



teaching skills, and who showed a respect and appreciation for student learning both in and out of the classroom.

Student evaluations of philosophy faculty consistently place the Philosophy Department among the highest (if not *the* highest) of any department on campus. We take student evaluations seriously. As graduate students and over the course of our time teaching, we have heard some professors seek to dismiss or to minimize the significance of student evaluations. We could not disagree more strongly with this dismissive attitude toward student evaluations, an attitude we view as defensive and self-protective. Teaching is essentially a *relational* activity, not a private exercise. While certainly not the only evidentiary basis from which to assess teaching quality, SIR data do provide us with crucial indicators regarding the health of the teaching relationship. First, SIR data provide us with a clear sense of the extent to which students are engaged in the learning experience, a necessary condition for successful teaching. Second, SIR data provide us with a clear sense of the extent to which professors are able to communicate clearly and effectively with their students. If students are going to grasp the material and begin the process of digesting it and making it their own, professors must be able to communicate clearly with students and in ways students can understand. Finally, SIR data provide us with a clear sense of the extent to which our students are able to affirm the value of their own learning experiences. All of these – student engagement, clarity of communication, and student affirmation of the value of their learning experiences – are crucial elements in successful teaching. SIR data provide us with credible objective evidence regarding our ability as teachers to approach teaching excellence in these areas.

SIR data from the past four semesters is provided below. The first nBT1 0 0 1 72.024 345.89 Tm[(S)-



reasoning skills, their research skills, their ethical reasoning skills, and their writing and oral communication skills. These skills are always already practical. In *any* field of inquiry or profession – indeed, in life generally – students will have to problem solve, think critically, assess arguments or strategies, communicate clearly, spot unspoken assumptions, evaluate ideas or positions, engage in value judgments, etc. Since doing philosophy encourages the development and growth of the skills that are essential to doing any of these things *well*, philosophical study is inherently practical. As the Times of London noted (August 15, 1998), “Their [philosophy graduates’] employability, at 98.9% , is impressive by any standard...Philosophy is, in commercial jargon, the ultimate ‘transferable work skill’”. This remains true today.

The Philosophy Department vigorously opposes any understanding of “theory-practice” that would co-opt “practice” for things like labs, practica, internships, or other vocational experiences *and limit the meaning of that concept to those sorts of activities only*. If the term “practice” is defined in that way, then philosophy does not do anything practical...and we are proud to admit that fact, for we can do nothing else so long as we remain true to our discipline! We have absolutely no idea what a “philosophy internship” or “philosophy practicum” or “philosophy lab” would even be. While some of our courses include readings that address “practical” or “applied issues,” often under the label of “applied ethics” (e.g., lying, abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, etc.), what this amounts to is simply bringing critical thinking skills to bear on concrete issues. We certainly are not going to have capital punishment labs or an abortion practicum! More importantly, we find the impulse to define “practice” in a limited and territorial fashion to be a misguided and dangerous understanding of practice and, by implication, of philosophy, and, by further implication, liberal education in general.

In philosophy, our emphasis on the development and growth of skill sets is an emphasis on *how* to think well, not an emphasis on *what* to think. Again, this focus is perfectly consistent with Millikin’s mission to “deliver on the promise of education” through the three prepares. In terms of professional success and post-graduate employment, the vast bulk of knowing what to do is learned on site; you learn “on the job.” The skill sets we aim to develop are skill sets that will allow students to do what they do in their jobs *well*. And this applies to any and all jobs.

Millikin began with an allegiance t

delivering the University educational curriculum that we now aim to assess cannot take place without philosophical activity. Again, the practical relevance of philosophical activity could not be clearer.

Philosophy services Millikin University's core goals and values. Close examination of the Millikin curriculum and its stated mission goals confirms that philosophy is essential to the ability of Millikin University to deliver on "the promise of education." This mission has three core elements.

The first core element of Millikin's mission is "

. " If philosophy is the "ultimate transferable work skill," then we prepare students for work in a variety of fields. Instead of preparing students for their first job, we prepare them for a lifetime of success—no matter how often they change their careers – something the empirical evidence suggests they will do quite frequently over the course of their lifetimes.

The second core element of Millikin's mission is "

. " Our focus on philosophy of law, political philosophy, and normative-value questions in general reveals our belief in and commitment to the Jeffersonian model of liberal education. In order to engage meaningfully in democratic citizenship, citizens must be able to ask the following kinds of questions and be able to assess critically the answers that might be provided to them: What makes for a *good* society? What are the *legitimate* functions of the state? How *should* we resolve conflicts between the common good and individual rights? Might we have a *moral* obligation to challenge the laws and policies of our own country? These are philosophical questions; not questions of the nuts and bolts of how our government runs, but questions about our goals and duties. Confronting and wrestling with these questions prepare students for democratic citizenship.

The third core element of Millikin's mission is "

. " Clearly this is exactly what philosophy does. That Millikin's mission includes this goal along with the first distinguishes us from a technical institution. We are not a glorified community college willing to train students for the first job they will get, and leaving them in a lurch when they struggle to understand death, or agonize over ethical decisions, or confront those whose ideas seem foreign or dangerous because they are new. Millikin University wants its students to be whole: life-long learners who will not shy away from the ambiguities and puzzles that make life richer and more human. Philosophy is the department that makes confronting these issues its life's work.

Philosophical study, then, is exemplary of Millikin's promise to prepare students for professional success, prepare them for democratic citizenship, and prepare them for a life of personal value and meaning. The Philosophy Department learning goals, then,

- x University Goal 1: Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
- x University Goal 2: Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
- x University Goal 3: Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The accompanying table shows how Philosophy Department goals relate to University-wide goals:



While some of our majors go on to pursue graduate study in philosophy and aspire eventually to teach, most of our majors go on to pursue other careers and educational objectives. Accordingly, the successful student graduating from the philosophy major might be preparing for a career as a natural scientist, a behavioral scientist, an attorney, a theologian, a physician, an educator, or a writer, or might go into some field more generally related to the humanities or the liberal arts. Whatever the case, he or she will be well prepared as a result of the habits of mind acquired in the process of completing the Philosophy Major. (See "Appendix One" for post-graduate information of recently graduated majors.)

There are no guidelines provided by the American Philosophical Association for undergraduate study.

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The Philosophy Department has three full-time faculty members. Each faculty member has a Ph.D. in philosophy and teaches full-time in the Department.

, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department, holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Iowa (with a specialization in ethics and ethical theory), a J.D. from Emory University School of Law, and a M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Iowa. He has published several books and articles on ethics and political philosophy. He is also the author of the textbook *Introduction to Philosophy*, published by McGraw-Hill.



provides trend information from 2001 to Fall 2012. Here's a couple of trends & talking points I've noticed...(3) Seven majors are at the record high numbers: biology allied health, history, human services, physics, sociology, and organizational leadership. (4) Four majors have had significant increases: human services, , sociology, organizational leadership...

This recognized and celebrated growth in philosophy is all the more impressive given that few students come to Millikin (or any college) as announced philosophy majors.

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The Philosophy Department's range of contributions across campus is truly exceptional. In addition to delivering a top quality philosophy major and minor to our students, the Department makes contributions that impact the University at large. These include but are not limited to the following.<sup>3</sup>

The theoretical design of the University Studies curriculum is intentionally interdisciplinary. The University Studies program does not necessitate that any specific element be delivered exclusively by any single department. Put another way, the program does not establish a "one to one" correspondence between program elements and specific departments. Instead, the program is anchored around a commitment to the development of important skills (e.g., writing, reflection, ethical reasoning), exposure to diverse ways of knowing (humanist, natural and social scientific, quantitative, artistic, etc.), and the expansion of student horizons (from self/local in the first year, to national in the second year, to global in the third year). Given this design,

- IN251, United States Structural Studies
- ICS, International Cultures and Structures
- QR, Quantitative Reasoning

In addition to the many contributions we make to the delivery of the University Studies program, we also make key contributions to the



broad liberal arts education is supported and celebrated by the Millikin University Philosophy Department and is looked upon very favorably by law schools.

Finally, as part of the course PH366, Appellate Legal Reasoning – Moot Court, the Philosophy Department provides students with the opportunity to participate in moot





course. We did this to provide better guidance to students as they work to produce this major paper and to ensure that this essential capstone teaching was appropriately counted as part of faculty workload.

With the addition of Dr. Hartsock, we are also offering more courses that will intersect with topics and issues in the natural sciences. Dr. Hartsock's area of expertise, philosophy and history of science, permits the Department to forge additional connections to programs in the natural and social sciences. These links have been forged by way of formal philosophy course offerings (e.g., PH223, History and Philosophy of Science) as well as by way of offering electives and interdepartmental courses focusing on philosophical content that intersects with the natural sciences.

The Philosophy Department rotates or modifies the content of its upper-level seminars on an ongoing basis. The Department also makes some modifications in its normal courses, rotating content in and out. Doing so allows philosophy faculty to keep courses fresh and exciting for the students, and helps to keep faculty interest and enthusiasm high. For example, Dr. Money had taught the PH400 Seminar in Philosophy course on Nietzsche, on personal identity, on the intelligent design-evolution controversy, and as a course on ethical naturalism. The title of the course is the same, but it is a new course nonetheless. This type of "internal evolution" takes place frequently within the Department.

A number of changes have occurred per year, and a[(c80048>3005B>400530048005500571D(-BD(f)-11(fe)-5

assessment tools must be constructed that respect that autonomy. Indeed, it is only when this is the case that it becomes realistic to expect faculty members to take ownership of assessment practices; after all, we are professors of philosophy, not

course and succeed. Howeve



challenged to think critically about core beliefs and assumptions, and are expected to be able to present critical and creative ideas regarding those core beliefs and assumptions in oral and, especially, written form.

The Philosophy Major requires 30 credits to complete.

theory and moral issues, meta-ethics and the like. These elective courses provide philosophy students with a chance to encounter a range of normative issues, and challenge them to think not only in descriptive terms (e.g., what is the case) but also in normative terms (e.g., what *should* be the case). (9 credits).

An overview of the requirements for completion of the Philosophy Major is offered as an appendix to this document (see Appendix Two).

The explosion in administration related to assessment – an explosion in which assessment has driven both size and priorities – deserves serious pushback. We provide this pushback in the form of a reminder regarding a point that we, as faculty members actually teaching courses to students, view as an obvious point:

\_\_\_\_\_



Despite these obvious points, we have been asked to engage in even further assessment of student learning. We have complied with this request. Given the peculiar



**A.**

Regarding the written product, the supervising faculty member will generate a brief evaluative summary for each thesis supervised during the academic year (included below). This summary will indicate the name of the student, the title of the senior thesis (if titled), the grade earned on the senior thesis, and an indication of the basis for the grade assigned. We employ the "Rubric for Thesis" as a general guideline for grading. (The rubric is included as Appendix Three to this report.) Finally, any additional information deemed relevant to the assessment of the student's work may be included.

Electronic copies of all theses will be obtained and stored by the Chair of the Philosophy Department.

The data for philosophy students completing their thesis during the 2013-2014 academic year is provided below. All students not only produced a thesis research paper, but each also presented and defended their thesis orally during the campus wide "Celebration of Scholarship."

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Recently, the Philosophy Department instituted a new process for the production of senior thesis. We revised our curriculum resulting in a combination of the old PH400 Senior Thesis course with the old PH381 Seminar in Philosophy course. We now have a single course, PH400, Seminar in Philosophy. Most (though not all) of our majors produce their "senior theses" (i.e., a major research paper engaging in argument based thesis defense) within the context of the newly created (modified) course. We did this to provide better guidance to students as they work to produce this major paper. This year, six of our ten graduating seniors wrote their thesis on this general topic. The other four students produced their thesis in another course or as an independent study project. All students not only produced a thesis research paper, but each also presented and defended their thesis orally during the campus wide "Celebration of Scholarship."



practices. The key question is not whether these beliefs are "true," but rather whether

deity..." It is a live issue as to whether any scientific approach to understanding would be relevant to the question of God's existence and nature.

x

#2





undergraduate work, and clearly demonstrates that she is prepared for graduate work in philosophy.



#8 argues that hallucinations should not be viewed as a challenge to the conceptualist view of experience. Rather, they should be used as a tool through which we can better understand the conceptual nature of experience. #8 offers and argues for what he terms the "dial" and "mind-engine" theories of mind.

The dial theory of mind that #8 develops suggests that agents 'turn-up' or 'turn-down' our focus of various aspects of experience, and that, to some extent, this is under the control of the agent. This is an ordinary aspect of perception, but when, for example, drugs or illness, interfere with the ordinary tuning of our sense modalities, hallucinations and illusions result. The mind-engine theory hypothesizes that the mind works together as an engine, with complex input-output functions, and that the engine synthesizes hallucinatory experience when the tuning of those functions are out of sync, per the dial theory.

While #8's theories are highly-speculative, the fundamentals of the theories construct something of a plausible account of mind. Where #8 falters is in defense of his theories. Where he excels is in the novel and creative account he provides. Too often, undergraduates rely on well-worn accounts and rarely "think out side of the box." #8 does not find himself so constrained. Though his theories are under-defended, #8's work is exceptionally critical and creative.



#9 in his senior thesis takes a critical look at the function and role of money and currency within civil society. #9 notes that all, or nearly all effective currency, is issued and 'guaranteed' in some sense by a state. Where you find currency you are bound to find a state and where you find a state you are bound to find currency. #9 does an excellent job distinguishing money from currency as well as explaining why it is the trust assigned to the action and solvency of the state that ultimately explain the value of state issued currency. The focus of the paper then takes an interesting turn to examine the way in which decisions made by states -often with limited consent from its citizens, e.g., going to war- can have devastating impacts of the value of a state issued currency. People can be economic victims to the inflationary policies of states. It seems that this notion can also work in reverse as well. For instance, consider the many, usually older people, in the United States who have seen virtually no grow of

fixed income guaranteed investments because the federal reserve has kept interest rates near zero. Lastly, #9 offers a very well developed section of his paper suggesting that Bicoïn could offer a substantive alternative to state sanctioned currencies. The ideas that #9 offers in defense of Bitcoin as a plausible alternative to



Student #5:  
Total Score on Rubric: 45  
Color-Code: Green

Student #6:  
Total Score on Rubric: 5  
Color-Code: Green

Student #7:  
Total Score on Rubric: 51  
Color-Code: Green

Student #8:  
Total Score on Rubric: 47  
Color-Code: Green

Student #9:  
Total Score on Rubric: 43  
Color-Code: Green

Student #10:  
Total Score on Rubric: 49  
Color-Code: Green

**c.**

Our report will indicate the post-graduation placement of our graduating seniors, if known. This information is updated as new information becomes available. Among this year's graduates:

- x Jame Farris is attending Stetson Law School, Florida
- x Maddi Harner was awarded an Illinois Legislative Studies Fellowship, University of Illinois
- x Nora Kocher is working at State Farm
- x Emma Prendergast is attending University of Wisconsin at Madison, Ph.D. in philosophy
- x Jacqui Rogers is pursuing Americorp, Clarke University, Dubuque, IA
- x Kolton Ray is attending University of Colorado Law, Boulder

Philosophy tends to attract students who are committed to the life of the mind. Accordingly, most of our graduating majors eventually pursue further educational opportunities. The range of areas within which our majors find success is also incredibly impressive. A sense of the post-graduation educational accomplishments of our majors can be gleaned from consideration of the following:



- Individual Award for Runner Up Most Outstanding Attor

The data reveals consistently high performance by our majors and is evidence that the philosophy program is strong. We are confident that student learning in the philosophy major is strong.

Given these results and the fact that this is our seventh year of data collection for formal assessment purposes, we do not anticipate making any changes in our program as a result of our assessment review. We are extremely pleased with the performance of our students and we continue to believe that our program facilitates the intellectual growth and development of the critical thinking skills that are essential to delivering on "the promise of education." The high quality work produced by our students is compelling evidence in support of this claim.

Much is made of the need to "close the loop" in assessment. While it is important to work to ensure that the information gained by assessment makes a meaningful impact on Department pedagogy and teaching practices, it is a mistake to assume that effective use of assessment information can only be demonstrated if review of assessment results in \_\_\_\_\_ to curriculum and/or pedagogy. We reject this assumption. If analysis and review of assessment data reveal positive student learning achievements, then there is no reason to change what is clearly working. We use assessment; it is simply that the results have confirmed our strategy and approach in terms of curriculum and/or pedagogy. Absent \_\_\_\_\_ presented by others to us that we are in need of changing our curriculum and pedagogy, we will not undertake action to change what, in our considered judgment—judgment informed by being trained in philosophy, interacting daily with our students, grading numerous assignments, etc.—is clearly working. The members of the Department are ready to listen to those who have \_\_\_\_\_ that our pedagogy/curriculum could be improved. In the absence of that evidence, however, no changes will be made. If no reasons whatsoever are given for why we should change pedagogy and/or curriculum

Philosophy tends to attract students who are committed to the life of the mind. Accordingly, most of our graduating majors eventually pursue further educational opportunities. Of our graduates, almost one-fourth have been accepted to law school. Approximately a one-third have been accepted to a masters or Ph.D. program of some sort.

The following list provides information regarding the post-graduate activities of each of our graduating majors over the last 14 years. Taken as a whole, this information clearly demonstrates an exceptional post-graduate success rate for our majors. It also demonstrates the ability of our faculty members to attract and retain high quality students, and their ability to grow and maintain a vibrant and essential major. In light of the totality of the circumstances (i.e., the nature of our discipline, the nature of our institution, the size of our Department, etc.), our trend line is extremely positive.

2014: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduating Seniors

Katherine



Dustin Clark (2010): working for a year, retaking LSAT, law school following year (was accepted at Cardoza Law School, NYC, but decided not to attend).

- x Update: Dustin was accepted to law school at both Wisconsin and Illinois. He received significant scholarship offers at both. He has decided to attend the University of Wisconsin. He starts fall 2011.
- x Dustin, as a first year law student and as part of a practicum for a non-profit group, wrote a legal brief for an appeal in a case involving a denial of unemployment benefits. The appellate court ruled in favor of his client. Here is his description of his work:

The case was based on a denial of unemployment insurance benefits because of an initial determination of misconduct by the department of workforce development. My client (without representation) then appealed this decision to an administrative tribunal run by an administrative judge. That judge determined that my client had indeed committed misconduct as defined by a Wisconsin statute and a ruling case explaining the statute. The client came to the clinic, and upon speaking with the client about what had occurred up to the point of our meeting, I identified a number of potentially arguable points. Since the client had a reasonable chance at success in an appeal, I agreed to be retained by the client as counsel (we have limited resources, so we try to filter out the cases that are lost causes). The appeal court, known as the Labor and Industry Review Commission (LIRC), is a three administrative law judge panel that reviews written appeals. They can request oral argument, but they did not. My brief argued three points. First, I argued that, contrary to the rules of evidence, the lower court had relied solely on hearsay to establish a material fact. Second, my client was never given an opportunity to view security footage either before the initial appeal or during the initial appeal, but a witness for the employer testified about the contents of said video.

I argued that because my client was unable to confront the evidence against him/her, this was a violation of his/her due process rights. Finally, I argued that no reasonable person, based on the weight of the evidence, could conclude that my client had committed misconduct. The employer did not file a timely response brief, so I'm sure that helped my client's position. I am not sure which of my arguments LIRC agreed with, but I will let you know if they publish the opinion on their website.

Khris Dunard (2010): John Marshall Law School, Chicago

- x Update: Khris did outstanding work during his first year. He is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in class of 345 and made

Gordon Gilmore (2010): Gordon was accepted to Sonoma State University's program in depth psychology. He starts fall 2011.



Kyle Fritz (2007): Ph. D. program in philosophy, University of Florida (starting fall 2008); Assistant Editor for Human Kinetics' Scientific, Technical, and Medical Division, Champaign, Illinois; Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Florida (starting fall 2008).

Nick McLenighan (2005): Northern Illinois University, MA program in Philosophy.

Jessica Revak (2005): Operations Manager at White Lodging Services; Western Illinois University, MA program in Experimental Psychology.

Amanda Russell (2005): University of Iowa, Dual MA programs in Health Administration









	alternative explanations, while maintaining a clear focus on the explanations utilized.	
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In addition to there being no flaws in the reasoning presented, it is also clear that the most effective arguments are being made. The arguments being presented are compelling.

	sentences such as run-on sentences occur.	
Clarity Goal 1	Some vocabulary is used correctly. Work minimally reflects a college level use of words and understanding of their meanings. Frequent use of simplistic vocabulary. More sentences clearly express ideas o3eflects a	

3		
	Analysis does not reflect consideration of multiple causes and alternative explanations. Clear explanations are missing.	
	Many glaring flaws in the reasoning presented. Only rarely are effective arguments are being made.	

: In light of Department learning goals, a senior thesis earning an "F" grade does not meet the standards for a "D" and is totally unacceptable work for a college senior, much less a philosophy major.

1. Identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the problem, question, issue, or creative goal.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
Does not attempt to or fails to identify and summarize issue/goal accurately.	Summarizes issue/goal, though some aspects are incorrect or confused. Nuances and key details are missing or glossed over.	Clearly identifies the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue/goal. Identifies integral relationships essential to analyzing the issue/goal.

2. Identifies and considers the influence of context and assumptions.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
Approach to the issue is in egocentric or socio-centric terms. Does not relate issue to other contexts (cultural, political, historical, etc.).	Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions regarding the issue, although in a limited way.	Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of audience. Considers other integral contexts.
Does not recognize context or surface assumptions and underlying ethical implications, or does so superficially.	Provides some recognition of context and consideration of assumptions and their implications.	Identifies influence of context and questions assumptions, addressing ethical dimensions underlying the issue, as appropriate.

3. Develops, presents, and communicates OWN perspective, hypothesis, or position.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
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Position or hypothesis is clearly inherited or adopted with little original consideration.

Addresses a single source or view of the argument, failing to clarify the established position relative to one's own.

Fails to present and justify own opinion or forward hypothesis.

Position or hypothesis is unclear or simplistic.

5. Integrates issue/creative goal using OTHER disciplinary perspectives and positions.

RED, 1 to 2 Points	YELLOW, 3 Points	GREEN, 4 to 5 Points
Deals with a single perspective and fails to discuss others' perspectives.	Begins to relate alternative views to qualify analysis.	
Treats other positions superficially or misrepresents them.	Analysis of other positions is thoughtful and mostly accurate.	
Little integration of perspectives and little or no evidence of attending to others' views.	Acknowledges and	







- 5 4 3 2 1      1. Is able to listen to perspectives that differ from one's own.
- 5 4 3 2 1      2. Uses language and nonverbal clues appropriately.
- 5 4 3 2 1      3. Displays appropriate turn-taking skills.

WRITTEN COMMENTS:

GREEN Total score of 55-34	YELLOW Total score of 33-23	RED Total Score of 22-11
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