

Program Assessment Plan
 American University
 Academic Program: CAS: Philosophy - BA

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Contact Person for Amy Oliver

Assessment:

Unit Website Address: <http://www.american.edu/cas/philrel/index.cfm>

Unit's Primary Department: Philosophy/Religion

Learning Outcome: General Philosophical Literacy

Students should demonstrate that they are able to successfully navigate the historical and disciplinary branches of philosophy and different philosophical approaches, showing knowledge of the breadth and depth of the discipline, including:

1. demonstrate how to locate a particular topic within its relevant larger philosophical context.
2. use conceptual frameworks including epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and other philosophical specializations.
3. explain this history or genealogy of ideas and concepts.

Outcome Year: 2009-2010
 2010-2011
 2011-2012

Start Date: 04/03/2009

Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
Written evaluations by department faculty and graduate students of the capstone seminar projects. Capstone professor, undergraduate adviser, and department chair review, then report extensive comments to capstone students and a summary to department faculty. We will also compare the results of transfer students to those of students schooled exclusively at AU. Measure Type: Final Paper/ Final Project	100% of students will improve their projects.	Every two years.	Yes
Faculty meeting devoted to assessment of the capstone projects. Capstone professor, undergraduate adviser, and department chair review, then report extensive comments to capstone students and a summary to department faculty. We will also compare the results of transfer students to those of students schooled exclusively at AU. Measure Type: Focus Group	100% of students will improve their projects.	Every two years.	Yes

Learning Outcome: Argumentation Skills

Students should display acuity and expertise in logical reasoning and philosophical analysis, including:

1. recognize different forms of argumentation.
2. identify the presupposed or unacknowledged premises.
3. critique arguments.
4. construct sound and persuasive arguments.
5. recognize and use different kinds of support in shaping arguments in different philosophical areas.

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Learning Outcome: Research Skills

Students should demonstrate their ability to effectively navigate both the library and on-line research tools, including:

1. demonstrate ability to use standard reference works (e.g. Encyclopedias and Dictionaries of Philosophy).
2. use online databases (e.g. Philosopher's Index, JSTOR, Project Muse, etc.).
3. locate and evaluate relevant scholarly books and articles.
4. distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

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Written evaluation by department faculty and graduate students of the capstone seminar projects. Capstone professor, undergraduate adviser, and department chairs review, then report to capstone students and department faculty. We will compare the result of sole philosophy majors with those of double majors to determine whether research methods learned in students' second majors enhance or detract from their ability to research well in philosophy. Measure Type: Final Paper/ Final Project	No target identified.	Every two years.	Yes
Faculty meeting devoted to assessment of capstone seminar projects. Capstone professor, undergraduate adviser, and department chair review, then report to capstone students and department faculty. We will compare the results of sole philosophy majors with those of double majors to determine whether communication skills learned in students' second majors enhance or detract from their ability to communicate well in philosophy. Measure Type: Other	No target identified.	Every year.	Yes

Learning Outcome: Communication Skills

Students should display their ability to communicate complex arguments and concepts effectively, both orally and in writing, including:

1. present arguments in a clear and straightforward manner.
2. clearly identify and communicate the central ideas.
3. listen and respond to questions carefully and thoughtfully.

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