### UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
Department of Philosophy and Humanities
College of Liberal Arts

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| MISSION STATEMENT:                          | Ability to identify and critically analyze arguments (Goals 2 & 3). | Direct Tools  
  a. Administration of questions that will test students’ ability to analyze arguments and apply the tools of formal and informal logic  
  b. Completion of (optional) B.A. Thesis | Direct Tools  
  a. Test (see Outcomes Assessment Questionnaire below) will be administered by instructors in select 100, 200, and upper level classes, both at the beginning and end of the semester. Data will be collected and compiled to compare the answer rates at the different levels  
  b. Theses will be assessed by three faculty members using a rubric that assesses the thesis according to their ability to identify and critically analyze arguments (Goals 2 & 3). Data will be collected and compiled for each completed B.A. Thesis. |
| GOAL STATEMENT:                             | Ability to identify and define key philosophical positions (Goal 1). | Direct Tools  
  a. Administration of questions that will test students’ familiarity with and understanding of prominent philosophical positions within the history of philosophy | Direct Tools  
  a. Test (see Outcomes Assessment Questionnaire below) will be administered by instructors in select 100, 200, and upper level classes, both at the beginning and end of the semester. Data will be collected and compiled to compare the answer rates at the different levels. |
humility, and the development of a sensitivity to the complexity behind most issues.

**Goal 3 -- Skills.** The engendering of critical thinking rigor within and outside the classroom.

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<th>Ability to identify and apply philosophical positions to contemporary issues (Goals 1; 2; &amp; 3).</th>
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<td>b. Completion of (optional) B.A. Thesis</td>
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Outcomes Assessment Questionnaire Rationale

As the table above illustrates, our Program’s goals could be more or less divided as follows:

**Goal 1 – Content.** The understanding of historically important philosophical positions.

**Goal 2 – Values.** The cultivation of the set of values, attitudes, and habits of mind that will translate into intellectual openness, humility, and the development of a sensitivity to the complexity behind most issues.

**Goal 3 – Skills.** The engendering of critical thinking rigor within and outside the classroom.

The Outcomes Assessment Questionnaire below is a set of questions that were designed to track our students’ achievements regarding these three programmatic goals. Even though, in an important sense, every question could be seen as a test for all three goals combined, we have identified the goal/s that the question was specifically designed to test by adding the letter “G” followed by the goal number (these goal identifiers will not appear in the Questionnaire presented to the students).

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**OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name:

Declared Major (& Minor – if any):

Course:

Semester & Year:

Please circle the correct answer (please choose only one answer).

**QUESTION 1 (G3).** In an induction, “sample size” refers to:

A. A conclusion that has the greater degree of universality.

B. The relationship between the size of the premises’ set and the size of the conclusion’s set.

C. How randomly the premises were picked.

**QUESTION 2 (G3).** In an induction, we say that the premises set is “representative” we mean:
That, if you were to close your eyes, chances are you'd pick up pretty much the same series of items form the premises' set, or the conclusion set.

That, chances are, the items in your sample are likely to be also found in the conclusion.

That, chances are, if you were to close your eyes, you'll get the same kind of item when you pick at different locations in the premises' set.

**QUESTION 3 (G3).** A valid deduction is one in which:

A. The conclusion has the greatest degree of plausibility.

B. The conclusion cannot violate the rules and symbols in the premises.

C. The conclusion must be true.

**QUESTION 4 (G3).** In a sound deduction:

A. The conclusion must be true because the premises are true.

B. The conclusion is most likely to be true.

C. The conclusion is most plausible.

**QUESTION 5 (G3).** When one infers to the best explanation (that is, when one preforms and *abduction*):

A. The best explanation is the one that makes the most sense out of the set of available ones.

B. The set of established theories determines whether or not there is a best explanation for the problem in question.

C. The best explanation is that which is accepted by most people.

**QUESTION 6 (G3).** If you read the conclusion that “three in four Americans believe in the paranormal,” you would assess this claim using the criteria to assess an:

A. Inductive maneuver.

B. Deductive maneuver.

C. Abductive maneuver.

**QUESTION 7 (G2).** Which of the following claims is most likely to figure into a utilitarian argument against laws requiring all bicyclists to wear helmets?
A. Forcing people to wear helmets violates cyclists’ absolute right to self-determination.

B. Increased cycling benefits society as a whole through decreased pollution and decreased costs associated with obesity, while evidence shows that forcing people to wear helmets leads to fewer people riding bicycles.

C. Government regulations should be limited to restricting activities that violate other people’s natural rights, while bicyclists riding without helmets risk harming only themselves.

D. Helmet laws are punitive and degrading to cyclists.

Read the following quote:

“Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would even have a prospect of becoming good.”

QUESTION 8 (G2, G1). This argument comes from which philosopher?

A. Aristotle

B. Hume

C. Kant

D. Mill

QUESTION 9 (G2, G1). The above quote is used in developing which type of ethical theory?

A. Deontological

B. Utilitarian

C. Egoistic

D. Virtue Ethical
QUESTION 10 (G2, G1). Which point is the author supporting with the above quote?

A. That what matters is how people act, not what their intentions or motivations are.
B. That people have a duty to be just and temperate.
C. That to become good, it is not enough to just study what philosophers say about goodness.
D. That just and temperate acts, when done correctly, will make people happy.

QUESTION 11 (G2, G1). "The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property." In this passage:

A. Hobbes explains the creation of the “Leviathan.”
B. Plato describes the primary duty of government.
C. Rousseau discusses the origin of the general will.
D. Locke describes the purpose of creating societies.

QUESTION 12 (G2; G1). "When we reason a priori, and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect; much less, show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them." In this passage:

A. Hume argues against the idea that knowledge about effects can be derived or inferred prior to experience from knowledge about causes.
B. Kant explains the limits of our knowledge about the world outside of our experience.
C. Hobbes argues that knowledge of causality is gained solely through experience.
D. Descartes discusses the limits of pure reasoning.

QUESTION 13 (G1). Descartes brings gods and demons into his Meditations in order to:

A. Question the existence of God.
B. Appease the Inquisition’s authorities.
C. To question the most basic rules of thinking.
QUESTION 14 (G1). In Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, the outside stands for:

A. The heaven for those who think critically.
B. The realm where true perceptions lie.
C. The realm where the unchanging lies.

QUESTION 15 (G1). In Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, the puppeteers stand for:

A. The expressions of the forms.
B. The objects that cause our perceptions.
C. The prisoners’ dubitable perceptions.