliance are internal to individuals: defective affective responses or defective normative theories. The former (absent new technologies) justify deterrence; the latter demand rehabilitative efforts.

The thesis is clear. #8 carries it out with a clear structure, excellent clear writing, and compelling argumentation. The thesis does precisely what we want students to do: take an existing area of interest, perhaps one that they have worked on previously, and significantly and substantially extend it.

B. Oral Defense of Thesis

All senior philosophy majors present an oral defense of their senior thesis. Their oral defense is assessed using the "Rubric for Assessment of Oral Communication," provided in Appendix Four to this report. The rubric provides for an available total point range of between 55 and 11. A total score of 34-55 will indicate a green light regarding assessment. A total score of 23-33 will indicate a yellow light regarding assessment. Finally, a total score of 11-22 will indicate a red light regarding assessment. The original assessment sheets will be stored by the Chair of the Philosophy Department.

The data for philosophy seniors graduating during the 2009-2010 academic year is provided below.

Student: #1

Total Score on Rubric: 52.5, 52

Color-Code: Green

Student: #2

Total Score on Rubric: 55.5, 53

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #3

Total Score on Rubric: 53, 54

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #4

Total Score on Rubric: 44, 49.5

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #5

Total Score on Rubric: 52.5, 53

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #6

Total Score on Rubric: 53, 54

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #7

Total Score on Rubric: 39.5, 41.5

Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #8

Total Score on Rubric: 55, 55

Color-Code: **Green**

C. Post-Graduation Placement (If Known)

Our report will indicate the post-graduation placement of our graduating seniors, if known. This information is also posted on our website and is updated as new information becomes available.

Our full placement record (as known to us) since 2000 can be found in Appendix One. However, we believe it important to emphasize in the body of this report our incredible success in this regard. Philosophy tends to attract students who are committed to the life of the mind. Accordingly, most of our graduating majors eventually pursue further educational opportunities. We have graduated a total of 48 philosophy majors over the past 10 years. **Amazingly, these majors have been accepted into and/or completed a total of 35 programs at the level of M.A. or above (including J.D.).** The range of areas within which our majors find success is impressive. A sense of the post-graduation educational accomplishments of our majors can be gleaned from consideration of the following:

- Our majors have been accepted into and/or completed Ph.D. programs in philosophy.
- Our majors have been accepted into and/or completed M.A. programs in philosophy.
- Our majors have been accepted into and/or completed Ph.D. programs in fields other than philosophy (e.g., political science)
- Our majors have been accepted into and/or completed M.A. programs in fields other than philosophy (e.g., experimental psychology, chemistry, health administration, French, etc.)
- Our majors have been accepted into and/or completed J.D. programs.

Acceptance into M.A., J.D., and Ph.D. programs provides compelling **external** evidence and validation of student learning in the philosophy major. Moreover, this evidence shows a consistent trend line over time: exceptional performance by our students over a decade. We believe this is compelling evidence that our *program* is vibrant and delivering on the promise of education. Student learning in the philosophy program is strong and demonstrable.

D. Additional Evidence of Student Learning in the Philosophy Major

Another source of evidence for student learning in the philosophy major is the outstanding performance over the past four years of philosophy majors who have chosen to participate in the Moot Court competition that is held each spring as part of the Model Illinois Government simulation in Springfield, Illinois. Universities and colleges of all sorts (four year public, four year private, community colleges, etc.) from all over Illinois send teams to the competition. The simulation is educational in the best and fullest sense of the word. For the six to seven weeks leading up to the competition, Dr. Money meets with participating students three to four hours per week, typically in the evenings. During these meetings, the “closed brief” materials are collectively analyzed. In addition, students work on the formulation of arguments representing both sides of the case, practice oral delivery of those arguments, and practice fielding questions from justices. Many of Millikin’s core educational skills are facilitated in this practical simulation: critical and ethical reasoning, oral communication skills, and collaborative learning, among others. This is a paradigmatic example of the “theory-practice” model endorsed by Millikin. Philosophy majors have played a substantial and active role in the Moot Court program over the past four years (coinciding with Dr. Money’s service as faculty advisor). Consider:

- At the 2009-10 competition, Millikin teams took **first** and **second** place in the competition, having to face each other in the final round of competition. Two of the four students were philosophy majors: Justin Allen and Kenny Miller. The team of Allen and Miller took first place. In addition, Caitlin Harriman was honored as “most outstanding attorney.”

- At the 2008-09 competition, Millikin teams took **first** and **second** place in the competition, having to face each other in the final round of competition. Two of the four students were philosophy majors: Justin Allen and Kenny Miller. The team of Allen and Miller took first place. In addition, Justin was honored as “most outstanding attorney.”
- At the 2007-08 competition, Millikin teams took **first** and **third** place. Both attorneys on the first place team were philosophy majors: Dustin Clark and Kenny Miller.
- At the 2006-07 competition, Millikin teams took **second** and **third** place. Two of the four attorneys were philosophy majors: Justin Allen and Dustin Clark.
- At the 2005-06 competition, a Millikin team took **third** place. Both students on that team were philosophy majors: Nichole Johnson and Gregg Lagger.
- At the 2004-05 competition, Millikin’s two teams took **first** and **second** place in the competition, having to face each other in the final round of competition. Three of the four students on those teams were philosophy majors: Gregg Lagger, Nichole Johnson, and Colleen Cunningham.

The success of our students as judged by external evaluators at the Moot Court competition, including faculty from other institutions as well as attorneys and law students, is clear external evidence and validation of the quality of our program.

Yet another source of evidence for student learning in the philosophy major is the outstanding performance of philosophy majors at HURF (Humanities Undergraduate Research Forum). HURF began in 2000 and was held for four consecutive years: 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003. It was then discontinued until this past spring (2008), when it was reborn with renewed energy and commitment from humanities faculty. An independent screening committee comprised of one faculty member from each of the humanities disciplines evaluates HURF submissions. **Of the seven HURFs held to date, philosophy majors have been awarded top prize in five, second prize in two, and third prize in one.** Philosophy majors awarded recognition at HURF include:

- Adam Moderow, “Shooting the Moon” (2010, first place).
- McKenzie VanBeest, “The Identity of One: Personal Identity in Science Fiction” (2010, second place).
- Klay Baynar, “Nietzsche on the Values of Religion” (2009, first place).
- Tom Fowle, “Deterministic Utilitarianism” (2009, third place)
- Dustin Clark, “Nietzsche’s Metaphysical Error” (2008, first place).
- Katherine Guin, “Establishing Values: Nietzsche and the Relationship of Truth to Values” (2003, first place).
- Robert Lininger, “Passion and Paradox: An Investigation of Kierkegaard’s View of Faith” (2002, second place).
- Christopher Wood, “The Ontological Argument: 1000 Years of Debate” (2001, first place).

The evaluative judgments of the independent screening committee provide yet another external validation of student learning in the philosophy major.

Both Moot Court and HURF provide compelling external evidence and validation of student learning in the philosophy major. Moreover, this evidence shows a consistent trend line over time: exceptional performance by our students. We believe this is compelling evidence that our program is vibrant and delivering on the promise of education. Student learning in the philosophy program is strong and demonstrable.

(7) Trends and Improvement Plans

The Philosophy Department is pleased with the results in our fourth year of formal assessment.

All eight of our seniors (100%) were assessed in the “green” for their oral defense of their senior thesis. The data reveals consistently high performance by our majors and is evidence that the philosophy program is strong. The data we have collected over the past four years reveals a consistency in the oral competencies of our students. We attribute this primarily to the intensely discussion-driven format of our courses, a format that encourage and rewards student engagement and student contributions. Given our emphasis on this pedagogical style, it is not a surprise that our majors are adept at communicating their views orally. They essentially receive the opportunity to engage in oral communication each and every class meeting!

Seven of our eight seniors (88%) were assessed in the “green” for their written senior thesis. The data reveals consistently high performance by our majors and is evidence that the philosophy program is strong. The single instance we had of a student’s thesis being assessed in the “yellow” category is largely a function of the degree of effort put into the thesis by the student, and does not in any way reflect negatively on the philosophy *program* itself. If we were to see a consistent and protracted pattern of yellow and red, this would give us pause for concern. In the absence of any such pattern and in light of the overall performance of our majors (in terms of their written work, oral defense, post-graduation placement, and superior performance as judged by external evaluators), we are confident that student learning in the philosophy major is strong.

Given these results and the fact that this is our fourth year of data collection for formal assessment purposes, we do not anticipate making any changes in our program as a result of our assessment review. We are extremely pleased with the performance of our students and we continue to believe that our program facilitates the intellectual growth and development of the critical thinking skills that are essential to delivering on “the promise of education.” The high quality work produced by our students is compelling evidence in support of this claim.

Much is made of the need to “close the loop” in assessment. While it is important to work to ensure that the information gained by assessment makes a meaningful impact on Department pedagogy and teaching practices, it is a mistake to assume that effective use of assessment information can only be demonstrated if review of assessment results in **changes** to curriculum and/or pedagogy. We reject this assumption. If analysis and review of assessment data reveal positive student learning achievements, then there is no reason to change what is clearly working. We use assessment; it is simply that the results have confirmed our strategy and approach in terms of curriculum and/or pedagogy. Absent **evidence** presented by others to us that we are in need of changing our curriculum and pedagogy, we will not undertake action to change what, in our considered judgment—judgment informed by being trained in philosophy, interacting daily with our students, grading numerous assignments, etc.—is clearly working. The members of the Department are ready to listen to those who have **evidence** that our pedagogy/curriculum could be improved. In the absence of that evidence, however, no changes will be made. If no reasons whatsoever are given for why we should change pedagogy and/or curriculum, and if all evidence points to the success of our students in terms of learning and achievement (Does anyone have evidence to the contrary? If so, then present it to us.), then the loop is closed by continuing with our tried and true approach. Our assessment efforts to date have revealed no issues or concerns that would justify instituting changes in our pedagogy/curriculum.

APPENDIX ONE: POST-GRADUATE INFORMATION ON RECENTLY GRADUATED MAJORS

Philosophy tends to attract students who are committed to the life of the mind. Accordingly, most of our graduating majors eventually pursue further educational opportunities. We have graduated a total of 48 philosophy majors over the past 11 years. **These majors have been accepted into and/or completed a total of 35 programs at the level of M.A. or above (including J.D.).**

The following list provides information regarding the post-graduate activities of each of our graduating majors over the last 11 years. Taken as a whole, this information clearly demonstrates an exceptional post-graduate success rate for our majors. It also demonstrates the ability of our faculty members to attract and retain high quality students, and their ability to grow and maintain a vibrant and essential major. In light of the totality of the circumstances (i.e., the nature of our discipline, the nature of our institution, the size of our Department, etc.), our trend line is extremely positive.

2010: **Eight** Graduating Seniors

Justin Allen (2010): Washington University Law School, St. Louis

Dustin Clark (2010): working for a year, retaking LSAT, law school following year (was accepted at Cardoza Law School, NYC, but decided not to attend)

Khris Dunard (2010): John Marshall Law School, Chicago

Gordon Gilmore (2010): plans unknown

Kenny Miller (2010): University of Colorado Law School, Boulder

Adam Moderow (2010): plans unknown

Dan Nolan (2010): plans unknown

Anna Stenzel-Kuehn (2010): plans unknown

2009: **Three** Graduating Seniors

Jessica Colebar (2009): plans unknown

Tommy Fowle (2009): plans unknown

Kenny Oonyu (2009): plans unknown

2008: **Four** Graduating Seniors

Ali Aliabadi (2008): Ross Medical School

██████████ (2008): applying to graduate school in chemistry (2010)

Gregg Lager (2008): John Marshall Law School, Chicago.

Giuliana Selvaggio (2008): plans unknown

2007: **Seven** Graduating Seniors

Bjorn Bollig (2007): Director of Christian Education, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Downers Grove, Illinois.

Colleen Cunningham (2007): State-wide coordinator for Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty; accepted and attending University of Chicago's Liberal Studies MA program (2010)

Mark Fredricksen (2007): plans unknown

Kyle Fritz (2007): Ph. D. program in philosophy, University of Florida (starting fall 2008); Assistant Editor for Human Kinetics' Scientific, Technical, and Medical Division, Champaign, Illinois; Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Florida (starting fall 2008).

Colette Gortowski (2007): Teaching at the Wuhan Yucai Primary School in China.

Nichole Johnson (2007): Attending University of Iowa, College of Law.

Cole Pezley (2007): Performing music, Chicago.

2006: **Five** Graduating Seniors

Corey Bechtel (2006): Ph.D. in Political Science, Purdue University (starting fall 2008); MA in International Studies (with concentration in International Politics), Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver.

Ashley Goodson (2006): Peace Corp (working in Senegal, West Africa); Indiana University, MA program in social work

Stephanie Janecke (2006): Southern Illinois University Law School.

Shaun Miller (2006): University of Houston, MA program in philosophy.

Jordan Snow (2006): CT Corporation, component of Walters-Kluwer, Springfield; accepted and attending University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Public Planning.

2005: **Six** Graduating Seniors

Erika Cornelius (2005): Ph.D. program in history, Purdue University (starting fall 2007). MA in Political Science, Eastern Illinois University, where she received an Award of Excellence for her thesis, "Unilateral Executive Power: Bush Push or Congressional Cave?"

Nick Curry (2005): St. John's College, M.A. in Asian Philosophy.

Zach Godsil (2005): Web Developer, Archer Daniels Midland, Decatur

Nick McLenighan (2005): Northern Illinois University, MA program in Philosophy.

Jessica Revak (2005): Operations Manager at White Lodging Services; Western Illinois University, MA program in Experimental Psychology.

Amanda Russell (2005): University of Iowa, Dual MA programs in Health Administration and Public Health where she was recipient of The John and Wendy Boardman/Amenity Foundation Exceeding Expectations Scholarship.

2004: **Five** Graduating Seniors

Kim Keplar (2004): Working in St. Louis area. Was accepted to the MA program in philosophy at the University of Missouri Saint-Louis, but declined to attend.

Danielle LaSusa (2004): Temple University, Ph.D. program in philosophy.

Louis Manetti (2004): Chicago-Kent Law School, where he was awarded the first Dolores K. Hanna Trademark Prize. The prize was established last year by the law firm of Bell, Boyd & Lloyd. Awarded at the end of the school year to a Chicago-Kent student based on outstanding performance in an intellectual property course, recipients are selected by intellectual property law Chicago-Kent faculty.

Paul Scherschel (2004): Associate Director of Major Gifts, Millikin University; Program Specialist with the Office of the Speaker in the Illinois House of Representatives, Springfield; State Service Representative/Writer with the Governor's Office of Citizens Assistance, Springfield.

Kelli Willis (2004, Dec.): Working on organic farms in California.

2003: **Three** Graduating Seniors

Jon Bassford (2003): Ohio Northern Law School.

Katherine Guin (2003): Florida State University, Ph.D. program in philosophy.

Meghan Haddad-Null (2003): Case Western Reserve University for graduate study in French.

2002: **Four** Graduating Seniors

Rob Lininger (2002): University of Illinois, MA program in journalism OR Marquette University, MA program in public relations and advertising. Completed a M.A. in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the Institute for Labor and Industry Relations, University of Illinois; Visiting Assistant Director of Student Development at Campus Recreations, University of Illinois; currently working in human resources, University of Illinois; currently in the process of applying to several masters programs in communication and education (Depaul, Loyola).

Carrie Malone (2002): Louisiana State University, Ph.D. program in psychology.

Jason Maynard (2002): Western Michigan University, MA program in philosophy; accepted into another MA program in religious studies at WMU (2009)

Jace Hoppes (2002): Dallas and Company, Champaign, IL

2001: **One** Graduating Senior

Chris Wood (2001): University of Kansas, Ph.D. program in philosophy.

2000: **Two** Graduating Seniors

Aaron Margolis (2000): Washington University School of Law. University of Chicago, M.A. Program in Social Science. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, M.A. in Israeli Politics and Society.

Michiko Tani (2000): Lewis and Clark Law School (Portland, Oregon).

APPENDIX TWO: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

Major in Philosophy

A major consists of a minimum of 30 credits and leads to the B.A. degree. The following courses are required:

PH 110, Basic Philosophical Problems
PH 213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH 381, Seminar in Philosophy
PH 400, Senior Thesis

Plus three of the following courses:

PH 300, Ancient World Wisdom
PH 301, The Golden Age of Greece
PH 303, The Modern World (17th-18th centuries)
PH 304, The Contemporary World of Philosophy (19th-21st centuries)

In addition, the philosophy major must take at least nine credits of electives within the Department.

Ethics Track within the Philosophy Major

Philosophy offers an “ethics track” within the philosophy major. The ethics track reinforces and substantially extends Millikin’s emphasis on ethical reasoning and issues of social justice. A student seeking to complete the ethics track within the philosophy major must complete 30 credits. The following courses are required:

PH 110, Basic Philosophical Problems
PH 211, Ethical Theory and Moral Issues
PH 213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH 215, Business Ethics
PH 217, Bioethics
PH 219, Environmental Ethics
PH 300, Ancient World Wisdom or PH301, Golden Age of Greece
PH 305, Philosophy of Law or PH310, Political Philosophy or PH311, Metaethics
PH 400, Senior Thesis
Plus one elective 300-level philosophy courses

Pre-Law Track within the Philosophy Major

Philosophy also offers a “pre-law track” within the philosophy major. According to the American Bar Association, after physics the major with the highest percentage of acceptance into ABA approved law schools is philosophy. We have developed a track within our philosophy major to provide students with the courses that emphasize the skills and the knowledge content that will make it both likely that they will get into law school and that they will succeed both there and later as lawyers.

The pre-law track of the philosophy major will consist of a minimum of 30 credits and leads to the B. A. degree. The following courses are required:

PH 110, Basic Philosophical Problems
PH 211, Ethical Theory and Moral Issues
PH 213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH 301, Golden Age of Greece or PH 311 Metaethics
PH 305, Philosophy of Law
PH 310, Political Philosophy
PH 400, Senior Thesis
Plus 3 elective courses from among any philosophy courses, PO 234 Civil Liberties, or PO 330 Constitutional Law.

Minors in Philosophy

A student seeking a philosophy minor is required to complete 18 credits. The student can elect to complete either the standard philosophy minor (“philosophy minor”) or the philosophy ethics minor (“ethics minor”). The standard philosophy minor emphasizes the history of philosophy. The ethics minor emphasizes ethical reasoning, the understanding of ethical theory, and the application of ethical theory to specific domains (e.g., business, medicine, the environment, politics, etc.). Both minors are described below.

Philosophy Minor

A student seeking the philosophy minor is required to complete 18 credits. 9 credits must come from among the following courses in the history of philosophy:

PH 300, Ancient World Wisdom
PH 301, Golden Age of Greece
PH 303, Modern Philosophy (16th-18th centuries)
PH 304, Contemporary Philosophy (19th-21st centuries)

In addition, the student must complete 9 credits of electives in philosophy.

Ethics Minor

A student seeking the ethics minor is required to complete 18 credits. The following course is required:

PH 211, Ethical Theory and Moral Issues (3 credits)

Two of the following “applied ethics” courses are also required:

PH 215, Business Ethics

PH 217, Bioethics
PH 219, Environmental Ethics

In addition, the student must take nine credits from among the following courses:

Any additional applied ethics course offered by the Philosophy Department (i.e., PH215, PH217, or PH219)

PH 301, Golden Age of Greece

PH 305, Philosophy of Law

PH 310, Political Philosophy

PH 311, Metaethics

PH 381, Seminar in Philosophy (with appropriate content and approval of the Chair)

Any one course outside the Philosophy Department focusing on ethics, including: CO 107, Argument and Social Issues; CO 308, Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression; SO 325, Social Work Ethics; BI 414, The Human Side of Medicine; or another course in ethics outside the Department and approved by the Chair of the Philosophy Department.

APPENDIX THREE: RUBRICS

“Rubric for Senior Theses”

The purpose of the Philosophy Major is stated in three Philosophy Department goals:

- Department Goal 1: Students will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of major concepts and intellectual traditions within the field of philosophy.
- Department Goal 2: Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize the principles of critical thinking and formal logic in order to produce a sound and valid argument, or to evaluate the soundness and validity of the arguments of others.
- Department Goal 3: Students will demonstrate their ability to complete research on a philosophy-related topic, analyze objectively the results of their research, and present arguments to support their point of view in a variety of venues.

The following rubric connects our three learning goals to our assessment of the senior thesis, completion of which is a requirement for all majors.

A: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning an “A” grade should meet the following criteria of assessment:

Presentation Goal 1	Very few grammatical errors or misspellings, if any.	
	Sentence structure is appropriately complex.	
	Vocabulary is used correctly. Work reflects a college level use of words and understanding of their meanings.	
Clarity Goal 1	Each sentence clearly expresses an idea.	
	Each paragraph forms a coherent whole. Paragraphs do not include several unrelated sentences without any overarching structure.	
	The logic used in the analysis is explicitly stated or clearly implied.	
	The overall structure and organization of the introduction and the analysis is appropriate, logical and coherent. The organization adds to the strength of the arguments being presented.	
Quality Goals 1, 2, 3	Analysis reflects a high level of integration of information from multiple questions and multiple sources.	
	Analysis reflects consideration of multiple causes and	

	alternative explanations, while maintaining a clear focus on the explanations utilized.	
	In addition to there being no flaws in the reasoning presented, it is also clear that the most effective arguments are being made. The arguments being presented are compelling.	
	The analysis elicits substantive questions regarding your interpretation.	

B: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning a “B” grade should meet the following criteria of assessment:

Presentation Goal 1	Few grammatical errors or misspellings.	
	Overall, sentence structure is appropriately complex, incorrect sentence structures occur rarely.	
	Vocabulary is used correctly. Overall, work reflects a college level use of words and understanding of their meanings. Occasional incorrect use of vocabulary.	
Clarity Goal 1	Overall, each sentence expresses an idea.	
	Overall, each paragraph forms a coherent whole. Level of coherence is varied. Paragraphs may include some unrelated sentences.	
	The logic used in the analysis is generally clear.	
	The overall structure and organization of the introduction and the analysis is appropriate, logical and coherent.	
Quality Goals 1, 2, 3	Analysis reflects integration of information from multiple questions and multiple sources.	
	Analysis occasionally reflects consideration of multiple causes and alternative explanations. A clear focus on the explanations utilized is generally present.	
	There are no glaring flaws in the reasoning presented. Effective arguments are being made.	

C: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning a “C” grade should meet the following criteria of assessment:

Presentation Goal 1	Some grammatical errors or misspellings.	
	Occasionally sentence structure is appropriately complex. Simplistic sentence structures are used. Common errors in sentences such as run-on sentences occur.	
	Some vocabulary is used correctly. Work minimally reflects a college level use of words and understanding of their meanings. Frequent use of simplistic vocabulary.	
Clarity Goal 1	More sentences clearly express ideas than do not. Rambling sentences or unclear structure occurs.	
	Level of coherence in paragraphs is varied. Paragraphs may include some unrelated sentences. Paragraphs may be too long or too short.	
	The logic used in the analysis is occasionally clear.	
	The overall structure and organization of the introduction and the analysis reflects some logic and coherence.	
Quality Goals 1, 2, 3	Analysis reflects occasional integration of information from multiple questions and sources.	
	Analysis rarely reflects consideration of multiple causes and alternative explanations. Occasional clear focus on the explanations utilized present.	
	There are few glaring flaws in the reasoning presented. Occasional effective arguments are being made.	

D: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning a “D” grade should meet the following criteria of assessment:

Presentation Goal 1	Grammatical errors or misspellings occur, penalties for affect final grade.	
	Sentence structure is rarely complex. Simplistic sentence structures are used. Common errors in sentences such as run-on sentences occur. Non-sentences occur occasionally.	
	Minimal appropriate use of the language. Work only rarely reflects a college level use of words and understanding of their meanings. Frequent use of simplistic vocabulary. When sophisticated vocabulary appears, it is often incorrect.	
Clarity Goal 1	Sentences occasionally clearly express ideas. Rambling sentences or unclear structure occurs.	
	Low levels of coherence in paragraphs. Paragraphs frequently include some unrelated sentences. Paragraphs may be too	

	long or too short.	
	The logic used in the analysis is rarely clear.	
	Structure and organization of the introduction and the analysis do not reflect logic and coherence, they are simply strung together.	
Quality Goals 1, 2, 3	Analysis reflects little or no integration of information from multiple questions or sources.	
	Analysis does not reflect consideration of multiple causes and alternative explanations. Clear explanations are missing.	
	Many glaring flaws in the reasoning presented. Only rarely are effective arguments are being made.	

F: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning an “F” grade does not meet the standards for a “D” and is totally unacceptable work for a college senior, much less a philosophy major.

Critical Thinking in the Philosophy Major

1. Identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the problem, question, issue, or creative goal.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
Does not attempt to or fails to identify and summarize issue/goal accurately.	Summarizes issue/goal, though some aspects are incorrect or confused. Nuances and key details are missing or glossed over.	Clearly identifies the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue/goal. Identifies integral relationships essential to analyzing the issue/goal.

2. Identifies and considers the influence of context and assumptions.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
Approach to the issue is in egocentric or socio-centric terms. Does not relate issue to other contexts (cultural, political, historical, etc.).	Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions regarding the issue, although in a limited way.	Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of audience. Considers other integral contexts.
Does not recognize context or surface assumptions and	Provides some recognition of context and consideration of	Identifies influence of context and questions assumptions,

underlying ethical implications, or does so superficially.	assumptions and their implications.	addressing ethical dimensions underlying the issue, as appropriate.
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3. Develops, presents, and communicates OWN perspective, hypothesis, or position.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
<p>Position or hypothesis is clearly inherited or adopted with little original consideration.</p> <p>Addresses a single source or view of the argument, failing to clarify the established position relative to one's own.</p> <p>Fails to present and justify own opinion or forward hypothesis.</p> <p>Position or hypothesis is unclear or simplistic.</p>	<p>Position includes some original thinking that acknowledges, refutes, synthesizes, or extends other assertions, although some aspects may have been adopted.</p> <p>Presents own position or hypothesis, though inconsistently.</p> <p>Presents and justifies own position without addressing other views, or does so superficially.</p> <p>Position or hypothesis is generally clear, although gaps may exist.</p>	<p>Position demonstrates ownership for constructing knowledge or framing original questions, integrating objective analysis and intuition.</p> <p>Appropriately identifies own position on the issue, drawing support from experience and information not available from assigned sources.</p> <p>Clearly presents and justifies own view or hypothesis while qualifying or integrating contrary views or interpretations.</p> <p>Position or hypothesis demonstrates sophisticated integrative thought and is developed clearly throughout.</p>

4. Presents, assesses, and analyzes sources appropriate to the problem, question, issue, or creative goal.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
<p>No evidence of search, selection, or source evaluation skills.</p> <p>Sources are simplistic, inappropriate, or not</p>	<p>Demonstrates adequate skill in searching, selecting, and evaluating sources to meet the information need.</p>	<p>Evidence of search, selection, and source evaluation skills; notable identification of uniquely salient resources.</p>

related to topic.	Appropriate sources provided, although exploration appears to have been routine.	Information need is clearly defined and integrated to meet and exceed assignment, course, or personal interests.
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5. Integrates issue/creative goal using OTHER disciplinary perspectives and positions.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
<p>Deals with a single perspective and fails to discuss others' perspectives.</p> <p>Treats other positions superficially or misrepresents them.</p> <p>Little integration of perspectives and little or no evidence of attending to others' views.</p>	<p>Begins to relate alternative views to qualify analysis.</p> <p>Analysis of other positions is thoughtful and mostly accurate.</p> <p>Acknowledges and integrates different ways of knowing.</p>	<p>Addresses others' perspectives and additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information to qualify analysis.</p> <p>Analysis of other positions is accurate, nuanced, and respectful.</p> <p>Integrates different disciplinary and epistemological ways of knowing. Connects to career and civic responsibilities, as appropriate.</p>

Comments:

6. Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
<p>Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences, or conclusion is a simplistic summary.</p> <p>Conclusions presented as absolute, and may attribute conclusion to external authority.</p>	<p>Conclusions consider or provide evidence of consequences extending beyond a single discipline or issue. Presents implications that may impact other people or issues.</p> <p>Presents conclusions as relative and only loosely</p>	<p>Identifies, discusses, and extends conclusions, implications, and consequences. Considers context, assumptions, data, and evidence. Qualifies own assertions with balance.</p> <p>Conclusions are qualified as the best available</p>

	related to consequences. Implications may include vague reference to conclusions.	evidence within the context. Consequences are considered and integrated. Implications are clearly developed and consider ambiguities.
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7. Communicates effectively.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
<p>In many places, language obscures meaning.</p> <p>Grammar, syntax, or other errors are distracting or repeated. Little evidence of proofreading. Style is inconsistent or inappropriate.</p> <p>Work is unfocused and poorly organized; lacks logical connection of ideas. Format is absent, inconsistent, or distracting.</p> <p>Few sources are cited or used correctly.</p> <p>Final product/piece does not communicate the intended issue or goal.</p>	<p>In general, language does not interfere with communication.</p> <p>Errors are not distracting or frequent, although there may be some problems with more difficult aspects of style and voice.</p> <p>Basic organization is apparent; transitions connect ideas, although they may be mechanical. Format is appropriate although at times inconsistent.</p> <p>Most sources are cited and used correctly.</p> <p>Final product/piece communicates the intended issue or goal in a general manner.</p>	<p>Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas. May at times be nuanced and eloquent.</p> <p>Errors are minimal. Style is appropriate for audience.</p> <p>Organization is clear; transitions between ideas enhance presentation. Consistent use of appropriate format. Few problems with other components of presentation.</p> <p>All sources are cited and used correctly, demonstrating understanding of economic, legal, and social issues involved with the use of information.</p> <p>Final product/piece communicates the intended issue or goal effectively.</p>

Criteria Scores

____1. Identify problem, question, issue, creative goal.

- ___ 2. Consider context and assumptions
- ___ 3. Develop own position or hypothesis
- ___ 4. Presents, assesses, and analyzes sources appropriate to the problem, question, issue or creative goal.
- ___ 5. Integrate other perspectives
- ___ 6. Identify conclusions and implications
- ___ 7. Communicate effectively

- ___ TOTAL SCORE

RED Total score of 7-20	YELLOW Total score of 21-27	GREEN Total Score of 28-35
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APPENDIX FOUR: RUBRIC FOR ASSESSMENT OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Presentation Context: _____

Evaluator: _____

Rating Scale:

- 5 = sophisticated communication skills
- 4 = advanced communication skills
- 3 = competent communication skills
- 2 = marginal communication skills
- 1 = profound lack of communication skills

I. Formal Presentation

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 1. Uses notes effectively. |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 2. Shows an ability to handle stage fright. |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 3. Communicates a clear central idea or thesis. |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 4. Communicates a clear and coherent organizational pattern (e.g., main supporting points are clearly connected to the central thesis). |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 5. Exhibits reasonable directness and competence in delivery (e.g., voice is clear and intelligible, body is poised, eye contact with audience, etc.). |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 6. Avoids delivery mannerisms that detract from the speaker's message. |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 7. Meets time constraints. |
| 5 4 3 2 1 | 8. Overall Evaluation |

WRITTEN COMMENTS:

II. Informal Classroom Discussions

- 5 4 3 2 1 1. Is able to listen to perspectives that differ from one's own.
- 5 4 3 2 1 2. Uses language and nonverbal clues appropriately.
- 5 4 3 2 1 3. Displays appropriate turn-taking skills.

WRITTEN COMMENTS:

GREEN Total score of 55-34	YELLOW Total score of 33-23	RED Total Score of 22-11
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