

**Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Annual Report**

Academic Year of Report: 2011-2012  
College: College of Arts and Humanities  
Department: Philosophy and Religious Studies

Check here if your assessment report covers all undergraduate degree programs: [X]

Check here if your assessment report covers all graduate degree programs: [n/a]

**1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?**

We assessed all department goals and student learning outcomes, because most of the tools we use assess multiple learning outcomes. It seems easier to assess all of them, rather than revise the tools year to year.

We also assessed the General Education Related Goal of reading, in accordance with the university-wide requirement, in two of our general education courses.

**2. How were they assessed?**

Department Goal 1: We used senior theses, exit surveys, student participation in conferences, student participation in internships, and student participation in study abroad programs to assess our educational goals. Data was collected in Summer, Fall, and Winter quarters from all thesis-writing seniors, and from the majors participating in these various events and programs.

Department Goal 2: We collected information about student and faculty presentations at conferences and faculty publications to assess our scholarship goals. This information was collected during Winter quarter.

Department Goal 3: We collected information in all three quarters about how many programs the department had sponsored or co-sponsored, our support of interdisciplinary programs, and student participation in clubs and university service.

Student Learning Outcome 1: This outcome focuses on teaching student content knowledge in our two disciplines, we used our senior thesis rubric as an objective measure of this skill on all senior theses. This was done in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. We also distributed exit surveys, in online form, to all thesis-writing seniors in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. A third measurement of this outcome came in the form of student grades in required coursework, in which this core content is taught. In order to collect grades on required coursework from majors, we ran a query in SAFARI for Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters.

Student Learning Outcome 2: This outcome focuses on the ability to analyze and support a thesis, and we used our senior thesis rubric to evaluate this skill objectively and the exit survey to evaluate it subjectively.

Student Learning Outcome 3: This outcome focuses on intellectual diversity and pluralism. Again, we measured this outcome on the senior thesis rubric and the exit survey.

Student Learning Outcome 4: This outcome relates to students' ability to understand and apply various approaches to ethics – including ethical reasoning, locating ethical values in historical and cultural context, and examining the wider implications of these values. This outcome was measured subjectively through a question on the exit survey, and objectively through our ethical evaluation rubric, which measured specific criteria on a set of papers written by majors. It was filled out by the instructor of PHIL 302 (Ethics) in Winter 2012. Although PHIL 305 (Philosophy of Religion) was offered in Winter 2012, due to some confusion, the instructor did not complete the rubric.

### Reading

We used the CWU reading assessment provided by the Office of Undergraduate Studies. In one philosophy class (PHIL 378: Philosophy of Love) and one religious studies class (RELS 398: Jewish Literature in Translation), both in Winter 2012, a total of 36 students were evaluated using this rubric.

### 3. What was learned?

**Table I. Department Goals**

Department Goals and Outcomes <sup>1</sup>	Related University and College Goals	Methods of Assessment <sup>2</sup>	Who/What Assessed	When Assessed	Criterion of Achievement	Data collected	Standard met?
1. Education	<u>University</u> Goals I & II: “Outstanding academic life”	Senior Thesis Evaluation (Appendix II)	All majors at end of capstone projects	Fall, winter, spring terms	See student learning outcomes.	See student learning outcomes.	
	Goal V: “Regional and national prominence”	Exit survey (Appendix III)	All majors at end of capstone projects	Fall, winter, spring terms	See student learning outcomes.	See student learning outcomes.	
	Goal VI: “Promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility”	Student participation in conferences and meetings	Track student participation in regional and national conferences/meetings	Fall, winter, spring terms	Student participation in at least two regional or national conferences/ meetings per year	8 students participating at two different conferences	Yes
	<u>College</u> SL Goal 2: “Improve students’ knowledge of human cultures and diversity”	Student internships	Students who participate in internships	Fall, winter, spring terms	5% of students doing discipline-related cooperative education projects	3 students (of 67 total majors: 4.5%)	Not quite
	SL Goal 3: “Facilitate disciplinary and interdisciplinary integrative learning”	Student participation in study abroad programs	Students who participate in study abroad programs	Fall, winter, spring terms	5% of majors participating in study-abroad programs	2 students (3%) Note: 1 student was abroad for three quarters (Fall 2011-Spring 2012)	No
	SL Goal 4: “Develop students’ intellectual and practical skills”	Department personnel policies	All faculty	Fall, winter, spring, summer terms	Refer to Sections IIA, III, IV, V, VI and VII of the department’s personnel policy.	Reported in faculty reappointment files and annual activity reports.	Yes
	SL Goal 5: “Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally”						

<sup>1</sup> For full text of department goals and outcomes, see Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Department, university, and college goals do not correspond one-to-one to methods of assessment.

**Table I continued. Department Goals**

<b>Department Goals and Outcomes</b>	<b>Related University and College Goals</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>	<b>Who/What Assessed</b>	<b>When Assessed</b>	<b>Criterion of Achievement</b>	<b>Data collected</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>
2. Scholarship	<u>University</u> Goals I & II: “Outstanding academic life”  Goal V: “Regional and national prominence”  <u>College</u> SL Goal 2: “Improve students’ knowledge of human cultures and diversity”  SL Goal 3: “Facilitate disciplinary and interdisciplinary integrative learning”  Strategic Goal 3: “Increase visibility of CAH”	Student conference presentations	Students and faculty participating in regional, national, and international conferences	Fall, winter, spring terms	Students: 20% of majors will present at SOURCE or other conferences.	12 different students presented at 3 different conferences (17.9%)	Not quite
		Faculty conference presentations and publications	Faculty	Fall, winter, spring terms	Refer to Sections IIB, III, IV, V, VI and VII of the department’s Personnel Policy.	Faculty members presented at a total of 16 conferences, and published 1 book and 4 articles.	Yes
3. Service	<u>University</u> Goals I & II: “Outstanding academic life”  Goal V: “Regional and national prominence”  <u>College</u> SL Goal 5: “Enhance	Participation in and sponsorship of university-wide events and interdisciplinary programs	Faculty	Fall, winter, spring terms	Refer to Sections IIC, III, IV, V, VI and VII of the department’s Personnel Policy. Department sponsors or co-sponsors on average 4 programs per year.	3 faculty directed or served on the steering committees for interdisciplinary programs: Jeff Dippmann, Asia/Pacific Studies; Cynthia Coe, Women’s and Gender Studies; Matthew Altman, Douglas Honors College. The department sponsored 9 events.	Yes

	students' civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally"	Student participation in clubs and university service	Students who participate in clubs and university service	Fall, winter, spring terms	Department-related student organizations sponsor at least one university-wide event per year.	Student clubs sponsored 4 events.	Yes
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**Table II. Student Learning Outcomes**

Student Learning Outcomes	Related Departmental Goals	Related College and University Goals	Methods of Assessment	Who/What Assessed	When Assessed	Criterion of Achievement	Data collected	Standard met?
1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major ideas within philosophical/religious traditions.	Goal 1 – encourage an understanding and appreciation of the diverse traditions, perspectives, and ideas in the disciplines of philosophy/religious studies.	<u>University:</u> Goals I & II: “Outstanding academic life”  Goal VI: “Promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility”	Senior thesis evaluation	All majors at end of capstone projects.	Fall, winter, spring terms	90% of senior theses need to obtain at least “met expectations” for Outcome 1 (understanding of major ideas) on the senior thesis rubric.	Out of 16 completed senior theses, 15 met or exceeded expectations on Outcome 1. (93.8%)	Yes
		<u>College</u> SL Goal 1: “Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies”  SL Goal 2: “Improve students’ knowledge of human cultures”	Exit survey	All majors at end of capstone projects.	Fall, winter, spring terms	67% of students answering the exit survey mark “4” or higher for question 2 (understanding basic concepts). <sup>3</sup>	100% marked 4 or higher.	Yes (Exceeded)
		SL Goal 3: “Facilitate disciplinary and interdisciplinary integrative learning”  SL Goal 5: “Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally”	Required coursework	All majors and minors.	Fall, winter, spring terms.	At least 85% of majors receive a C or better in required courses for the relevant specialization.	88.5% of majors received a C or better.	Yes

<sup>3</sup> The complete results of the exit survey are compiled in Appendix V.

**Table II continued. Student Learning Outcomes**

<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Related Departmental Goals</b>	<b>Related College and University Goals</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>	<b>Who/What Assessed</b>	<b>When Assessed</b>	<b>Criterion of Achievement</b>	<b>Data collected</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to advance and support a thesis, as well as analyze and critically evaluate the beliefs and practices of others.	Goal 2 - explore the questions that lie at the core of the human condition — issues of value, purpose, identity, knowledge, and faith	<u>University:</u> Goals I & II: “Outstanding academic life”  Goal VI: “Promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility”	Senior thesis evaluation	All majors at end of capstone projects.	Fall, winter, spring terms	90% of senior theses need to obtain at least “met expectations” for Outcome 2 (clarity of thesis), Outcome 3 (defense of that thesis) and Outcome 5 (thoughtful engagement with a serious question) on the senior thesis rubric.	Outcome 2: 100% met or exceeded expectations  Outcome 3: 93.8% met or exceeded expectations  Outcome 5: 93.8% met or exceeded expectations	Yes
		<u>College:</u> SL Goal 1: “Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies”  SL Goal 4: “Develop students’ intellectual and practical skills”	Exit Surveys	All majors at end of capstone projects.	Fall, winter, spring terms	67% of students answering the exit survey mark “4” or higher for question 3 (advance/defend thesis), question 5 (analyze/critically evaluate claims – PHIL) and question 7 (analyze/comprehend others’ beliefs – RELS).	Question 3: 89.5% marked 4 or higher  Question 5: 94.4% marked 4 or higher  Question 7: 91.7% marked 4 or higher	Yes
3. Students will think pluralistically and flexibly, consider new ideas and critically reflect on them, and embrace perplexity.	Goal 1 - encourage an understanding and appreciation of diverse traditions, perspectives, and ideas in the disciplines of philosophy/religious studies.	<u>University:</u> Goal VI: “Promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility”  <u>College:</u> SL Goal 5: “Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally”	Senior thesis evaluation	All majors at the end of the capstone project.	Fall, winter, spring terms.	90% of senior theses need to obtain at least “met expectations” for outcome 4 (critical evaluation of a variety of perspectives) on the senior thesis rubric.	Outcome 4: 93.8% met or exceeded expectations	Yes

Student Learning Outcomes	Related Departmental Goals	Related College and University Goals	Methods of Assessment	Who/What Assessed	When Assessed	Criterion of Achievement	Data collected	Standard met?
3. continued	Goal 2 - explore the questions that lie at the core of the human condition — issues of value, purpose, identity, knowledge, and faith		Exit surveys	All majors at the end of the capstone project.	Fall, winter, spring terms.	67% of students answering the exit survey mark “4” or higher for question 4 (engagement with multiple points of view).	100% marked 4 or higher.	Yes (Exceeded)
4. Students will examine multiple approaches to ethics and recognize their application — for example, by examining the implications of those approaches for specific moral problems, comparing different positions, or identifying their historical and cultural context.	Goal 2 - explore the questions that lie at the core of the human condition — issues of value, purpose, identity, knowledge, and faith	<u>University:</u> Goal VI: “Promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility”  <u>College:</u> SL Goal 5: “Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally”	Final paper in specific 300-level courses, assessed by an ethical engagement rubric (Appendix IV)	Students enrolled in PHIL 302 (Ethics), which is required for Philosophy majors, and PHIL 305 (Philosophy of Religion), which is required of all Religious Studies majors.	Terms in which these courses are offered	90% of students will at least “meet expectations” on a standard rubric used to grade these papers (Appendix IV).	95.7% of students in PHIL 302 (Ethics) met or exceeded expectations.	Yes
			Exit surveys	All majors at the end of the capstone project.	Fall, winter, spring terms.	67% of students answering the exit survey mark “4” or higher for question 6 (ethical reasoning – PHIL) or 8 (understanding of ethical ideas – RELS).	Question 6: 94.4% marked 4 or higher  Question 8: 75% marked 4 or higher	Yes

**Table III. Reading Assessment**

PHIL 378: Philosophy of Love (Winter 2012)

<b>Rubric Element</b>	<b>Pass Native</b>	<b>Pass Transfer</b>	<b>Non-Pass/ Native</b>	<b>Non-Pass/ Transfer</b>
Reading Rate	6 / 24%	5 / 20%	11 / 44%	3 / 12%
Summary - Details	8 / 32%	3 / 12%	9 / 36%	5 / 20%
Summary - Discipline Specific Vocabulary	11 / 44%	7 / 28%	6 / 24%	1 / 4%
Summary - Author's Intent	6 / 24%	3 / 12%	11 / 44%	5 / 20%

RELS 398: Jewish Literature in Translation (Winter 2012)

<b>Rubric Element</b>	<b>Pass Native</b>	<b>Pass Transfer</b>	<b>Non-Pass/ Native</b>	<b>Non-Pass/ Transfer</b>
Reading Rate	5 / 62.5%	0 / 0%	3 / 37.5%	0 / 0%
Summary - Details	8 / 100%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
Summary - Discipline Specific Vocabulary	8 / 100%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
Summary - Author's Intent	6 / 75%	0 / 0%	2 / 25%	0 / 0%

**4. What will the department do as a result of this information?**

- communicate more clearly to all professors the process of gathering information for assessment
- align our department goals with the revised university and college goals, given the strategic planning process
- focus more carefully on teaching our students how to read disciplinary texts for comprehension, and how to write effectively in our disciplines. We will talk about how to incorporate a beginning reading/writing assessment for majors.
- encourage more students to participate in study abroad programs, especially for students in the religious studies specialization
- encourage more students to participate in SOURCE. We have established an honors thesis option that requires students to publicly present their research, and one possible venue is SOURCE.
- encourage more students to participate in cooperative education. Both the 62-credit major and the Ethics minor now require cooperative education credits.
- continue to support student participation in regional and national conferences, and to support our student club's sponsorship of university-wide events
- we will hold another student forum in winter quarter
- we are working with the newly formed pre-law club, to help our majors (and others) explore that career path
- in response to student requests, we plan on adding more upper-division courses

(depending on funding)

**5. What did the department do in response to last year's assessment information?**

- the department did a great deal more to reach out to students, alumni, and prospective students: a newly updated webpage, Facebook page, quarterly newsletter, and marketing materials.
- with a new department secretary, we have worked out more streamlined ways of collecting assessment information.

**6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at CWU: None.**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Department Goals and Outcomes**

The department will:

1. In education, encourage an understanding and appreciation of the diverse traditions, perspectives, and ideas in the disciplines of philosophy/religious studies by:
  - a) offering excellent courses for majors, minors, general education students,<sup>4</sup> and students in other programs,
  - b) demonstrating to students the value of a liberal education for thriving intellectual lives, as well as careers in the professions, business, industry, public administration, and non-profit institutions
  - c) cultivating critical reasoning skills
  - d) promoting knowledge and employment of moral reasoning.
  
2. In scholarship, explore the questions that lie at the core of the human condition — including issues of value, purpose, identity, knowledge, and faith — by:
  - a) supporting faculty and student research
  - b) helping faculty to share that research in a variety of settings
  - c) having clear performance standards in the area of scholarship.
  
3. In service, educate a wider audience about the value and significance of philosophy/religious studies by:
  - a) sponsoring relevant public presentations and colloquia
  - b) contributing to interdisciplinary programs and university-wide forums
  - c) providing scholarly service activities for local, regional, national, and international professional philosophy/religious studies organizations.

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<sup>4</sup> Note: General education courses will be assessed as part of the general education program.

**APPENDIX II**  
**Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies**  
**Evaluation of Senior Thesis**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Paper Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please refer to the evaluation rubric on the back of this sheet.**

<b>Student learning outcomes</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations</b>
Understanding of the major ideas in the disciplines: Accuracy and relevance of historical or contextual references			
Clarity of thesis			
Defense of that thesis			
Consideration and critical evaluation of a variety of perspectives in supporting material			
Thoughtful engagement with a serious question			

**Comments:**

Evaluation Rubric: These descriptions are intended as general guidelines.

<b>Primary Traits</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations</b>
Understanding of the major ideas in the relevant discipline	The paper demonstrates a clear grasp of the broader context and implications of the issues discussed.	The paper accurately refers to the historical or intellectual context of the issues discussed.	The paper contains serious inaccuracies or neglects the context of the issues discussed.
Clarity of thesis	The paper has a clear and appropriate thesis.	The paper's thesis is appropriate but needs to be clarified.	The paper lacks a clear and appropriate thesis.
Defense of that thesis	The thesis is defended by a well-constructed and convincing argument. Writing is clear and free of grammatical errors, interesting, and well-organized.	The author's argument could be strengthened but is fairly persuasive. Writing is fairly clear, organized, interesting, and mostly free of grammatical errors.	The paper does not support the thesis adequately. Writing is vague, contains many grammatical errors, and lacks organization.
Consideration and critical evaluation of a variety of perspectives in supporting material	Original and insightful analysis of the material. The paper references important and varied sources, uses them effectively, and cites them appropriately.	The analysis shows some independent interpretation of the material. The paper uses well-chosen sources adequately and cites them appropriately, with some mistakes in format.	The paper merely repeats someone else's ideas and interpretations, or gives a relatively superficial reading of the material. The paper does not use appropriate sources or does not cite them properly.
Thoughtful engagement with a serious question	The thesis focuses on a significant topic, and demonstrates the student's grasp of the perplexities and complexities of that issue.	The thesis focuses on a significant topic but does not demonstrate a very thorough engagement with the issue.	The thesis does not focus on a significant topic, and does not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the theoretical issues.

**APPENDIX III**  
**Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies**  
**Exit Survey (questions from online form)**

1. What is your specialization?                      Philosophy                      Religious Studies
2. When you pick up a text in philosophy or religious studies (depending on your specialization), how well are you able to understand the basic concepts and situate that text in relation to other concepts and works in the tradition of philosophy or religious studies? [5-point scale]
3. How would you rate your ability to advance and defend a thesis? [5-point scale]
4. How much has the department contributed to your engagement with multiple points of view, and an attitude of open-mindedness with regard to those views? [5-point scale]

**Philosophy majors only:**

5. How would you rate your ability to analyze and critically evaluate the claims of others? [5-point scale]
6. How would you rate your ability to engage in ethical reasoning? [5-point scale]

**Religious Studies majors only:**

7. How would you rate your ability to analyze and comprehend the beliefs and practices of others? [5-point scale]
8. How much has the department contributed to your ability to understand the ethical sources, concepts, ideas, and practices of various religious traditions? [5-point scale]

**Everyone, again:**

9. Please rate your overall satisfaction with your experience in the department: [5-point scale]
10. Which of your skills have improved the most, due to your work in this department?
11. What is the most important academic experience you've had in this department?
12. What should be done to improve the major?
13. What do you plan on doing in the next few years?

[We separately collect students' names and contact information.]



**APPENDIX V**  
**Exit Survey Results**

Quantifiable Questions	<b>2011-12 Average Response</b>	2010-2011 Average response	2009-10 Average response	2008-09 Average response
Q2: When you pick up a text in philosophy or religious studies (depending on your specialization), how well are you able to understand the basic concepts and situate that text in relation to other concepts and works in the tradition of philosophy or religious studies?	<b>4.58</b>	4.73	4.13	4.33
Q3: How would you rate your ability to advance and defend a thesis?	<b>4.47</b>	4.45	3.88	4.25
Q4: How much has the department contributed to your engagement with multiple points of view, and an attitude of open-mindedness with regard to those views?	<b>4.84</b>	4.64	4.32	4.78
Q5 (PHIL majors only): How would you rate your ability to analyze and critically evaluate the claims of others?	<b>4.61</b>	4.5	4.29	4.43
Q6 (PHIL majors only): How would you rate your ability to engage in ethical reasoning?	<b>4.56</b>	4.33	4.29	4.57
Q7 (RELS majors only): How would you rate your ability to analyze and comprehend the beliefs and practices of others?	<b>4.5</b>	4.6	4.29	4.5
Q8 (RELS majors only): How much has the department contributed to your ability to understand the ethical sources, concepts, ideas, and practices of various religious traditions?	<b>4.25</b>	4.6	4.43	4.67
Q9: Please rate your overall satisfaction with your experience in the department.	<b>4.58</b>	4.73	4.6	4.56

Open-ended questions:

Q10: Which of your skills have improved the most, due to your work in this department?

- Developing arguments
- Writing
- I have improved on analyzing arguments as well as engage in ethical reasoning.
- Critical thinking and endurance.

- Writing ability, the ability to develop a strong argument, the ability to better understand complex ideas and think "outside the box"
- My ability to write comedy has improved tremendously.
- Writing, explicating, and critical thinking. I also feel as if my social abilities have increased significantly since entering the major.
- The ability to word emotion into a coherent sentence within a paper.
- Writing
- The ability to read and think critically, of course, as well as being able to craft a well-written paper.
- The ability to defend a thesis and support a claim within a paper. i have also improved my ability to analyze others claims.
- The skills that I feel have improved because of the work in this department is my reading, writing, and critical analysis. Reading a philosophical work is nothing like reading another material in another class. It requires intense attention and analysis in order to understand what the you are reading about. Because of the experience that I had in reading many philosophical works, reading any other material that is not philosophical just comes easy to me. Writing a philosophical paper is also different than writing a paper in any other class. Not only is the reading in philosophy hard to understand, but the writer has to take that reading and explain it in his/her terms and enhance the ideas of that philosopher, whereas other non-philisophical material is explained in layman terms and anybody can interpret it. The critical analysis involved in philosophy in order to be able to read and write a philosophy paper has made it easier for me to take a non-philosophical work and interpret, analyze, and write about it. In other words, by deciding to major in philosophy, it has only made other classes seem like a piece of cake.
- My ability to write an organized, clear paper and defend it well. Additionally, I feel that my ability to analyze, understand, and critique multiple viewpoints has also improved.
- I'm wary as to whether I should call this a skill, but my ability to step back from my own position and try to seriously engage in asking what people with different backgrounds and basic beliefs might believe about any given thing. In a way, I've come to see it as an exercise in humility.
- Skills in critical thinking and analysis of arguments. Ability to evaluate the reasons behind my belief in any given argument or idea.
- My critical thinking skills have improved a great deal since beginning this program. I find I am much better able to understand concepts presented to me than I was previously.

Q11: What is the most important academic experience you've had in this department?

- The struggle to get through the very difficult classes
- My thesis
- The most important experience i have had is completing my thesis.
- The most important experience was agreeing to become a major in the department. Learning from Dr. Szpek and Dr. Dippmann has been a real honor.
- Intro to Logic. This is the class that I took only as a requirement, but was the catalyst for my developing an interest in philosophy and everything that followed.

- My senior thesis
- Researching and writing my thesis.
- SOURCE
- My thesis
- I would say attending the Forest Grove undergrad philosophy conferences has REALLY helped gauge how being a 'philosopher in real life' would work. The sort of unspoken standard one is held to by one's peers, and the camaraderie it builds was all excellent. These sorts of things are the best.
- Writing my thesis
- I have never had to write as many papers as I did for this department. Let alone to have to write a thesis paper as a requirement in order to major in philosophy. I have to admit that as a student majoring in philosophy I at times doubted myself because the material seemed hard and because of that I was frustrated. I am a student who aims to do the best of my ability and who works hard at everything. I was so used to getting A's in other classes that when I saw B's in philosophy I could not understand why if my work ethic was the same. The only answer I could come up with is that philosophy was a challenge for me and I have never been challenged before in my other classes because I was able to tackle them with no problem. This department pushed me to the limit as a student and after going through all the required coursework for my philosophy major I am now a better student because of it. Holding a BA in philosophy is not easy, anybody that thinks that it is a fool. I cannot be any more proud of myself for not giving up and sticking to the major when so many times I felt like just dropping it. Thank You Dr. Coe for making me believe that I could do it. :)
- For me, I really enjoyed the Junior Seminar class, as well as all the little academic speakers and events put on by the department.
- Classes with a great deal of discussion about issues that people really connect with have proven to be very useful experiences for me. It's always interesting to hear people's opinions and then be able to debate them in a safe and respectful environment. I hope this is an environment I can promote wherever I end up.
- Phil. 488, senior seminar, was one of the better experiences of my time in college. The way the class was set up, I felt as though I was able to apply my knowledge and be a part of the discussion in a substantive way.
- My exposure to Sartre's existentialism and Kant's ethics through this department have had a profound effect on me, and I have tried to internalize these ways of thinking into my own daily life because of it.

Q12: What should be done to improve the major?

- More religion classes
- Have junior seminar available in the fall and require the class before thesis prep, and thesis.
- The professors deserve pay raises.
- There is no realistic recommendation I could make. My only regret is that I could not fit more specialty classes in.
- A philosophy of laughter/comedy class

- Offer more classes. It would be nice if the core classes, that are usually taken sequentially, were taught by different professors. I like having the same professor for a required class every quarter but I feel that exposure to different professors every quarter would be more beneficial than working for the same prof every quarter.
- More publicity needs to be done. Many do not know we even have a religious studies department.
- I know there are budget concerns, but more religious classes would be nice.
- Definitely, definitely, DEFINITELY try to open up lines of communication between students and professors. Especially with things like philosophy and religious studies--it's just not enough to sit around and read books all day. And most often, class is lecture, with little or sometimes no time for discussion. Also, (and this isn't a reflection on the professors as people; I'm sure there are reasons) the professor-student connection can, at times, feel sort of cold and aloof. As in, wouldn't it be great if students could sit around and talk philosophy (or religious studies) with professors? Isn't that REALLY what students enjoy? I often hear students in class, talking to one another, and it's often conversation like, 'yeah I talked to Dr. So-and-So yesterday and it was so awesome'. But the opportunity for these more casual, less stressed, less formal interactions is scarce. Some of the professors are too busy for this sort of engagement, it seems. Philosophy and religious studies is fantastic as a discipline --- but how much more could we learn just from sitting around and TALKING? I think the best moments are these. The moments where you can relax just a little bit, and just talk about things pertaining to the discipline. In a study where one is almost always interacting with dead people in a musty old book (although that's good, too and necessary), it would be to everyone's great benefit, I think, if some professors tried to reach out and make connections with students. Believe me. We are all eager.
- Certain professors should not be teaching courses that are required for graduation
- I do not have statistics regarding the exact numbers when it came to females and males in the philosophy department, but based on my observations in the classes that I took in philosophy, it seemed like there were more males than female majors. In one class I was the only female in it as well as a minority. I think that the department should try and recruit more females and minorities into the major. It seems like those categories are still so underrepresented in the department.
- I think that adding an honors component could help, as well as continuing to add new and diverse class options.
- More cowbell
- It's hard to pinpoint improvements that could easily be made without more funding from the college. It would be nice to be able to offer certain classes more often.
- Not that I think this is an option, but the biggest thing I can think of is to bring back Dr. Beauclair. Dr. Beauclair and Dr. Coe were my two favorite professors in the department, and I genuinely enjoyed lectures with both of them. Dr. Beauclair in particular had a unique way of making the material more accessible and understandable to students who were only just entering the major. I was truly saddened to see him go.

Q13: What do you plan on doing in the next few years?

- travel

- Starting out in my career
- I plan on moving to Seattle working and traveling
- Working.
- Attending graduate school for archaeology.
- Becoming a comedian and perhaps getting a BFA in performance
- I plan on looking for a job or perhaps finding a graduate school/law school (maybe). If I went to grad. school I would like to advance my undergrad thesis and become more fluent in the philosophy of music.
- Finding work in pretty much any field I can.
- Graduate school for philosophy.
- Working.
- After graduating, I plan on looking for employment and working only for a year while I study for the LSAT exam or the GRE. I hope to get accepted in law school and if that does not work go into a master's program (I still do not have my mind set on what type of master's program I would go into). Furthering my education is still my plan whether I go to law school and become a lawyer or I get my master's degree.
- Going to law school!
- Studying for the LSAT, taking the LSAT, applying to Law schools, running away to France, coming back and (hopefully) going to law school.
- I am preparing to apply for masters' programs in English. I hope to complete a masters' degree and eventually earn a PhD in English.
- Finding a job and getting some work experience under my belt, making sure I'm financially secure. After that I might attempt graduate school if I think I can do it.