



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
PULASKI TECH

Assessment Report:
2018-2019

**PHIL 1310 – Introduction to
Philosophy**



Course-Level Learning Outcomes for PHIL 1310 (Introduction to Philosophy)

1. What are the Course-Level Outcomes (CLOs)?

The student will:

Develop an appreciation of various points of views.

Demonstrate Critical Inquiry

Demonstrate a familiarity with the crucial concepts relevant to a philosophical analysis of reality, knowledge, human values, and critical reasoning.

2. Which CLOs were addressed for this academic year? (2018-2019)

All of the above.

3. Which CLOs are being addressed in your assessment plan next academic year? (2019-2020)

We will be updating criteria three to include a more specific list of important philosophers and ideas, but we will be assessing the same basic criteria.

4. Explain the assessment cycle.

Assessment is based on three essay exams given throughout the course; these essays each cover all three of the course outcomes. The results are reviewed each semester, and faculty discuss any changes.

5. What are the assessment methods? Are they direct or indirect?

Students are asked to respond to short answer prompts by explaining the issue at hand in a clear and concise manner, and by supporting their reasoning or rationale with strong supporting evidence. A standardized rubric is used in all PHIL 1310 classes to evaluate the student's ability to appreciate various points of view, demonstrate critical inquiry and a familiarity with the concepts relevant to a philosophical analysis of reality, knowledge, human values, and critical reasoning. Students are also asked to take a position on issues they write about. Instructors gather completed rubrics on each student's short answer response for the class and compare scores for content.

6. What are the assessment goal(s)?

80% of the students in the course will receive a 75% or better on each section of the standardized rubric, covering all three course outcomes.

7. What were the findings for this academic year? (2018-2019)

In Fall 2018 134 completed the Comprehensive Exam. 80% of students received a 75% or better on explanation of issue and position taken on the issue (2 of the 4 main areas covered on the rubric). The other 2 areas (argument is supported by reasoning or rationale and evidence for reasoning or rationale) did not meet the threshold. Only 70% of students received a score of 75% or higher in these areas. A small but significant percentage of students stopped turning in work and did not complete the exam used for the rubric.

8. What is your analysis of the findings?

Essentially, the majority of students learn to explain some of the classic explanations and arguments of famous philosophers. However, they had difficulty developing arguments of their own.

9. What is the action plan for the next academic year? (2019-2020) Explain.

To focus the ability to develop philosophical arguments with sound reasons, we will spend time distinguishing between philosophical arguments and statements of feeling or opinions. We will continue to spend more time on details of famous arguments in class so that students will more clearly see how philosophers use logic and reason to argue for their positions and criticize the positions of others. This will hopefully encourage them to develop their own individual ideas.

Students will continue to illustrate their understanding of various philosophical issues by applying them in class. Instructors will spend time distinguishing facts and opinions so that students are better able to understand reasoning and rationale. Instructors will spend more time having students apply the concepts to philosophical issues. Students will also be put in more collaborative groups so their peers can give feedback in coming to a conclusion and so they can deal with potential issues by comparing their personal results with those from the group.

Instructors will assign dilemmas (via handouts) that students must work through step by step to come up with their own way of working through the problem. Students may complete this activity in groups in order to gain peer feedback and to better understand key differences. Students will work through problems using peer review methods to discuss difficulties they are having. Instructors will provide students with a form to guide written critiques and feedback so students are aware of what the instructor is looking for when evaluating cases.