

More detailed information may be required by your institution's academic administrators.

**Institution: University of Rhode Island**

**Program: Philosophy**

**Degree: BA**

**Chair: Donald Zeyl**

**Academic Year Plan: 2008 / 2009**

<b>Expected Level of Achievement</b>	<b>Actual Level of Achievement</b>	<b>Analysis and Interpretation of Data</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timetable for Reassessment</b>
Identify the level of norm-based or criteria-based performance you expect graduating students to achieve.	Identify students' actual level of achievement against the expected performance level.	Identify the recommendations that emerged from your interpretation of data (such as through aggregating and disaggregating data or triangulating multiple sources of data).	Describe the actions you have taken (or will take) with particular focus on improving teaching and learning.	Identify when you have reassessed or will reassess specific outcomes to ascertain the efficacy of actions you have taken or will take. If you have already reassessed, what did you find?
Outcome 1. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 2. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 3. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 4. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 5. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 6. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outcome 7. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	See Report (attached)	See Report (attached)	See Report (attached)	See Report (attached)
Outcome 8. 80% of Graduating Philosophy Majors	NA	NA	NA	NA

Outcomes Assessment  
Data Report, Department of Philosophy  
October 6, 2008

The Philosophy Department Assessment Team consists of Professors Cheryl foster, William Krieger, and Donald Zeyl

The Assessment Team has previously worked on articulating student learning outcomes, establishing performance criteria, statements of evidence of intentional commitment to address and assess outcome(s) across the program, and outlined program-level assessment method(s) and timing processes. The team has subsequently concentrated on articulating performance rubrics under which work done to achieve one of the stated outcomes may be assessed. This work relates to one of the outcomes mapped to the Senior Seminar in Philosophy (Philosophy 490). That outcome reads as follows (the central project designed to achieve this outcome is stated in bold):

**Engage critically both the primary and secondary literature on philosophical subject matter, to present one's critical assessment orally to a group, and to produce a written document reflecting one's independent research on a philosophical subject**

Methodology:

1. A syllabus for PHL 490, Spring Semester 2008, was obtained, along with a statement from the Instructor (not a member of the Assessment Team) relating to the course objectives and methods. In addition, electronic copies of 14 seminar research papers<sup>1</sup> were obtained.
  2. Each seminar paper was evaluated against the rubrics developed, and assessed as either "exceeding expectations," "meeting expectations" or "below expectations" for each of the rubrics. The table of rubrics is attached as Table A to this report.
  3. The evaluations were conducted by each of the three Assessment Team members individually and independently of each other. The results were then correlated.
  4. Because the seminar papers gave no evidence of compliance with the consulting process (the first of the rubrics in the table) and there was insufficient time to consult with the instructor, that rubric is ignored in our report.
- A. Actual Level of Achievement: The results of the evaluations of data are shown in Table B.

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<sup>1</sup> Enrollment in the course was 15 students. Despite the instructor's best efforts, it was not possible to obtain an electronic copy of the paper submitted by one of the students.

B. Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Three out of 14 students exceeded expectations in all three rubrics (21%).
2. Eight out of 14 students met or exceeded expectations in all three rubrics (57%).
3. 13 out of 14 students met or exceeded expectations in two out of three rubrics (93%).
4. 0 out of 14 students failed to meet expectations in all three rubrics (0%).
5. 1 out of 14 students failed to meet expectations in two out of three rubrics (7%).
6. 5 out of 14 students failed to meet expectations in one out of three rubrics (36%)

In terms of the target 80% compliance rate, this percentage is exceeded by 13% if compliance is measured as meeting expectations in the majority but not all of the rubrics (93%). It exceeds it by 23% if compliance is measured as meeting expectations in all of the applicable rubrics (57%).

C. Actions Proposed:

1. The greatest area of unsatisfactory performance was seen in connection with the second of the four rubrics: *Completeness and accuracy in representing both primary and secondary sources*. We propose that greater emphasis be placed on developing greater facility in the use of secondary sources.
2. The data prompted a reconsideration of the third and fourth rubrics, which were found to be too closely tied to the use of secondary sources. We propose redefining those rubrics more independently of the use of such source materials.

D. Timetable for Reassessment:

The Senior Seminar (PHL 490) to which the outcome under consideration is linked, is offered once per year. We are considering our next assessment of this outcome in the Fall of 2011, to allow time to collect data from the next three iterations of the seminar.

Table A

CRITERIA	SUPERIOR	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
<i>Compliance with consultation process. (Students are required to consult with the instructor to revise oral seminar presentation [or other project] into a formal seminar paper [as stipulated by the syllabus])</i>	Student follows all consultation requirements as stipulated in the syllabus, except as excused by instructor. All submission deadlines are met.	Student misses a consultation requirement without an excuse, but communicates with the instructor and makes up for it in an agreed-upon way. At most one submission deadline is not met.	Student fails to comply with any of the consultation requirements without communicating with the instructor. More than one submission deadline is not met.
<i>Completeness and accuracy in representing both primary and secondary sources</i>	The paper shows detailed familiarity with and understanding of the sources, omits no pertinent material from these sources, and demonstrates with outstanding clarity and rigor their relation to the topic.	The paper shows broad familiarity with and understanding of the sources, with few omissions of pertinent material from these sources, and demonstrates with acceptable clarity and rigor their relation to the topic.	The paper shows insufficient familiarity with and understanding of the sources, and/or fails to demonstrate with clarity or rigor their relation to the topic.
<i>Organization, including alignment of discussion of secondary with primary sources, and integration of personal critique</i>	The paper begins with a clear and compelling introduction to the issues to be considered within the topic, discusses the issues in clear logical order, showing their bearing on the topic as a whole, and concludes with a concise summary. The paper does a superior job of aligning discussion of secondary with primary sources, and integration of personal critique.	The paper begins with an adequate introduction to the issues to be considered within the topic, discusses the issues in an appropriate order, so that their bearing on the topic is generally clear, and concludes with a statement that adequately summarizes the preceding argument. The paper does a fair job of aligning discussion of secondary with primary sources, and integration of personal critique.	The paper fails to provide an adequate introduction to the issues to be considered within the topic, fails to discuss the issues in an appropriate order, or make clear their bearing on the topic, and fails to conclude with an acceptable summary statement of the preceding argument. The paper shows little or no effort in aligning discussion of secondary with primary sources, and integration of personal critique.
<i>Originality of Critique</i>	The paper amply demonstrates independent critical engagement with the sources as indicated by a superior level of critical reasoning ability—including a high level of adeptness in identifying and questioning assumptions in the sources, and in exposing instances of fallacious reasoning—and a superior knowledge of the cultural context that bears on the topic.	The paper demonstrates an acceptable degree of independent critical engagement with the sources as indicated by adequate critical reasoning ability, and some knowledge of the cultural context that bears on the topic.	The paper shows little or no independent critical engagement with the sources. Critiques are by and large repetitions of critiques already found within the sources (esp. secondary sources). There is little or no demonstration of independent reflection upon the texts. There is also little or no sign of knowledge of the cultural context that bears on the topic.

Table B

	Rubric 2: <i>Use of Sources</i>			Rubric 3: <i>Organization</i>			Rubric 4: <i>Originality</i>		
	Exceeds	Meets	Below	Exceeds	Meets	Below	Exceeds	Meets	Below
# 1	X			X			X		
# 2			X			X		X	
# 3	X				X				X
# 4	X			X				X	
# 5			X		X			X	
# 6		X			X			X	
# 7	X			X			X		
# 8		X			X			X	
# 9			X		X			X	
# 10		X		X			X		
# 11			X		X			X	
# 12			X		X			X	
# 13		X			X			X	
# 14	X			X			X		