

**Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College**

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Philosophy (new)	241	PHL 241 12/15/2024- Environmental Ethics
College	Division	Department
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities, Languages and the Arts
Faculty Preparer		Meghan Bungo
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

No

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

3.

4. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

5.

II. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Identify central concepts from philosophical ethics and ethical theories applicable to the environment.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Outcome-related matching or multiple-choice questions
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2023
 - Course section(s)/other population: All
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key

- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students will score 70% or higher
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2023, 2022	2024, 2023, 2022	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
171	85

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

50% of all students were assessed from each section.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All sections offered were assessed and a random sample of 50% of the students in those sections were assessed. The course is offered online only during Fall and Winter semesters. In Fall of 2023, 2 sections were offered, and both were assessed. We were not able to assess Fall 2021 due to a lack of data for that section.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The tool includes a number of multiple-choice exam questions. The questions ask the student to identify central concepts and were administered as part of an exam on Blackboard (Bb). Those questions were then scored based on the number of correct answers submitted using a departmentally developed rubric (1-4).

The standard of success indicated on the assessment plan is 70% of students scoring 70% or higher; however, 70% is not a possible score on the current rubric (the master syllabus has not been updated since 2020). For the current assessment, the standard of success is 70% of students scoring 75% or higher, or 3 out of 4 on the rubric.

The rubric is defined as follows:

1 = No concepts identified correctly

2= Identifies 1 or 2 correctly

3= Identifies 3 or 4 correctly

4= Identifies 5 or 6 correctly

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The students have excelled in the identification of concepts portion of the assessment. The standard of success was met for this outcome with 90% (77/85) of students achieving the standard of success. While certainly there is always room for slight improvements, the goal going forward will be in maintaining their excellence in this outcome and staying steady with our consistent focus on reiterating concepts throughout the course.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students truly excelled in achieving this outcome. They have consistently in every single semester been able to achieve well above average here. They really do well with identifying the concepts of normative ethics and utilitarianism in particular.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

The rate of success is so high that there is not a ton to do to improve, though there is a slight trend of lower scores on questions involving the distinction between moral patient and moral agent and Schweitzer's ethics, so emphasizing these concepts a bit more in discussions and announcements may help students think about the key features of these ideas more clearly.

Outcome 2: Define and explain the central principles and/or features of the theories of environmental ethics examined in the class.

- Assessment Plan

- Assessment Tool: Essay question
- Assessment Date: Winter 2023
- Course section(s)/other population: All
- Number students to be assessed: A random sample of 50% of all students with a minimum of one full section
- How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally-developed rubric
- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students will score 70% or higher
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2023, 2022	2024, 2023, 2022	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
171	85

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

50% of all students were assessed from each section.
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4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All sections offered were assessed and a random sample of 50% of the student submissions in those sections were selected for assessment. The course is offered as a single DL section only during Fall and Winter semesters. In Fall of 2023, 2 sections were offered, and both were assessed. Fall 2021 was not included due to a lack of data for that section.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The tool includes a number of "define this term" style exam questions. The questions ask the student to define central concepts and were administered as part of an exam either in person or on Bb. Each definition was scored out of 1 point

and the total score was calculated according to a departmentally developed rubric (1-4).

The standard of success indicated on the assessment plan is 70% of students scoring 70% or higher; however, 70% is not a possible score on the current rubric (the master syllabus has not been updated since 2020). For the current assessment, the standard of success is 70% of students scoring 75% or higher, or 3 out of 4 on the rubric.

The rubric is defined as follows:

1 = No concepts identified correctly

2= Identifies 1 or 2 correctly

3= Identifies 3 or 4 correctly

4= Identifies 5 or 6 correctly

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The students did very well on the define and explain concepts portion of the assessment. The standard of success was met for this outcome with 88% (75/85) of students achieving the standard of success. Overall they are excelling in their achievement of this outcome. There is again, always some room to improve, and their ability to define Leopold's Land Ethic and Mill's 2 concepts of nature are two points where there is some room to improve and focus attention going forward.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students are doing fantastic work in defining and explaining central concepts. They have consistently been able to identify and concisely explain the key features of the concepts and theories we discuss in the course.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Again, they are exceeding expectations in this area so there are no suggestions for substantive improvements or changes, but there were a couple of concepts that may need a little more discussion as part of earlier assignments. Leopold's land

ethic and Biocentrism are two theories that give students a little trouble in their explanations. More emphasis by the instructor on the key features of these viewpoints may be helpful going forward.

Outcome 3: Analyze contemporary ethical issues involving the environment by applying the ethical theories and concepts covered in the course.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Essay question
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2023
 - Course section(s)/other population: All
 - Number students to be assessed: A random sample of 50% of all students with a minimum of one full section
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students will score 70% or higher
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2023, 2022	2024, 2023, 2022	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

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171	85

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

50% of all students were assessed from each section.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All sections offered were assessed and a random sample of 50% of the students in those sections were selected for assessment. The course is offered as a single DL

section only during Fall and Winter semesters. In Fall of 2023, 2 sections were offered, and both were assessed. Fall 2021 was not included due to a lack of data for that section.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The tool used for this outcome involves an essay questions (students choose from two options) asking students to apply central ethical concepts and theories to analyze environmental issues. The essay question was administered as part of a required student exam on Bb. The essay question was then scored (1-4) using a departmentally developed rubric.

The standard of success indicated on the assessment plan is 70% of students scoring 70% or higher; however, 70% is not a possible score on the current rubric (the master syllabus has not been updated since 2020). For the current assessment, the standard of success is 70% of students scoring 75% or higher, or 3 out of 4 on the rubric.

The rubric is defined as follows:

- 1- Did not directly apply theory to the ethical issue.
- 2- Incorrect application of theory to the ethical issue.
- 3- Partially correct application of theory to the ethical issue.
- 4- Correct application of theory to ethical issue

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The students also did excellent on the application of concepts and analysis portion of the assessment with 83% (71/85) of students meeting the standard of success. While the students are excelling overall in this outcome as in the others, this is the outcome that appears to present the most challenge for students. Emphasizing more careful application of the concepts and theories throughout lower stake assignments a bit more might be a nice way to possibly improve success rates in this outcome going forward.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students are excelling in their written application of theories and analysis of environmental ethics issues. With both essays, the students are submitting work that shows a great deal of critical engagement with the ideas and creative application of ideas to issues associated with the environment.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Students are again not in need of great improvements here, though I think more emphasis on careful analysis in prior assignments, particularly discussion boards will be a nice way to assist students in developing their essays to achieve greater success.

III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

N/A

2. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

It was clear that students were performing well in the course, but it was a pleasant surprise to see how consistently well they were meeting the course outcomes. The course is serving the needs of our students well. As a side note, overall the students in this course every single semester have seemed to be passionate and dedicated to issues surrounding the environment and that has influenced the excellent quality of their work.

3. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

This information will be shared with departmental faculty at our next departmental meeting.

4. Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Standard of success	Update the standard of success from “70% of students will score 70% or higher” to “70% of students will score 75% or higher.”	This aligns with the current rubrics being used to score the assessment tools.	2025

5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

6.

III. Attached Files

[Assessment Tool](#)
[Assessment Data](#)

Faculty/Preparer: Meghan Bungo **Date:** 12/16/2024
Department Chair: Charles Johnson **Date:** 12/17/2024
Dean: Anne Nichols **Date:** 12/17/2024
Assessment Committee Chair: Jessica Hale **Date:** 06/24/2026