



**College of Arts and Humanities  
Academic Learning Compacts**

**Philosophy - B.A.**

**Discipline Specific Knowledge, Skills, Behavior and Values**

- 1. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the central philosophical theses or positions expressed in writing by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central claims in argumentative discourse (a prerequisite for forming any kind of communicative response, whether critical, supportive or otherwise) as well as the discipline-specific ability to understand the central claims of philosophical figures who are commonly recognized to be prominent in the field (specific philosophers will vary from year to year), as well as an ability that is key to critical thinking; namely, the ability to identify the central claims or positions of an author in question.**
- 2. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the arguments made in support of central philosophical theses or positions expressed by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central arguments in argumentative discourse as well as the critical thinking ability of being able to identify the argumentative support for a thesis. This ability to identify arguments is also central to students' discipline-specific skills in philosophy; while no discipline commands a monopoly on critical thinking, philosophy has been the disciplinary home of logic and critical thinking since the time of Aristotle. In our case, then, critical thinking is both a learning compact in itself as well as a discipline-specific skill. In a more specific sense, however, students will be able to identify some of the major arguments by prominent philosophers as part of their discipline-specific knowledge of the major figures of their field.**
- 3. Students completing the BA Program in Philosophy will be able to assess critically the adequacy of arguments made in support of central philosophical theses or positions expressed by prominent authors in the field. Critical evaluation of arguments may include the employment of such notions as validity, soundness, cogency, coherence, etc., as well as an awareness of common fallacies and reasoning errors, all of which are key**

to critical thinking. This ability to assess arguments is also central to student's discipline-specific skills in philosophy because of the place of critical thinking in our discipline. In a more specific sense, however, students will be able to discuss the adequacy of some well-known arguments by prominent philosophers as part of their discipline-specific knowledge of the major figures of their field.

4. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to demonstrate ability to identify critical components in philosophical arguments and proficiency in communication and critical thinking by the clear articulation of their own positions and theses.
5. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to identify specific components to philosophical arguments and to demonstrate proficiency in communication and critical thinking by formulating argumentative support for their own positions and theses.
6. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will have a competent understanding of major philosophical fields, issues, authors and movements.
7. In addition to demonstrating familiarity with the major subjects and fields of philosophy, students completing the BA program in Philosophy will have a competent understanding of the skills and knowledge that are central to those major fields and subjects. Since this outcome cannot be tested in a fully comprehensive way (all subjects every year), the specific skill set and knowledge base will vary from one assessment period to another. For example, students should not only know about the major ethical positions of Kantianism, Utilitarianism, and Virtue Ethics, but should also be able articulate how ethical questions are evaluated within those different ethical schools.

### **Critical Thinking**

1. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the central philosophical theses or positions expressed in writing by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central claims in argumentative discourse (a prerequisite for forming any kind of communicative response, whether critical, supportive or otherwise) as well as the discipline-specific ability to understand the central claims of philosophical figures who are commonly recognized to be prominent in the field (specific philosophers will vary from year to year), as well as an ability that is key to critical thinking; namely, the ability to identify the central claims or positions of an author in question.
2. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the arguments made in support of central philosophical theses or

positions expressed by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central arguments in argumentative discourse as well as the critical thinking ability of being able to identify the argumentative support for a thesis. This ability to identify arguments is also central to students' discipline-specific skills in philosophy; while no discipline commands a monopoly on critical thinking, philosophy has been the disciplinary home of logic and critical thinking since the time of Aristotle. In our case, then, critical thinking is both a learning compact in itself as well as a discipline-specific skill. In a more specific sense, however, students will be able to identify some of the major arguments by prominent philosophers as part of their discipline-specific knowledge of the major figures of their field.

3. Students completing the BA Program in Philosophy will be able to assess critically the adequacy of arguments made in support of central philosophical theses or positions expressed by prominent authors in the field. Critical evaluation of arguments may include the employment of such notions as validity, soundness, cogency, coherence, etc., as well as an awareness of common fallacies and reasoning errors, all of which are key to critical thinking. This ability to assess arguments is also central to student's discipline-specific skills in philosophy because of the place of critical thinking in our discipline. In a more specific sense, however, students will be able to discuss the adequacy of some well-known arguments by prominent philosophers as part of their discipline-specific knowledge of the major figures of their field.
4. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to demonstrate ability to identify critical components in philosophical arguments and proficiency in communication and critical thinking by the clear articulation of their own positions and theses.
5. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to identify specific components to philosophical arguments and to demonstrate proficiency in communication and critical thinking by formulating argumentative support for their own positions and theses.
6. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to demonstrate proficiency in communication and critical thinking by identifying and expressing opposing arguments or evidence against their theses, expressed both verbally, in class participation, as well as in their own philosophical writing.
7. Students in Introduction to Philosophy, Critical Thinking, Research Methods, Ethics in Science and Technology, Senior Seminar, and one 4000-level philosophy course will demonstrate improvement in critical thinking during that course.

## **Communication**

- 1. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the central philosophical theses or positions expressed in writing by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central claims in argumentative discourse (a prerequisite for forming any kind of communicative response, whether critical, supportive or otherwise) as well as the discipline-specific ability to understand the central claims of philosophical figures who are commonly recognized to be prominent in the field (specific philosophers will vary from year to year), as well as an ability that is key to critical thinking; namely, the ability to identify the central claims or positions of an author in question.**
- 2. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to identify the arguments made in support of central philosophical theses or positions expressed by prominent authors in the field. This includes the general communicative ability of being able to identify the central arguments in argumentative discourse as well as the critical thinking ability of being able to identify the argumentative support for a thesis. This ability to identify arguments is also central to students' discipline-specific skills in philosophy; while no discipline commands a monopoly on critical thinking, philosophy has been the disciplinary home of logic and critical thinking since the time of Aristotle. In our case, then, critical thinking is both a learning compact in itself as well as a discipline-specific skill. In a more specific sense, however, students will be able to identify some of the major arguments by prominent philosophers as part of their discipline-specific knowledge of the major figures of their field.**
- 3. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to demonstrate ability to identify critical components in philosophical arguments and proficiency in communication and critical thinking by the clear articulation of their own positions and theses.**
- 4. Students in the Philosophy program will be able to identify specific components to philosophical arguments and to demonstrate proficiency in communication and critical thinking by formulating argumentative support for their own positions and theses.**
- 5. Students completing the BA program in Philosophy will be able to demonstrate proficiency in communication and critical thinking by identifying and expressing opposing arguments or evidence against their theses, expressed both verbally, in class participation, as well as in their own philosophical writing.**

## **Assessment of Philosophy - B.A. Outcomes**

**These outcomes will be assessed using a variety of assessment methods, including:**

- **Tests**
- **Projects**
- **Essays**
- **Position papers and presentations**