In AY 16/17 we assessed GELO 3, “Mathematical concepts courses should prepare the student to arrive at conclusions based on numerical and graphical data”. This was assessed using a technique called Venn Diagrams which are a graphical way of representing relations between concepts and objects falling under them. We teach the students to use these diagrams to assess sample arguments, and to see whether the purported conclusion of the argument follows validly. So, for example, we give them the following premises (1) “Some politicians are liars”, (2) “No liars are good people”, and then ask them whether the conclusion (3) “Some politicians are good persons” follows validly.

The assessment of the GELO itself comprised a series of exercises and a quiz. Student ability to draw valid conclusions following the exercises increased; about 5% of the students excelled, and while there were about 40% of students who were competent with the technique, we hope to improve to at least 50% in the future. Most students seem to find the Venn Diagram technique intuitive and relatively easy to grasp, and this seems to be borne out in the assessment. One worry that I have is that the arguments considered in the course are, in general, toy examples chosen to make a pedagogical point. But, it is difficult to assess how the students would do when trying to apply the Venn Diagram method to arguments found ‘in the wild’.

Overall, we are satisfied with the assessment activities, and think that they adequately measure the students' ability to interpret graphical data and to draw conclusions on its basis. However, given the worry expressed in question 2, we might wish to at least include an exercise which takes arguments from popular sources (such as newspapers or blogs) and see if the students can successfully apply the technique.
Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes - Janet Stemwedel, Chair, Department of Philosophy

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE GELOs for writing.

This course does not fall into this category.