Self Study
Department of Philosophy, University of San Francisco
Final edited version, completed March 16, 2020

II. Curriculum

A. Major and Minor in Philosophy

The Department offers a Major and a Minor, along with a Senior Thesis in Philosophy.

Major in Philosophy. In fulfilling the Major, students learn both historical and contemporary philosophy in both the analytic and continental traditions. The Major in Philosophy requires the completion of 44 units in philosophy: 16 of these units are required courses; the remaining 28 units are electives (of these, 20 units must be taken at the 300 or 400 level). As is the case throughout the College of Arts & Sciences as of Fall 2019, these courses require a minimum enrollment of fifteen (previously this was twelve) though exceptions may be made. Seminars have a maximum enrollment of twenty, while some of the required courses may have a maximum enrollment of thirty (although most required courses are capped at twenty as well).

Two of the required courses for the major cover the History of Philosophy: "Ancient & Medieval Philosophy" (310) examines the origins of Western Philosophy with the Greeks, and Medieval developments of it by Islamic, Jewish, and Christian thinkers;
"Modern Philosophy" (312) focuses on knowledge and political community as
philosophy changed in tandem with the revolutionary changes that occurred in science and politics. The other two required courses are "Ethics for Majors" (315), which covers both ethical theory and social issues (and serves to fulfill the Core D3 requirement); and "Logic" (319), which introduces students to contemporary symbolic logic, including propositional and predicate logic.

Philosophy Major Program Learning Outcomes
1. Students identify primary philosophical themes found in the writings of major ancient, medieval, modern, and moral philosophers.
2. Students write historical and argumentative essays on central philosophical issues.
3. Students develop philosophical arguments using formal and informal methods originated by historical and contemporary philosophers.

Learning outcomes 1 and 2 are achieved by foundational courses 310, 312, and 315; and upper-division electives. Learning outcome 3 is achieved by foundational required courses 310, 312, 315, and 319; and upper-division electives.

Minor in Philosophy. The minor requires the completion of 20 units in philosophy. Students typically declare a Minor in Philosophy after having taken a Core D1 Philosophy or Core D3 Ethics course. However, it is not necessary to enroll in any 100- or 200- level courses in Philosophy, and students interested in declaring a Philosophy Minor may enroll in 310 (Ancient & Medieval Philosophy) to satisfy their Core D1 Philosophy requirement, and 315 (Ethics for Majors) to satisfy their Core D3 Ethics requirement. To complete the minor, they take three additional electives at the 300 or 400 level.

Philosophy Minor Program Learning Outcomes
1. Students identify primary philosophical themes found in the writings of major philosophers.
2. Students write historical and argumentative essays on central philosophical issues.
3. Students develop philosophical arguments using methods originated by historical and contemporary philosophers.

These learning outcomes are achieved through foundational courses 310 and 315 and through upper-division elective courses.

Philosophy electives may be chosen from a wide variety of courses. Elective content is almost entirely up to the individual faculty members who are in line for teaching seminars any particular semester. However, the Chair makes some effort to steer faculty into courses that do not overlap and that provide genuine alternatives for students taking more than one course. Upper-division philosophy electives are taught on rotation by full-time faculty. Typically, philosophy faculty teach one upper-division elective every other year. Elective courses fall (roughly) into five categories (Directed Studies are marked by an asterisk):

I. History of Philosophy & Historical Periods

PHIL 330: Reading Aquinas (Cavanaugh, Spring 2015)
PHIL 482: Topics in the History of Philosophy: Passivity, Vulnerability and Suffering (Oele, Spring 2015)
PHIL 482: Topics in the History of Philosophy: Augustine (Torre, Spring 2015)
PHIL 399: Writing About Aquinas* (Cavanaugh, Spring 2017)
PHIL 482: Topics in the History of Philosophy: Stoics and Neo-Platonists (Torre, Fall 2017)
PHIL 380: Nietzsche/Nietzscheans (Kuperus, Fall 2017)
PHIL 399: Heidegger* (Kuperus, Summer 2018)
PHIL 403: Pragmatism (Stump, Fall 2016 and Fall 2018)
PHIL 405: Analytic Philosophy, Frege to Wittgenstein (Stump, Fall 2015)
PHIL 482: Augustine and his Influence (Torre, Fall 2019)
PHIL 482: Special Topics: Philosophy of Nature (Kuperus, Spring 2020)
PHIL 482: Special Topics: Indian Philosophy (Ashton, Spring 2020)

II. Social and Political Philosophy

PHIL 381: Advanced Social and Political Philosophy (Sundstron, Spring 2015)
PHIL 399: Feminist Legal Theory* (Taylor, Intersession 2015)
PHIL 399: Theories of Justice* (Sundstrom, Intersession 2015)
PHIL 399: Theories of Justice (Sundstrom, Fall 2015)
PHIL 483: Human Rights, East and West (Kim, Fall 2015)
PHIL 380: Philosophy and Economics (Taylor, Spring 2016)
PHIL 380: Free Will (Vargas, Fall 2014)
PHIL 483: Families and Formative Politics (Kim, Fall 2016)
PHIL 399: Philosophy of Multiculturalism (Sundstrom, Spring 2017)
PHIL 381: Advanced Social and Political Philosophy (Sundstrom, Fall 2018, Spring 2020)
PHIL 399: Social and Poststructuralist Feminism (Taylor, Spring 2019)
PHIL 483: Human Rights, East and West (Kim, Spring 2019)
PHIL 335: Feminist Thought (Mason, Fall 2019)

III. Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science

PHIL 399: Ecopsychology (Paris, Fall 2015)
PHIL 325: Metaphysics (Mason, Spring 2016)
PHIL 399: Second-Semester Logic* (Stump, Spring 2016)
PHIL 399: Philosophy of Social Science* (Stump, Fall 2016)
PHIL 399: Philosophy of Free Will* (Vargas, Fall 2016)
PHIL 482: Topics in the History of Philosophy: Heidegger and Sloterdijk (Oele, Spring 2017)
PHIL 480: Truth, Lies, and Bullshit (Mason, Fall 2017)
PHIL 399: Philosophy of Science* (Stump, Summer 2018)
PHIL 399: Philosophy of Technology* (Stump, Spring 2019)
PHIL 402: Phenomenology (Oele, Spring 2019)

IV. Value Theory

PHIL 339: Moral Psychology (Vargas, Fall 2016)
PHIL 484: Absolutism vs. Consequentialism (Cavanaugh, Fall 2015)
PHIL 399: Business Ethics* (Sundstrom, Spring 2016)
PHIL 373: Animal Ethics (Paris, Spring 2017)
PHIL 399: Environmental Ethics* (Paris, Summer 2017)
PHIL 399: Confucian Ethics and Social Responsibility* (Kim, Summer 2017)
PHIL 373: Contemporary Ethical Problems (Paris, Fall 2018)
PHIL 399: Human Enhancement* (Paris, Fall 2014)
PHIL 484: Topics in Ethics (Paris, Fall 2014; Cavanaugh, Spring 2019)
PHIL 339: Moral Psychology (Taylor, Fall 2019)

V. Eastern Philosophy

PHIL 482: Buddhism (Ashton, Spring 2018)

VI. Aesthetics

PHIL 377: Philosophy and Literature (Taylor, Fall 2014)
PHIL 399: Aesthetics (Taylor, Spring 2015)

Size of Major and Minor

The total number of philosophy majors began to decline in 2014, hitting a low of 36 students in 2016-2017 when an unusually large class of majors graduated. However, the philosophy major rebounded and grew to 51 students in 2017-2018 and 55 students in 2018-2019. Over the past five years (since our last self-study in 2013-2014), the major has grown by 20 percent and the minor has grown by 55 percent.

This growth is attributable to at least three sources. First, there was a particularly large incoming class of freshman philosophy majors in the fall semester of 2018. Second, beginning in the spring semester of 2017, the department began conducting classroom visits to promote the major and minor in philosophy courses with D1 and D3 Core designations. These visits have helped the department to rebuild its major and to substantially grow the size of the minor. Thirdly, since Fall 2017 we have collaborated with the Admissions Office and sent out letters to philosophically-minded admitted students, explaining to them the value of studying philosophy at USF. More specifically, we worked with admissions to send letters to admitted students who indicated an interest in philosophy, but it is still too early to tell whether this has helped to grow our majors and minors. In the fall of 2018, we had a very large incoming class of freshman philosophy majors, but the year after we did not (the letters in both years were similar).

Academic Year	Majors	Minors
2014-2015	45	19
2015-2016	40	25
2016-2017	36	22
2017-2018	51	42
2018-2019	55	34

Senior Thesis in Philosophy

The Philosophy Department offers all its majors the opportunity to write a Senior Thesis. We wrote the requirements for the Senior Thesis in Spring 2015 to replace the former Honors Thesis. Since we rewrote the requirements, and opened up the thesis to all interested majors, we have gradually seen an increase of students writing a Senior Thesis (about one per year). In Spring 2019, three students successfully defended their senior thesis, which testifies to the growing reputation and success of the Senior Thesis.

B. The Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum (i.e., general education) requirements for every USF undergraduate mandate that one Philosophy course be taken (referred to as Core, Area D1).

The Department regularly offers a variety of courses that satisfy the Core D1 requirement, seven of which are First Year Seminars (PHIL 195):

> PHIL 110: Great Philosophical Questions
> PHIL 195: The Meaning of Life
> PHIL 195: What is Wisdom?
> PHIL 195: Existentialism in San Francisco
> PHIL 195: Minds and Machines
> PHIL 195 The Human Animal
> PHIL 195: God, Science, Life
> PHIL 195: Asian Traditions in San Francisco
> PHIL 202: Philosophy of Religion
> PHIL 203: Social and Political Philosophy
> PHIL 204: Philosophy of Science
> PHIL 209: Aesthetics
> PHIL 211: Ancient Philosophy
> PHIL 220: Asian Philosophy
> PHIL 230: Philosophy of the Human Person
> PHIL 231: African American Philosophy
> PHIL 242: Latin American Philosophy
> PHIL 251: Mind, Freedom, Knowledge
> PHIL 253: African American Philosophy
> PHIL 256: Existentialism
> PHIL 310: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy (majors and minors only)

The Core Curriculum requirements for every USF undergraduate also mandate that one Ethics course be taken (referred to as Core, Area D3). This Core requirement may be satisfied by taking an approved D3 course offered by the Theology and Religious Studies Department or by taking a relevant course offered by the Philosophy Department.

The Department regularly offers a variety of courses that satisfy the Core D3 requirement, four of which are First Year Seminars (PHIL 195) and one of which is a Transfer Year Seminar (PHIL 295):

> PHIL 195: Ethics and Film Noir
> PHIL 195: Environmental Ethics
> PHIL 195: When East Meets West
> PHIL 195: Ethics of Integrity
> PHIL 240: Ethics

PHIL 240: Ethics (War, Torture, and Terrorism)
PHIL 240: Biomedical Ethics
PHIL 240: Medical Animal Ethics
PHIL 241: Business Ethics
PHIL 241: Ethics (Service Learning)
PHIL 244: Environmental Ethics
PHIL 295: Moral Responsibility
PHIL 315: Ethics for Majors (majors and minors only)

The Core requirements for every USF undergraduate also require that students take one course having a Service Learning (SL) component and one course having a Cultural Diversity (CD) component. The Department only offers one course which satisfies the Core SL requirement. Moreover, as of the 2019/2020 academic year, the Core Service Learning requirement has been replaced by the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) requirement. Presently, the Philosophy Department does not offer any courses which satisfy the CEL requirement. Since Fall 2014, the Philosophy Department has only offered two courses which satisfy the Core CD requirement:

PHIL 231: African American Philosophy
PHIL 242: Latin American Philosophy

The majority of Philosophy Core classes offered in the five-year period between Fall 2014 and Spring 2020 were taught by part-time philosophy faculty. However, as the table below shows, the percentage of FT faculty teaching Core classes has increased from a low of 22 percent in fall 2014 to a high of 48 percent in fall 2018. On average, between fall 2014 and spring 2020, full-time faculty taught 34.5 percent of Core classes offered by the philosophy department. By contrast, part-time faculty are teaching fewer Core philosophy classes: part-time faculty taught 78 percent of Core philosophy classes in fall 2014 but only 52 percent of Core philosophy classes in fall 2018. On average, between fall 2014 and spring 2020, part-time faculty taught 65.5 percent of Core classes offered by the philosophy department. Part-time faculty continue to teach a large majority of the Core classes offered by the philosophy department during summer and intersession. Due to recent changes to the part-time faculty contract, we anticipate most summer courses being taught by non-PHP part-time faculty from now on.

Fall and Spring Semesters

Semester	Total Number of Philosophy Core Classes (CD, D1, D3, SL)	FT %	PT %
F 2014	37	22	78
S 2015	37	22	78
F 2015	43	32	68

S 2016	36	36	64
F 2016	37	30	70
S 2017	33	27	73
F 2017	33	39	61
S 2018	33	36	64
F 2018	35	48	52
S 2019	32	43	57
F 2019	34	41	59
S 2020	32	38	62

Summer and Intersession

Summer	Total Number of Philosophy Core Classes (CD, D1, D3, SL)	FT %	PT %
2015	6	0	100
2016	4	25	75
2017	5	20	80
2018	5	0	100
2019	6	27	83
2020	6	0	100

Intersession	Total Number of Philosophy Core Classes (CD, D1, D3, SL)	FT %	PT %
2015	3	0	100
2016	3	0	100
2017	2	0	100
2018	2	0	100

| 2019 | 3 | 23 | 67 |
| 2020 | 3 | 23 | 67 |

C. Advising

All members of the department advise students. The Chair and Program Assistant keep and maintain a Google spreadsheet of all Majors and Minors along with their Advisors, and share this with all FT faculty. These Advisors are also updated formally in the Banner system (the University's administrative computer system) regularly by the department Program Assistant. Students are provided the opportunity to change their Advisor should they choose, based on personal fit, although this happens rarely. When faculty are on leave or sabbatical, the Chair temporarily re-assigns advising duties to another Advisor.

The Chair forwards a list of Advisees to all department faculty some weeks before pre-registration each semester. Students have an "Advising Hold" placed on their account, so they are required to make contact with their faculty Advisor to review their Major and Core requirements.

Beginning in Fall 2018, the Department began organizing group advising for philosophy majors and minors. Group advising is scheduled during "activity hour." During the group advising session, a faculty member reviews graduation requirements for majors and minors; provides advice on how to graduate on time; and presents the philosophy seminars for the following semester. After their presentation, faculty members are available for individual questions and to lift students' advising hold. As our major and minor grow, group advising is a helpful supplement to individual advising sessions.

As for the minors, the Chair reaches out to all minors every semester, and sends them the updated list with available seminars. The advisor to the minors is the Chair. While the minors are not required to meet with their Philosophy Minor Advisor (i.e. the Chair) quite a few do so, and the Chair makes sure to meet with them in person to answer their questions.

D. Future Directions

Given the growth of the Major (20 percent increase) and Minor (55 percent increase), as well as changes to the composition of the department (new full-time faculty members Mason, Ashton, Leonard) the department may wish to consider expanding the philosophy major to include a broader range of required courses that reflect the pluralism of the profession and our department.

Honors College. The Philosophy Department has started offering D1, D3 and 2-unit symposia for the Honors College beginning in Spring 2018 (as part of the "soft launch" of the Honors College) including:

> HON 390: AI and the Future of Work (Mason, Spring 2018)
> HON 200: Global Humanities (Kim, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019; Kuperus, Spring 2019; Ashton, Fall 2018, Spring 2020)
> HON 318: Wisdom's Lovers: Ancient and Medieval (Cavannaugh, Spring 2020)
> HON 365: Global Ethics (Kuperus, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020; Sundstrom, Spring 2020)
> HON 390: Zen and Leadership (Ashton, Spring 2019)
> HON 390: Zen and Facing Suffering (Ashton, Fall 2018)

The Philosophy Department continues to develop philosophy courses for the growing student population at the Honors College (presently 400 students but could grow to 600).

The Department is developing a D3 Engineering Ethics course for students admitted to the new Engineering Program, and, given the new Center for Applied Data Ethics, the Department is also interested in developing a D3 Data Ethics course.

III. Assessment of Student Learning

The following are the program learning outcomes (PLOs) for the major and minor. Listed underneath each Major PLO are the standards we use to determine the success of the outcomes. Those standards function as the rubrics for PLO assessment. The standards for the major PLOs are used to measure the success of the minor PLOs.

A. Major PLOs
1. Students identify primary philosophical themes found in the writings of major ancient, medieval, modern, and moral philosophers.
    a. Below expectations: The student shows little or no understanding of the basic texts, traditions, theories, questions, and values that constitute the history of philosophical thought. The student is unable to demonstrate a meaningful understanding in her written and oral arguments.
    b. Minimal acceptable: The student shows a general understanding of the basic texts, traditions, theories, questions, and values that constitute the history of philosophical thought. The student is also able to demonstrate this understanding in her written and oral arguments.
    c. Exemplary: The student provides clear evidence of a nuanced understanding of the basic texts, traditions, theories, questions, and values that constitute the

history of philosophical thought. The student is also able to provide detailed and subtle interpretations in her written and oral arguments.

2. Students write historical and argumentative essays on central philosophical issues.
   a. Below expectations: The student is unable to ask relevant questions, to conceive, suggest and answer those questions, or to support her own positions with appropriate arguments. The student shows little or no understanding of any additional implications of her positions.
   b. Minimal acceptable: The student shows that she is able to ask relevant questions, to conceive, suggest and answer those questions appropriately, and to support her own positions with logically competent arguments. The student can also show an understanding of the more general implications of the question as framed and her position taken on that question.
   c. Exemplary: The student shows that she is able to ask relevant and original questions, to suggest novel answers to those questions, and to support her own positions with creative and compelling arguments. The student can also take into account a range of competing arguments and show why her position taken is superior to those alternatives.

3. Students develop philosophical arguments using formal and informal methods originated by historical and contemporary philosophers.
   a. Below expectations: The student is unable to locate information, or inappropriately uses or fails to cite sources. The student shows little or no ability to critically analyze her sources. The student is unable to utilize effective philosophical argumentation to defend a stated thesis.
   b. Minimal acceptable: The student is able to locate, appropriately use, and cite sources with critical analysis and application of those sources. Essays serve to establish a primary thesis by following one accepted method of philosophical argumentation and defending that thesis from competing or alternate interpretations.
   c. Exemplary: The student is able to demonstrate excellence in conducting critical research on philosophical topics. The student can also demonstrate some degree of originality grounded in the source material. Essays provide a basis for further research by including relevant secondary sources and a wide range of primary material.

B. Minor PLOs

1. Students identify primary philosophical themes found in the writings of major philosophers.

2. Students write historical and argumentative essays on central philosophical issues.

3. Students develop philosophical arguments using methods originated by historical and contemporary philosophers.

Included in the appendix are the Annual Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes reports for AY 2017-2018, 2017-2016, 2016-2015, and 2015-2014. These are all the annual assessment reports that date back to the last Academic Program Review in 2013.

As stated in our 2018 report, our yearly assessments occur in two steps; the first employs an **indirect** method and the second a **direct** method of assessment.

a) Indirect: The department selects one of the foundation philosophy courses, as well as one of the D1 or D3 core classes, and collects across two iterations of the courses their syllabi and assignment materials. The collected material will be reviewed to determine whether the courses meet the expectations of the PLO. We will not be comparing the performance of the upper-division course to the lower-division course, but rather examining how the courses across the spectrum of courses we offer meet the PLOs.

b) Direct: The department will then select particular assignments from each course that are reflective of the PLO, collect and review all the student work turned in for those assignments, and determine whether the assignments meet the expectations of the PLO.

The department reviewed the findings of the assessment and meet as a whole to recommend methods of (1) improving curricula, (2) establishing effective standards for students' primary understanding of the issues of the field, (3) establishing effective standards for students' skills in analysis, explanation, and logical reasoning, (4) establishing or revising effective priorities for students' research and argumentation skills,   and (5) preparing students for success in more advanced courses.

These five goals correspond to essential questions the department continuously has about the development and efficacy of its program; i.e., how can we improve our curricula? How can we improve the students' understanding of our field? How can we improve the philosophical skills of our students? Are we effectively recruiting students for the philosophy major and minor from the Core D1 and D3 course?

We have assessed all three of our major and all three of our minor PLOs and we have determined that we have achieved our stated PLOs. This conclusion is affirmed in feedback the department has received from Mark Meritt, the Faculty Director of Curriculum Development, Humanities. On March 7, 2019, he responded to our last report.
Please note that our annual reviews and the reaction of the Faculty Director of Curriculum Development, demonstrate that:
1. We have achieved our PLOs,

2. We have used the Annual Assessment of Program Learning reports to make changes and inform them of the quality of student learning in our program,
3. Our individual courses satisfy our PLOs,
4. We have determined the factors that have facilitated or impeded our program's ability to meet its learning outcomes,
5. We have reflected on the data on retention and persistence to graduation,
6. We have communicated our program expectations to our students,
7. The department has participated in the assessment of the Core areas (D1 and D3) courses we deliver for the university.

The Faculty Director of Curriculum Development for the Humanities' response to our PLO assessment reports is reproduced below, and a copy of the email is included in the appendix:

"*Program Learning Outcomes and Mission Statement*: Mission statements for the Philosophy major and minor are distinct. Each statement communicates clearly and concisely the goals and values of the program, and each statement is clearly aligned with the university's broader mission. Program learning outcomes for the major and the minor are also distinct. Both lists of outcomes clearly describe the knowledge students should gain in the respective programs.

Assessment Methods: Faculty in the Philosophy department chose to assess a program learning outcome common to both majors and minors (#2: Students write historical and argumentative essays on philosophical issues), as well as to assess how well the course (PHIL 315, required for majors and minors) from which samples were taken aligns with all program outcomes (as well as core D3 outcomes). The assessment process was careful and well designed. For direct assessment, faculty selected sample final papers (including work by both majors and minors) from PHIL 315 that addressed the outcome selected. Before scoring student work, faculty tested the rubric to be used and calibrated their scoring practices through discussion of scoring. Each student work product was scored by three different faculty members. All of the above practices helped to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment process. The syllabus for PHIL 315 was checked for alignment of course outcomes and assignments with program outcomes.

Assessment Results and Closing the Loop: Indirect assessment results confirm that a course required for majors and minors (PHIL 315) aligns (in its course outcomes and assignments) with program learning outcomes for both the major and the minor. Also, direct assessment results provide strong evidence that a majority of both majors and minors in Philosophy are meeting PLO #2. Philosophy has thus used the assessment process to confirm the overall effectiveness of its curriculum in meeting one of its outcomes (for both majors and minors). The report indicates plans to revise the rubric used in assessment. Such revisions might help the program build upon this already thoughtful assessment. For example, perhaps a more detailed rubric or an analytic one (measuring different elements or components of the

task assessed) could help the program determine possible areas for improvement even of acceptable work (e. g., students writing generally sound arguments displaying understanding of concepts might improve documentation of sources, grammar/syntax, or organization). Whatever possible refinements Philosophy undertakes, the department has conducted a thoughtful and well conceived assessment process providing valid evidence of student learning.

Summary Comments: The Philosophy department has directly and indirectly assessed student achievement of all of the program learning outcomes (PLO) for its major and minor. It has assessed all of the core learning outcomes (CLO) for the Philosophy (D1) and Ethics (D3) courses it offers. Evidence indicates that students are meeting standards set for the outcome and that required coursework aligns with all program learning outcomes. The Philosophy department engaged and completed the assessment of its PLOs before the majority of the departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. It was among the first departments to have its CLOs assessed, and this is because the University recognizes that the department sets a high standard for its courses and has engaged in a thorough assessment process. In this matter the Philosophy department is regarded as a model for other departments in the college and university.