Expected Outcome 1: Analytical Reading
Students will be able to extract arguments from primary texts, offer interpretations of texts that are both sympathetic and successful in making the issues and concerns of the text 'alive' from the standpoint of the contemporary reader, and contextualize the project of one text in relation to others with which it is in conversation.

Assessment Method 1: Written Work
Assessment Method Description
Every final term paper in PHIL 4970 is assessed during the grading process using the "Material Understanding" section of the "Department Rubric". 4970 is offered every semester and every Philosophy major is required to take two sections of the class. All final essays from 4970 were assessed.

Findings
Nearly every student could present the main issue being discussed, although it was not clear that this was the result of reading as opposed to merely listening to lectures and discussions in class. Most students are able to present clear, complete, and correct accounts of what they have read. Many (but not most) demonstrate control over the philosophical dynamic.

How did you use findings for improvement?
See "Annual Discussion" below.

Additional Comments
Assessment Method 2: Annual Discussion
Assessment Method Description
We devote a department meeting every year to discussing the students in our major and assessing their skills, including their analytical reading skills. The faculty are asked to make judgments about the analytical reading skills of students based on student work, classroom discussion, and any other relevant data they might possess.

Findings
Faculty continue to note some improvement in these skills, attributable to an increased emphasis by the faculty on requiring that students read prior lecturing on the material.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
Primarily we plan to continue on course, to continue to give assignments that require of our students that they read carefully and not depend entirely on lectures. We are also starting to experiment with flipped classrooms and the initial response has been positive.

**Additional Comments**

**Expected Outcome 2: Argumentative Skills**
Students will be able to: 1. distinguish valid and invalid arguments, consider and assess forms of inference; 2. track and understand lines of reasoning through various phases of a dialectic (e.g., distinguish claims, arguments, objections, replies, premises from conclusion, explanations from arguments, and so forth).

**Assessment Method 1: Written Work**

**Assessment Method Description**
Every final term paper in 4000-level classes is assessed during the grading process using a standard rubric (attached). Two 4000-level courses are required of every student and serve the functional role played by capstone courses in other programs.
### Findings

29 students were enrolled in 4000-level classes for 2013-2014. Nearly all of our students can offer explicit premises and at least the most obvious objections. A strong majority of students are excellent with respect to both skills.

### How did you use findings for improvement?

Improving these skills only comes through practice. Although our students are required to work on these skills, especially given the nature of their written assignments, we think that students need more opportunity to practice these skills in class. Some faculty are now working with versions of flipped classrooms to see whether that approach gives students more opportunity to develop these skills.

### Additional Comments

**Assessment Method 2:** Annual Discussion
**Assessment Method Description**

We devote a department meeting every year to discussing the student in our majors and assessing their skills. This discussion relies on the judgments of faculty who have evaluated student assignments, witnessed classroom discussion, and talked with students in the offices and hallways of the department. It involves, in other words, the collective judgment of every relevant expert and every piece of relevant evidence. A part of this meeting is used to discuss, in particular, how students are doing in relation to the skills on the "Department Rubric".

**Findings**

Our discussion confirms the findings of "Written Work". Faculty expressed a concern that too many students are intellectually passive. They are not disinterested, but they come to class to do philosophy, but to listen to it. It isn't clear whether this is due to reticence or a lack of preparation. Regardless, argumentative skills are best acquired through practice, and we feel we are missing opportunities in class to develop these skills.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

see above

**Additional Comments**

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**Expected Outcome 3: Philosophical Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate basic knowledge of the history of philosophy, contemporary metaphysics and epistemology, and axiology.

**Assessment Method 1: Annual Discussion**

**Assessment Method Description**

Students are required to take a history of philosophy sequence and the satisfy distribution requirements in metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology (value). The faculty involved in teaching these courses meet once a year to discuss whether and to what extent students demonstrate philosophical knowledge. The judgments of these experts relies on all of the course evidence -- student assignments, classroom discussion, etc. -- relevant to these courses, and these courses are designed in part to target this particular outcome.

**Findings**

Faculty conclude that most students have a basic knowledge of the major areas of philosophy and its history and an understanding of how these areas
Expected Outcome 4: Writing
Students will be able to: 1. clearly explain a philosophical problem, purported solutions to such, and arguments in favor and against these; 2. offer critical discussion of these that goes beyond merely reporting; 3. argue for the claims one makes, where such arguments are valid and have premises for which some reasonable attempt has been made to secure their plausibility; 4. articulate fully abstract claims in explicit, minimally-figurative language; 5. produce written work that sustains a coherent intellectual narrative and succeeds in including what is relevant and excluding what is not; 6. demonstrate a mastery of Standard Written English in matters of grammar, diction, and style.

Assessment Method 1: Written Work

Assessment Method Description
Every final term paper from PHIL 4970 is assessed during the grading process. Every philosophy major at Auburn is required to take two sections of 4970, and every student is assessed at some point before graduating as a philosophy major. Papers are assessed using the writing portion of the Department's standard rubric.

Findings
Nearly all of our students write papers that are clear, concise, concrete, and readable (Good to Excellent). And most write papers that are adequately organized (Good). All of our students write with no more than occasional deviations from standard written English grammar and spelling, and most write with few or no such deviations.

How did you use findings for improvement?
See "Annual Discussion" below.

Additional Comments
Assessment Method 2: Annual Discussion

Assessment Method Description
We devote a department meeting a year to discussing the students in our major and assessing their skills, including their writing skills. This meeting involves a discussion amongst all of the faculty concerning all of the written
work they have seen from students. The discussion is guided by the
department's rubric. Specifically, faculty are asked to judge how students
are doing with respect to the relevant categories represented on the rubric,
based on the total evidence at their disposal.

**Findings**
Faculty now require multiple-drafts in PHIL 4970 and in most 3000-level
classes. Faculty are convinced that we are seeing positive results. Writing
skills have long been a strength of our majors, but students now seem to
be getting better and at a faster rate.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
We will continue to require multiple-drafts in 4970 and encourage that
students have more opportunities to write drafts. Many faculty are now
experimenting with using class time to teach students how to use rubrics
to assess the writing of their fellow students, partly in the hope that it will
teach students how to assess their own writing.

**Additional Comments**