

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
WSU Philosophy Program  
Self-Study Document, Fall 2016

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The following is a summary of the self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full, self-study document itself.

**Mission Statement:**

The philosophy program seeks to impart knowledge and skills that fall under the categories of liberal education, methodology, and application. A major in philosophy first and foremost exposes students to the intellectual history of Western Civilization, though it does not limit itself to this tradition. Students in our program complete coursework in at least one major historical period (Ancient, Medieval, or Early Modern), while taking other classes that regularly include thinkers from various historical eras. Students who major in philosophy also learn to apply principles of sound reasoning and train in value theory.

In sum, a philosophy major offers students the opportunity to learn the foundations of an intellectual discipline that forms a central part of a liberal education, while at the same time developing practical, marketable skills including critical thinking skills, communication skills, creative thinking skills, research skills, and the ability to understand the interrelations between various fields/subjects.

**Curriculum:**

Our program offers both a B.A. and a minor in philosophy. Students may also choose to incorporate philosophy as one of their Bachelor of Integrated Studies areas of emphasis.

We currently list 25 courses in our catalog—5 lower division and 20 upper-division. This is an increase of 2 upper-division courses since our last review (a philosophy of mind course and an experimental course number for potential new offerings). Our lower-division classes are all offered at least once annually, with three being offered nearly every semester, including summers. Our upper-division classes are offered on a rotating basis, with our core courses being offered once every two years. Because of our small size, two of our upper-division courses are not offered regularly.

## **Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:**

During summer 2012, the philosophy program identified learning outcomes and articulated them to each of our core courses, and we began assessing courses in fall of that year. (Prior to that year, the Senior Capstone Seminar was the only course that we assessed.) All upper-division courses are assessed using a rubric developed during summer 2012 (see Appendix H). It was also during this time that we began assessing our general education courses, according to standards set by the university's General Education Assessment and Improvement Committee. With the exception of one class, we have been very satisfied with the assessment outcomes for our classes.

Beginning in fall 2012, we implemented an anonymous online exit interview for all of our graduating majors and minors. (Questions appear as Appendix I. Full student responses are available upon request.) Overall, students are highly satisfied with our program, with the exception of our relatively sparse upper-division offerings. As numerous students recognize, this problem stems from our having only three full-time faculty members, which is an ongoing limitation of our program and something we will continue to work to rectify.

## **Academic Advising:**

All students who sign up to be a philosophy major or minor are directed to the program advisor for an orientation session at which all program requirements are discussed. Students are also provided both a program brochure and a graduation checklist they can use to ensure that they are on track for a timely graduation. Other topics, including course descriptions and career opportunities, are discussed at the student's request. Subsequent to this, all majors and minors are encouraged to meet with the program advisor at least once annually. Finally, all pending graduates are required to undergo a final progress check to ensure that they will have completed all requirements by their graduation date. For final graduation sign-off, students must complete an anonymous exit exam over ChiTester.

## **Faculty:**

The philosophy program current has three full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty, all of whom hold a Ph.D. in the discipline. In addition, the program employs a varying number of adjunct instructors each semester. For the 2016-17 academic year, the program has hired a one-year visiting instructor to cover for a maternity leave (fall 2016) and sabbatical (spring 2017). All faculty within the program are regularly evaluated and have established a record of teaching and research excellence.

### Program Support:

The department as a whole receives excellent support from the College's Dean's office, including an annual travel budget of roughly \$950 per faculty member, technology support for both our offices and classrooms, and academic advising for all of our students. Our department staff person has been excellent, and our library resources are strong for a program of our size.

### Relations with External Community:

Our faculty are involved with a number of external groups, including professional organizations, non-profits, and educational groups.

### Student, Faculty, Contract/Adjunct Faculty and Staff Statistics:

Full-time faculty statistics:

Name	Gender	Rank	Tenure Status	Highest Degree	Years of Teaching
Fudge, Robert	M	Full	Tenured	Ph.D.	12
Greene, Richard	M	Full	Tenured	Ph.D.	16
Willard, Mary Beth	F	Assistant*	Tenure-eligible	Ph.D.	6

Contract/Adjunct faculty statistics:

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Rank	Highest Degree	Years of Teaching	Courses Taught
Jason Goltz	M	W	Adjunct	Ph.D.	Spring 2014 - present	1000, 1120
Christopher Healow	M	W	Visiting Instructor	ABD	Fall 2016 - present	1000, 1120, 3200
Michael Hermon	M	W	Adjunct	Ph.D.	Fall 2008 - Fall 2013	1000, 1120, 2200
Michael Hill	M	W	Adjunct	J.D., M.A.	Fall 2011 - Spring 2012	1000, 1250
Adam Jonesinski	M	W	Adjunct	M.A.	Fall 2007 - Spring 2012	1000, 1120
Marc Nelson	M	W	Adjunct	M.A.	Spring 2012 - present	1000, 1120, 2920
Rachel Robison-Greene	F	W	Adjunct	ABD	Fall 2011 - present	1000, 1120

Staff Profile:

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Job Title	Years of Employment	Areas of Expertise
Debra Strait	F	W	Administrative Specialist I	2009 - 2016	General office administration
Nicole Gabor	F	W	Administrative Specialist I	2016 - present	General office administration; Microsoft Office & Windows; basic accounting

Student Statistics:

<b>Political Science and Philosophy</b>	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Political Science	6,173	6,238	5,175	6,482	7,309
Philosophy	4,482	4,427	3,594	4,069	4,086
<b>Student Credit Hours Total</b>	<b>10,655</b>	<b>10,665</b>	<b>8,769</b>	<b>10,551</b>	<b>11,395</b>
<b>Student FTE Total</b>	<b>355.17</b>	<b>355.50</b>	<b>292.30</b>	<b>351.70</b>	<b>379.83</b>
<b>Student Majors</b>					
Political Science	136	132	109	96	100
Philosophy *	27	24	18	19	18
<b>Program Graduates</b>					
Political Science	22	21	16	9	14
Philosophy (first majors only)	1	3	6	4	3
Philosophy (first and second majors) **	1	6	8	5	3
Philosophy Minors ***	0	4	3	9	2
<b>Student Demographic Profile</b>					
Female	47	50	38	35	42
Male	116	106	89	80	76
<b>Faculty FTE Total</b>	<b>16.75</b>	<b>16.15</b>	<b>14.54</b>	<b>15.49</b>	n/a
Adjunct FTE	7.64	7.04	6.11	6.38	n/a
Contract FTE	9.11	9.11	8.43	9.11	n/a
Student/Faculty Ratio	<b>21.20</b>	<b>22.01</b>	<b>20.10</b>	<b>22.70</b>	n/a

*Note:* Except as noted below, data provided by Institutional Effectiveness

\* We find the reliability of these numbers suspect, as the university systems only report on first majors, and many of our students have declared philosophy as their second major.

\*\* Because we have tracked our graduates during the past five years, we have been able to confirm with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness that this row reflects our true number of graduates.

\*\*\* Data compiled by the Philosophy Program Director.

## Results of Previous Program Reviews:

Problem Identified	Action Taken	Progress
1. No established procedure for gathering/storing assessment outcome data for the Senior Capstone Seminar.	All area exam data are stored on ChiTester. Assessment data concerning completion of the capstone project are stored by supervising faculty and reported annually to the Program Director for inclusion in the annual assessment report.	This procedure was implemented beginning spring 2013 and has been maintained ever since.
2. Insufficient evidence showing that gen ed courses meet established learning outcomes.	In summer 2012, the philosophy program faculty established an assessment schedule to ensure that all gen ed courses meet learning outcomes. The results of these assessments are reported to the Program Director for inclusion in the annual assessment report.	This procedure was implemented beginning fall 2012 and has been maintained ever since.
3. Feedback from program alumni is primarily anecdotal.	In summer 2012, the philosophy program faculty wrote an exit interview that must be completed by all graduating majors and minors before they are cleared for graduation. Responses to this are anonymous and are stored on ChiTester.	This exit interview was implemented beginning fall 2012, and all graduating majors and minors have been held to the requirement.
4. Insufficient records kept on adjunct teaching.	Beginning spring 2012, the Program Director began keeping records on all courses taught by adjunct faculty.	This procedure was implemented beginning spring 2012 and has been maintained ever since.
5. Learning outcomes not included on departmental syllabi.	Prior to each semester, the Program Director now sends out a reminder e-mail with all learning outcomes to be included on the relevant syllabi.	This procedure was implemented beginning fall 2012 and has been maintained ever since.
6. There is no established process for gathering and storing program assessment materials.	Beginning fall 2012, the Program Director began compiling and reporting assessment materials on a regular basis.	This procedure was implemented beginning fall 2012 and has been maintained ever since.
7. As identified by the previous review team, the implementation of a philosophy major has created a pressing need for an additional faculty member to cover additional courses. This is especially so, given the very large number of student credit hours produced each semester.	The philosophy program faculty continue to remind the Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences of the ongoing need for a fourth philosophy faculty member.	This effort is ongoing.

**Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Michael Wutz	Rodney H. Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor of English	Weber State University
Michael Popich	Professor of Philosophy	Westminster College