

Master of Arts (Apologetics)

Spring 2024

ATS Degree Program Goals for Standard D Degrees – The goals an institution adopts for these degree programs should include the attainment of a survey knowledge of various theological disciplines, or focused knowledge in a specific discipline, or interdisciplinary knowledge. Achievement of student learning outcomes for these degrees shall contribute to meeting these programmatic goals.

Alignment to Mission Statement: Proclamation

Student Learning Objective 1: Students will demonstrate their understanding of and ability to communicate biblical, theological, and historical truth in settings that require a defense of the Christian faith.

Measures	Baseline	Results Last Year/Improvement	New Benchmark(s)	Action Plan Steps Recommended in 2024
<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Embedded Assignments PHIL6305 - Problem of Evil (moral argument for God essay)	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.0 out of 4.0	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 2.9 (Sp '24) Short of benchmark, but 2 papers were incomplete, while 4 were late (out of 9), skewing the data.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.0 out of 4.0 Since benchmark was nearly met despite skewed data, benchmark should be set retained.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Require earlier due date for embedded assignment, with more wiggle room for late completion and submission. Revise essay guidelines (Dr. Anderson – Fall 24) to incorporate 'biblical, theological, and historical truth' language. Develop new rubric for grading the assignment which corresponds precisely to the Assessment benchmark numbering (Dr. Anderson – Fall 24).
<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> Student Evaluations Question 2 (from PHIL5301 and PHIL6305) 2. The content of this course expanded my knowledge and skills in this area of study.	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> 4.7 out of 5.0	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> PHIL 5301 Avg 4.6 - Spr 21 Hyb 5.0 - F 21 Flex 4.4 - Sp 22 Hyb 5.0 - F 22 NOBTS 3.6 - F 22 OnL 4.9 - Sp 23 NOBTS 3.8 - F 23 Hyb 4.8 - F 23 Hyb 5.0 - F 23 NOBTS 5.0 PHIL 6305 No data for the time period	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> 4.7 out of 5.0 Average fell shy of benchmark. Two classes stood out as below benchmark – the on-campus iterations in the 2022-2023 academic year. Keep the benchmark in place.	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> The assessment jury deliberated over possible explanations for the variation in results, but noted that the Course Evaluations improved toward the benchmark as we moved into 2023-2024. Seek to establish standardized syllabus for all sections of PHIL 5301 from Fall 2024 onward.

Student Learning Objective 2: Students will demonstrate critical and constructive thought processes in cultural and apologetic engagement.

Alignment to Mission Statement: Proclamation

Measures	Baseline	Results Last Year/ Improvement	New Benchmark(s)	Action Plan Steps Recommended in 2024
<u>Direct measure(s)</u> <i>Embedded Assignments</i> - PHIL 6303 - Logic - THSE 6300 – Theological Research and Writing Seminar Summative Component assignment, rubric items (3) Thesis/Structure and (4) Argument/Response	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.10 out of 4.0 3.08 out of 4.0	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Spring 2023: 3.0 (6) Spring 2024: 3.25 (3) Cumulative: 3.08 (9) (3) Fall 2023 – 3.7 (4) Fall 2023 – 3.8 Benchmark clearly exceeded.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.1 out of 4.0 2023-2024 results fell just short of the benchmark; monitor performance and keep benchmark the same. 3.25 out of 4.0 Given the nature of the course and assignment, it is reasonable to expect higher attainment.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Select or create new embedded assignment (2024-2025 academic year: Dr. Anderson). Develop rubric for new embedded assignment that serves both class grading and program assessment. Develop grading rubric for THSE 6300 faculty to utilize for course grade and program assessment: Dr. Anderson develop Summer 2024 to deliver to Dr. Bandy (faculty of record for THSE 6300) for use in Fall 2024.
<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> <i>Student Evaluations</i> - Questions 6 and 7 (combined average of these two questions from PHIL 5301 and PHIL6303) 6. I can take things I learned in this course and apply them to my ministry situation. 7. The assignments in this course were appropriate and helped me learn the subject matter.	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> 4.7 out of 5.0	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> PHIL 5301 – Avg 4.5/4.6 Sp 21 Hyb 5.0/5.0 F 21 Flex 4.5/4.4 Sp 22 Hyb 5.0/5.0 F 22 NOBTS 3.3/3.7 F 22 OnL 4.8/4.6 Sp 23 NOBTS 3.8/4.2 F 23 HybMS 5.0/4.8 F 23 Hyb NOLA 5.0/4.9 F 23 NOBTS 4.8/4.8 PHIL 6303 – Avg 4.1/4.7 Sp 21 OnL 4.1/4.5 Sp 22 OnL 4.4/4.9 Sp 23 OnL 3.9/4.8	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> 4.7 out of 5.0 Results were close to reaching the benchmark. Keep benchmark in place and monitor progress.	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> For PHIL 5301, monitor relationship of student satisfaction with syllabus/professor of record. Seek to establish standardized syllabus for all sections of PHIL 5301 from Fall 2024 onward. For PHIL 6303, monitor relationship of student satisfaction with syllabus/professor of record.

Student Learning Objective 3: Students will demonstrate personal and spiritual maturity as Christian apologists.

Alignment to Mission Statement: Servanthood and Devotion

Measures	Baseline	Results Last Year/ Improvement	New Benchmark(s)	Action Plan Steps Recommended in 2024
<u>Direct measure(s)</u> <i>Embedded Assignments</i> PHIL 6305 – Problem of Evil Suffering: Personal Reflection Paper	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.10 out of 4.0	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.15 (Sp 24) Data skewed by one 0 (out of 9 students). Benchmark still met.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> 3.25 out of 4.0 Given nature of assignment, and the skewed Sp 24 data still meeting benchmark, the benchmark should be raised.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Develop an assignment rubric that will equally serve the course grading and program assessment purposes (Fall 2024: Dr. Anderson).
<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> <i>Graduate Student Questionnaire</i> Questions 17k, 18i, 23f 17k. How effective was your program or degree in facilitating your Ability to live your faith in daily life? 18i. How effective was your education in facilitating your ability to interact effectively with those of religious traditions other than your own? 23f. In your overall experience during your graduate program, is your faith stronger than when you came?	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> 4.0 out of 5.0	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> 17k Avg 4.2 - Sp 22 (5): 4.4 - F 22 (24): 4.71 - Sp 23 (16): 4.6 - F 23 (1): 3 18i Avg 4.5 - Sp 22: 4.2 - F 22: 4.25 - Sp 23: 4.4 - F 23: 5 23f Avg 4.9 - Sp 22: 4.8 - F 22: 4.75 - Sp 23: 4.9 - F 23: 5 Benchmark exceeded for all three questions.	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> 4.1 out of 5.0 Student satisfaction varies by semester, but is consistently higher than the benchmark. Raise the benchmark and continue to monitor student satisfaction.	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> Continue to monitor student satisfaction through GSQ

Student Learning Objective 4: Students will demonstrate effective skills in research and writing.

Measures	Baseline	Results Last Year/ Improvement	New Benchmark(s)	Action Plan Steps Recommended in 2024
<u>Direct measure(s)</u> THSE6300 Theological Research and Writing Seminar Summative Component assignment, rubric items (1) Research; and (2) Writing	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> • 3.08 out of 4.0	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> (1) Fall 2023: 3.92/4 (2) Fall 2023: 3.33/4 Composite: 3.63/4 Benchmark easily met and surpassed in Fall 2023, representing only 3 students. Research skills score much higher than writing style.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> • 3.2 out of 4.0 Raise benchmark.	<u>Direct measure(s)</u> Consider separating the two components of the rubric out and establish different benchmarks for each if we see a continued trend of considerably diverse scores.
<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> • <i>Student Evaluations</i> Questions 3 and 4 (combined average of these two questions from THSE6300)	<u>Indirect measure(s)</u> • 4.7 out of 5.0	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> Average: 4.7/4.7 F 21 NOLA: 5.0/5.0 F 23 Hyb: 4.3/4.3	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> • 4.7 out of 5.0 Keep benchmark in place.	<u>Indirect measures(s)</u> Monitor success as THSE 6300 applies new assignment rubric.

Executive Summary:

The Assessment Map for the M.A. (Apologetics) was just revised in Fall 2023. In addition, long-tenured professors in the discipline have recently retired, and the new program coordinator has been on faculty for just over a year. It is also worth mentioning that several direct assessment measures have very limited data sets to compile and interpret. Hence, while it appears that assessment benchmarks were met or exceeded, the changing context makes it difficult to draw any significant conclusions from the data.

As leadership of the MA(Apol) transitions, there are a number of actionable items stemming from this year's assessment process.

- (1) The 'Moral Argument' embedded assignment for PHIL 6305 (Problem of Evil) needs to be slightly revised to include language compatible with SLO #1. The resulting assignment then needs a new grading rubric to serve the purposes of both Class Grading and Program Assessment. Responsible faculty: Program Coordinator (Dr. Anderson), who is also the primary faculty of record.
- (2) Revise embedded assignment description for PHIL 6303 (Logic) to better reflect SLO #2. The resulting assignment then needs a new grading rubric to serve the purposes of both Class Grading and Program Assessment. Responsible faculty: Program Coordinator (Dr. Anderson) in consultation with most common faculty of record (Dr. Walker).
- (3) A grading rubric to be developed for the THSE 6300 (Theological Research and Writing) embedded assignment. Responsible faculty: Faculty of record (Dr. Bandy) in consultation with MA(Phil) Program Coordinator (Dr. Anderson).
- (4) The 'Personal Reflection' embedded assignment for PHIL 6305 (Problem of Evil) needs to be slightly revised to include language compatible with SLO #3. The resulting assignment then needs a new grading rubric to serve the purposes of both Class Grading and Program Assessment. Responsible faculty: Program Coordinator (Dr. Anderson), who is also the primary faculty of record.