Assessment of Student Learning in the Philosophy Major
Academic Year 2006-2007
Formal Report (Due July 1, 2007)

(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 think critically, analytically, and synthetically.
- 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. The "practice" of delivering the very 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, some 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 over the past two years. At the 2005 Model Illinois Government (MIG) competition, our two teams took first and second place in the competition, facing each other in the final round of the competition. One of our three student justices also won for most outstanding justice. At the 2006 MIG competition, one of our teams took third place and one of our student justices was elected to the position of Chief Justice for the 2007 competition. At the 2007 competition, our teams took second and third place, and the student serving as Chief Justice was re-elected to serve as Chief Justice for the 2008 competition.

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.

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

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.

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 scare 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 2004-05 *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, or humanities; (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. (49)

While some of our majors go on to pursue graduate study in philosophy and eventually 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 two full-time faculty members, Jo Ellen Jacobs and Robert Money.

Dr. Jacobs has taught in every category of the MPSL. Her logic course serves students who need to develop their quantitative reasoning skills and meets the quantitative reasoning requirement of the MPSL. The Ancient World Wisdom course introduces majors to Asian and Western philosophy, as well as MPSL students who want to understand the fundamentals of global studies. Other courses complement the large number of arts students at Millikin, including directing majors who are required to take Philosophy of Art, a course that also meets the fine arts requirement of the MPSL. Historical studies students may select among a range of Dr. Jacobs' classes. A large number of humanities students supplement their majors with many of the upper division courses and seminars taught by Dr. Jacobs.

Dr. Money serves 40 first-year honors students each fall by offering two sections of Honors University Seminar. He also regularly teaches an honors seminar in humanities in the spring. 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, Civil Liberties) 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, listed at both the 200 and the 300 levels. He sometimes serves IN 250 students through the Philosophy of Law course. He serves pre-law students as Director of the Pre-Law Program, and as faculty advisor to the Moot Court Team.

The Philosophy Department currently has 23 majors and 4 minors. The Department sponsors the Theo-Socratic Society.

Along with Interdepartmental courses such as University Seminar; Critical Writing, Reading, and Research II; and Honors Seminars, Philosophy Department faculty teach over 12 different courses from 100- through 400-level.

In terms of new initiatives and improvements, the Philosophy Department has just finished aligning its curricular program with the teaching interests and abilities of the philosophy faculty. The Department does not plan any further changes in this regard. Dr. Money has recently taken over as Director of Pre-Law and Advisor to Moot Court, and is also helping to deliver aspects of the Political Science curriculum. Most semesters, Dr. Money will offer one course as either a political science offering, or as a cross-list between philosophy and political science.

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, and as a course on the intelligent design-evolution controversy. Similarly, Dr. Jacobs has taught the same course as a seminar on philosophy and literature, the aesthetics and ethics of class, and the politics and aesthetics of food. The title of the course is the same, but it is a new course nonetheless. This type of "internal evolution" takes place frequently within the Department.

A number of changes have occurred in the philosophy curriculum in recent years. All courses taught by Dr. Money received a new description in order to align them better with his teaching interests and expertise. The Department constructed a Pre-Law track in order to provide better service to philosophy majors who have an interest in law school. In addition, the Department modified the history of philosophy sequence, changing from a requirement that students take 4 out of 5 courses in the Department's historical sequence to a requirement

that students take 3 of 5. The old additional course requirement is now designated as another elective within the major. (See "Appendix Two" for an overview of requirements within the major.) Dr. Money's decision to help the Political Science Department in the delivery of its curriculum has had some impact on the number of courses the Philosophy Department can offer for philosophy majors. To compensate, Dr. Money has been teaching more immersion and summer courses. As the Political Science Department regains strength, Dr. Money will lessen his contribution to their curriculum.

(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 a 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]

[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

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 (Logic), then complete the history sequence in order (PH300, 301, 302, 303 and/or 304), then take PH381 (seminar), and finally end with PH400 (senior thesis), this preference is completely unrealistic. The only situation in which we could realistically expect its implementation would be with those very few incoming freshmen students who declare philosophy as a major during summer orientation and registration. Even with these students, however, we would be limited by the small size of our Department and our faculty's commitment to making substantial contributions to other portions of the university curriculum (e.g., university studies/MPSL program, 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. It is unnecessary for the very same reasons that allow us to cross-list our courses between the 200 and 300 levels. Many of our courses involve a mix of students, both majors and non-majors as well as students registered at the 200 and the 300 levels. 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 inconceivable that a student beginning the major or a student from another discipline could enter an upper level course and succeed. However, in philosophy, first year undergraduate students in PH110 Basic Philosophical Problems and graduate students in graduate school seminars read many of the same texts, e.g., Plato's *Republic*, Descartes' *Meditations*, etc. We regularly have students from history, English, or music who do as well or better than philosophy majors in the same courses. This somewhat peculiar feature of philosophical inquiry and activity explains (and completely justifies) why we do not insist on a formal rigid sequential curricular pathway for our majors. High quality intellectual engagement with philosophical issues and philosophical texts does not require that we follow a stepping stone model.

The only exception to our curricular flexibility is the philosophy capstone course: PH400 Senior Thesis. That course can only be taken during the senior year. In

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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).

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

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

Students in the Philosophy Major learn to think critically. Both 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.

Both Dr. Jacobs and Dr. Money employ written forms of evaluation, including in-class essay examinations, take-home essay exams, and papers.

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

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

Similarly, Dr. Money employs written assignments as the primary basis for assessing student learning. Dr. Money has also made extensive use of e-mail communication and the Blackboard discussion board 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 cross-list courses between the 200 and 300 levels, and 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. Finally, in terms of grading and assessing student work, philosophy faculty employ different expectations regarding student work depending on the whether the student is registered at the 200 or 300 level, even while assigning the same texts and assignments to all students. In this way, philosophy faculty are able to use a single class to expose a range of students to philosophical thinking without diluting or weakening the rigorous expectations that we have for our majors.

The key experiences in the philosophy curriculum, along with encounters with challenging texts (as mentioned above), include intensive engagement with

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

The Philosophy Major requires 30 credits to complete.

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

- **Philosophy 110, Basic Philosophy.** This course gives students an initial glance at both the kinds of texts they will encounter and the kind of teaching style that informs and characterizes the Philosophy Major.
- **Philosophy 213, Logic.** This course is essential for critical thinking.
- **Philosophy 381, Seminar in Philosophy.** This course gives Philosophy majors (or advanced Philosophy students) a chance to learn in a small setting, usually 12-15 students. It is the most discussion-driven of all Philosophy courses. Moreover, this course allows students truly to lead the direction of the course. The course goes where students' questions in response to readings take the course. Philosophy faculty also use the course to "rotate in" materials and subjects that are of current interest.
- **Philosophy 400, Senior Thesis.** This independent research paper allows students to pursue in depth a topic of their choosing, and to bring together the research and writing skills that they have acquired over the course of their Philosophy Major at Millikin.

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

- **Philosophy 300, Ancient World Wisdom;**
- **Philosophy 301, Golden Age of Greece;**
- **Philosophy 302, Medieval Philosophy;**
- **Philosophy 303, Modern Philosophy;**
- **Philosophy 304, Contemporary Philosophy.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) Assessment Data

Assessment data on key learning outcomes will be collected beginning with the coming academic year (2006-2007). The "artifacts" to be collected include the following:

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

(6) Analysis of Assessment Results

For the 2006-2007 academic year, we had seven students graduate with majors in philosophy. These students were:

- #1[2]
- #2
- #3
- #4
- #5
- #6
- #7

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

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

Analysis of assessment results for each key learning outcome goal, with effectiveness measures established on a green-light, yellow-light, red-light scale, occurs for each academic year (beginning with the 2006-2007 academic year). We see no reason to reinvent the wheel. We correlate letter grades with this "colored-light" schema. A grade of "A" or "B" correlates to "green." A grade of "C" correlates to "yellow." And a grade of "D" or "F" correlates to "red."

A. Written Senior Thesis

Regarding the written product, the supervising faculty member will generate a brief evaluative summary for each thesis supervised during the academic year (included below). This summary will indicate the name of the student, the title of the senior thesis, the grade earned on the senior thesis, and an indication of the basis for the grade assigned. We employ the "Rubric for Senior Thesis" as a

[2] #1, completed all work for the Philosophy Major during the 2005-2006 academic year. His official graduation date was delayed for non-philosophy related curricular reasons. Given that the practice of providing an oral defense of the senior thesis was not instituted until the 2006-2007 academic year, #1 did not present an oral defense of his senior thesis. Hence, reference to his work will not be included in this report.

general guideline for grading. (The rubric is included as Appendix Three to this report.) In general, if a student earns an A or B on the senior thesis, this will be taken to indicate a "green light" in terms of assessment of student learning. If a student earns a C, this will be taken to indicate a "yellow" light in terms of assessment. Finally, if a student earns a D or an F, this will be taken to indicate a "red" light in terms of assessment. Finally, any additional information deemed relevant to the assessment of the student's work may be included.

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

The data for philosophy seniors graduating during the 2006-2007 academic year is provided below.

Student: Student #1
Thesis Title: "And Justice For All: A Philosophical Examination of Vengeance"
Grade: A
Color-Code: Green Light

Student #1 exhibits excellent writing skills. Her writing is polished, clear, and coherently organized. Her analysis of the issues surrounding capital punishment and the role of vengeance (retribution) as a justification for it is multifaceted and sophisticated. While Student #1 is personally vehemently opposed to capital punishment, she is able to provide a balanced open-minded treatment of the topic in her essay. She thereby embodies the mark of an educated mind emphasized by Aristotle: "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." Her essay most definitely "elicits substantive questions regarding your interpretation" (rubric). At her oral defense, she engaged the audience for well over 20 minutes in the Q&A session. Many people asked a variety of questions relating to her thesis and her arguments. This is an excellent indication that the work has real philosophical merit – it elicits deeper reflection and questioning by those who encounter it.

Student: Student #2
Thesis Title: "Computer Ethics"
Grade: C-
Color-Code: Yellow

Student #2's thesis attempted to bring together his two majors in philosophy and computer science. He considered the question of whether there could be ethical hackers. In doing so, he identified a number of types of hackers with a

gradation of ethical practices. His aim was to then discuss how various ethical theories would respond to these new ethical situations. However, he was never able to completely realize this section of the work. His analysis "occasional[ly] integrat[ed]…information from multiple…sources" (as our rubric states), but did not do this consistently. The theoretical foundation for his discussion of the ethics of hacking was not well research or well founded. He had the beginnings of an interesting thesis, but this was not his best work.

Student: Student #3
Thesis Title: "If It Ain't Broke Don't Fix It. If it is Broke…: Calvinism, Open Theism, and the Usefulness of Insufficient Theology"
Grade: A
Color-Code: Green Light

Student #3's essay possesses all the hallmarks of outstanding honors-level work: analytically precise, clear, logically organized, grammatically written, reflective, and interesting. I believe his essay is representative of graduate level philosophical writing and analysis. The quality of his essay is no accident. He read innumerable sources over his junior year and over the summer in between junior and senior year. He constructed a rigorous schedule for the writing of various components of the paper and stuck to that schedule. He submitted a multitude of drafts for my review and critical feedback, each followed by conversations (whether in person or over email). He sought out feedback from other professors. Thus, what we have is the product of a sustained intellectual commitment over time – i.e., the very goal of the JMS project.

Student #3's essay represents the sort of sustained reflection that we want to encourage from our JMS students. He was attracted to this topic for personal reasons, i.e., trying to figure out what he believed about this particular very personal topic. He has worked hard to understand the various theories and issues raised in his essay and has, I believe, modified his own position in light of his sustained reflection on the topic. As he will tell you, he has had many discussions with his parents, his minister, and fellow students about his topic. He has reached a tentative position and he has reached it on the basis of careful reflective consideration of the alternatives, their strengths and weaknesses, their logical implications, etc. Is this not what we want an educated person to do?

Finally, **Student #3's essay was runner up for the JMS project of the year award**. This is a clear external validation of the quality of his work.

Student: Student #4
Thesis Title: "The Greening of Ethics: Reflections on Nature's Intrinsic Value and its Implications"
Grade: A

Color-Code: Green

Student #4's thesis considered the question of environmental ethics. She effectively argued for a non-anthropocentric ethic using a mixture of contemporary ethical text as well as classical European and Asian theories. Her thesis was well organized and integrated the wide variety of text into a coherent whole. This is the mark of very sophisticated philosophical abilities, since it is difficult to see how various arguments speak to each other as a whole. In addition Student #4's thesis reflected her other major, political science, in considering an issue that has political as well as ethical implications. She "taught" her thesis as part of a Basic Philosophical Problems course and students responded to her knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Knowing a subject well enough to teach goes beyond the knowledge on the page.

Student: Student #5
Thesis Title: "A Look at Personal Identity According to Parfit"
Grade: A
Color-Code: Green Light

Student #5's essay possesses all the hallmarks of outstanding honors-level work: analytically precise, clear, logically organized, grammatically written, reflective, and interesting. In fact, it so nicely presents the basic aspects of Parfit's very complex view that I plan to have future students read it when I cover Parfit!

The quality of her essay is no accident. She read innumerable sources over her junior year and over the summer in between junior and senior year. She submitted a multitude of drafts for my review and critical feedback, each followed by conversations (whether in person or over email). She sought out feedback from other professors. Thus, what we have is the product of a sustained intellectual commitment over time – i.e., the very goal of the JMS project.

Student #5's essay represents the sort of sustained reflection that we want to encourage from our JMS students. She was attracted to this topic for personal reasons, i.e., trying to figure out what she believed about this particular very personal (no pun intended!) topic. She has worked hard to understand the various theories and has, I believe, modified her own position in light of her sustained reflection on the topic. As she will tell you, she has had many discussions with her parents about her topic. She has reached a tentative position that was not the one she began with and she has reached it on the basis of careful reflective consideration of the alternatives, their strengths and weaknesses, their logical implications, etc. Is this not what we want an educated person to do?

Finally, **Student #5's essay was awarded JMS project of the year**. This is a clear external validation of the quality of her work.

Student: Student #6
Thesis Title: "The Illusive Nature of Happiness"
Grade: B+
Color-Code: Green

Student #6 combined a number of sources that consider the question of how happiness is achieved and how it can be defined. He drew together Epicurus, Berman, Aristotle, and Buddha discussions of happiness. Student #6 understood these various philosophers' arguments and was able to explain coherently each. It is always difficult to find the thread that brings different arguments together and Student #6's thesis was fairly good but not completely successful in this task. Some of his ideas needed more development and the connections could have been strengthened. However, on the whole his thesis carefully diagnosed why our own culture often fails to achieve happiness and brought together philosophical ideas that might guide one in a more successful pursuit of this elusive goal.

B. Oral Defense of Thesis

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

The data for philosophy seniors graduating during the 2006-2007 academic year is provided below.

Student: Student #1
Total Score on Rubric: 55, 55
Color-Code: Green, Green

Student: Student #2
Total Score on Rubric: 43.5, 42
Color-Code: Green, Green

Student: Student #3
Total Score on Rubric: 51.5, 53

Color-Code: Green, Green

Student: Student #4
Total Score on Rubric: 50.5, 47
Color-Code: Green, Green

Student: Student #5
Total Score on Rubric: 46, 48
Color-Code: Green, Green

Student: Student #6
Total Score on Rubric: 49, 52.5
Color-Code: Green, 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. Appendix One to this report contains our placement record since 2000. The following data is available at this time for 2006-2007 graduates:

Student: Colleen Cunningham

- State Coordinator for Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty. For the first time in its history, this not for profit organization obtained funding to hire a full-time paid state-wide coordinator. Colleen was the person hired.

Student: Mark Fredricksen

- Unknown.

Student: Kyle Fritz

- Kyle has been accepted to two graduate schools, but is still awaiting acceptance of a position with the JET program to teach English in Japan.

Student: Colette Gortowski

- Colette will be teaching at the Wuhan Yucai Primary School in China.

Student: Nichole Johnson

- Nichole will attend the University of Iowa, College of Law. Nichole received a full academic scholarship. UI's law school was ranked #24 in the nation by US News & World Report.

Student: Cole Pezley

- Unknown.

(7) Improvement Plans

The Philosophy Department is pleased with the results in our first year of formal assessment. All six of our six graduating seniors (100%) were assessed in the "green" for their oral defense of their senior thesis. Five of the six (83%) were assessed in the "green" for their written senior thesis, with two of those five earning external recognition from the honors program for the quality of their work. While one student's written thesis (17%) was assessed in the "yellow" category, we are confident that this result reflects on the degree of effort put into the thesis by the student, and does not in any way reflect negatively on the philosophy program itself.

Given these results and the fact that this is our first year of data collection for formal assessment purposes, we do not anticipate making any changes in our program. On the contrary, 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.

While the results from our data collection will not lead us to make changes in our program, the Department would like to emphasize several ways in which the "call to assessment" over the past several years has produced verifiable changes in our program. First, we have fully instituted the oral defense of the senior thesis as a formal part of our capstone course (PH400, Senior Thesis). For some time, we had been planning to move in this direction. The institution's emphasis on assessment provided a welcomed impetus to make that modification. Second, the Department generated a rubric for assessing oral communication and included that rubric in its initial "Student Learning in the Philosophy Major" report. As we approached our first oral defense, however, we reflected further on the nature of the rubric and decided to make several minor modifications (e.g., word changes in the rating scale, focusing on total points as opposed to average scores). The modified rubric is included in this final report. We believe it is an excellent rubric and we will employ it going forward. This is evidence that we will continue to assess our assessment mechanisms as we go forward and make modifications and changes when we believe they are warranted. Finally, we are currently working on formulating a rubric for the assessment of critical thinking. We intend to blend that rubric with our currently existing "Rubric for Senior Thesis" and use the modified rubric going forward.

The Department would also like to provide a brief contextual note regarding the academic quality of this graduating group of philosophy seniors. In the judgment

of the philosophy faculty, the group of graduating seniors represented – from top to bottom – the strongest group of philosophy graduates since the Department has been in its current configuration (i.e., since 1999). Among the group of six graduating seniors, we had one Presidential Scholar, four James Millikin Scholars, three students with over a 3.9 cumulative GPA (four over a 3.7 cumulative GPA, and five over a 3.4 cumulative GPA), two Scovill Award winners, one JMS project of the year winner, and one runner up for JMS project of the year. On top of this, five of the six completed an additional major. These are only some of the many academic honors bestowed upon this group of philosophy majors. This is a testament to the ability of the philosophy faculty and the philosophy curriculum to attract students who represent the very brightest Millikin has to offer. In the context of assessment, however, it gives us pause. While our own experience reveals that our program consistently attracts some of Millikin's most academically gifted students, we do not believe it is realistic to expect that all future groups of philosophy graduates will represent this degree of academic strength and abilities. We expect future assessment data to represent these differences. However, this note of "realism" should not dampen the celebration of the fact – amply demonstrated by the data presented above – that the philosophy program at Millikin University is thriving and without question delivering on the promise of education.

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. What may be surprising to some, however, is the range of areas within which our majors find success. The following provides information regarding the post-graduate activities of each of our graduating majors over the last 7 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 two 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.

2000: Two Graduating Seniors

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

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

2001: One Graduating Senior

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

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.

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

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.

2004: Five Graduating Seniors

Kim Keplar (2004): Applying to University of Missouri Saint-Louis, MA program in philosophy.

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

Louis Manetti (2004): Chicago-Kent Law School.

Paul Scherschel (2004): Employed, Governor's Office in Springfield, Illinois.

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

2005: Six Graduating Seniors

Erika Cornelius (2005): Eastern Illinois University, MA in political science. Purdue University, Ph.D. program in political science.

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

Zach Godsil (2005): Employed, website designer.

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

Jessica Revak (2005): Western Illinois University, MA program in Experimental Psychology.

Amanda Russell (2005): University of Iowa, Dual Masters Degrees in Health Administration and Public Health.

2006: Five Graduating Seniors

Corey Bechtel (2006): MA in International Studies (with concentration in International Politics), Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver

Ashley Goodson (2006): Indiana University, MA program in social work

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

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

Jordan Snow (2006): CT Corporation, component of Walters-Kluwer, Springfield.

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.

Mark Fredricksen (2007): Unknown

Kyle Fritz (2007): Kyle has been accepted to two graduate schools, but is still awaiting acceptance of a position with the JET program to teach English in Japan.

Colette Gortowski (2007): Colette will be teaching at the Wuhan Yucai Primary School in China

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

Cole Pezley (2007): Unknown

APPENDIX TWO: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

"Standard" Philosophy Major:

Total Credits for the Major: 30

All students majoring in philosophy must take the following courses (12 credits):

PH110, Basic Philosophical Problems
PH213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH381, Seminar in Philosophy
PH400, Senior Thesis

All students majoring in philosophy must take three of the following five courses (9 credits):

PH300, Ancient World Wisdom
PH301, Golden Age of Greece
PH302, The Medieval World of Philosophy
PH303, The Modern World of Philosophy
PH304, The Contemporary World of Philosophy

All students must take an additional three electives within the major (9 credits).

"Pre-Law" Track: 30 credits

Students wishing to complete the "pre-law" track in philosophy must take the following courses (21 credits):

PH110, Basic Philosophical Problems
PH211, Ethical Theory and Moral Issues
PH213, Critical Thinking: Logic
PH301, Golden Age of Greece
PH305, Philosophy of Law
PH310, Political Philosophy
PH400, Senior Thesis

Students completing the "pre-law" track in philosophy must take an additional three electives (9 credits). These may come from any philosophy offering, or from the following: PO234, Civil Liberties; PO330, Constitutional Law; PO339, Seminar in Judicial Decision Making

APPENDIX THREE: RUBRIC FOR SENIOR THESIS

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.

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