

Undergraduate Assessment of Student Learning Report
Report for Academic Year: 2026

A. Program Information

Department: Philosophy

Program: Philosophy

Contact Name: Bruce Glymour

Contact Email: glymour@ksu.edu

Program assessment website: http://www.k-state.edu/philos/future_students/assessment.html

B. Outcome Reporting

Include the following information for each outcome assessed this year:

Student Learning Outcome

We assessed all five of our five SLOs in Academic Year 2026 (F25-S26):

SLO 1: Students should be able to analyze philosophical arguments using informal methods to differentiate valid arguments, invalid arguments, and arguments that, while valid, rely on contentious premises.

SLO 2: Students should be able to use semantic methods to assess the validity of arguments in sentential logic, and should be able to construct derivations in first order logic.

SLO 3: Students should be able to compose extended philosophical essays in clear prose that meet professional ethical standards of charity, open-mindedness, avoidance of ad hominem attacks, and proper citation of others' ideas.

SLO 4: Students should be able to describe and apply a range of important philosophical theories in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, social and political philosophy and decision theory.

SLO 5: Students should be able to verbally debate philosophical theories, defending and critiquing alternatives in a manner that meets professional ethical standards of charity, open-mindedness, avoidance of ad hominem attacks, and proper credit given to others' ideas.

Assessment Method(s)

Describe the assessment tools, measures, instruments, and/or forms of evidence utilized to demonstrate students' achievement of the learning outcomes. Provide information on who is assessed (what course(s) and students) and expected levels of student performance (minimum expected level, proficient level, etc.).

A total of 133 student-assessments were conducted over 5 SLOs.

SLO 1 was assessed by direct measures using multiple instruments in four classes (Philo 330, Philo 335 and Philo 625). A total of 82 students were assessed; in total assessments employed 15 instruments, all direct.

SLO 2 was assessed in one class (Philo 320). A total of 17 students were assessed using 6 direct instruments.

SLO 3 was assessed by direct measures in four classes (Philo 330, Philo 335, Philo 346 and Philo 625). A total of 81 students were assessed using 13 direct instruments.

SLO 4 was assessed in four classes (Philo 305, Philo 330, Philo 335 and Philo 346). A total of 104 students were assessed, using 18 instruments, all direct.

SLO 5 was assessed in one class (Philo 335). 21 students were assessed, all by direct observation of class discussion and presentations.

Philo 305, 320, 330, 335 and 346 are all required core courses for majors. Philo 625 is an elective course populated by majors fulfilling elective requirements within the major.

We have Program and Class specific objectives. We aim to ensure that our students have mastered the skills relevant to each SLO, and that as many as possible show truly excellent abilities. We judge a

student to have mastered an SLO if his or her average score across all measures of the skills associated with the SLO is at least 75%; we judge the student to have demonstrated excellence if that average is at least 90%. Class Specific Objectives: we aim for each class to contribute to student success, and judge this by class-specific performance on relevant SLOs. Specifically, we want a) the mean score over all measures of an SLO, in each class, to be at least 75%, and b) we desire that 90% of the students in a class demonstrate mastery of the SLOs measured in that class. Program Specific Objectives: for each SLO, we want mean student performance to be at least 75%, with at least 90% of our students exhibiting mastery and 30% of our students exhibiting excellence. Examples of direct measures can be found at <https://www.k-state.edu/philos/student-success/assessment.html>

Results Calendar Year 2024

Table 1: Average of Student Performance by Class and SLO

Classes	SLO				
	1	2	3	4	5
305				88%	
320		94%			
330	88%		89%	88%	
335	92%		91%	93%	92%
346			96%	98%	
625	89%		87%		

Table 2: Class Performance by Achievement (Excellence) and SLO

Classes	SLO				
	1	2	3	4	5
305				60%	
320		70%			
330	66%		78%	59%	
335	71%		76%	86%	57%
346			88%	94%	
625	58%		33%		

Table 2: Class Performance by Achievement (Mastery) and SLO

Classes	SLO				
	1	2	3	4	5
305				86%	
320		100%			
330	88%		100%	90%	
335	100%		90%	95%	100%
346	91%		100%	100%	
625	83%		100%		

Program Performance	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5
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Grand Average	90%	94%	93%	89%	92%
Excellence	67%	70%	74%	66%	57%
Mastery	90%	100%	99%	90%	92%

Class Specific Objectives: We note that all sections met benchmark goals with respect to overall average, mastery, and excellence, excepting only Philo 330 with 88% mastery for SLO1 and Philo 645 with 83% mastery for SLO1. The result in Philo 625 is explicable as a result of two things: a small class size of 22 of whom only two students failed to gain mastery (though both had scores above 70), and the fact that this was the first run of a new preparation for the instructor. We think no special action is required, as normal changes to content and pedagogy after a first-run should improve performance. The result in Philo 330 is more concerning. It is possible that the result is a consequence of misleading instruments, and also that changes in pedagogy are needed. We will undertake changes of both kinds for the next iteration of Philo 330.

Year-on-year comparison for class specific objectives: Changes in pedagogy in Philo 330 undertaken in Spring 2024 produced superior performance in Spring 2025, but Spring 2026 reverted to form. It is not clear whether this results from pedagogical adjustments that need to be rethought or poorly designed instruments. We have adjusted both.

Program Specific Objectives: All benchmark program goals were successfully achieved.

Year-on-year comparison for program specific objectives: Year-on-year comparisons reveal modest variation in all metrics, none requiring explanation beyond normal sample variance.

C. Program Self Review

Faculty Review of Annual Assessment Data and Process

Discussion of data rendered agreement that the reworking of Philo 330 pedagogy on one topic (perfect obligations) and changes to one related assessment instrument are in order. Mastery levels are only slightly below benchmark, so unless scores drop considerably in Spring 2027, only minor adjustments seem necessary.

Program Improvements

Modest improvements in some outcomes, paired with modest decreases in others. All program benchmarks are well above benchmark.

Future Plans

As above, we will assess Philo 330 again in Spring of 2027, and the program as a whole in at the end of Fall, 2027.

Summary of this Report

In academic year of 25-26, the Philosophy Department succeeded in all Program Objectives and all but one course objective. We believe the small changes in pedagogy in Philo 330 will increase mastery levels above benchmark.