

# ILLINOIS COLLEGE

LIBERAL ARTS SINCE 1829

Dr. Adam L. Porter  
Assistant Professor of Religion  
1101 W. College Avenue  
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650

Voice: 217-245-3429  
Fax: 217-245-3480  
E-mail: [aporter@ic.edu](mailto:aporter@ic.edu)  
Web: [www2.ic.edu/aporter](http://www2.ic.edu/aporter)

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To: Assessment Committee

Re: Department of Philosophy and Religion Assessment Report for AY 2004-05

The department's assessment program outlines several goals for the department, including:

1. Providing courses for Majors and Minors in each program
2. Providing courses to support the General Education program
3. Providing courses to support the other departments' programs
4. Promoting the department members' professional development
5. Providing advising to students

After analyzing assessment data contained in this report, the department has reached the following conclusions for the above goals:

1. The department needs two additional staff positions:
  - a. an additional philosophy professor to teach the increasingly large number of service classes in the Philosophy program and to help develop the philosophy major.
  - b. an additional religion professor to teach classes in non-Western religious traditions.

The department needs to revise, somewhat, its assessment plan to ensure consistent entry of data by faculty members and to clarify what some metrics mean.

The department should consider sending one or more members to explore innovative ways of teaching history to make its importance clearer to the students.

2. The department, especially the religion program, offers an unusually high proportion of classes that help the college's general education program. As the program matures and comes to resemble those in other departments, this proportion should be expected to fall slightly and the course offering profile should come to resemble other programs in Division III.

3. The department, especially the philosophy program, offers a very large number of courses designed to assist other departments and programs.

4. The faculty members in the department are very active in professional development and the department would like to support their efforts in this area by giving them a one course release every third semester, as announced by the Dean at the opening faculty conference, in August 2004. It remains to be seen if this is viable.

5. Faculty, especially those teaching FYS classes, have a fairly high advising load. But, nevertheless, advisees are generally satisfied with the assistance they receive from their advisers.

The data and analysis that lead to these conclusions may be found in the rest of the report.

## **Goal 1: Providing courses for comprehensive majors and minors**

### **Section A: The Religion Program**

#### **History**

The religion and philosophy programs followed different trajectories until approximately 2002. Philosophy's offerings and enrollment of majors followed a pattern similar to that of other departments.

But the majority of courses offered by the Religion program were to support the Gen Ed requirement that students take at least one course in biblical material (Rel 101, 205, or 212). Starting in 2000, with the hiring of Porter, the department began to revise its offerings. This continued with the hiring of Riswold in 2002. The number of courses listed in the catalogue and regularly offered went from approximately 12 to 26.

At the same time, in the Fall of 2002, the faculty adopted a new set of Gen Ed requirements that allowed students to select from a much wider list of courses to fulfill the Gen-Ed requirement to study religious and philosophical issues. Additionally, some religion classes can be taken to fulfill other Gen-Ed requirements in areas of Humanities, Global Issues, etc.

Because of these internal and external changes, the Religion program has been in a period of change and growth. It should eventually come to resemble other programs in the college.

Partly in response to these changes, there has been a marked increase in the number of students opting to major in religion, which may indicate that students perceive the department's offerings to be interesting and its teaching methods to be meritorious. From 1971 to 2002, when the program began to revise its offerings, the total number of students graduating with majors in religion (or religious studies) was 11. In 2003, two students graduated in religion. Currently, there are 16 majors and 12 minors. This suggests that the changes in the program's offerings are finding merit with the students.

In short, it appears that the religion program is on track to resemble other programs at the college, although there remains work to be done.

#### **Sources of Data:**

##### **1) Student Learning Assessment**

As reported in our previous assessment report, the department has been collecting data on its majors. When a student declares a religion major, their adviser creates a record in the Access database. Other faculty members enter assessment data on for that student when they take classes from that faculty member, ranking the student's performance from 1 to 10, with 10 being "superlative," 5 being "average," and less than 5 being "low" or "failed to demonstrate understanding."

Descriptions of the different criteria and the methods used to assess them can be found in the departmental assessment plan.

One problem with analyzing these data is that for most classes, especially the lower level classes, the number of students being studied are relatively small. Thus, it is difficult to tell if different teaching methods account for the different assessment numbers or if the variation is largely due to student performance. That is, certain students work harder and this is reflected in higher assessment figures for the class, regardless of the teaching methodology employed.

A second problem is that for most classes with  $N > 1$  is that they have been offered only once or twice (such as 289, 265, 320, 332, 333, etc.). The data from S05 semester should address this issue, but it is not reflected in this assessment report.

Until enough time passes for us to have collected significant data, we have decided to aggregate the data for a given class. There are still some classes with  $N=1$ , but most have 2 or more students in them.

The printouts for the different learning metrics are found in Appendix C of this report.

## **2) Comments from Senior Religion Majors**

Appendix A contains comments from several majors, solicited as part of the senior seminar.

## **3) Faculty Assessment of Student Learning**

Appendix B contains essays from department members discussing their perceptions of student performance in one of their classes. These essays demonstrate that faculty are continually trying to improve their courses, are aware of student learning issues, and make mid-course adjustments to try to ensure favorable learning outcomes.

## **Conclusions about Student Learning Goals**

Examining these various sources of data, several conclusions can be reached.

1) There are relatively few classes that introduce students to Breadth and Diversity. This is seen in the reports from the database: only three classes are assessed under the breadth and diversity metric.

It is also seen in the comments from the majors, two of whom commented that they would have liked to have more offerings in non-Western religious traditions.

And it can be seen in our course offerings: only two classes focus exclusively on non-Western traditions (288 and 312); Rel 289 introduces students to the Abrahamic faiths (including Orthodox Christianity), which many of them are unfamiliar with.

Adding a member to the department of religion with a non-Western focus would remedy this issue.

2) Different professors seem to have different ideas about how to assess student performance. The average grade is not “5” but something higher “perhaps an “8.” The department needs to meet and try to come to a consensus on how to put data into the database.

The department also needs to clarify exactly what is meant by different metrics. For example, how is “METH” different from “CSE” or “CE”?

The department has decided to meet early in the fall of 2005 to discuss these two issues and revise the assessment plan to clarify these issues.

3) The metrics with the highest Standard Deviation in scores are: CSE, HK, LIT, and BD. Part of this difference is attributed to the issue addressed in point two: different professors are entering different numbers for the same level of performance. Part of it may be attributed to one (or two) students outliers (for example, in Rel 320, the one student who didn’t turn in the final paper and flunked the course significantly distorted the class average).

3A) The importance the faculty place on historical knowledge is reflected in the large number of classes that assess historical knowledge. But the average scores for this metric are lower than most others and have a higher standard Deviation. The student comments reflect an under-appreciation of the importance of history. The comments of Porter and Spalding reveal how they have struggled to address this issue.

The department needs to explore ways to make history more interesting and relevant to the students. We should consider sending one or more faculty members to a “Reacting to the Past” symposium or other similar innovative pedagogical training venue as soon as possible.

3B) The scores for LIT and CSE are also somewhat lower than for the other metrics. The reasons for this are mostly attributable to the issues discussed above (in point 3). However, professors may want to think about how they could get the students to engage with the literature or scholarly materials more vigorously.

## **Section B: The Philosophy Program**

Written by John A. Laumakis

### **I. Introduction**

Assessment was not conducted in Fall 2004. Assessment was conducted, however, in Spring 2005.

At the beginning of Spring 2005, there was only one philosophy major at Illinois College. Hence, so that sufficient data could be collected, assessment was conducted at the course level, not the major program level.

The course assessed was PHIL 191: Introduction to Philosophy. PHIL 191 was assessed because it has been offered more frequently than any other philosophy course, and as a result, it has most supported the College's General Education Program. Therefore, outcomes for student learning in PHIL 191 indicate, in a unique way, the degree to which the Philosophy program has enriched the liberal arts nature of Illinois College, which is reflected in the College's General Education Program.

### **II. Goals for Student Learning**

The goals for student learning for PHIL 191 were determined in accordance with the Assessment Plan of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, including the Mission Statement of the Department. Given that PHIL 191 is an introductory course, there were two goals for student learning assessed, each of which had two corresponding criteria:

**Goal 1:** Learn *about* philosophy, that is, demonstrate knowledge of the history of Western philosophy

Criterion A: Identify the positions of major thinkers in the history of Western philosophy: *know who said what*

Criterion B: State the arguments of major thinkers in the history of Western philosophy: *know why they said what they said*

**Goal 2:** Learn to *do* philosophy, that is, demonstrate the basic skills used in philosophical argumentation

Criterion A: Identify and distinguish an argument's premise(s) and conclusion

Criterion B: Evaluate arguments or philosophical positions

These goals for student learning were stated in slightly different words on the course syllabus under "Goals," which read as follows:

#### **Goals:**

By the end of the course, you should be able to do two things. First, for short-term purposes, you should be able to identify and explain the philosophical theories of Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, and Russell. *This means that you should learn about the history of Western philosophy: you should know who said what and why.* Second, for long-term purposes, you should be better able to think philosophically. *This means that you should be better able to do philosophy.* It means that, when you read a text or partake in a discussion on any issue, you should be better able to judge the clarity, meaning, and acceptability of statements; to uncover assumptions and recognize logical entailments; and to

identify, reconstruct, and evaluate arguments. You should also, therefore, be better able to articulate and defend your own beliefs and justify your own actions.

### III. Methods of Achievement

Two methods of achievement were used: three exams and two homework assignments.

For Goal 1, criteria A and B were assessed in the three course exams. Criteria A was assessed in true/false questions. Criteria B was assessed in multiple choice questions.

For Goal 2, criteria A was assessed in two homework assignments. Criteria B was assessed in the three course exams in essay questions.

### IV. Standards of Achievement

For Goal 1, criteria A and B were assessed according to an absolute standard of achievement, namely, whether a response was correct or incorrect. For these criteria, the content is either known or not; there are no degrees of comprehension. Hence, an absolute standard was used.

For Goal 2, criteria A and B were assessed according to a graduated standard of achievement, namely, the degree to which a response was reasonable. For these criteria, the content admits of degrees of comprehension. Hence, a graduated standard consisting of three levels—**target**, **minimum**, and **sub-minimum**—was used. For criteria A—identifying and distinguishing an argument’s premise(s) and conclusion—a **target** response accurately stated an argument’s conclusion as well as all but only the premises needed to establish that conclusion; a **minimum** response accurately stated an argument’s conclusion but either lacked a premise needed to establish that conclusion or included a premise not needed to establish that conclusion; a **sub-minimum** response incorrectly stated an argument’s conclusion. For criteria B—evaluating arguments or philosophical positions—a **target** response correctly stated the argument or position evaluated and provided a well-reasoned evaluation of the essential points of the argument or position evaluated; a **minimum** response *either* correctly stated the argument or position evaluated but failed to provide a well-reasoned evaluation of the essential points of the argument or position evaluated *or* incorrectly stated the argument or position evaluated but provided a well-reasoned evaluation of the essential points of the incorrectly-stated argument or position evaluated; a **sub-minimum** response incorrectly stated the argument or position evaluated and failed to provide a well-reasoned evaluation of the essential points of the incorrectly-stated argument or position evaluated.

### V. Results

There were 21 students in the course. The results were as follows:

**Goal 1:** Learn *about* philosophy, that is, demonstrate knowledge of the history of Western philosophy

Criterion A: Identify the positions of major thinkers in the history of Western philosophy: *know who said what*

Method of achievement: True/false questions on three exams

**First exam:**  
100% : 7

**Second exam:**  
100% : 0

**Third exam:**  
100% : 0

90%: 2	90%: 6	90%: 0
80%: 5	80%: 7	80%: 4
70%: 3	70%: 4	70%: 4
60%: 4	60%: 2	60%: 4
50%: 0	50%: 2	50%: 7
40%: 0	40%: 0	40%: 1
30%: 0	30%: 0	30%: 1

Ave. score: 82.3%      Ave. score: 76.1%      Ave. score: 60%

**Criterion B:** State the arguments of major thinkers in the history of Western philosophy: *know why they said what they said*

Method of achievement: Multiple-choice questions on three exams

<b>First exam:</b>	<b>Second exam:</b>	<b>Third exam:</b>
100%: 1	100%: 1	100%: 0
80%: 3	80%: 7	80%: 3
60%: 8	60%: 7	60%: 12
40%: 4	40%: 4	40%: 5
20%: 4	20%: 2	20%: 1
0%: 1	0%: 0	0%: 0

Ave. score: 50.4%      Ave. score: 60.9%      Ave. score: 56.2%

**Goal 2:** Learn to *do* philosophy, that is, demonstrate the basic skills used in philosophical argumentation

**Criterion A:** Identify and distinguish an argument's premise(s) and conclusion

Method of achievement: Standardizing arguments in two homework assignments, the first on Plato's *Apology* and the second on Descartes' *Meditations*

**First assignment** (3 arguments):      **Second assignment** (2 arguments):

*First argument:*

Target: 2

Minimum: 8

Sub-minimum: 11

*First argument:*

Target: 2

Minimum: 11

Sub-minimum: 8

*Second argument:*

Target: 0

Minimum: 8

Sub-minimum: 13

*Second argument:*

Target: 16

Minimum: 5

Sub-minimum: 0

*Third argument:*

Target: 10

*Aggregate scores:*

Target: 18 (43%)

Minimum: 7

Sub-minimum: 4

Minimum: 16 (38%)

Sub-minimum: 8 (19%)

*Aggregate scores:*

Target: 12 (19%)

Minimum: 23 (36.5%)

Sub-minimum: 28 (44.5%)

Criterion B: Evaluate arguments or philosophical positions

Method of achievement: Essay questions on three exams

**First exam:**

*First essay:*

Target: 15

Minimum: 6

Sub-minimum: 0

**Second exam:**

*First essay:*

Target: 3

Minimum: 16

Sub-minimum: 2

**Third exam:**

*One essay:*

Target: 5 (24%)

Minimum: 14 (67%)

Sub-minimum: 2 (9%)

*Second essay:*

Target: 4

Minimum: 10

Sub-minimum: 7

*Second essay:*

Target: 10

Minimum: 8

Sub-minimum: 3

*Aggregate scores:*

Target: 19 (45%)

Minimum: 16 (38%)

Sub-minimum: 7 (17%)

*Aggregate scores:*

Target: 13 (31%)

Minimum: 24 (57%)

Sub-minimum: 5 (12%)

Within Goal 1, students performed better on criterion A than on criterion B on each of the three exams. This is perhaps not surprising, given the cognitive skills needed for criterion A and criterion B. Performance concerning criterion A depends primarily on *memory*, whereas performance concerning criterion B depends not only on *memory* but also on *the ability to understand relations*.

On criterion A, student performance consistently worsened across all three exams, since the average score steadily decreased from 82.3% to 76.1% to 60%. On criterion B, student performance fluctuated across all three exams, since the average score increased from 50.4% to 60.9% between the first and second exam but then decreased from 60.9% to 56.2% between the second and third exam.

Within Goal 2, student performance improved on criterion A from the first to the second homework assignment, since, as a comparison of the aggregate scores of each assignment indicates, the percentage of target responses increased from 19% to 43%, the percentage of minimum responses increased from 36.5% to 38%, and the percentage of sub-minimum responses decreased from 44.5% to 19%.

On criterion B, student performance consistently improved with respect to sub-minimum responses across all three exams, since the percentage of sub-minimum responses steadily decreased

from 17% to 12% to 9%. Throughout the semester, then, fewer and fewer students scored poorly on this criterion. Yet student performance consistently worsened with respect to target and minimum responses across all three exams, since the percentage of target responses steadily decreased from 45% to 31% to 24% at the same time that the percentage of minimum responses steadily increased from 38% to 57% to 67%. Throughout the semester, then, fewer and fewer students scored well on this criterion, while more and more scored at an acceptable level.

Many factors could have caused these results. It is unclear precisely what caused them. Concerning the effectiveness of my teaching, however, it is a good sign that student performance improved on Goal 2, criterion A from the first to the second homework assignment and that, throughout the semester, fewer and fewer students scored poorly on Goal 2, criterion B. For in my judgment, Goal 2, namely, learning to *do* philosophy, is more important than Goal 1, namely, learning *about* philosophy. Hence, in my teaching, I focus principally on Goal 2. Therefore, improved student performance on Goal 2 indicates, in a special way, the effectiveness of my teaching. At the same time, however, I must reflect on ways to improve student performance on Goal 1, especially Goal 1, criterion B, since this criterion partly concerns *the ability to understand relations*, an ability that is essential to sound philosophical thinking.

## **VI. Future Assessment**

In Fall 2005, PHIL 191 will again be assessed. But in Spring 2006, PHIL 210: Ethics will be assessed since, beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year, PHIL 210 will be a core course in the interdisciplinary Management and Organizational Leadership Program.

## **VII. Human Resources and Budgetary Planning**

Reflection on the Philosophy program in light of assessment has made it clear that, by Fall 2006, a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy should be established at Illinois College.

There is currently only one full-time position in Philosophy at Illinois College. This fact entails negative consequences for students and faculty. These consequences would be eliminated, however, by the establishment of a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy. Hence, by Fall 2006, a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy should be established.

The fact that there is only one full-time position in Philosophy entails at least two negative consequences for students.

**First**, it entails a rather strict limitation on the number of Philosophy courses offered each year to all students. In an effort to avoid this consequence, faculty members from other disciplines have sometimes been asked to forego teaching courses in their own disciplines in order to teach Philosophy courses instead. Dr. James Streib from Computer Science has been asked to teach Logic, and Dr. Adam Porter from Religion has been asked to teach Computer Ethics. Moreover, Dr. Caryn Riswold from Religion has taught three courses for which students can receive credit either in the Philosophy program or in the Religion program, namely, Philosophy of Religion, Process Theology and Philosophy, and God, Suffering and Evil. With the establishment of a second full-time position in Philosophy, not only would these faculty members be free to teach other courses in their own disciplines, but also more Philosophy courses could be offered each year to all students. Hence, assuming the education of all students is enhanced by the fact that Philosophy courses are offered at Illinois College, a second full-

time position in Philosophy should be established so that a greater number of Philosophy courses may be offered each year to all students.

Indeed, the current rather strict limitation on the number of Philosophy courses offered each year to all students will become even more strict beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year. For, as mentioned above, PHIL 210: Ethics will be a core course in the interdisciplinary Management and Organizational Leadership Program. Thus, beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year, at least two classes of Ethics must be taught each year, given the number of majors—both current and future—in the Management and Organizational Leadership Program as well as the appropriate class size for a section of Ethics, namely, 20 students. Hence, beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year, two of the eight classes taught each year by the person occupying the lone full-time position in Philosophy will be Ethics classes. This will simply further restrict the number of courses that can be offered each year to all students by the person occupying the one full-time position in Philosophy. It again follows, therefore, that a second full-time position in Philosophy should be established so that a greater number of Philosophy courses may be offered each year to all students.

The current rather strict limitation on the number of Philosophy courses offered each year to all students—the limitation that will become even more strict beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year—entails, in turn, that 100, 200, and 300-level Philosophy courses be taught at the same level, namely, the introductory level. For, because there is such a small number of Philosophy courses offered each year, 200 and 300-level courses do not—and cannot—have prerequisites at the 100 level. For 100-level courses simply cannot be offered with sufficient frequency for them to serve as prerequisites for 200 and 300-level courses. It is not uncommon, then, that more than half of the students in 200 and 300-level courses have never before taken a Philosophy course. Consequently, 200 and 300-level courses must be taught at the same level as 100-level courses, since they are effectively introductory in nature. This is detrimental to students taking 200 and 300-level courses who have already taken other courses in Philosophy (especially Philosophy majors and minors), because they are not challenged in proportion to their philosophical experience. Yet, with the establishment of a second full-time position in Philosophy, a sufficiently large number of courses could be offered each year so that, at the very least, PHIL 191: Introduction to Philosophy could be made a prerequisite to all 200 and 300-level courses, with the exceptions—because of content matter—of PHIL 211: Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking and PHIL 316: Symbolic Logic. Hence, a second full-time position in Philosophy should be established so that all students—and especially Philosophy majors and minors—can be challenged in proportion to their philosophical experience in 200 and 300-level Philosophy courses.

**Second**, the fact that there is only one full-time position in Philosophy entails that the education of Philosophy majors and minors is diminished, not enhanced. Philosophy majors complete ten courses in the program, while Philosophy minors complete six courses. Although faculty members from other disciplines have taught Philosophy courses, Philosophy majors and minors must take either all or the overwhelming majority of their Philosophy courses with the same instructor. For the faculty members from other disciplines who have taught Philosophy courses do not do so regularly because of the teaching demands in their own programs. In fact, because of the teaching demands in their own programs, no faculty member from another discipline will teach a Philosophy course in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year. Thus, only one instructor, namely, Dr. Laumakis, will teach the eight Philosophy classes offered that year. This will not enhance but rather diminish the education of

Philosophy majors and minors. For example, Jenna Erickson, a sophomore who declared a major in Philosophy in Spring 2005, has already taken two courses with Dr. Laumakis, and she will take her next four courses with him during the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year. The first six courses of Jenna’s major program will, consequently, be taken with the same instructor. This will not be good for Jenna’s education. For, regardless of the skill of any instructor, it is detrimental for students to take either all or the overwhelming majority of the courses in their major or minor programs with the same instructor. This problem would be eliminated, however, by the establishment of a second full-time position in Philosophy. Hence, a second full-time position in Philosophy should be established in order to enhance the education of Philosophy majors and minors.

The fact that there is only one full-time position in Philosophy likewise entails at least two negative consequences for faculty.

**First**, as stated above, it entails that faculty members from disciplines other than Philosophy are sometimes asked to forego teaching courses in their own disciplines in order to teach Philosophy courses instead. These faculty members have been trained in other disciplines, not Philosophy. They should, consequently, have the freedom to teach courses in their own disciplines. They should not be asked to teach Philosophy courses in an attempt to rectify a defect in the Philosophy program that could—and would—be easily rectified by the establishment of a second full-time position in Philosophy. Hence, a second full-time position in Philosophy should be established for the sake of these faculty members, who have kindly given their time, effort, and talent to the Philosophy program.

**Second**, the fact that there is only one full-time position in Philosophy entails that, beginning in the Fall 2005–Spring 2006 academic year, the person occupying the lone full-time position in Philosophy will need to teach Ethics each year. For, as stated above, PHIL 210: Ethics will be a core course in the interdisciplinary Management and Organizational Leadership Program. It is true that some courses at Illinois College must be offered each year by certain programs. It is also true, however, that these programs have more than one full-time position. Hence, instructors in these programs can rotate through the courses that must be offered each year so that no one instructor is required to teach the same course each year. Yet, *the Philosophy program will be, beginning in Fall 2005, the only program at Illinois College with only one full-time position*. Whoever occupies this position, therefore, will be required to teach the same course, namely, Ethics, each year. Hence, the person occupying this position will be restricted in teaching in a way that other faculty members at Illinois College will not be restricted. If, however, a second full-time position in Philosophy were established, then, just like the faculty members in other programs that offer required courses each year, the two faculty members in the Philosophy program could alternate with each other in teaching Ethics so that no one instructor in the Philosophy program would be required to teach the same course, namely, Ethics, each year. Hence, a second full-time position in Philosophy should be established so that faculty members in the Philosophy program are asked to teach under conditions similar to those under which faculty members of other programs at Illinois College are asked to teach.

A final—and perhaps the strongest—reason to establish a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy at Illinois College can be gathered from Goal 1 of the Academic Programs section of the College’s “Leading the Way” Strategic Plan. Goal 1 states that the College intends “[t]o reclaim the liberal arts character of an Illinois College education.” From the Middle Ages to the present day, there has been an intimate and unique union between the liberal arts and Philosophy. Thus, the clearest and strongest way to reclaim the liberal arts character of an Illinois College education is to

strengthen the College's commitment to Philosophy. Yet, establishing a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy would do just that and, at the same time, produce a greater likeness between Illinois College and other Midwest liberal arts colleges, such as Augustana, Beloit, Grinnell, and St. Norbert, each of which currently has multiple full-time, tenure-track positions in Philosophy. Therefore, by Fall 2006, a second full-time, tenure-track position in Philosophy should be established at Illinois College.

**Goal 2. Providing courses to support the General Education program**

The department has a long tradition of providing strong support for the Gen-Ed program. This can be seen by analyzing data supplied by the registrar’s office showing the number of courses offered in each department and enrollment by semester.

From Fall 1998 to Fall 2004, the average class size for the college as a whole was 11.7 students. For religion courses (excluding language courses), the average size was 20.6, the highest for any department in the college. For philosophy courses, the average size was 14.0, which is still larger than the college average.

One could argue that this comparison isn’t fair, since it includes courses with widely different teaching methods and thus class size (such as lab sciences, foreign languages, or composition classes). But compared to departments with similar teaching methods and in the same division of the college, the average for religion and philosophy is still higher:

Program	Ave Class Size
Rel	20.6
Phil	14.0
Hist	16.6
Polys	18.0
Soc	17.1
Psych	14.6

Another way to measure the department’s support of the Gen-Ed program is to consider what percentage of its classes are lower level (100 and 200) classes which are more likely to be taken by students seeking to fulfill their Gen-Ed requirements. The registrar’s data shows, again, that a greater than normal percentage of the department’s offerings are to support the Gen-Ed program.

Program	Total Classes (98-04)	Total advanced courses (300 & 400)	Percent advanced classes
<b>Rel</b>	168	14	<b>8.33</b>
<b>Phil</b>	69	27	<b>39.13</b>
Hist	182	64	35.16
Poli sci	111	38	34.23
Soc	242	149	61.57
Psych	259	104	40.15

In short, while the philosophy programs offerings are similar to those of other departments and programs, the religion program offers far more support to the general education program than average. As the religion department continues to develop its offerings for a comprehensive major, its numbers should be expected to approach those of other similar departments: approximately 30-40 percent of course offerings should be for advanced classes and the average class size should decrease.

**Goal 3. Providing courses to support the other departments' programs**

The department offers a large number of courses that are designed, in whole or in part, to help other departments. These include: Phil 214 (Bioethics), 216 (Computer Ethics), 315 (Business Ethics), 316 (Symbolic Logic), 324 (Survey of Political Philosophy), Rel 288 (Eastern Religions) and 289 (Abrahamic Religions).

In addition to supporting other departments, we offer a number of classes that are part of the Gender and Women's Studies Program (GWS), including: Rel 213 (Contemporary Religious Issues), Rel 260 (Religion and Literature), Rel 320 (Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Mediterranean), and Rel 371 (Women, Race, and Theology).

One of our faculty members teaches GWS 101 on a rotating basis with other faculty in the GWS program.

Finally, the department has made a commitment to supporting the first year seminar (FYS) and is planning on offering one section of an FYS class each fall.

The following table (generated by the enrollment data from 1998 to 2004) summarizes the data:

Course	Total # of courses in program	Total # of sections of course	Percent of total offerings	Ave class size
Hist/Rel 332	168	3	1.9	9
Phil 214	69	2	3	14
Phil 216	69	2	3	7.5
Phil 315	69	10	14.5	22.2
Phil 316	69	5	7	7.6
Phil 324	69	3	4	6
Rel 213	168	1	0.6	18
Rel 216 (FYS)	168	1	0.6	15
Rel 260	168	2	1.2	19
Rel 288	168	6	3.5	22.5
Rel 289	168	4	2.4	11
Rel 320	168	2	1.2	13
Rel 371	168	1	0.6	16

Approximately 1/3 of the total number of philosophy classes and about 12% of religion courses are designed, in whole or in part, to help other departments and programs.

#### **Goal 4. Promoting the department members' professional development**

Members of the department continue to develop professionally, as can be seen by the following list of activities and publications done from 1 June 2004 to today. The college provides some funding to encourage professional development, but department can do little to mitigate the college's heavy demands in terms of teaching, service, and advising loads; these are the most significant impediments to developing professionally.

The department's major means of supporting professional development is to allow faculty members to take a 1-course reduction in teaching load every third semester. However, it remains to be seen if this release will actually be granted or if the demand for classes will preclude it.

##### **Porter**

###### Book Reviews:

Review article: Birger Olsson and Magnus Zetterholm (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.: Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14-17, 2001* (ConBNT 39; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003); Birger Olsson, Dieter Mitternacht, and Olof Brandt (eds.), *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome* (Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, Series in 4, Vol. 57; Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rom, 4, Vol 57; Jonsered: Paul Aström, 2001), *American Journal of Archaeology*, forthcoming (2005)

Anonymous reviewer for proposed textbook: Anon., *Exploring the Bible* (New York: McGraw-Hill), September 2004.

Anonymous reviewer for proposed textbook: Carol Hillenbrand, *Introduction to Islam* (London, Thames & Hudson), March 2005.

###### Conference Participant:

Attended, "AAR/SBL National Meeting," San Antonio, TX, November 20-23, 2005

Participant, "Ancient Galilee in Interaction: Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity," New Haven, CT, October 23-25, 2004.

##### **Riswold**

###### Faculty Awards/Grants:

*Alice Margaret Engelbach Memorial Endowment for Asian Studies Award.* To support travel to and study in Tokyo, Japan, including international conference sessions on Japanese religions and excursion to Shinto and Buddhist sites in the city.

*Faculty Collaboration Fund Award.* To develop renewed Sociology of Religion course with Dr. Kelly Dagan, to be team taught and collaboratively developed as a cross-disciplinary course.

###### Published Scholarship:

"The Rhetoric of Evil and Eradicating Terrorism." in Underlying Terror: Religious Studies Perspectives on the War on Terrorism, eds. Bryan Rennie and Philip Tite. (2005, forthcoming)

“Confessing Christ in a World of Violence.” Collaborative statement with Richard B. Hays, Duke Divinity School, George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary, Richard V. Pierard, Gordon College, Glen Stassen, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*. Released to and covered by national media October 2004. Published in God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It, by Jim Wallis (Harper San Francisco, 2005).

Conference Participant:

*Old and New Europe: A Brethren Colleges Abroad International Seminar.*

Szombathely, Hungary, June 14-22, 2004.

*Lilly Fellows Program National Conference: “fling yourself farther: Metaphor, Faith, and Learning.”* St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, October 15-17, 2004. Participant.

Papers Presented:

“Underlying Terror: Religious Studies Responses to the War on Terror.” Panelist with contributors to the corresponding book. *19<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Association of the History of Religions*. Tokyo, Japan, March 2005 (forthcoming).

“Teaching Complexities: God, Evil, and Peacemaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” *Christianity and Human Rights, the Fourth Annual Lilly Fellows Program National Research Conference*. Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 2004.

Professional Service:

Member, Steering Committee, Religion, Social Conflict, and Peace section of the American Academy of Religion

Member, Editorial Board, Political Theology

**Spalding**

Faculty Awards/Grants:

C. Reed Parker Professional Development Grant (2 Feb. 2005)

Charles E. Frank Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching (2 Feb. 2005)

Published Scholarship:

“What Really Happened in Lafayette’s Escape: Revelations from Brno,” *Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 2004* (forthcoming)

“Roles of Women in the Effort to Rescue Lafayette, 1793-1794,” *Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 2003* (forthcoming)

Book Reviews:

*The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity*, by S.J. Barnett (NY: Manchester UP, 2003), in *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* 42/ 1 (Sept. 2004).

Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop, ed. by Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence (Chapel Hill: U of NC Press, 2005), in *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* (forthcoming).

*Woman’s Identity and the Qur’an: A New Reading*, by Nimat Hafez Barazangi (Gainesville, FL: UP of Florida, 2004), in *Choice* (forthcoming).

*Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, by Natana J. Delong-Bas  
(NY: Oxford UP, 2004), in *Choice* (forthcoming).

**Goal 5. Providing advising to students**

Faculty in the department, especially those who taught the IC 101 class in the past or teach first year seminars have a fairly high number of advisees (22 for Porter, 18 for Riswold). As the number of majors has increased, this, too, has added to the advising load for professors in the department.

Fortunately, the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) reveals that those students identified as religion majors (N=7) or Philosophy majors (N=3) seem relatively happy with their advising.

The following table summarizes the data for the religion program (on a scale of 1 = unhappy to 7 = happy):

Item	Mean	Median	Mode
Adviser is approachable	5.71	6	6
Adviser is concerned about my success	5.71	6	6
Adviser helps me set goals	4.86	6	6

The only low number is the “goal setting.” We have addressed this by making the major and minor requirements clearer and supplying our advisees with a worksheet/checklist to help them negotiate the religion major.

The following table summarizes the data for the philosophy program:

Item	Mean	Median	Mode
Adviser is approachable	6	6	6
Adviser is concerned about my success	5.33	6	6
adjudicata helps me set goals	5.33	6	6

Again, students are generally satisfied with their advising.

Appendix A: 2005 Senior Seminar comments on studying religion at IC:

As far as the reason for this debt, my study of religion, I can't say it was what I wanted when starting here. But I took a Church history class with Dr. Koss and couldn't shake the idea of "this is where I belong" (or I "*ought not*" do anything else as Dr. Laumakis is fond of saying). So I gave in. When put like that, it almost sounds bad. As far as low points, I would have liked to take more classes inside the major, like another class on Eastern religions or a Church history class if one had been offered. High points are more than I could remember, including making some good friends and getting the chance to explore how and why people relate to God and the supernatural. It is so personal to people, that once you understand their religion and spirituality, you gain an intimate knowledge of the individual and consequently their worldview. Personally, this study has intensified my search for Truth and living a virtuous life, and that can't be bad can it. No regrets!

With looking at high and low points, there are too many high points about studying Religion at IC to pinpoint just one, but the only low point was not being able to study more on Eastern Religions.

As far as my religion studies at IC go, my all-time favorite class was Religion and Literature, probably because the homework was essentially to read for fun. I've been a little disappointed with the Abrahamic Faiths and Eastern Religion courses, because a lot of the emphasis seemed to be on history. While I understand that history largely effects things like doctrine, culture, and theology, those things are really what I want to know about other religions, and I don't feel like I've come away with a lot of knowledge in those areas.

The highlights of my study of religion is the things that I learned about my own beliefs, especially when hearing about others opinions on what is out there. Diverse arguments are what make learning great, and an experience. The low parts of religion would be that no one hardly ever agrees.

## Appendix B: Individual Faculty Self-Assessments on Specific Courses

### Rel 212 Assessment Narrative -- Adam L. Porter

I taught Rel 212 (New Testament) three times before spring 2005 and in the middle of the fall semester decided I needed to do something different. I was teaching Rel 205 (Hebrew Bible) and was very dissatisfied with the class -- it just seemed “boring” and I didn’t want Rel 212 to follow in its footsteps.

I read an article on a program started at Barnard College called “Reacting to the Past” that featured role-playing games for specific historic periods or events (such as “The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.” I also attended several presentations on pedagogy at the AAR/SBL conference in November and was interested in some of the ideas discussed there.

Combining these different influences, I reworked the syllabus and content of Rel 212 to include:

1) Teams. Students were placed in teams and competed against each other. They earned points by having good attendance, working together to produce papers, and challenging other teams.

2) Portfolios. Students produced 20 written projects over the course of the semester. Ten papers were short and done in lieu of quizzes. Nine papers were longer and produced collaboratively by the teams. Some of these were to prepare the teams for the trials; others asked them to think about particularly complex issues in the NT. The last paper was a description of their “creative project.”

3) Trials. The class re-enacted the trials of Jesus and Paul. Historically, this was terribly flawed since the “Followers of Jesus” and the “Essenes” would not have been privy to the trials -- the NT makes it clear that after a hearing by the Saducee-dominated council, Jesus was taken to the Romans and Pilate ordered his execution. But I felt poetic license was necessary or else there wouldn’t be any dispute in the trials.

I have been pleased with the results of these changes. Students have taken advantage of the opportunity to re-write their portfolio papers after redoing the reading assignment. The trials were very dynamic as the different groups challenged each other to provide citations to support their assertions. Perhaps the most surprising thing was how the “creative projects” demonstrated the students had learned the basics of how to read critically.

Of course, there are things that I want to change for the next time I teach the class. I was not satisfied with student attendance (my team model didn’t work as well as I hoped in this respect). Although student understanding of the historical setting of early Christianity improved, I need to figure out how to get the students better prepared for the trials, in terms of understanding Jewish and Roman law systems and the privileges enjoyed by the Jews under the Empire. After the “Trial of

Paul,” the class lot a bit of energy, which may be attributable to end of the semester exhaustion, but I think I can modify the assignments over the last couple of weeks to improve them.

However, all in all, I am pretty pleased with this class. I have begun to think about how I can introduce similar projects in my other classes, especially Rel 205 (Hebrew Bible) and Rel 313 (Religions of the ANE).

Religion 104 Assessment Narrative -- Caryn D. Riswold

I began teaching a course new to Illinois College, Religion 104, Questions of Christianity, Fall 2003. The course has been offered in multiple sections every semester since, with demand always far outpacing seats available. I have used the same set of major texts each semester, as they seem to fit well together, and offer a balance of academic and personal reflection on major topics in an introduction to theology course. I have tweaked assignments and exams over the course of the four semesters – notably, in Fall 2003 I gave only a cumulative final exam. Now, as of Spring 2005, I give a midterm exam and a final exam, each covering half of the semester. This seems much more appropriate and manageable for both me and the students.

During the Spring 2005 semester, I moved all of my lecture notes to Power Point. I did this for several reasons:

- 1) Writing notes on the board twice in one day (when teaching two sections) became tedious.
- 2) Expecting students to decipher handwriting on the board became a problem.
- 3) I had no permanent record of notes I had given – in one instance in Fall 2004, I thought I had provided a particular definition of a term on the vocabulary list. I marked several exam answers wrong because of it. Several students then showed me their notes, and confirmed that I had in fact written what they copied down and learned – I was the one who had it wrong!
- 4) PowerPoint presentations are eminently more professional than chalk on a board, or marker on a board.
- 5) It became difficult to get a classroom with decent chalkboard or whiteboard space.

Results of these moves, observed thusfar by a few grade numbers:

Fall 2003 weekly quiz average:	81.00%
Spring 2005 weekly quiz average:	83.19%
Fall 2003 final exam average:	69.97%
Spring 2005 midterm exam average:	76.37%

It is clear that moving from only a final exam to a final and a midterm has helped students learn material more effectively.

The results of incorporating technology in the classroom are probably qualitative and subjective, rather than quantitative. Students seem to be able to more precisely understand concepts when I am both explaining them verbally, and they can see them clearly, and write them down for themselves. At the end of the semester, many students used Power Point themselves for their final research presentations, thus showing that they too find it a useful teaching when they are presenting.

In the fall, I am going to begin using the IC Moodle site to make lecture notes available to students after class sessions are complete. I will also devise a new system for “counting” attendance, as up to this point, I have not made lecture notes available outside of class in order to “force” students to come to class for notes. Making them available electronically will lead me to devise a points system for showing up to class.

Finally, I continue to search for the “perfect” way to assign a small research project in this class ... I am still not entirely satisfied with how that assignment is structured, and I have so far tried three different incarnations of a research project. This is my next task ...

Religion/ History 333 Assessment Narrative -- Paul D. Spalding

I set up the new course Religion 333 (“Age of Faith, Age of Reason”) to treat “key religious and intellectual developments within their cultural contexts, as embodied by selected men and women of early modern Europe and America.” I chose the readings entirely from primary sources I anticipated would be appropriate to an advanced undergraduate course: John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Hans von Grimmelshausen’s *Adventures of a Simpleton*, *Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, excerpts from Pierre Bayle’s *Critical and Historical Dictionary*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government* and *Letter Concerning Toleration*, excerpts from Hermann Reimarus’ *Fragments*, David Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Voltaire’s *Candide*, Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*, and James Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson* (abridged).. My hope was that we could divide every class between discussion of the readings and a lecture or, occasionally, film offering larger context.

Signs of trouble soon appeared. The readings were proving to be too challenging for most participants, as appeared both in lagging class discussions and quiz results. Early in the semester, students began asking for study guides as I had provided in lower-level courses. It became apparent that I had presumed participants brought to the class more reading skills and general knowledge of history and geography, than they actually had. Also, I’m very concerned that the course inspire students to pursue study in early modern religious and intellectual history, rather than overwhelming them. Once the subject had grabbed them, they could pursue it either in later independent or graduate study.

I’ve considered several solutions. Study guides to fill out while reading, which I quickly instituted, seemed to help for reading comprehension. However, I came to the conclusion that we did not have time even in the three hours of weekly classes, beyond our discussion of the reading, for me to provide the necessary contextualization of the readings in their original social, geographical, and political environments. I’ve begun making plans to move in future versions of the course to include secondary texts providing more of that contextualization, and a corresponding reduction of reading in primary texts. Among secondary texts I’ve reviewed and tentatively chosen for the next version of the course are Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715* and Isser Woloch, *Eighteenth-Century Europe: Tradition and Progress, 1715-1789*. Also, I’d like to choose some recent biographies of persons with important impact on the religious and intellectual scene of early modern times, such as Dana Sobel’s popular *Galileo’s Daughter* to replace the primary writings by Galileo himself. Some other primary readings will also have to bite the dust, though I have not, to date, made a final decision. Finally, I’d like to encourage better preparation for a discussion seriously informed by the readings, by assigning a student to lead each discussion in the future.