

Philosophy Program Value Rubric

This rubric is designed for use in establishing a framework for student learning outcomes in each of the three Philosophy Programs: General Major (with two concentrations: Logic and Science, and Ethics, Politics, and Law), Honors Program, and the Philosophy Minor. These identify the core student learning outcomes as well as program specific outcomes.

This value rubric is used on the departmental and university level to facilitate program assessment. By identifying the qualitative features associated with three broad levels of mastery, from novice to proficient, it is used to monitor and measure the degree of student philosophical development as they progress through the program.

It is also used by individual instructors to guide student learning outcomes for each course taught in the Philosophy program, as well as for identifying the qualitative features in student work which will form and inform the basis for student grades on individual assignments and in the course overall.

| PROGRAM | LEARNING GOALS | PROFICIENT | COMPETENT | NOVICE |
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| Philosophy Core (Major, Honors, Minor) | <i>Discipline Specific Knowledge, Including Philosophical Methodology</i> | Demonstrates comprehension and understanding of the major historical and contemporary works, figures and trends in the discipline of philosophy, including mastery in reading and analyzing philosophical texts, and ease with communicating (written and oral) philosophically; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognizes precisely the issue in question when confronted with a complex hypothetical; distinguish that issue from other suggestive, or similar-appearing, issues;States a position (possibly a position not one's own) | Ability to identify major philosophical traditions and approaches in historical and contemporary works, though confusion of their similarities and differences impedes comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none">the use and application of philosophical concepts in general;the ability to identify philosophical issues and arguments in most contexts, though less so in complex or multilayered hypotheticals or situations;the ability to formulate a philosophical argument, with | Ability to identify and comprehend major philosophical traditions and approaches in historical or contemporary works is limited; <ul style="list-style-type: none">frequent misuse or misapplication of philosophical concepts;tendency to read or analyze philosophical texts at a superficial level;frequent misrecognition of the issue in question or inability to distinguish it from other similar issues;when stating a position it is overly broad as to be unfocused or indefensible, |

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| | | <p>plausibly, sympathetically, and effectively, including its assumptions, implications; state forceful objections to the position;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and effectively apply the core concepts and methods of philosophy (logical, semantical, ethical), including their underlying assumptions, implications, limitations; • Compose an argument, stating a conclusion that is a logical derivation from the premises and the evidence; • Articulate a clear, concise criticism of an argument which identifies the specific weakness of the argument, how this undermines the argument. • Recognizes the limits of criticism and counterarguments as analytic tools. | <p>assumptions, and implications, though suffering from logical problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to generate an objection to an argument and the particular weakness it presents; • ability to communicate philosophically, though with errors or omissions. | <p>or is implausible given its assumptions and implications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constructed arguments are incomplete or suffer from fallacious reasoning, poor selection of supporting evidence, or contain irrelevant premises; • distinguishes arguments from objections to them • independently constructed objections and critiques are off-point or poorly formulated; • written and oral communication lacks clarity, precision, or generates misunderstanding in others. |
| | <i>Inquiry, Analysis & Synthesis</i> | <p>Identifies creative, focused, manageable topics which allows for in-depth analysis and potential for synthesizing material;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formulates articulate, defensible theses; synthesizes detailed information from relevant | <p>Identifies a topic that while manageable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic which impedes the full extent potential for analysis and synthesis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents information from relevant sources | <p>Identifies a topic that is far too general, wide-ranging, unmanageable, or impractical;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view or approaches; • inquiry and analysis |

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| | | <p>sources representing various philosophical approaches;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillfully develops all elements of a methodology or theoretical framework; • synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to a thesis; • conclusion is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings; insightfully discusses relevant, supported limitations and implications. | <p>representing limited points of view/ approaches;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused; • organizes evidence, but organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities; • states a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings; • presents relevant and supported limitations and implications. | <p>demonstrate misunderstanding of methodology, theoretical framework;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes unorganized or irrelevant evidence; • states ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings; • presents limitations and implications, which are irrelevant or unsupported. |
| | <i>Critical and Creative Thinking</i> | <p>Recognizes and reflects on the value of creativity to philosophical method;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluates the creative philosophical process using domain-appropriate criteria; • actively seeks out and follows through on untested and potentially risky directions or approaches to the assignment; • not only develops a logical, consistent plan to | <p>Successfully adapts an appropriate exemplar to assigned specifications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considers new directions or approaches without going beyond the guidelines of the assignment; • considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solving problem; • includes (recognizes the value of) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a narrow way; • experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, | <p>Successfully reproduces an appropriate philosophical hypothetical or exemplar of an argument or analysis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stays strictly within the guidelines of the assignment; • only a single approach is considered and is used to address the philosophical issue or problem; • acknowledges alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas; reformulates a collection of |

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| | | <p>solve problem, but recognizes implications of each plausible solution and can articulate reasons for choosing one over another;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully integrates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas; • extends a novel or unique idea, question, format, or hypothetical to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries; • transforms ideas or solutions into entirely new forms. | <p>question, format;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connects ideas or solutions in novel ways. | <p>available ideas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reformulates a collection of available ideas. |
| Logic & Science(in addition to Core) | <i>Program Specific Knowledge</i> | <p>Demonstrates sophistication of comprehension of central issues in the philosophy of science as well as those arising within the study of language, mind, and space and time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows detailed grasp of the design and significance of scientific studies and experiments; • demonstrates proficiency with proofs in first order propositional and predicate logic and main non-classical logics; | <p>Demonstrates good comprehension of central issues in the philosophy of science and those arising within the study of language, mind, and space and time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows basic grasp of the design and significance of scientific studies and experiments; • demonstrates ability to do simple to medium difficulty proofs in first order propositional and predicate logic and some non-classical logics, but may struggle with | <p>Demonstrates preliminary and general comprehension of basic issues in the philosophy of science and those arising within the study of language, mind, and space and time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows acceptable grasp of the design and significance of scientific studies and experiments; • ability to do proofs may be limited to simple problems in first order propositional and predicate logic and some non-classical logics; • shows an awareness of the |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to prove significant properties of formal systems and their extensions; • demonstrates reliable and thorough understanding of the core concepts of probability and decision under uncertainty and is able to frame and solve problems of varying complexity. | <p>complex problems;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows basic grasp of the properties of formal systems and their extensions, and some facility with proofs; • demonstrates basic understanding of the core concepts of probability and decision under uncertainty and is able to frame and solve simple to medium difficulty problems in each but may struggle with complex problems. | <p>basic properties of formal systems and their extensions, but may struggle to perform or understand proofs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates basic understanding of the core concepts of probability and decision under uncertainty but may be unable to frame and solve problems above an introductory level. |
| Ethics, Politics & Law (in addition to Core) | <i>Program Specific Knowledge Including Ethical Reasoning, Problem Solving, Action</i> | <p>Demonstrated comprehension of major ethical and meta-ethics theories and traditions in historical and contemporary works;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fluency in comprehension and application of ethical terms and concepts; • capable of formulating subtle and detailed defenses of ethical positions (even those not one's own); • cogent and insightful analysis of ethical issues (historical and contemporary); • demonstrated comprehension of complex ethical and meta- | <p>Student can name the major ethical and meta-ethical theories but is only able to present the gist of the named theory, lacking sophistication and detail;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues but incompletely grasps the complexities, interrelationships among the issues; • student can apply ethical perspectives and concepts to an ethical question, independently though the application is inaccurate; • student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical | <p>Student only names the major ethical and meta-ethical theories, but confuses the differences between them;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues but fails to grasp complexity or interrelationships; • student can apply ethical perspectives and concepts to an ethical question but only with support (using examples, in a class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting); • student states a position but cannot state relevant objections, assumptions or limitations of the different perspectives and concepts. |

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| | | <p>ethical issues, arguments, and counter-arguments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sophisticated and insightful application of ethical reasoning to problems in public policy, law, politics, and morality. | <p>perspectives and concepts but does not respond to them , ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications do not affect the judgment or determination of the issue.</p> | |
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