

Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Philosophy	245	PHL 245 07/20/2017- Philosophy of Religion
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities	Corinne Painter
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Identify and explain the basic tenets, justifications, and sources of disagreement between Evidentialist Theism, Non-Evidentialist Theism, Evidentialist Atheism and Evidentialist Agnosticism.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: An essay exam, class presentation or paper (one instrument will be chosen by the department per assessment cycle and administered in all sections).
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: All
 - Number students to be assessed: All
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 75% of the students will score 3.75 of 5 or higher
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
11	10

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

There were 11 students enrolled in the course, but only 10 participated in the embedded assessment process. This happened because 1 student missed class when the assessment tool was administered.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

There was only 1 section of this course, and 10/11 students who attended the class for the entire semester participated in the assessment. A handful of students withdrew from the class.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

An in-class exam composed of 5 fill-in-the-blank and 2 short answer questions was used to assess this outcome. The exam was scored in the standard way, by calculating the points earned out of the points possible for each question. The fill-in-the-blank questions were worth 2 points each (10 points total), and the short answer questions were worth 5 points each (10 points total). (These scores were then transferred to percentage grades for the exam as a whole).

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Nine students who completed the exam used for assessment of this outcome met -- and usually significantly exceeded -- the standard of 3.75/5 or 75%. Accordingly, the class as a whole met the standard of success, with its average being 4.275/5 or 85.5%.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

My interpretation of the results demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of the students were able to identify and explain the basic tenets, justifications, differences of Theism, Agnosticism, Atheism, Evidentialism and Non-Evidentialism. This is the case because only 1 student who took the exam did not meet the standard of success. The average percentage score earned by the 10 students who met the standard of success is 92%.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Since the majority of students met the standard of success for this outcome, I do not plan to reconstruct or change the material being taught in the course, nor the method by which it is taught, namely, interactive lecture, group assignments, group debates, and exams. I will, however, try to make clearer -- stress -- that students should contact the professor for extra help if they are having difficulty understanding the material.

Outcome 2: Identify and explain various accounts and justifications of the nature of God and God's attributes as well as how these influence religious traditions, beliefs, and practices.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: An essay exam, class presentation or paper (one instrument will be chosen by the department per assessment cycle and administered in all sections).
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: All
 - Number students to be assessed: All
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 75% of the students will score 3.75 of 5 or higher
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

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Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
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3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

There were 11 students in the course, but only 10 took the embedded assessment exam. This happened because 1 student did not attend class on the day on which the assessment exam was administered.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

There was only 1 section of this course, and 10 out of the 11 students who remained in the class throughout the semester (some withdrew before the term's end), participated in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

In-class exam composed of a short essay question, which was scored by a senior philosophy faculty member on the basis of how well the student elucidated, justified and compared various definitions of god and god's attributes, as well as on the basis of how well they defended their own position with respect to the existence and nature of god.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Nine of the 10 students who took the exam used to assess this outcome met the standard of success (and in many cases significantly exceeded). Accordingly, the class as a whole met the standard of success for this outcome with an average of 89% or 4.45/5 points.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Based on my interpretation of the results of this assessment question, an overwhelming majority of the students met or exceeded the standard of success for this outcome, by demonstrating in writing that they understood the various accounts (definitions) of god as well as of god's alleged attributes and the philosophical paradoxes that certain definitions of god give rise to. A majority of students also showed that they could at least moderately defend their own position with respect to god's nature and attributes.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Based on my analysis of student performance in this class, given that an overwhelming majority of students not only met but significantly exceeded the standard of excess for this class, I do not intend to make any changes either to the material that is taught in it (unless the instructor teaching it wants to add another topic to those that are already covered) or to the method by which it is taught, namely through discussion-based lecture, group exercises, debates, and exams. Having said this, I will try to more robustly emphasize (or have the instructors who teach this course emphasize) that students who are struggling with the material may get extra help (perhaps through office hours or through a student study group).

Outcome 3: Identify and explain some of the main philosophical positions that are taken regarding the relationship between religion and at least two other intellectual disciplines (such as, for example, ethics and epistemology) as well as the critical questions that arise therefrom.

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4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

There was only 1 section of this course, and 10 out of the 11 students who remained in the class throughout the semester (some withdrew before the term's end), participated in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

An in-class exam composed of short essay questions was used to assess the course. It was scored by a senior philosophy faculty member on the basis of how well the student elucidated, justified and compared various definitions of god and god's attributes, as well as on the basis of how well they defended their own position with respect to the existence and nature of god.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Nine of 10 students who took the exam used to assess this outcome, met the standard of success (and in many cases significantly exceeded). Accordingly, the class as a whole met the standard of success for this outcome with an average of 89% or 4.45/6 points.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Based on my interpretation of the results of this assessment question, an overwhelming majority (9 out of 10) of the students met or exceeded the standard of success for this outcome, by demonstrating in writing that their ability to critically compare and analyze the relationship between religion and at least two other areas of human interest or knowledge, such as science, morality, and epistemology.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Based on my analysis of student performance in this class, given that an overwhelming majority of students not only met but significantly exceeded the standard of excess for this class, I do not intend to make any changes either to the material that is taught in it (unless the instructor teaching it wants to add another topic to those that are already covered) or to the method by which it is taught, namely through discussion-based lecture, group exercises, debates, and exams. Having said this, I will try to more robustly emphasize (or have the instructors who teach this course emphasize) that students who are struggling with the material may get extra help (perhaps within office hours or by forming a student study group).

II. Course Summary and Action Plans Based on Assessment Results

1. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

In my view, this class not only meets but significantly exceeds the standard of success that is set for this course, as long as a person who is learned in the area of philosophy of religion teaches it, and as long as students are not asked to do an overwhelmingly large amount of reading. This is because a substantial amount of time is spent on understanding how to deconstruct, analyze, and compare arguments and positions advanced about god as well as about various religious traditions, as well as on how to construct one's own thoughtful position regarding god's existence and nature. This kind of work is challenging for students, and as such, a significant amount of time needs to be devoted to this material; and this work should contain various homework and in-class quiz and/or group work before students complete an exam or write a paper on the topics covered.

The results of this assessment did not bring into light any opinion about how well the students met the learning outcomes; rather, it confirmed for me that the material that is covered in the course as well as the method by which it is disseminated and discussed appears to be working. Having said this, I would perhaps only add another class day or two of discussion on the various theories of belief justification, both generally and with respect to religious claims.

2. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

We will share these assessment results, as well as any intended changes to the course both to her philosophy colleague and to her Department Chair during a meeting that will be called for this purpose.

3.

Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
No changes intended.			

4. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

5.

III. Attached Files

[Assessment Data Winter 2017 PHL 245](#)

Faculty/Preparer: Corinne Painter **Date:** 07/20/2017

Department Chair: Allison Fournier **Date:** 08/01/2017

Dean: Kristin Good **Date:** 08/03/2017

Assessment Committee Chair: Michelle Garey **Date:** 10/24/2017