

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN

Department of Philosophy and Religion
University of North Dakota

MISSION

Both philosophy and religion are concerned with the fundamental human questions, as well as the traditions to which they are attached. The Department of Philosophy and Religion is committed to creating an environment of dialogical inquiry both in and outside the disciplinary context. Areas of investigation include but are not limited to questions regarding the meaning of life, the ability to live ethically, and the human quest for the sacred. These concerns form the core of liberal arts education. The department maintains a major and a minor, but also offers a wide range of courses in the disciplines of philosophy and religious studies accessible to students of many interests.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Students will develop the ability to think critically.

Objective 1.1 Demonstrate the skills necessary to the critical thinking process.

Objective 1.2 Demonstrate the ability to analyze complex arguments.

Objective 1.3 Demonstrate the ability to formulate and communicate arguments.

Goal 2: Students will develop awareness and understanding of diverse approaches to the questions of existence, meaning, and value.

Objective 2.1 Demonstrate their understanding of the various world views posed by diverse cultures including familiarity with a variety of art, ritual, symbols, narratives and other social expressions.

Objective 2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the arguments regarding the value of diversity.

Goal 3: Students will develop the ability to read and think through basic literature and texts fundamental to philosophy and/or religion.

Objective 3.1 Demonstrate knowledge and use of the basic vocabulary of the relevant discipline.

Objective 3.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the central movements, arguments and approaches of the disciplines.

Objective 3.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental methods and literature of the relevant discipline.

Goal 4: Students will develop the ability to apply the theories and arguments of philosophy and religion in making informed choices.

Objective 4.1 Demonstrate that they understand the implications of particular arguments and theories

Objective 4.2 Demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and practice.

Goal 5: Students with professional aspirations in philosophy and religion, and related fields, will be familiar with the necessary information and develop the necessary skills to pursue their future endeavors.

Objective 5.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the variety of career options possible with a degree in philosophy and religion.

Objective 5.2 Demonstrate preparation for their respective entrance examinations and applications processes.

DATA COLLECTION

Below are listed the five ways the Department will generate and collect program assessment data. These activities will be spread out over several semesters and repeated on a regular and consistent basis. These particular activities were chosen because they offer a mix of both indirect and direct assessment data and they are narrowly focused on our primary goal at this stage of our program assessment plan – namely, assessing the *major* program. They do not exclude the possibility of designing and implementing a capstone course in the future, nor do they rule out the prospect of expanding the program assessment plan to cover other aspects of our program that fall outside of the majors – for example, “service” courses, colloquium, student discussion group, or those other students who may not be majors but enroll in a significant number of our courses.

A. Mid-Program Review/Exit Interviews (direct/indirect): Both at the midway point of a major’s program (approximately after the completion of 15 credit hours) and during the final semester in residence, students will be interviewed by their departmental advisor and/or the chair of the department. Reviews and interviews will be recorded and employ the same set of questions developed by the department for this purpose. The number of reviews and/or exit interviews conducted would vary from semester to semester, from year to year. **Responsibility: chair conducts reviews/interviews**

B. Major’s Course Assignment (direct): Every third semester (spring 2007, fall 2008, spring 2009, and so forth), individual faculty will collect (ungraded and anonymous) examples of appropriate assignments turned in by department majors in their courses. Only assignments from majors who have completed at least 24 credit hours toward their major will be collected for assessment data. **Responsibility: individual faculty members collect “data” [majors are asked to turn in two copies of significant assignments and/or faculty makes copies of exams].**

C. Major Course Surveys (indirect): Every third semester (fall 2007, spring 2009, fall 2010, and so forth), all students enrolled in courses required for departmental majors will be asked to respond anonymously to surveys made available on the department’s webpage. The surveys will employ a set of questions developed by the department for this purpose. **Responsibility: individual faculty members notify students that the survey is available on-line at the departmental webpage.**

D. Focus Groups (indirect/direct): Every third year during the fall semester (2006, 2009, 2012, and so forth), facilitators/consultants, from outside of the department, will conduct focus groups with all departmental majors employing questions developed by the department for this

purpose. The responsibility for organizing this activity would be shared by the Chair and the DPC. **Responsibility: chair organizes focus groups and recruits facilitators**

E. Alumni/ae Survey (direct/indirect): Every third year during the spring semester (2008, 2011, 2014, and so forth), surveys will be sent out to all former students who have graduated with a philosophy and/or religion degree during the previous seven years. The survey will employ the set of questions developed by the department for this purpose. The responsibility for organizing this activity would be shared by the Chair and the DPC. **Responsibility: chair notify alumni/ae of survey [survey available on-line at the departmental webpage].**

Out of concern for student privacy and in accordance with the law, data collected in the process of program assessment will remain confidential and under the control of the department at all times.

TIMELINE

ACADEMIC YEAR	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	AS NEEDED
2006-2007	focus group	major's course assignments	review/exit interview
2007-2008	major course survey	alumni/ae surveys	review/exit interview
2008-2009	major's course assignments	major course surveys	review/exit interview
2009-2010	focus groups	major's course assignments	review/exit interview
2010-2011	major course survey	alumni/ae surveys	review/exit interview
2011-2012	major's course assignments	major course surveys	review/exit interview
2012-2013	focus groups	major's course assignments	review/exit interview

DATA ANALYSIS

1. Department Chair: The Chair is responsible for recruiting members to the Department Program Committee [DPC], for oversight of the program assessment plan, and for cooperating with the DPC in the completion of their responsibilities.

2. Department Program Committee: The DPC has three major responsibilities, which include (1) collect, organize, and store all data generated during the academic year, (2) prepare materials and agenda for the annual departmental program meeting, and (3) produce a final report after the completion of the annual departmental program meeting.

3. Annual Departmental Program Meeting: Each year, after 16 August but before the beginning of the fall semester, department faculty, working as a committee of the whole, will meet to review and to analyze the program assessment data generated during the previous academic year. The department will then decide on recommendations for changes to the curriculum and/or pedagogical methods, as well as determine possible modifications to the assessment tools based on the data gathered each year. The final report of the meeting, written by the Department Program Committee, will be included in the department's Annual Report and made available in the department's office to interested parties.

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