

B. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1 SLOA Assessment Plan - Check one:

- ☒ A new plan is attached to this template.
- ☐ Plan is currently posted on Provost's assessment website.

2 SLOA Implementation Summary - Check one:

- ☒ The most recent summaries are attached to this template.
- ☐ Summaries from the last four academic years are currently posted on Provost's assessment website.

Overview

The department has had ongoing difficulties with Outcomes Assessment over the period under review, and while we have made curricular changes based upon the results of previous OA measures, we have repeatedly found our proposed methods and instruments of OA to be unsatisfactory in implementation, and accordingly we have had to revise our OA plan each time.

For direct measurement, our new plan utilizes the Philosophy Major Questionnaire that we have devised, which should provide a comprehensive diagnostic of student learning over the duration of the entire program. This replaces the course-by-course questionnaire approach of our prior OA plan. As in previous plans, indirect measures of OA are provided by traditional measures embedded in coursework (exams, papers, presentations) required for the Philosophy major. Successful completion of the required program of study with at least a C grade in all courses provides a measurement of students having achieved the minimum learning outcome expected.

Multiple measures are utilized in the department's OA plan, incorporating both direct and indirect evidence of student learning and providing for the regular collection and summarization of data. Streamlining this process had been something of a problem for the B.A. program in past reviews. We have made substantial curricular changes in response to the results of past OA metrics; in particular the expectations for a successful B.A. Senior Thesis in Philosophy have been clarified and made more explicit in our expanded *Syllabus and Student Guide* for PHIL F499 W [see **Appendix C**]. The thesis is optional but it has served as one of our alternate measures of student learning OA, and it provides a useful metric for how well our students are doing in the most advanced and difficult work in Philosophy available to UAF undergraduates.

OA Questionnaire: Comprehensive vs. Course-by-Course

As a directly quantifiable OA measure, we experimented with OA questionnaires (multiple choice examinations) in a number of our required courses for the major and minor [see **Appendix B**, sample questionnaire results and analysis for the individual course PHIL F104 *Logic and Reasoning*]. These were administered at the beginning and again at the end of the semester, and results were largely as predicted. But individual course questionnaires take away class time, twice, and we have since determined it to be more effective and easier to administer and evaluate one longer questionnaire (multiple choice examination), which should still represent student learning for the entire program [see **Appendix A**, *Philosophy Major Questionnaire*]. The Questionnaire will be administered to all Philosophy majors, when they first begin in the program and again in the semester when they apply to graduate. (Current students, whatever their level, will have to take the initial examination immediately, and may be expected to score significantly higher than incoming freshmen and newly declared majors.)

Questions reflect content knowledge, theoretical and conceptual understanding, competence in the history of philosophy, and analytical abilities expected to be acquired and improved upon over the duration of the program. As we have done for individual courses, we will now compare beginning and ending results, expecting to see significantly higher percentages of correct answers. Where we do not see such outcomes—where more than 20% of students answer a question incorrectly on the exit examination—we will investigate, seek explanations, and take specific measures in our courses to address those content areas.

PHIL F499 W: The Senior Thesis in Philosophy

The B.A. Thesis in Philosophy (PHIL F499 W) was at one time a requirement for all majors, and was both our capstone course and primary instrument of OA. Since the thesis has been made optional—a curricular change based directly on previous OA results—we continue to measure student learning as exhibited in the thesis writing and defense, assessed collectively by faculty committee on a numerical grade scale 1-4 across a set of 16 evaluative criteria (see the next section). This has yielded quantitative data which we have regularly monitored and evaluated for trends and potential areas for improvement.

The results of this OA evaluation are reflected in the expanded and revised Student Guide now included as part of the syllabus for PHIL F499 W [**Appendix C**]. But as it is now an optional course, PHIL F499 W can no longer be considered a capstone for our program for OA purposes, inasmuch as it does not provide us with a measure of student learning outcomes for all majors. OA is limited only to those students who opt and qualify for the additional challenge of the thesis. It is still the culminating course for our program, however, and we think it is important and meaningful to continue to collect OA data for the thesis.

The following summary Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan reflects the updated goals and measures pursuant to prior OA results; the table provides only a brief summary of what has been explained in more detail within this full Program Review report.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
B.A. in Philosophy
 College of Liberal Arts
 2012

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose	Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation (what, when, who)
<p>UNIT MISSION STATEMENT: The liberal arts instill a passion for learning tempered by systematic systems of reasoning that make the growth and expression of knowledge an open and ever-changing process, while maintaining our commitment to the democratic, multicultural and civil society required to sustain that process <i>[excerpted from CLA]</i>.</p> <p>DEPARTMENT GOAL STATEMENT: The B.A. program in Philosophy will prepare students to become original, conscientious and rigorous thinkers, as well as knowledgeable and effective scholars and researchers in Philosophy.</p> <p>Goal 1 (CONTENT): Understanding the historically important philosophical positions.</p> <p>Goal 2 (SKILLS): Developing abilities in critical thinking and analysis, recognizing and evaluating arguments, and applying important philosophical positions to contemporary issues.</p>	1. Ability to identify and define key philosophical positions.	<p>COURSEWORK:</p> <p>Satisfactory completion of PHIL 102, 202, 322X, 351, 352, 471, and electives, evaluated by faculty according to standard rubrics.</p>	<p>QUESTIONNAIRE:</p> <p>All students will take the comprehensive entrance and exit examination; faculty will collectively score and evaluate, with reporting annually.</p>
	2. Ability to identify, reconstruct, and critically analyze arguments.	<p>COURSEWORK:</p> <p>Satisfactory completion of PHIL 104 and electives, evaluated by faculty according to standard rubrics.</p>	<p>QUESTIONNAIRE:</p> <p>Content questions on comprehensive entrance and exit examination; faculty will collectively score and evaluate, with reporting annually.</p>
	3. Ability to identify and apply philosophical positions to contemporary issues.	<p>COURSEWORK:</p> <p>Satisfactory completion of PHIL 322X, 471 and electives, evaluated by faculty according to standard rubrics.</p>	<p>QUESTIONNAIRE:</p> <p>Content questions on comprehensive entrance and exit examination; faculty will collectively score and evaluate, with reporting annually.</p>
	<p>4. Ability to undertake advanced research and writing in Philosophy (at a level demonstrating student readiness for graduate work).</p> <p>For majors with superior abilities in reading, writing, and analysis.</p>	<p>COURSEWORK:</p> <p>Optional completion of PHIL 499W, evaluated by committee according to the specialized rubric developed for the thesis (Thesis Scorecard).</p>	<p>THESIS & DEFENSE:</p> <p>Students who undertake the Senior Thesis in Philosophy will write, revise, submit, and defend a 25-30 page thesis; committee will collectively read and evaluate thesis, and conduct oral examination and defense in each semester of enrollment.</p>

Thesis Scorecard: OA Data & Summary

The following tabular data were collected from a sample size of 5 students whose theses were evaluated by committee FY08-12. Not every thesis was considered sufficiently defensible to advance to the level of oral examination. Scores are given for each question (item of evaluation) and each student (identified by number), as the average of 3-4 committee scorecards. We had originally anticipated average scores would range between 2.5 and 3.5, according to this scoring rubric, and this has been borne out across virtually all criteria of evaluation. Our analysis can thus report that results were generally as expected. Pursuant to those items with aggregate averages under 3.0—**Q3, Q4, and Q5**—we are focusing our thesis advising on the need to address these parameters more explicitly.

The scoring rubric was from 1-4 as indicated. To allow for more nuanced distinctions of evaluation, we have now revised our scale to range from 1-5 [see current Senior Thesis Scorecard in the *Syllabus and Student Guide, Appendix C*]. Evaluation questions on the scorecard are given line by line, with averages rounded to one decimal point.

1= Unacceptable 2=Acceptable 3=Good 4=Excellent N/A: Not applicable

___1. The topic is appropriately chosen and framed for a senior thesis.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q1	Avg 3.5	3.0	3.5	3.7	4.0	3.3	

___2. The thesis is clearly articulated.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q2	Avg 3.1	2.3	2.5	3.7	3.8	3.3	

___3. Key concepts are clearly defined, analyzed or explained.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q3	Avg 2.7	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0	2.0	

___4. Clear arguments for the thesis are presented.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q4	Avg 2.9	2.3	2.0	2.7	4.0	3.7	

___5. Possible objections to the thesis are considered and evaluated.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q5	Avg 2.7	1.3	2.0	2.7	3.8	3.7	

___6. Useful examples are provided.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q6	Avg 3.0	3.0	2.0	3.3	3.5	3.3	

___7. The writing is clear and effective.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q7	Avg 3.4	3.7	2.5	3.7	4.0	3.0	

___8. The writing is free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q8	Avg 3.3	3.7	2.5	4.0	4.0	2.3	

___9. The thesis demonstrates a sustained philosophical argument.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q9	Avg 3.0	1.3	3.0	3.0	3.8	4.0	

___10. The thesis shows familiarity with the relevant philosophical sources.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q10	Avg 3.1	2.7	2.5	3.7	3.5	3.3	

___11. Footnotes or endnotes are appropriate and follow protocols of scholarship.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q11	Avg 3.6	4.0	2.5	3.7	4.0	N/A	

___12. The thesis includes a comprehensive bibliography.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q12	Avg 3.4	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.8	3.3	

___13. The thesis demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue or question.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q13	Avg 3.1	2.3	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	

___14. The student was able to explain and defend the thesis orally.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q14	Avg 3.4	3.0	N/A	2.7	4.0	4.0	

___15. The student gave appropriate answers to questions about the thesis.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q15	Avg 3.3	2.3	N/A	3.0	4.0	4.0	

___16. The student gave appropriate answers to questions about the history of philosophy.

Question		Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4	Student #5	
Q16	Avg 3.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5	2.7	

APPENDIX A

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

B.A. in Philosophy Program

PHILOSOPHY MAJOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Major(s): _____

Minor: _____

Date: _____ Entrance ☐ Exit ☐

INSTRUCTIONS: This is a diagnostic instrument of student learning outcomes. It will not affect your grades in any way. Please circle the letter that best answers each question. Choose only one answer per question.

Q1. 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

Q2. 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

Q3. 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

Q4. When one infers to the best explanation (performs an *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

Q5. The conclusion that “three in four Americans believe in the paranormal” would be evaluated using the criteria to assess:

- A. Inductive reasoning
- B. Deductive reasoning
- C. Abductive reasoning

Q6. In formal logic, which of the following are *rules of inference*?

- A. Premises and conclusions
- B. Modus ponens and categorical syllogism
- C. Modus tollens and hypothetical syllogism
- D. Negation and conjunction
- E. Implication and disjunction

Q7. What kind of logic does the following notation represent: $(\exists x) (Sx \bullet \sim Px)$

- A. Set theory
- B. Categorical syllogism
- C. Disjunction
- D. Quantification

Q8. 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

For Q9-11, 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.”

Q9. This argument comes from which philosopher?

- A. Aristotle
- B. Hume
- C. Kant
- D. Mill

Q10. The above quote is used in developing which type of ethical theory?

- A. Deontological
- B. Utilitarian
- C. Egoistic
- D. Virtue Ethical

Q11. 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

Q12. *Deontological* theories are:

- A. Results-oriented
- B. Duty-based
- C. Religion-based
- D. Relativistic

Q13. “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

Q14. “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 reason

Q15. The view known as *Idealism* is best summarized by the phrase:

- A. All ideas come from experience
- B. There is no knowledge of the external world
- C. There is no object without a subject
- D. Truth is known *a priori*
- E. Reality is transcendent

Q16. The *Ontological Argument* is best summarized by the phrase:

- A. Everything must have come from a first cause or prime mover
- B. God *is* the universe, not outside of it
- C. God’s essence includes existence
- D. God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent
- E. God’s *nature* cannot be known, even if God’s *existence* can be proved

Q17. Descartes brings gods and demons into his *Meditations* in order to:

- A. Question the existence of God
- B. Appease the Inquisition’s authorities
- C. Question the most basic rules of thinking

Q18. Which of the following is LEAST a question for *Epistemology*?

- A. Truth
- B. Mind
- C. Doubt
- D. Value
- E. Science

Q19. The Presocratic philosopher most associated with the idea of unitary, indivisible *Being* is:

- A. Thales
- B. Xenophanes
- C. Aristotle
- D. Parmenides
- E. Empedocles

Q20. 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
- D. The gods that cause human actions

APPENDIX B

NOTE: The following is an example of the course-by-course OA and analysis conducted according to our prior plan. The intention was for students to take entrance and exit questionnaires along these lines in each of the courses required for the major. But implementation proved excessively time consuming and somewhat redundant, and we have consolidated these questions into a single comprehensive entrance/exit examination to be administered covering the entire program with one set of questions. The kind of question-by-question analysis shown here will be undertaken for the comprehensive *Philosophy Major Questionnaire* [Appendix A] which will be administered to each major and scored and evaluated collectively by the department faculty each year.

INDIVIDUAL COURSE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT

PHIL F104 *Logic and Reasoning*

Compiled by Joseph Thompson

SUMMARY OF REPORT: The following set of questions and instructions was given to students at the start of the Spring 2012 semester. The identical set of questions was given during the last week of classes. Data and analysis are interspersed with each question: **30** forms were returned the first time; **22** were returned at the end. Relative percentages are given with numerical counts.

This is a diagnostic instrument of student learning outcomes. You will be given a similar set of questions at the end of the course. Note that **this is not an exam** and you will not receive a score, **nor will it affect your course grade in any way**.

Please **circle the letter** corresponding to the best answer for each of the following questions.

1. What kind of proposition is the statement “No fish are mammals”?

- A. Particular and universal
- B. Affirmative and negative
- C. Universal and affirmative
- D. Universal and negative
- E. Particular and negative

Initial Correct Out of 30
16 53%

Final Correct Out of 22
17 77%

Analysis: This question tests for conceptual and factual knowledge of philosophical vocabulary, specifically quality and quantity of categorical propositions. The class was about evenly split at the beginning; outcomes show a significant increase in the proportion (if not the absolute numbers) of correct answers. Still, even more correct answers would have been expected at the end.

2. The symbols (x) and $(\exists x)$ are best translated as:

- A. "Given x " and "therefore x "
- B. "For all x " and "no x "
- C. "For all x " and "there exists an x "
- D. " x " by itself; and "the affirmation of x "
- E. " x " by itself; and "the negation of x "

Initial Correct Out of 30
18 60%

Final Correct Out of 22
21 95%

Analysis: This question tests for knowledge of symbolic logic, specifically quantification. It may be acquired in an introductory Philosophy class, but a good educated guess is also possible. There were more correct answers at the beginning than would have been expected with no background. Outcomes show a dramatic increase in the proportion of correct answers, and confirm that virtually everyone learned this.

3. Which of the following are rules of inference?

- A. Premises and conclusions
- B. Modus ponens and categorical syllogism
- C. Modus tollens and hypothetical syllogism
- D. Negation and conjunction
- E. Implication and disjunction

Initial Correct Out of 30
1 3%

Final Correct Out of 22
19 86%

Analysis: This question tests for specific knowledge of the elementary rules of formal proof in propositional logic. It is unlikely that students should have such technical knowledge prior to an introductory Logic class; 97% of the students did not know the answer at the beginning. Relative to this, outcomes show a very significant increase in the proportion of correct answers. Still, even more correct answers would be expected at the end.

4. What kind of logic does the following notation represent: $SP \neq 0$

- A. Set theory
- B. Categorical syllogism
- C. Hypothetical syllogism
- D. Disjunctive equation
- E. Quantification

Initial Correct Out of 30

4 13%

Final Correct Out of 22

20 91%

Analysis: This question tests for specific knowledge of a technical notation system. It is unlikely that students should have such knowledge prior to an introductory Logic class; only 13% gave the correct answer. Outcomes show a dramatic increase in the proportion of correct answers. The percentage is at the level of desired results.

5. What kind of logic does the following notation represent: $(x)Fx$

- A. Set theory
- B. Categorical syllogism
- C. Hypothetical syllogism
- D. Disjunctive equation
- E. Quantification

Initial Correct Out of 30

5 17%

Final Correct Out of 22

21 95%

Analysis: This question tests for basic knowledge of another notation system. One additional student was able to give the correct answer at the beginning. Outcomes again show a dramatic increase in the proportion of correct answers. The percentage is at the level of desired and anticipated results.

6. In formal logic, what is the difference between a *valid argument* and a *sound argument*?

- A. A valid argument may have false premises
- B. A sound argument may have false premises
- C. In a valid argument the conclusion follows of necessity
- D. In a sound argument the conclusion follows with some degree of probability
- E. A valid argument must have a true conclusion

Initial Correct Out of 30

19 63%

Final Correct Out of 22

17 77%

Analysis: This question tests for conceptual knowledge of logical vocabulary. Nearly two thirds were able to give the correct answer at the beginning, more than would be expected unless students had an introductory Philosophy course. Outcomes show only a modest increase in the proportion of correct answers. On such a fundamental definitional question, a higher proportion at the end would be expected and desired.

APPENDIX C

SYLLABUS and STUDENT GUIDE

PHIL F499 W

B.A. Thesis in Philosophy

- 3 credits (1+2)
 - Fulfills writing intensive requirement
 - *Prerequisites:* Lower-division writing sequence (ENGL 111X; ENGL 211X or 213X); history of philosophy sequence (PHIL 351, 352, 471) and additional upper-level coursework in the proposed topic area
 - By department permission only
 - **Instructor:** Thesis advisor (Department Chair is listed as instructor of record)
 - **Days/Times:** TBA
-

CONTENTS

- A. Overview and Rationale
- B. Expected Timetable for the Semester
- C. Course Prerequisites and Expected Prior Coursework
- D. Other Necessary Preparation in Advance of Registering for PHIL F499 W
- E. Preparing a Prospectus for the Thesis
- F. General Thesis Expectations and Guidelines
- G. Evaluation and Grading of the Thesis

A. Overview and Rationale

In years past the Senior Thesis has been a formal requirement for the Bachelor's program in Philosophy. The faculty decided that it should not be required—and indeed we do not believe it is always appropriate—for every student majoring in Philosophy. We have therefore made the thesis optional; but it should be noted that this option may be exercised only in consultation with a thesis advisor, and students must secure the approval of an advisor and the department faculty prior to registering (see section **D**).

Writing a thesis is a difficult undertaking; it demands a great deal of time and effort from the advisor as well as the student, and not everyone who attempts the thesis is successful. That is why we have prepared this guide, to help ensure student success and to be certain that students are clear about the specific expectations for PHIL F499 W.

The thesis option requires significant preparation above and beyond the formal course prerequisites (section **C**), including developed abilities in philosophical research and writing. It is intended for truly exceptional Philosophy majors, those who have demonstrated readiness for advanced study; the thesis (or some portion of it) may serve as a writing sample in the graduate school application process. Students will be permitted to enroll and continue in PHIL F499 W only when they have met the conditions and prepared the materials described in this student guide (sections **C-E**).

B. Expected Timetable for the Semester

ITEM	DATE
1. Consultation with thesis advisor; faculty approval	Prior to start of semester
2. Prospectus/diagnostic (<i>submitted to advisor</i>)	Week 1
3. Prospectus approved or returned for revision	Week 2
4. Conference and progress report on first draft	Week 6
5. First draft of thesis (<i>submitted to advisor</i>)	Week 8
6. Conference and comments on first draft	Week 9
7. Revised draft of thesis (<i>submitted to advisor</i>)	Week 11
8. Conference and comments on revised draft	Week 12
9. Final version of thesis (<i>copy to each member of thesis committee</i>)	Week 14
10. Thesis defense/oral examination	Finals Week

C. Course Prerequisites and Expected Prior Coursework

The thesis is meant to be the culmination of undergraduate study in Philosophy at UAF. In addition to the lower-division writing sequence (ENGL 111X; ENGL 211X or 213X), students are expected to have successfully completed the history of philosophy sequence required for the major (PHIL 351, 352, 471) as well as additional upper-level coursework in the proposed topic area of Philosophy.

D. Other Necessary Preparation in Advance of Registering for PHIL F499 W

Students planning to register for PHIL F499 W must consult with a faculty member under whose supervision they propose to write the thesis. This meeting must take place prior to the start of the semester; it is advisable to begin work on the prospectus (section E) and to have at least a working draft in hand at the time of this initial meeting. Students are expected to have already done substantial reading in the topic area, and to have a specific list of sources (primary and secondary) which they plan to focus on. Upon provisional approval of the thesis advisor, the department faculty as a committee will determine student eligibility and readiness for thesis work, and appropriateness of the proposed project.

E. Preparing a Prospectus for the Thesis

The formal prospectus for the thesis, to be submitted to the advisor by the end of the first week of the semester, will serve as a diagnostic for assessment of the student's writing ability and general competence in Philosophy. It is expected to demonstrate the suitability of the proposed project as well as the student's readiness to complete such a project in a timely manner. This is an ungraded exercise and will either be approved or returned with comments for required revisions by the end of the second week of the semester. Failure to produce a satisfactory prospectus after revision will result in the student being withdrawn from PHIL F499 W before the end of the third week of the semester.

The prospectus should be 3-4 pages describing the proposed project, along with a select bibliography of primary and secondary sources to be consulted. In preparing the prospectus, students are expected to address the following considerations:

- What is the question/problem at issue? Within which branch of philosophy does the question/problem fall (e.g. metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics, comparative philosophy, etc.)?
- How and why does this question/problem have philosophical import?
- How do you propose to engage the question/problem? What will be your methodological focus or interpretive strategy?
- What contribution do you anticipate your thesis will make to this question/problem?
- What sources will be your primary focus? How and why are the proposed bibliographical materials relevant to your thesis?
- To the extent possible at this point, give an outline of the principal topic headings within the proposed thesis.

F. General Thesis Expectations and Guidelines

The recommended length of the thesis is 25-30 pages, double-spaced, following one of the standard style and bibliographic formats (e.g. MLA, Chicago Manual, APA). The content of the thesis should show a balance of exposition of text, reconstruction of argument, and critical commentary.

G. Evaluation and Grading of the Thesis

The student will defend the thesis during a one-hour oral examination scheduled during finals week. The defense shall be open to the public. The thesis is approved upon majority vote of the thesis reading committee, comprised of the advisor and at least two other full-time Philosophy faculty members. The committee shall determine a letter grade for the course (using the plus/minus grading system) by majority vote, having evaluated and scored the thesis and defense according to the following rubric and criteria:

1: Unsatisfactory 2: Satisfactory 3: Good 4: Very Good 5: Excellent x: N/A

- ___1. The topic is appropriately chosen and framed for a senior thesis.
- ___2. The thesis is clearly articulated.
- ___3. Key concepts are clearly defined, analyzed or explained.
- ___4. Clear arguments for the thesis are presented.
- ___5. Possible objections to the thesis are considered and evaluated.
- ___6. Useful examples are provided.
- ___7. The writing is clear and effective.
- ___8. The writing is free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors.
- ___9. The thesis demonstrates a sustained philosophical argument.
- ___10. The thesis shows familiarity with the relevant philosophical sources.
- ___11. Footnotes or endnotes are appropriate and follow protocols of scholarship.
- ___12. The thesis includes a comprehensive bibliography.
- ___13. The thesis demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue or question.
- ___14. The student was able to explain and defend the thesis orally.
- ___15. The student gave appropriate answers to questions about the thesis.
- ___16. The student gave appropriate answers to questions about the history of philosophy.

Support Services

Students are encouraged to seek the assistance available from university support services such as the Writing Center & UAF's Library and Computing staff. The thesis advisor and reading committee will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (208 WHIT, 474-5655) to provide accommodation for students with disabilities.

Sample Title Page

No page number should appear on the title page. The title page should spell out the entire thesis title and subtitle in capital letters, with formatting and additional capitalization as follows:

FULL TITLE AND SUBTITLE IN CAPITALS: CENTERED AND DOUBLE-SPACED

A THESIS

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