

COURSE SLO ASSESSMENT REPORT, SCC

Department: Philosophy Course: Introduction to Philosophy

Year: 2012 Semester: Fall

1) Outcome to be assessed	2) Means of assessment and criteria of success	3) Summary of data collected	4) Analysis of data	5) Plan of action/what to do next
<p>A. Demonstrate knowledge of the discipline of philosophy</p> <p>B. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and evaluate philosophy.</p>	<p>A. Students were given two in-class comprehensive exams concerning major developments in various areas of philosophy. Because the exams consisted of short answers and essays, students had to be able to recall and write on requested information. Essays required students to explain their positions (see attached).</p> <p>B. Students had to write papers, of increasing difficulty, on philosophical problems through the elucidation of key concepts explored throughout the semester. By the end of the semester, students had to demonstrate the ability to write solid analytical papers by developing good thesis statements, conducting strong analysis, and properly structuring arguments (see attached).</p>	<p>A. Exam questions were related to class materials and lectures. The essay questions required demonstration of analytical skills. Questions regarding specific areas of philosophical inquiry were given more weight. Midterm Exam: 28 out of 43 students achieved a score of 75% or higher. Final Exam: 22 out of 35 students achieved a score of 75% or higher.</p> <p>B. Midway through the course it was evident that students struggled with the writing assignments (reading summaries, and the first essay paper assignment). This was attributed to a lack of general college essay-writing skills and experience. Their second essay papers showed vast improvement overall. The average score for the first essay assignment was 70%. The average score for the final essay assignment was 90%.</p>	<p>A. Most students performed strongly on the first exam. This is attributed to students having been provided with exam questions during the exam review session. Although there was a review session for the second exam, the exam questions were not revealed. By the time students took the final exam they were expected to know how to prepare for it.</p> <p>B. Students struggled with formulating clear thesis statements, interpreting texts, and overall structure when it came to writing assignments despite detailed instructions. For this reason a power point presentation replete with examples was designed and presented. It explained what was expected of a good college essay and how to incorporate textual analysis. Most students showed vast improvement in their writing after the presentation.</p>	<p>A. Short quizzes will be incorporated in classes leading up to exams. The quizzes will be related to exam questions.</p> <p>B. The presentation on writing the college essay, and details regarding writing philosophy papers specifically, will be given much earlier in the course. Students showed a marked increase in evaluating and incorporating concepts and philosophical texts in their second essay assignment. It is expected that the first essay in the next Philosophy 106 class will be as substantive as the second essay in the class under discussion presently.</p>

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My goal as a professor of Philosophy 106: Introduction to Philosophy has been to help students build a relationship to philosophy by identifying, elucidating, and developing concepts.

Each of my classes is designed to bring about an optimum level of engagement with course material for the purpose of achieving a high degree of understanding what philosophy is about.

There are three kinds of assignments for this class:

- 1) Reading Summaries: Reading summaries are intended to motivate students to read with consistent care and regularity.
- 2) Exams: Exam questions are designed to foster analyses of various viewpoints.
- 3) Essays: Essay questions are designed to stimulate creativity stemming from an intimate relationship with course materials. In fact, students have the option to work on pre-approved topics they develop.

When it comes to course materials, I like to have a good number of primary sources because I think it important that students read Philosophers in their own words. I am aware that even the most lucid philosophical material discusses concepts difficult to grasp without help, that sufficient and competent commentary and explanation is necessary, and class lectures are meant to compliment reading material in this way.

I expect students to experience an intimate engagement with a text, and since I demand this of them, I make sure that I pace the class more slowly whenever we touch on difficult subjects.

Course adjustment is an ongoing process. As an instructor I understand that my success can only be measured by the degree to which my students comprehend and establish positive relationships to the material we cover. This requires that I be sensitive to the degree of accuracy involved in student responses to exam questions and renditions of philosophical concepts. By carefully reviewing student work I attempt discern what concepts require further development. This may come with added discussion and reading.

The SLOs for Philosophy 106 during the fall of 2012 required that students not only demonstrate an awareness of the philosophical tradition but that they engage in philosophical inquiry themselves as well. While worth striving toward, such goals are not easily met. The benefit of this exercise is that it provides an opportunity to determine what works and what does not when it comes to meeting

Student Learning Outcomes.

The kinds of assignments used for this class seem to work. These are discussed in the SLO Assessment Report (with the exception of the aforementioned Reading Summaries). The actual essay and exam questions discussed are attached for reference. Most importantly, it has come to light that students' ability to communicate their ideas will be more of a focus in successive semesters.