

**SJSU Annual Program Assessment Form
Academic Year 2015-2016**

Department: Philosophy
Program: Philosophy B.A.
College: Humanities & the Arts
Program Website: http://www.sjsu.edu/philosophy/curriculum/Degree_Programs/BA/
Link to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) on program website: http://www.sjsu.edu/philosophy/about/
Program Accreditation (if any): n/a
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Part A

1. List of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

(PLOs should be appropriate to the degree and consider national disciplinary standards, if they exist. Each outcome should describe how students can demonstrate learning.)

- PLO1 Be able to identify, discuss, and constructively engage with, in both written and oral fashion, core areas and methods of Philosophy, and major figure and ideas in various historical periods and in various traditions from around the world.
- PLO2 Have the ability to understand texts and oral presentations and to identify and critique the arguments expressed in these texts.
- PLO3 Have the ability to successfully collect and evaluate information and carry out research projects, and successfully to share the results in both written and oral form.
- PLO4 Have an understanding of the demands of responsible citizenship and an understanding of how to make and defend ethical choices.
- PLO5 Have an understanding of the ways in which culture, race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, and national membership influence perceptions about reality, knowledge, and value.

2. Map of PLOs to [University Learning Goals \(ULGs\)](#)

(Please indicate how your PLOs map to the University Learning Goals below by listing the PLO under each relevant ULG, or including this map in table form (see examples [here](#)). Use the link above for a full description of each ULG.)

ULG 1 – Specialized Knowledge PLO1
ULG 2 – Broad Integrative Knowledge PLO1, PLO4, PLO5
ULG 3 – Intellectual Skills PLO2, PLO3
ULG 4 – Applied Knowledge PLO4, PLO5
ULG 5 – Social and Global Responsibilities PLO4, PLO5

3. Alignment – Matrix of PLOs to Courses

PLO1 [Phil 70A, Phil 70B, Phil 70C, eight upper division courses one of which must be from the Phil 190 or Phil 290 series]

PLO2 [Phil 57, Phil 70A, Phil 70B, Phil 70C, eight upper division courses one of which must be from the Phil 190 or Phil 290 series]

PLO3 [Phil 70A, Phil 70B, Phil 70C, eight upper division courses one of which must be from the Phil 190 or Phil 290 series]

PLO4 [Phil 70A, Phil 70B, Phil 70C, eight upper division courses one of which must be from the Phil 190 or Phil 290 series; for example, Phil 108]

PLO5 [Phil 70A, Phil 70B, Phil 70C, eight upper division courses one of which must be from the Phil 190 or Phil 290 series; for example, Phil 119]

4. **Planning – [Assessment Schedule](#)**

(Please provide a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that specifies when a PLO will be assessed (A), when you might plan to implement changes as a result of your assessment (I), and, if applicable, when you might reassess a given PLO (R) to gauge the impact of the change. All PLOs should be assessed at least once during each program planning cycle (usually 5 years). Add rows and columns as necessary.)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
PLO 1					A
PLO 2	A	IC			
PLO 3		A	IC		
PLO 4			A	IC	
PLO 5				A	IC

5. **Student Experience**

a. How are your PLOs and the ULGs communicated to students, e.g. websites, syllabi, promotional material, etc.?

PLOs are discussed with incoming students at frosh and transfer student orientation sessions, and listed on department website. Website redesign is anticipated this summer. Updated website will prominently feature PLOs. Relevant PLOs will be listed on courses syllabi and in assignment descriptions.

b. Do students have an opportunity to provide feedback regarding your PLOs and/or the assessment process? If so, please briefly elaborate.

We are exploring ways to solicit student feedback on PLOs and how they are assessed.

Part B

6. **Assessment Data and Results**

(Please briefly describe the data collected for this report (e.g., student papers, posters, presentations, portfolios, assignments, exams). The instruments used to evaluate student achievement (e.g., rubrics or other criteria) and actual data (e.g., assignment description or instructions) should be attached as appendices.)

We assessed PLO 2: “Have the ability to understand texts and oral presentations and to identify and critique the arguments expressed in these texts.” While this learning objective is built into nearly every course taught in the Philosophy Department, we looked specifically to our required

history of philosophy courses (Phil 70A and Phil 70B) to assess PLO 2 for AY 2015-2016.

In assessing PLO 2, we considered student term papers, in-class note-taking assignments, and an assignment for which students were required to prepare an outline and give an oral presentation on a philosophical topic.

As might be expected, student mastery of this objective became noticeably stronger by the end of a semester than it was near the beginning, and similarly was markedly stronger for students who had already completed more Philosophy coursework than for students in their first Philosophy course.

7. Analysis

(Please discuss the findings and evaluate the achievement of PLOs and/or progress on recommended actions.)

The in-class note-taking assignment asked students to demonstrate their understanding of an oral presentation by taking good lecture notes. Most students did poorly on this assignment the first time it was assigned. However, by the second time it was assigned, the students' notes had greatly improved, showing that they were able to follow the philosophical points that were being presented, to identify the structure of the arguments, and to flag points that might be vulnerable to objections.

By the second half of the semester, student presentations (including the outlines they distributed to their classmates and the PowerPoint slides they composed and submitted as part of the assignment) reflected even more facility with extracting arguments from philosophical texts and presenting them clearly.

The culminating student term papers demonstrated significant growth over the first assignments (where students showed little understanding of how to interpret philosophical texts or even to give proper citations). In these papers, students demonstrated good understanding of the material they had read, used reasonable strategies for interpreting philosophical texts, and offered high quality critiques of arguments and claims.

8. Proposed changes and goals (if any)

(Given your findings, please list the proposed changes and goals for the next academic year and beyond – that is, how will you “close the loop”?)

Especially in Phil 70A, instructors found that students were hesitant to critique arguments in texts posed by renowned ancient philosophers. In future, instructors will incorporate more exercises focused on critiquing such arguments to help students overcome this hesitance.

Part C

(This table should be reviewed and updated each year, ultimately providing a cycle-long record of your efforts to improve student outcome as a result of your assessment efforts. Each row should represent a single proposed change or goal. Each proposed change should be reviewed and updated yearly so as to create a record of your department’s efforts. Please add rows to the table as needed.)

Proposed Changes and Goals	Status Update
Include more exercises involving critiques of arguments of “great philosophers” in 70A	