

Department of Philosophy
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Executive Summary (full report available upon request)

Degree Program(s) Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed
Undergraduate, B.A.	Various, cf. Below	(a) Exit Questionnaires: 15/21 Graduating Majors, Fall/ Spring, 2003-04 (b) Assessment of Oral Comm. Skills (Phil. 4991) SP, 04 (7 Students)
Masters Program, M.A.	Exit Questionnaire	0 (cf. below)

Undergraduate, B.A.:

Data: (a) *Exit Questionnaire...* cf. summary of data below (following 'Analysis' Section)

(b) *Assessment of Oral Communication in Phil. 4991...* While all philosophy classes involve discussion, Phil. 4991 was explicitly designed as a capstone course for Philosophy majors (following the advice of our last external program review, 1997). Each faculty member chooses an example of recent research in Philosophy, which is distributed to all students at the beginning of the semester, and then the faculty member leads the discussion on the work they chose. So, *all* faculty members interact with students in this course. Faculty members informally rate the students' level and quality of interaction during the session they lead.

During the 2nd part of the course, the students lead the discussion on recent articles that *they've* chosen. Again, copies are provided in advance for all of the other students. This requires a 10-15 minute oral presentation by each student, followed by a question and answer session.

The Department Head is the instructor of record in the course, collects faculty and student articles and makes them available to all the participants, and attends *each* class section. He/she also collects faculty and student feedback on the course each semester.

Other faculty members conduct one session, and are welcome to attend other sessions as well (as are our graduate students).

So each faculty member is in a position to judge the level of student participation during their own session, and usually several others as well. The Department Head is in a position to rate each session, as well as the individual student reports.

The last class session is devoted to round-table discussions between students and faculty concerning research, applying to graduate programs, career options, and so on.

Analysis: (a) *Assessment of Oral Communication in Phil. 4991 (Faculty)...* There were 7 students enrolled during the Spring, 04 course, all participating faculty were asked to informally rate the level and quality of student participation. As has been the case for the last three years, faculty were unanimous in ranking the level of student participation as high. All students were prepared (had read the material in advance), asked insightful questions concerning it, and responded well to questions posed by the faculty). It appears that revamping the Undergraduate Degree requirements a few years ago has contributed to more sophisticated and well-rounded seniors in our program.

(b) *Assessment of Oral Communication in Phil. 4991 (Dept. Head)...* The oral presentations in Spring, 2004 were the best to date. The students not only *chose* diverse, timely, sophisticated and interesting papers to present, they presented them clearly, analyzed them thoughtfully, and were *quite* articulate both in presenting the material and in responding to questions from other students and faculty. *Some* students have performed like this in the past, sometimes even *most* of them (particularly in the last 3 years). This time, however, there were *no* weak links. Each session was enjoyable for students and faculty alike. The level of discussion was *excellent*.

Data: Results of Student Questionnaires. I intended to amend these questionnaires during 2003-2004, to better reflect the new assessment guidelines that were approved in 2002-2003. We need questions that more directly reflect communication skills and critical reasoning. These *are* covered in the existing questionnaires (Items 6 and 7 in section II), but I decided last year that we needed to address these concerns in more detail. With all the work on Strategic Planning in 2003-2004, however, I did not have a chance to make these changes. I intend to do so next year. Also, we will probably ask for funding to conduct another external review in 2005-2006. It will then have been 8 years since the last review, more than half of the faculty have turned-over during that time, procedures and requirements have been changed, etc. It is time to have the new program assessed, as well as attain new ideas concerning where we might improve.

Results (Analysis)

{N = 15/21 graduating majors and double majors, Fall-Spring, 2003-2004}
... (full report available upon request). . .

Analysis: Again, given the old questionnaire, there are areas that are not adequately covered (especially Oral Communication and Critical thinking Skills). I'll try to better tap these areas in a new questionnaire next year. Responses were favorable overall. We might think of ways to include career and graduate school options earlier (done in detail in Phil. 4991, but it's not a required course, and students don't take it until they're seniors...often their last semester). Advisors distribute brochures, etc....but maybe they need to discuss this with students at the beginning of their junior year, systematically. And/or, maybe we can coordinate with our new Honors Society and w/ Friends of the Forms to establish yearly discussion-sessions between undergraduates and faculty about these matters...announced in all philosophy courses. We will discuss some options early next year.

Overall Analysis: I think the Undergraduate Program is considerably improved over, say, five years ago. We have a better balanced set of required courses, and we have a more active undergraduate population (not only *more* majors and minors, but more participation in undergraduate clubs, etc.). Quality, as judged from faculty feedback and the 4991 course, seems to be improving as well. Our new National Honors Society Chapter should also increase undergraduate participation and interaction with faculty and the field as a whole. The main current goal is to improve communication between faculty and undergraduates *outside* of the classroom, and we will explore several possibilities here. We should also, again, have another external review in the next couple of years. I'm confident we have improved since the last one, but there has been enough change that we could also use some new perspectives again.

Masters Program, M.A.:

We have only had two students graduate w/ their Masters' in the last 2 years, (4 overall) and should have about the same (perhaps 1 or 2 more) next year. We will submit total results next year.

Also, I intended to revise and strengthen our assessment of the MA Program (closer to what we have done w/ the Undergraduate Program...other means of assessment besides the Questionnaire), but have not been able to do so in 2003-2004. That, too, will need to be redone next year.

So, because of overall low numbers (we should report on the M.A. Program every 2-3 years...w/ 5 or more Graduates rather than 1 or 2 responding), and the need to revamp our Assessment Strategy for our M.A. Program (Strategic Planning made it impossible to devote the necessary time to it in 2003-2004), we will turn in Assessment Results for the M.A. program in 2004-2005.