

Assessment of Student Learning Department of Philosophy

The Philosophy Department's assessment of our Undergraduate Major contains three components: (1) An assessment of our majors' grasp of key philosophical concepts and skills, (2) an assessment of the breadth and the depth of knowledge that they obtain, and (3) the majors' own assessment about the quality of the teaching in the Department. To accomplish (1), in the three required courses — Logic, Ancient Philosophy, and History of Modern Philosophy — professors assess the majors' grasp of key concepts or skills by embedding questions designed for this purpose in a regular examination or other assignment. The professor then evaluates their performance and submits a report to the Undergraduate Major Advisor. Regarding (2), the Undergraduate Major Advisor reviews the transcripts of the majors to evaluate whether they are taking enough courses from a sufficient variety of areas that are fundamental to the subject. (From such an assessment, it was determined that our majors took too many 'applied' philosophy courses and had too limited a grasp of the fundamental subjects. A new requirement was instituted to insure that they have a good grounding in the central subjects.) Finally, the third component of the assessment— determining the majors' view of quality of the teaching— is done by having all majors in our advanced level courses and recent graduates that went on to graduate school in philosophy complete a questionnaire. The questions seek to obtain their judgment about the quality of the lectures, the fruitfulness of the assignments, the accessibility of Professors and Teaching Assistants, and whether they are able to enroll in the courses they need at the right stage.