

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Undergraduate Programs

### Program: Perspectives/ Perspectives in Western Culture

**1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)**

1. Students completing the Perspectives in Western Culture course will be able to intelligently discuss the original works and central ideas from a wide range of ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophers and theologians of the Western cultural tradition.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to closely read, interpret, and explain ideas found in major philosophical and theological texts. Additionally, they will be able to discuss important connections between these thinkers and texts.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate some of the principles that guide their ethical choices and to identify the intellectual roots of those principles.
4. Students will be able to write clear, well-reasoned essays on theological and philosophical topics.
5. Students will demonstrate an ability to think and speak critically about questions of the ultimate meanings and principles of their own lives, and will have a grasp of a variety of philosophical and theological approaches to questions of human and spiritual realities.

**2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department's major handouts?)**

Learning outcomes are accessible via the Philosophy and Theology Department web sites and a brochure published and distributed by the Philosophy Department. These will have to be updated on the web site and in the program description.

**3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)**

Two measurements are used to assess the outcomes of the Perspectives program: first, a quantitative instrument is administered at the beginning and end of the course, which assesses a number of variables related to learning outcomes a randomly selected sample of final essays will be gathered by the Director of the Program and analyzed to assess qualitatively the achievement of learning outcomes articulated above. ( The quantitative instrument will be administered every odd year, and the qualitative analysis every even year).

**4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)**

The Director of the Perspectives Program will appoint a panel of Philosophy and Theology faculty who have background and experience in data analysis to review the findings of the quantitative surveys. This faculty panel will present its findings to the Perspectives faculty in a dedicated session of the program's annual May Workshop. Additionally, the Director will appoint a committee of faculty representatives from both the Philosophy and Theology Departments to read and summarize the randomly selected sample of final essays. The panel will evaluate these reflections as they relate to learning outcomes and will report these findings to the Perspectives faculty at the annual May workshop.

**5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)**

The quantitative survey and essay evaluations used for data collection have recently been developed. Therefore, results of this data are yet to be determined. For the past 20 years, the Perspectives faculty has used dedicated sessions in the three-day May workshops to discuss and make changes to the curriculum. Decisions about these curricular changes result from faculty consensus regarding classroom experiences and course outcomes. These sessions have been a wonderful experience of faculty sharing their experiences of helping students to appropriate the material and themes of the course more richly. The evaluative measures we've now put in place will serve to formalize aspects of this process.

**6) What evidence do you have that the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes?**

The faculty looks forward to the findings of the evaluations to show more explicitly the extent to which the goals and learning outcomes of the program are achieved.

**7) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)**

The Program was reviewed as part of a self-study within the Philosophy Department Review process in Spring, 2010.