Four Year Report (2023)

Philosophy
Graduate and Undergraduate Programs
(Reviewed 2018-19)

A. Summary of Review

1. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.

2. The academic programs offered by the Department of Philosophy which were examined as part of the review were:

MA in Philosophy
BA (Honours) in Philosophy
BA (Pass) in Philosophy
BA Combined (Honours and Pass)
Minor in Philosophy

3. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Kym Maclaren (Ryerson University) and Chris Framarin (University of Calgary) and an internal reviewer, Murray Smith (Brock University).

4. The site visit occurred on February 13-15, 2019.

5. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on September 18, 2021.

6. The reviewers assigned the programs the following outcome categories:

Program(s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
MA in Philosophy		X		
BA (Honours) in Philosophy			X	
BA (Pass) in Philosophy			X	
BA Combined (Honours and Pass)			X	
Minor in Philosophy		X		

7. The next review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in the Department of Philosophy will be in 2025/26.

B. Recommendations

Recommendation #1

The department should conduct a complete curriculum review to provide broader, but more efficient coverage, align courses at different levels, and increase enrollment.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the complete curriculum review will also serve to address the reviewers' other recommendations (5,6,7) about possible curriculum changes.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department
Responsible for resources: Department
Responsible for implementation: Department
Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department discussed and agreed to offering a broader range of courses.	2020	2023
Action #2 The Department recognizes the need to employ part-time instructors to bolster course offerings.	2020	2021
Action #3 Posting of future courses on the Department website is an ongoing project.	2020	2020

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
Regarding action # 2: Since September 2021, the Department has employed at least two part-time instructors. In addition, one part-time instructor taught two full-credit courses for the Department (2022-2023). Those courses included PHIL 1F90, PHIL 2P95 (the largest upper-year course the Dept offers), and PHIL 2P25. The second instructor is teaching three upper-year undergraduate courses (2P09, 2P99, 3P80).

To some degree, Action # 1 was implemented just this year as PHIL 2P99 and 3P80 were previously taught well over 5 years ago. It is important to keep in mind that it is difficult to execute the action with the Department's limited personnel resources. With that said, we have two members coming back from full year teaching releases next year, and the Department will be offering three brand new courses: PHIL 5V03 Critical Post-Humanism, PHIL 3P98 Roman Stoicism, and PHIL 3V91 Franz Fanon.

Action Item 3: Courses have been listed on the Department website since 2020.

Recommendation #2

The department should hire 1 or 2 LTA's so that full-time faculty can limit overload teaching, as an intermediary measure until a full-time tenure-track faculty member can be hired.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. It is expected that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for faculty resources.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #3

The department should hire a tenure-track specialist in Chinese philosophy and continental philosophy, to continue to provide a strong non-western and comparative program.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. It is expected that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for faculty resources.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
The Department received permission to post a job advertisement for a hire in Chinese Philosophy in the Fall of 2021. The individual would have started in the Fall of 2022. The posting was advertised widely, and the Department received well over 20+ high-quality applications. However, hiring was delayed, and we hope to restart the hiring process for this position several years from now.

Recommendation #4

The Department should offer additional large, introductory courses to increase enrollment.
ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.
Implementation Plan (1st Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department
Responsible for resources: Department
Responsible for implementation: Department
Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department proposed offering 3 large enrollment first year philosophy courses for 2020-21 in the Fall 2019 budget submission.	2020	2020
Action #2 Two of these three introductory courses are to be taught by part-time instructors.	2020	2020
Action #3 One of these three introductory courses is a newly designed class aimed at garnering high enrollment. Two other newly designed introductory courses are being prepared for 2021-22.	2020	2021

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
The Department has offered three introductory courses each academic year since 2020. Two of these courses are offered in the Fall/Winter semesters. In addition, an accelerated first-year course is scheduled either in the Summer or Spring of each year. One of these courses has been taught by the same part-time professor since 2020. The other introductory courses (the one offered during the Summer and the other offered during the Fall/Winter) are taught by a full-time faculty member. We would like to offer more introductory courses during the Fall/Winter semesters. However, offering said courses is difficult due to the Department's limited number of faculty members.

Since 2020, two newly designed introductory courses have been in rotation: PHIL 1F97 and PHIL 1F95.

Recommendation #5

The Department should consider developing a new course that builds on their transdisciplinary, and that further raises the profile of philosophy amongst students and within the university - for example, a course on information technology ethics.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that this will be considered during the curriculum review referenced in Recommendation #1.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department
Responsible for resources: Department
Responsible for implementation: Department
Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of
                                    academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department plans to offer PHIL 3Q98 in the fall 2020, and PHIL 3P19 is currently being taught.	2020	2020
Action #2 The Department has recognized the demand for and continual success of PHIL/BIOL 2P95, and plans on offering this course on a yearly basis as well as allowing part-time instructors to teach the class.	2020	2020
Action #3 The development of new transdisciplinary courses is a long-term goal.	2022	2022

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
Action item 2 was implemented in 2020: PHIL 2P95 has been offered yearly by the same instructor. As far as Action item 1 is concerned, the Department offered the above courses in the year specified. While it cannot offer PHIL/MARS 3P19 every year because of the limited roster of full-time faculty members, the Department intends to offer it in 2024-2025. In regard to action item 3, the Department has developed several transdisciplinary courses, including PHIL 2Q91 in 2020 and, for 2024, PHIL/ENG 3P10 Engineering, Society and Ethics. We expect the course on Engineering to enroll between 100-120 students. It will be offered every year starting in 2024-2025.

Recommendation #6

> The Department should consider working with other programs, and the support of administration, to develop a certificate in pre-law and/or ethics, built out of existing courses that are already being taught within the department.
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> **ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**
> ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that this will be considered during the curriculum review referenced in Recommendation #1.
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> **Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)**
> Responsible for approving: Department
> Responsible for resources: Department
> Responsible for implementation: Department
> Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of
>   academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department chair is to develop contacts with the Faculty of Education.	2020	2020
Action #2 The Department chair is to develop contacts with the Law Plus program.	2021	2021

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
Action Item 1 was successfully implemented in 2020. The result was the development and subsequent implementation of a transdisciplinary course: EDUC/PHIL 2Q91 Indigenous Epistemology. This course has been offered every year since 2020.

Action item 2 was implemented in 2021. We now offer a certificate in pre-law. Please refer to https://brocku.ca/admissions/certificate-programs/#pre-law for more information.

Recommendation #7

The Department should consider developing an online or hybrid online/in-person course to increase enrollment and transdisciplinarity and attract more majors and minors.
ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that this will be considered during the curriculum review referenced in Recommendation #1.
Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department
Responsible for resources: Department
Responsible for implementation: Department
Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department should develop additional transdisciplinary courses.	2020	2021
Action #2 The development of new transdisciplinary courses is a long-term goal.	2020	2021
Action #3 Raising the profile of PHIL 2P25 Logic is an ongoing project of the Department.	2020	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

As above, in recommendation #6, the Department has worked hard to establish transdisciplinary courses (PHIL 3P10). A hybrid course is something the Department intends to develop and implement in the near future. As far as PHIL 2P25 is concerned, the course typically enrolls between 80-100 students each year. The course is often recommended to students who take the first-year introductory courses in philosophy.

Recommendation #8

The department should consider expanding the M.A. program to two years. This would give graduate students an extra semester to take courses (thereby mitigating graduate student concern with course offerings) and make more students available to run seminars in additional large, first-year courses. **ARC Disposition of the Recommendation** ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. **Implementation Plan (1st Priority)** Responsible for approving: Department Responsible for resources: Department Responsible for implementation: Department Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department has submitted to the appropriate committees the above modifications for the PHIL MA Program.	2020	2021
Action #2 Follow-up justifications and forms to explain the proposed modifications have also been submitted.	2020	2021

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

In the Fall of 2020, the Department enrolled its first cohort of graduate students into its newly designed 5 term MA degree. The pandemic has certainly altered the impact of this structural change, but with the hope of returning to in-person classes in 2021 Fall, this first cohort will have the opportunity for an authentic graduate experience with their peers along with direct access to their professors. Also, note that there was an important correction made to the PHIL MA Graduate Program Calendar entry. The corrected version appeared in the 2021-22 Graduate Calendar. Nearly all the students who started the new 2-year program in the Fall of 2020 have since graduated.

The transition to a five-term program has proven to be very successful. With five terms, students have more time to hone their intellectual skills. We also provide students with an opportunity to present papers at our Research in Progress meetings—a helpful proving ground for students thinking about submitting their work to conferences.

Recommendation #9

The department (and administration) should consider developing incentives for faculty to apply for external funding, in order to make their graduate student funding more competitive and thereby raise the quality of their already very good graduate program.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction and has implications with respect to the Brock University / Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #10

The department should engage in conversations with Recruitment, Career Education, and Experiential Learning contacts at the University, to explore the possibility of programs that would benefit philosophy students, and reach out to the community, but not further tax an already over-stretched faculty complement.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department
Responsible for resources: Department
Responsible for implementation: Department
Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of
                                                 academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department should develop further contacts within and outside of the University in order to promote its programs.	2022	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:
The Department continues to explore contacts within and outside of the University. The Department is currently updating its website and developing a new profile to be added to the Brock Program flipbook:
https://issuu.com/brockuniversity/docs/2022-204_-_brock_viewbook_2023_-_final_digital.
We hope to make changes to our webpages by the end of 2023. In addition, the Department held an MA program promotion event in December of 2022. The purpose of the event was to promote the Master's program to our 4th year philosophy majors. Several of the students who attended the get-together have applied to the MA program for next year's entry. The Department intends to sponsor this event yearly.

C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation

1. **To what extent has the Department achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?**

   The Department has successfully implemented nearly all of the proposed suggestions by the reviewers. The Department will endeavor to improve its programs moving forward.

2. **What overall impact has it had on the Department's programs?**

   The reviewer's analysis of the Department helped it focus on those courses that were important in implementing its specialties (Continental, East-West comparative philosophy). In addition, the reviewers provided helpful suggestions to broaden the Department's appeal to students in other programs.

3. **Is the Department adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?**

   Yes. The Department is always looking to improve its undergraduate and graduate programs. On the undergraduate side, we are perpetually seeking to offer new courses to students that are aligned with our traditional mission but that reflect the concerns and issues of the day. On the graduate side, the new two-year program has been very successful. Students no longer feel rushed to complete coursework and a Major Research Paper in the span of one year. Now students can take time to fully immerse themselves in courses for the first year of study and then engage their research (whether in the form of the MRP or Thesis option) meaningfully and robustly in their second year. This change to the completion time also means that students can work on their course essays and turn them into conference papers.

4. **How well do the programs now align with Brock University strategic priorities? Brock's strategic priorities can be found here: https://brocku.ca/strategic-plan/ Below are the main takeaways:**

1. Offer a transformational and accessible academic and university experience;

2. Build research capacity across the University;

3. Enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond;

4. Foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization;

Regarding point 1, the Department has provided a transformational experience to its students since the inception of its undergraduate program in 1964 and its MA program ten years later. Brock remains one of the few programs in the country to offer a comprehensive academic experience focusing on Continental and Eastern philosophies. Our professors are dedicated teachers who provide multiple unpaid tutorials on topics suggested by students.

2. Our faculty are dedicated researchers and incredibly productive academics. In the past, we have offered multiple cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary courses. Our RIPs (Research in Progress) meetings are well-attended events (in some cases with over 40+ online attendees). Many audience members for these events come from outside of the Humanities' Faculty.

3. Aside from academic conference presentations, many of our members (prior to the pandemic), gave talks at various local Public Libraries (St. Catharines and Pelham). We plan to continue this work in 2023-2024. In this way, we have enhanced the life and vitality of our local region.

4. Perhaps the chief way in which we have fostered a culture of inclusivity is through the content of our programs. Philosophy in Anglo-American communities is often thought to be synonymous with analytic philosophy—a kind of philosophical thinking that puts pride of place on the analysis of arguments and language. In contrast to other programs, we have sought to broaden the scope of philosophy in North America by focusing on contemporary European philosophy and Eastern (especially Indian Vedanta and Buddhism) philosophies. In addition, we are actively promoting courses such as PHIL 2Q98 (Indigenous Ways of Knowing) that help decolonize and deterritorialize philosophy.

5. **How does this review and its results position the programs as the Department moves into the next review cycle?**

I think the Department's programs will be much stronger in the next review cycle. We have developed and implemented several transdisciplinary courses and have revamped our first-year offerings. We have also developed several new courses (see Action item 1) while offering the traditional buffet of history of philosophy courses one could

reasonably expect from a philosophy program at a Canadian university. In addition, we have developed two, new micro-credentialing programs: ethics and law. The ethics certificate program, in particular, has been quite successful.

D. ARC Final Summary

In final summary of the 2018-2019 cyclical academic review of the programs offered by the Department of Philosophy, ARC has determined the following:

1. That the Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.

2. That the Department has established a direction for the next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle.

3. That the Department has achieved a broad-based, reflective, and forward-looking self-assessment.