

Assessment Report AY 2023-2024

1. Identifying Information

Saint Ignatius Institute
Certificate Program (Saint Ignatius Institute—living learning community)
Erin Brigham, SII Director

SII Faculty Steering Committee members
Mark Miller, Thomas Cavanaugh

Submitted: November 8, 2024

2. Mission Statement

Following revisions in 2019/2020, the mission statement is as follows:

Mission Statement:

The St. Ignatius Institute is a core living/learning community at the University of San Francisco (USF) that is distinctively Jesuit. The SII curriculum and community challenge students to think critically and creatively; to reason and ask questions; and to attain a deeper understanding of the human experience across time and space. Our academic approach is multidisciplinary, historical, and global. Our curriculum integrates the study of influential ideas from around the globe to engage with the challenging realities of our world. Through intellectual inquiry, community involvement, service to others, and exploration of spirituality, SII students tackle “Great Questions”—the ideas and issues people have debated and discussed for centuries. Through SII core classes and symposia, students are challenged to explore new ideas, uncover old theories, listen respectfully to opinions different than their own, and, in the senior symposium, reflect on their own education and future paths.

3. Program Learning Outcomes

1. Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)
2. Interpret and analyze complex and contested histories and contexts of Christianity in the world before 1800
3. Employ interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, or discipline-specific methods in scholarly inquiry
4. Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources
5. Evaluate challenges facing local and global communities in light of community engagement
6. Articulate their own intellectual and personal gifts in light of major world religions, particularly the Catholic, Jesuit traditions of *cura personalis*, finding God in all things, discernment of one’s deepest desires, contemplation in action, and becoming people for (and with) others

Area D Core Learning Outcomes

Philosophy D1

- Understand the value of thinking philosophically by reflecting on the meaning of one's own life, the conceptual foundations of human actions and beliefs, the nature of the self and of human responsibility
- Understand and discuss coherently the central philosophical issues, such as the problem of evil, the existence of God, free will, the mind/body relation, human knowledge, and the question of being
- Demonstrate an ability to identify and articulate, both orally and in writing, the primary philosophical themes and issues found in the writings of the major philosophers
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate philosophical arguments critically, both orally and in writing, using philosophical methods that have been developed by either historical or contemporary philosophers

Theology D2

- Human Dimensions of Religion, Theology, and Spirituality. Understand their own spirituality and recognize how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience
- Religious Diversity. Understand, differentiate, and appreciate various religious traditions, as encouraged by Vatican II's stance on the Catholic Church's relationship with other faiths. This understanding will entail the creedal vision, moral teachings, historical context, social expression, and key rites and symbols of these faith traditions
- Social Justice. Investigate and discuss how religious and theological traditions can work effectively for social justice and for the good of the entire human family and the environment that sustains it

Ethics D3

- Identify and articulate central ethical problems concerning equality, justice, and rights, and understand the role these play in personal and professional life
- Compare and contrast major ethical theories, to show how actions can be determined to be just or unjust, right or wrong, or good or bad, and to demonstrate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of major ethical theories
- Investigate ways of settling ethical disputes in arriving at ethical judgments
- Think and write critically about classic and contemporary moral issues
- Identify the contributions of diversity and recognize the challenge that it presents in resolving contemporary ethical issues
- Demonstrate an ability to apply ethical theories and values in personal decision-making

4. Curricular Map

Following revisions in 2019/2020, the certificate requirements are as follows:

Students complete 8 units of the following coursework from at least two of the three areas listed below.

Philosophy (D1)

- SII 210 - Ancient Philosophy

Theology (D2)

- SII 106 - Sacred Scripture
- SII 201 - Catholic Thought
- SII 203 - Rel & Cult in Late Antiquity
- SII 205 - The Battle for Middle Earth
- SII 220 - Catholic Social Thought

Ethics (D3)

- SII 214 - Theories of Ethics
- SII 215 - Ethical Theory/Practice

SII Symposium (8 units)

One 2-unit SII Symposium per year is required for the first three years, and Senior Symposium is required in the final year.

5. Assessment schedule between APRs; description of the methodology for the required and/or alternative assessment process; description of results

Following our indirect assessment last year, which analyzed SII symposia syllabi with attention to PLOs 1 and 4, we directly assessed student work from Fall 2023 symposia. Specifically, the SII director and faculty steering committee (Erin Brigham, Mark Miller, Tom Cavanaugh) assessed written work from two symposia using the following rubric, again focusing on PLO 1 and 4 (see below).

Rubric to assess student work:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
PLO 1: Identify major themes, key concepts, and perennial	<i>To exceed expectations students must identify and give examples of a comprehensive amount of major</i>	<i>To meet expectations students must identify and give examples of a high number of major themes, key concepts and perennial questions.</i>	<i>Students that are below expectations are not able to clearly and accurately identify major themes, key</i>	<i>A student does not meet expectations if there is little to no (or inaccurate) reference to major themes,</i>

questions in works across the humanities (arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion and theology)	<i>themes, key concepts and perennial questions and engage in relevant analysis.</i>	<i>(In this category, analysis may not yet be present, even at an introductory level.)</i>	<i>concepts and perennial questions.</i>	<i>key concepts and perennial questions.</i>
PLO 4: Articulate critical arguments using relevant primary and secondary sources	<i>To exceed expectations students must demonstrate an ability to articulate critical arguments with several, well-chosen and well-cited particular references to and analysis of primary and secondary sources.</i>	<i>To meet expectations students must demonstrate an ability to articulate critical arguments with some, well-chosen and well-cited particular references to primary and secondary sources with an emerging ability to engage in the analysis of primary and secondary sources.</i>	<i>Students that are below expectations show very little ability to engage primary and secondary sources to develop critical arguments.</i>	<i>A student does not meet expectations if they do not articulate critical arguments and/or do not engage with the relevant primary and secondary sources.</i>

We provided individual assessment of all student work from one assignment per course before meeting to discuss the results. In total, we assessed 14 written assignments (11 from one course and 3 from the other¹). There was considerable overlap in our assessments, with almost all students meeting expectations for PLO 1 and the majority of students meeting expectations for PLO 4. The following chart represents the combined scores provided by three faculty evaluators:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
PLO 1	4	32	7	0
PLO 4	4	25	15	0

¹ This represents the total number of USF students enrolled in the class. This symposium also included Fromm students whose learning was not assessed through written work.

The student work assessed suggested an overall strength related to PLO 1: identifying themes and perennial questions across the humanities. In our discussion of student work related to PLO 4, we identified an opportunity for growth related to student ability to develop critical arguments using primary sources.

6. Description of how the results were shared with faculty and how your department/program responded to the results. Plans for future improvement or assessment of your program.

The department will send a summary of our results to SII faculty with an invitation to meet with the faculty steering committee to discuss the assessment process and outcomes. We will also alert faculty to the assessment plan for the coming year. (We missed the opportunity to assess student work from one SII symposium because the faculty member was not asked to keep student work for the purpose of assessment.)

For the next assessment, we will return to our indirect assessment of SII syllabi to better understand if our previous communication made a difference in how PLOs are articulated and connected to relevant assignments in the syllabi. In our communication around the results of direct assessment, we will alert faculty to the assessment plan.

7. Discussion of any significant feedback from your previous year's report and how your department/program responded to that feedback.

Feedback from our previous year's report highlighted the need to create more consistent and explicit connections between PLOs and assignments in the syllabi. In response, we revised syllabi guidelines for symposia and sent them to the SII faculty. We will close the loop on this process through our analysis of syllabi next year and clear communication with faculty about the assessment plan.

The direct assessment of student work related to PLO 1 and 4 followed the indirect assessment from last year. As we continue to work toward consistency and alignment in all syllabi, we found that the majority of student work met expectations related to these learning outcomes.