

**Assessment of Student Learning in the Philosophy Major
Academic Year 2010-2011
Formal Report (Due July 1, 2011)**

(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 seven 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.**” Again in 2011, a Millikin team again took **first** place. This is now the fourth consecutive year a Millikin team has won the competition. In addition, a Millikin student was runner up for 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 2011-12 *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.56)

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. Robert Money (Chair), Dr. Eric Roark, and Dr. Michael Hartsock.

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 director to the Moot Court Team.

Dr. Roark teaches two sections of IN183/140 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. Hartsock teaches two sections of IN183/140 each fall, serving 40 students. He also helps deliver the first week introduction to ethical reasoning program. He teaches PH213, Logic, providing an option for students to take to meet the university's quantitative reasoning requirement. In addition, he teaches in the honors program, delivering an honors version of his philosophy and history of science course. Dr. Hartsock regularly teaches Basic Philosophical Problems as well as some of the components of our history of philosophy sequence (e.g., Golden Age of Greece, Modern Philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy, etc.).

As of the spring 2011 semester, the Philosophy Department had 23 majors and 13 minors. This is the third consecutive 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. Dr. Hartsock was approached by students interested in starting a formal philosophy club on campus. This will likely develop over the next year.

Along with Interdepartmental courses such as IN140, IN203, IN250, and IN251, 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 offer 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 2011. 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.

Furthermore, with the addition of Dr. Hartsock, we are also offering more courses that will intersect with topics and issues in the natural sciences. Dr. Hartsock's area of expertise, philosophy and history of science, permits the Department to forge additional connections to programs in the natural and social sciences. These links will be forged by way of formal philosophy course offerings (PH223, History and Philosophy of Science) as well as by way of offering in IN courses and by way of content included in some of our upper level philosophy offerings.

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. 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. The Department regularly meets to review its curriculum and identify ways in which it can be improved.

(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. While we might prefer our majors start with PH110 (Basic), then move on to PH213

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).

(Logic), then complete the history sequence in order (PH300, 301, 303 and/or 304), then finally take PH400 (Seminar in Philosophy), 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 Seminar in Philosophy. That course can only be taken during the junior or senior years. In that course, philosophy faculty identify a topic or philosopher of interest and design a seminar course based on the graduate school model to explore the topic/philosopher. A major research paper is required of each student. (This paper is the equivalent of the prior senior thesis.) Faculty work one-on-one with each of our junior and/or 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 near 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. Roark utilizes a case-study approach in many of his applied ethics courses. Under this pedagogical strategy, students are responsible for presenting analysis and engaging in normative reasoning regarding the case study, with class debate and interaction intentionally woven into the experience. Similarly, Dr. Money has students engage in the oral delivery of legal arguments in his Appellate Legal Reasoning course. These arguments are delivered to the class, with Dr. Money and the other students roll playing as justices – peppering the students with questions, etc.

Similarly, all philosophy faculty employ 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 three required courses (9 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 400, 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. Students also write a major research paper. This paper is collected and analyzed for purposes of assessing student learning.

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 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 four electives (12 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, Seminar in Philosophy. This course, toward the end of the student's career, involves the writing of a major research paper (thesis) and is, therefore, an important key opportunity for assessing the student's growth and learning over the course of the Philosophy Major. The 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 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 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 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 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 thesis. The 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 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

Three students completed PH400 during the 2010-2011 academic year. These students were:

- #1
- #2
- #3

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

- 1) The written thesis produced by each graduating philosophy major.
- 2) The oral defense of the 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 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 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 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 theses will be obtained and stored by the Chair of the Philosophy Department. In addition, electronic copies of all 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 2010-2011 academic year is provided below.

Student: #1

Title: Forgetting Epistemology

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Roark)

Abstract: When a person attempts to justify their beliefs regarding any particular issue, they most likely appeal to the relevant evidence and data available to them regarding that issue. It seems obvious that a person can only appeal to the reasons that they have available to them and cannot appeal to evidence that they do not have; thus, any information that an individual has forgotten (i.e. information that is no longer available to the individual) does no justificatory work in supporting their beliefs. However, I attempt to show that in some cases, having forgotten particular pieces of information *can* do justificatory work and can sometimes be *necessary* for justification. Also, there are important epistemological distinctions to be made between information that an individual *remembers*, information that an individual *misremembers*, and information that an individual *forgets*. I hope to distinguish these significant epistemological occurrences from one another and illustrate the effects each occurrence can have on justification.

Dr. Roark Comments:

#1 offers an in-depth philosophical analysis of a central debate in modern epistemology, namely the role of memory in an external account of epistemic justification. The central thesis which #1 advances builds from an example in Ernest Sosa's externalist account of epistemic justification. An epistemic externalist, such as Sosa, holds that our justification, for knowledge claims typically results from eternal facts about the world, e.g., that the agent claiming knowledge uses a reliable belief forming process. The example which #1 utilizes throughout his paper which Sosa uses to defend his view of externalism operates as follows. Mary and Jane have both completed some mathematical problem. Mary accomplishes the proof by relying on a brilliant proof and Mary arrives at the conclusion by a tissue of fallacies. Mary is typically competent at mathematics but Jane has always in the past operated through flawless and impeccably sound reasoning. In the specific case at hand Jane has forgotten how she actually reasoned through the proof at hand. Is Jane justified to believe that her proof formed, on this occasion, by a tissue of fallacies is justified? Sosa's answer is that we, with all the knowledge of the case, would not be justified to think that Jane is justified to believe that her proof is accurate since we know it was formed through the use of fallacies (even though she is usually a brilliant at mathematical reasoning and does not remember that in this particular case her reasoning was faulty). #1 draws from and challenges this example in his paper.

#1 draws very different implications from the example than does Sosa. Most importantly #1 advances the view that Jane is indeed justified to believe that her proof that was formed through fallacious reasoning. And further that we (from an outside perspective) are also justified to believe that Jane is justified to believe that her answer to the mathematic proof is epistemically justified. After all, Jane does not recall that her proof in question was derived from any fallacious reasoning and she knows from past experience that she is, to her knowledge, always a competent mathematician. #1 makes the convincing case that Jane's belief that her proof is accurate is justified, even though the proof was actually formed through a tissue of fallacies.

The thesis offers important insight and implications for the role of memory and forgetting within epistemology generally and virtue accounts of epistemic justification specifically. Virtue accounts of epistemic justification hold that a necessary condition of a belief being justified is that the agent who forms the belief does so in a fashion that exhibits intellectual virtues, e.g., open-minded, consistent thinking. One difficulty here is that there seem to be cases where forgetting is necessary to a belief's being justified. If Jane had remembered that her belief was formed through a tissue of fallacies, then there would be little dispute that her belief that her proof was accurate would not be justified. Jane's forgetting the specific circumstances in which she reasoned through her proof was arguably necessary to her justification regarding the accuracy of her proof. Here we see a case that suggests forgetting can be necessary for the justification of a belief. But this is a major problem for virtue accounts of epistemic justification because forgetting is typically considered an epistemic vice and not a virtue. Perhaps, virtue epistemologists could either explain why the vice of forgetting is

never in fact necessary to justify a belief or alternatively explain how forgetting can be understood as an intellectual virtue. But in either event the issues that #1 explores in his paper are well worth increased attention by epistemologists and in particular virtue epistemologists.

Overall, #1's critique of Sosa's influential epistemic account through his attack on the Jane case is both inventive and adds nicely to the present literature on the topic.

Student: #2

Title: An Argument for Coherence Based Justification

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Roark)

Abstract: Coherence based justification is based in the understanding that justification for a belief is derived from its ability to fit together with already established beliefs. Through my paper, I attempt to demonstrate that beliefs do not stand alone in the mind, but instead relate to one another in a meaningful way. Using the analogy of a spider web, I describe how such relations are formed and evolve as individuals experience episodes that come into conflict with already established beliefs. In such cases, the more justified belief will triumph and will remain in that individual's web of beliefs. By constantly comparing new information to one's established belief system, individuals create a stable but changeable view of the world that allows for a prudent way to come to terms with new information and judgments about the world while also creating an effective way to understand how others can be justified in holding entirely different beliefs.

Dr. Roark Comments:

#2 begins her ambitious project (which straddles the philosophical line between epistemology and metethics) by offering a very nice explanation of epistemic coherentism. Epistemic coherentism is the view that, roughly, a belief is epistemically justified if and only if the belief coheres with other beliefs held by the subject together in some coherent set of beliefs. #2's project grew out of a clear blending for the senior seminar course reviewing matters of epistemic justification and the metaethics upper level philosophy course. The project was also able to incorporate #2's double major in psychology by appealing in places to the network model of memory.

#2's project goes beyond a mere explanation or description of coherentism, she addresses major objections to the view and does a convincing job of dealing substantively with these major objections and leaves coherentism bruised but still standing as a viable theory of epistemic justification. This was no easy task given just how badly the view has been beaten up in the epistemic literature. It is clear that #2 spotted the relevance of coherentism and stuck with the view despite strong philosophical objections (it is fair to say that a wide majority of epistemologists reject coherentism).

#2 stresses three ways in which a belief can be justified in a coherentist fashion: consistency, entailment, and explanation. Logical consistency and entailment can create the coherence bond between beliefs which a subject holds. But beyond logical relations a subject's belief can cohere with the beliefs she holds because of the explanatory power offered by the belief in question. For instance, the belief that the only other person in the house must have eaten the piece of cake in the fridge is 'typically' a more coherent belief than the belief that a random stranger came in the house at 3AM simply to devour the last piece of chocolate cake. The belief that your only roommate ate the cake offers greater and more likely explanatory power than other beliefs about the whereabouts of the last piece of cake than do alternative explanations. But this is the case given the consistency of the other beliefs in your belief set. If, for instance, random people did typically walk into your house at 3AM and eat your leftover cake, then a coherent belief set would take such a belief seriously as the whereabouts of your cake are concerned.

After defending coherentism generally #2 offers a very sharp analogy that allows for a better way of understanding coherentism. #2 asks us to imagine a spider web that is connected to a window. The web represents our belief set, while the window represents the physical world. The case of the natural spider web is extremely helpful to #2's defense of coherentism because it allows for an imagery of beliefs that are unequal in strength and importance to the subject. Some of the threads are thick and as such could not be lost without the web breaking or becoming much weaker, but other threads are thin and could break without breaking the web. The threads, just like the beliefs in the belief set of an epistemic subject, differ greatly in their importance to the survival of the overall web. Thus with this analogy we see that the idea of epistemic coherentism has room to make certain beliefs central to the survival of one's existent belief set, while other beliefs can be inconsequential or nearly so to the survival of a belief set.

#2, exerts a great deal of well spent energy in her project describing the advantage of coherentism allowing children to have epistemically justified beliefs. #2 argues that one downfall of many standard views of epistemic justification is that they do not allow children to possess justified beliefs. Some standard views of epistemic justification do allow children to have justified beliefs, but #2 is right to point out that a fair number do not. One example that #2 uses a number of times throughout her project is that of a child's belief in the existence of Santa. #2 argues that such a belief can be epistemically justified for a child (if the belief does in fact cohere with the other beliefs that the child holds). #2's approach does rely upon a great deal of internalist assumptions that she does not allow make clear in her paper, but this is a slight concern.

On the topic of children or unsophisticated adults #2 makes the excellent point that within a coherentist framework a child's belief set will typically be structured to place a

great deal of an importance on any one belief. This is because in such cases there will be fewer beliefs in the set to rely upon, thus making any particular belief in the belief set extremely important. Imagine, for instance, that an epistemic subject literally only has four beliefs in his entire belief set. In such a case it is very likely that all of these beliefs will be extremely important for the subject as he forms any new beliefs about the world and interprets and digests empirical evidence presented by the world. As the beliefs increase in number, it will typically be the case that any one particular belief will become less important to the subject, since they have a greater number of beliefs to lean on when interpreting the world around them. The implications of this plausible suggestion has bearing on the philosophy of education. As a person becomes more educated and adds to her belief set both in terms of quality and quantity of belief, then it is likely that any particular belief will be less importance in respect to the coherence of the entire belief set. Think again of the spider that adds more threads to her web, as the spider does this any particular thread becomes less important to the structure and strength of the web. While exceptions no doubt exist it might turn out to be the case that as we add more beliefs in terms of quality and quantity to our belief set, then we also at the same time generally decrease the importance of any particular belief to upholding the structure of our overall belief set. This analysis offers the hope of starting the larger project of embracing coherentism as a means of describing or defending the epistemic foundations of open-mindedness and diversity of thought.

#2 devotes a good deal of her project to describing how a coherentist epistemology makes sense of how children actually develop beliefs about morality. A nice blending of morality and epistemology is offered as #2 discusses 'isolated racist cases'. These are cases where people have non-standard and racist beliefs because of their isolated upbringing. #2 uses her coherentist view to argue that such people can be epistemically justified in their beliefs, while at the same time possessing morally dubious beliefs. One can have a coherent set of beliefs that is at the same time racist and immoral, nothing prevents this. But #2 convincingly separates epistemic justification from moral justification. In this respect one inclusion that could have aided the paper is a discussion of the difference between moral wrongness and blameworthiness. For instance, we might say the racist is morally wrong but if the beliefs they hold are epistemically justified because of growing up in a racist and isolated environment, then should such a person be blamed? But it should be kept in mind that questions of blame are separate from questions of rehabilitation. For instance, we might say the isolated racist (which is say 14 and never discusses social matters with non-racists) should not be blamed for her beliefs but should still be helped and educated with beliefs that will help her realize a different and more robust non-racist coherent belief set.

#2 also takes time to discuss the difference between forming moral and amoral beliefs. For instance she says, "General amoral beliefs as well as observational beliefs are derived non-inferentially from either given information from some "reliable" source or directly through experience. Moral beliefs, on the other hand, develop depending on

one's perception of oneself and one's relation to society (21)." #2 is right to stress this point and discuss the differences between forming moral and amoral beliefs. Coherentists have not traditionally done much to discuss the differences to be found between normative and descriptive belief sets but there does seem to be a difference here and #2 is right to give it attention.

Overall, #2 offers an ambitious senior project that demonstrates her strong understanding in both epistemology and moral theory.

Student: #3

Thesis Title: "Accepting or Excepting the Extra-Terrestrial: A Non-Human Response to Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics"

Grade: ■ (Green Light) (Dr. Money)

Abstract: This paper focuses on Sidgwick's descriptions of the three methods of ethics he envisions before embarking on a discussion of a fourth method, Ecoiticism. These three methods, Egoism, Intuitionism, and Utilitarianism, all necessitate a conflict between interest and moral duty. Depending on the method, one's duty may oppose, directly or indirectly, or merely interfere with one's interest. Egoists attempt to *reduce* the conflict by dissolving all duties into self-interested actions and, further, necessitating the pursuit of self-interest as a duty. Our duties turn out to be effective ways to advance our interests. An intuitionist *modifies* the conflict by spreading the duties across several self-evident principles for behavior. These principles often (but not always) conflate duty and self-interest. Even when they do not, the decentralization of duty seems less odious; it is easier to deny one's self-interest in a small way or a little at a time, but it is much harder to deny one's self-interest in every case in which it does not serve the greatest good for all. A utilitarian, taking the approach of a singular duty that is not self-interested or even self-aware, *amplifies* the struggle between duty and interest. The utilitarian maintains that our ultimate moral duty is to act in ways that maximize net happiness for all. It seems obvious that this will not usually be aligned with one's self-interest. Great sacrifice of interest seems required. Ecoiticians, following a method more inclusive than intuitionism and less demanding than utilitarianism, overcome the conflict between interest and duty by completely *dissolving* the two. By defeating the illusion of self, one removes a presupposition of self-interest and understands clearly one's place in a connected web of life.

Dr. Money Comments: The thesis is largely an examination of major ethical theories developed in the western tradition as presented and systematized by Henry Sidgwick in his classic work, *The Methods of Ethics*. Sidgwick's work is often utilized in graduate school courses and seminars focusing on the history of ethics. It is rarely utilized at the undergraduate level. #3's ability to digest major strands of this work is a testament to her ability to conduct independent research and engage in independent critical reading. These are, of course, skills that the philosophy department seeks to develop in our students. It is worth noting that #3 read the work on her own. While we met weekly to

discuss her progress and any questions she might have, the responsibility of reading the text and digesting it was largely her own.

#3 not only worked from Sidgwick's *Methods*, she also utilized his shorter *History of Ethics* to provide historical context for the major concepts and ideas that were ultimately utilized by Sidgwick in his systematization of the three major theories he examined in *Methods*. We encourage our students to think about philosophical issues in historical context; to see philosophy as organic and evolving; to see current topics and issues as having historical precursors and roots. #3's approach was an interesting approach as it utilized the history of ethics as interpreted and presented by Sidgwick, the author of the primary text under analysis. #3's goal was to make clear that Sidgwick did not spin these theories out of air, but that he drew from a rich historical landscape to create his influential work. Sidgwick's greatness as an ethical philosopher lies not in his creation of original substantive theories, but in his analytical and systematizing talents. In large part, these talents were brought to bear on historically extant ethical theories.

As the abstract included above makes clear, after #3 identified and characterized the major concepts and ideas in the history of ethics as that history was presented by Sidgwick, she turned to an examination of the three methods of ethics Sidgwick examines – egoism, intuitionism, and utilitarianism. She argued that these theories could best be compared by examining them through the lens of the classic ethical issue of "duty vs. interest." That is, each theory was reviewed with the goal of showing (a) how Sidgwick utilized existing ideas and concepts from the history of ethics to develop and present them, and (b) how each theory approaches those situations in which an agent's interests conflict with that agent's moral duty.

As her efforts in comparative thinking unfolded, #3 came to believe that Sidgwick's three methods overlooked an important and implicit fourth method – a view she termed "ecoitionism." Kenzie argued that ecoitionism – an ethical view that expands the scope of ethical concern beyond the typical human or even sentient being focus and includes within its scope all living things – was implied by the sort of approach Sidgwick utilized to systematize the presentation of the three major theories he examines in *Methods*. #3 concludes her thesis by arguing that ecoitionism is, itself, an existent ethical viewpoint and that it flows naturally from the comparative approach to systematizing ethical theories utilized by Sidgwick.

#3's thesis is well written. There are very few grammatical errors or mistakes. In general, #3 is a very good writer. Her thesis is in line with the work she has done in classes she has taken with me. While there are a few places where the flow breaks down, this is likely due to complexity of material.

The following substantive criticisms identify four points where the thesis could be strengthened.

First, #3 tends to emphasize the way in which an intuitionist position would likely give greater weight to duties regarding intimates. This works to situate intuitionism between egoism and utilitarianism in terms of its scope. While this is likely accurate, a greater emphasis should be placed on the way in which intuitionism asserts the existence of several independent duties, duties which are not unified under a broader principle, but are presented as independent duties. In addition, some of these duties are duties not on the grounds that fulfilling them will have good consequences (for society, for intimates, etc.), but simply because they are intrinsically right to do. Sidgwick, of course, argues that intuitionism can be largely subsumed under utilitarianism – that utility is the implicit organizing principle behind the plurality of intuitionist duties. But it still seems to me that intuitionism itself is not utilitarianism. In addition, intuitionism should be presented to make clear that it does not always vindicate intimates over self or others. For example, my duty to keep my promises is a duty independently of its impact on my intimates. In some cases, duties to my intimates might outweigh my duty to keep my promise, but my duty to keep my promise is not void in situations in which keeping my promise would fail to advance or even actually impede the interests of my intimates. Absent a some other duty, I would have an obligation to keep my promises even if doing so worked against the interests of my intimates.

Second, in places, #3 does not adequately or consistently distinguish rational action and moral action. Her discussion of Hume is one place where this happens. Standard interpretation of Hume is that he embraces an instrumental picture of rational action. On this view, rational action is action that maximizes the satisfaction of the agent's desires, whatever the content of those desires. This, however, cannot be identified with moral action. For example, to use an example from Hume, if my strongest desire is to scratch my finger, then it can be rational for me to do so, even if the causal effect of that would be the destruction of the world. While it may be *rational* to scratch my finger, Hume would not view it as *moral*. Moral action, then, requires a link to specific sorts of desires: humanity, sympathy, benevolence, fellow feeling, etc. It is the altruistic part of our nature that provides the substantive goal of moral action. Hume argues that moral action can be rational – and this is a clear advance away from Hobbes' egoism. Nevertheless, under an instrumental conception of rationality, immoral action can also be rational.

Third, if intuitionism is implied by a sort of "progression of scope" (from self, to intimates, to all humans, to all life), then is there not another expansion of scope waiting in the wings: the expansion to all beings? Such a position would suggest some affinity with ancient/medieval ideas under which some sort of identification of or necessary connection between Being and Goodness was endorsed. Of course, questions arise that would need to be considered. For example, when one being impacts on another being – say, appropriating it for food, destroying it for its own purposes, etc. – does this raise an ethical issue? When a beaver destroys a tree to make its dam, is this an ethical issue? If ethics is about well-being, then is it even coherent to think of the

well-being of a rock? Finally, is there a reasoned rational basis for maintaining that the well-being of a human child overrides, say, the well-being of a squirrel?

Fourth, related to the third, it sometimes seems that ecotitionism essentially affirms the value of what is, regardless of the nature of what is. That is, it seems the view refuses to recognize any ideal under which actual extant being can be criticized as lacking, defective, worthy of being changed, needing to be improved, etc. In some places, ecotitionism looks to simply affirm the value of what is, whatever it is that is. Any change to being looks to “disrespect” the extant being in favor of the alternative being, what we might call a future possible being. #3’s example of environmental restoration could be used to make this point. If we intervene in nature to restore a particular environmental habitat, we are in some sense destroying the current habitat in order to bring about a possible future habitat. Does this have ethical implications? Are we wrong to act in this fashion on the grounds that our action destroys the extant habitat? But if being is affirmed without qualification, then my being as the intervening agent must also be affirmed, and so the initial objection seems to lose traction. To object to my intervention is to object to my being! This problem might be extended in the context of consideration of moral progress. So, for example, action to end slavery is an action (or set of actions extended over time) that seeks to change the existent norms that partly constitute a social structure. But surely, doing this “destructive” work is morally justified and represents a progression, an advancement, etc. Indeed, trying to convince me to change my current theoretical frame of operation from rational egoism to, say, utilitarianism is to seek to change the existent state of affairs; it is to change being. Is this objectionable?

That #3’s thesis elicited these sorts of reflective criticisms and comments is good evidence that she produced a high quality work. Her thesis is the kind of work that we aim to have our seniors produce.

B. Oral Defense of Thesis

All philosophy majors present an oral defense of their 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. Dr. Roark was off-campus on a scholarship activity. Hence, the oral defenses were assessed by Dr. Money and Dr. Hartsock.

Student: #1

Total Score on Rubric: 54, 49
Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #2
Total Score on Rubric: 53, 53
Color-Code: **Green**

Student: #3
Total Score on Rubric: 50, 49
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 seven years (coinciding with Dr. Money's service as faculty advisor). Consider:

- At the 2010-11 competition, Millikin teams took **first** place. In addition, a Millikin student was honored as runner up for most outstanding attorney.
- 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 Lager.
- 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 Lager, 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 eight 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 fifth year of formal assessment.

All 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!

All of our seniors (100%) were assessed in the “green” for their written thesis. The data reveals consistently high performance by our majors and is evidence that the philosophy program is strong. We are confident that student learning in the philosophy major is strong.

Given these results and the fact that this is our fifth 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 51 philosophy majors over the past 12 years. Of our graduates:

- 12 (23.5%) have been accepted to law school
- 15 (29%) have been accepted to a masters program of some sort
- 7 (13.7%) have been accepted to a doctoral program of some sort
- 1 (2%) has been accepted to a medical school

The following list provides information regarding the post-graduate activities of each of our graduating majors over the last 12 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.

2011: **Three** Graduating Seniors

Klay Baynar (2011): University of Minnesota College of Law

Jessy Sivak (2011): Boston University, Masters in Occupational Therapy (accepted and deferred enrollment until 2012)

Kenzie VanBeest (2011): University of Kansas, MA program in literature

2010: **Eight** Graduating Seniors

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

- Update: Justin did outstanding work during his first year. His work was of sufficient quality that he made **Law Review**.

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).

- Update: Dustin was accepted to law school at both Wisconsin and Illinois. He received significant scholarship offers at both. He has decided to attend the University of Wisconsin. He starts fall 2011.

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

- Update: Khris did outstanding work during his first year. He is ranked 7th in class of 345 and made **Law Review**.

Gordon Gilmore (2010): Gordon was accepted to Sonoma State University's program in depth psychology. He starts fall 2011.

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): working in the IT department at the University of Illinois.

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): Graduate University of Iowa, College of Law. Attorney with Reno and Zahm LLP, in Rockford, Illinois.

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): Completed his MA in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois-Chicago. His main course of study was Urban Transportation with a focus on transportation policy and finance. After graduation he was offered and accepted a full time position as a visiting researcher at the Urban Transportation Center at UIC. He has been working on a wide variety of projects from monitoring federal policy to consulting with local transportation organizations about revenue generation systems/policies and how they can benefit from specific federal and state programs.

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

Philosophy

Robert E. Money, Jr. (Chair)

Philosophy Department Faculty

Full-Time: Michael D. Hartsock, Robert E. Money Jr., Eric S. Roark

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; and (d) those who are professionally interested in philosophy and who plan to do graduate work in the field and then to teach or write. Students with a professional interest in philosophy are urged by the Department to give early attention to courses in the history of philosophy sequence, logic, and ethics.

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 400, Seminar in Philosophy

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 twelve 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, Seminar in Philosophy
Plus one elective 300-level philosophy course

Pre-Law Track within the Philosophy Major

Philosophy also offers a “pre-law track” within the philosophy major. 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 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 211, Ethical Theory and Moral Issues
PH 213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH 221, Appellate Legal Reasoning
PH 305, Philosophy of Law
PH 310, Political Philosophy
PH 400, Seminar in Philosophy
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 221, Appellate Legal Reasoning
PH 301, Golden Age of Greece
PH 305, Philosophy of Law
PH 310, Political Philosophy
PH 311, Metaethics

PH 400, 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 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.
--	-------------------------------------	---

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.
-------------------	--	--

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.
--	---	---

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
----------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------

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
-------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------