

Annotated Form E-1-A for Boston College Perspectives II, III, and IV (version of June 18, 2015)

Program: PERSPECTIVCES III: Horizon of the Social Sciences

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

This course aims at leading the student towards an understanding of the unity that underlies the diversity of the social sciences: It is in the shift of the answer to the **enduring question** how do we understand human nature that ultimately grounds the unity among the various social sciences.

The distinctive features of each of the contemporary social-scientific disciplines can be understood only by understanding the common ground from which they sprang - the transition from late medieval to modern times. The student is first led to see the genesis and installation of a new political order, cut loose from religious authority and tradition as sources of political power. Civil order having been thus established on a secular basis, a new material prosperity followed, and with it the new science of economics needed in order to understand that prosperity; the new science of law, which owes little or nothing to medieval conceptions; and, finally, the new science of sociology that proposes to understand social life in all its varied manifestations.

THE STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- a. Demonstrate an understanding the tension between formal or procedural democracy (with the emphasis on freedom, consent, and due process) and substantive democracy (with emphasis on republican values and the conditions for the emergence of governors).
- b. Demonstrate and understanding of the successive shifts that eventually led legal interest away from persons and things, under theological authority, to regulation, in today's bureaucracy-riddled society.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the modern the tendency to view economics as the fundamental science.
- d. Demonstrate a knowledge of the split, in both science and policy, between facts and values; and the privatization of religion and its corollary, the split between an ethics of responsibility and an ethics of conviction.
- e. And as with the other Perspective Courses, demonstrate an ability to write critical and analytical papers, as well as continue to appropriate the philosophical underpinnings of the various disciplines.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department's major handouts?)

These learning outcomes will eventually be made available on the updated department web site, and in the course description.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

At this point measurements need to be developed that are analogous to Perspectives on Western Culture. This will start this coming year. There will be both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

As with Perspectives on Western Culture, the Director of the Perspectives Program will appoint a panel across departments who have background and experience in data analysis to review the findings of the quantitative surveys. This faculty panel will present its findings to the Perspectives faculty in a dedicated session of the program's annual May Workshop. Additionally, the Director will appoint a committee of faculty representatives to read and summarize the randomly selected sample of final essays. The panel will evaluate these reflections as they relate to learning outcomes and will report these findings to the Perspectives faculty at the annual May workshop.

5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

As we are in the stage of planning and implementation we will need to have the data before we have a clearer picture of what is working and what might need to be changed.

6) What evidence do you have that the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes?

No data at this point to answer this.

7) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The last program review took place in 2009-2010.

Annotated Form E-1-A for Boston College Perspectives II, III, and IV (version of June 18, 2015)

Program: PERSPECTIVES II: MODERNISM AND THE ARTS

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

[Most students anticipate that their college years will give them their first real opportunity to explore, in a structured way, those fascinating areas of human concern known collectively as the expressive arts - literature, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. This course aims at matching such an anticipation.

Its goal is not to give to either a history or a standard introduction to any of these arts, but rather to select a clearly defined period - the bridge between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that illustrates the phenomenon of modernism: *Why Modernism?* There are two reasons. First, *Modernism* signifies a significant shift in the understanding of the human person. This corresponds analogously to the second semester of Perspectives I where the shift to *Modernity* also gives a new emphasis on what it means to be human. As Peter Gay points out in his book *Modernism and the Lure of Heresy* modernism “produced a fresh way of seeing society and the artist’s role in it, a fresh way of valuing works of culture and their makers.”

THE STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- a. Identify a certain unity in the various artistic expressions of a particular cultural era, in this case Modernism. And how this artistic movement affects the form, style, and content of the arts.
- b. demonstrate a fairly rich understanding of the nature of artistic creation in general, while focusing on the nuances expressed by the modernist artists.
- c. demonstrate an appreciation of the richness of art and that it is not about imitation of nature.
- d. demonstrate the capacity to write both analytical and reflection papers. In other words, a student should be able to give an account of how a piece of art has impacted his or her feeling life. second, the student should be able to analyze and compare two different forms of artistic expression.
- e. demonstrate an understanding of the philosophical and theological issues that ground the artist’s way of understanding the role and nature of art in addressing such issues as the nature and scope of human knowledge, the meaning of human personhood, the good life and moral obligation, the social and political dimensions of human existence, the relationship of faith and reason, and the existence and nature of God.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department's major handouts?)

Learning outcomes will be made available on the departments web site, and in the course description.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

At this point measurements need to be developed that are analogous to Perspectives on Western Culture. This will start this coming year. There will be both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

As with *Perspectives on Western Culture*, the Director of the Perspectives Program will appoint a panel across departments who have background and experience in data analysis to review the findings of the quantitative surveys. This faculty panel will present its findings to the Perspectives faculty in a dedicated session of the program's annual May Workshop. Additionally, the Director will appoint a committee of faculty representatives to read and summarize the randomly selected sample of final essays. The panel will evaluate these reflections as they relate to learning outcomes and will report these findings to the Perspectives faculty at the annual May workshop.

5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

As we are in the stage of planning and implementation we will need to have the data before we have a clearer picture of what is working and what might need to be changed.

6) What evidence do you have that the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes?

No data at this point to answer this.

7) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The last program review took place in 2009-2010.

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Program: PERSPECTIVES IV: NEW SCIENTIFIC VISIONS

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

In Perspectives IV the students encounter the great mathematical and scientific texts of Western Culture. The students see how positions concerning whether the universe is ultimately intelligible or positions regarding teleological questions have important consequences for theological issues in such areas as the transcendence of God, creation, redemption and the manner in which grace can be said to perfect nature.

This course is a 'guided tour' that leads the student beyond the familiar land of ordinary Newtonian experience, and into the strange and mysterious territory of contemporary thinking in science and mathematics.

In addition, Perspectives IV attempts to place the students within the overall conflict between science and religion. The course covers not only Galileo's mathematics and cosmological positions, but also recent debates over Galileo's conflict with the Church.

Perspectives IV also covers contemporary scientific, philosophical, and theological debates over the true meaning of evolution.

THE STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- a. Demonstrate the ability to understand and identify the problems that ancient Greek mathematicians explored in science and mathematics, that are well beyond the understanding of even highly educated people today.
- b. Demonstrate the capacity to identify the conceptual revolution that lay behind the seventeenth-century break-through to modern science and the nearly mystical enthusiasm of the time for the explanatory power of mathematical demonstration.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of how science has interpreted the human being as a mere, though complex, machine.
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of the problems that the calculus was invented to solve.

- e. Demonstrate a knowledge of the shifts from mechanistic explanation to the more recent view of explanation in terms of functions and relations, and from determinism to randomness and probability.
- f. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the universe as examined in relation to the modern concept of energy, the unimaginable and paradoxical results of modern mathematics, quantum theory's continuity with previous developments in the science of heat and energy, and the 'state of the art' in contemporary evolutionary biology.
- g. Demonstrate an understanding of how previous achievements in math and science set the conditions for possible future developments.
- h. Lastly, all of these goals stand in relationship to the fundamental question about whether the universe is completely intelligible, and if so that how do we talk about the existence of an intelligible ground (God)?

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department's major handouts?)

Learning outcomes will be made available on the update department web site, and in the course description.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

At this point measurements need to be developed that are analogous to Perspectives on Western Culture. This will start this coming year. There will be both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

As with Perspectives on Western Culture. the Director of the Perspectives Program will appoint a panel across departments who have background and experience in data analysis to review the findings of the quantitative surveys. This faculty panel will present its findings to the Perspectives faculty in a dedicated session of the program's annual

May Workshop. Additionally, the Director will appoint a committee of faculty representatives to read and summarize the randomly selected sample of final essays. The panel will evaluate these reflections as they relate to learning outcomes and will report these findings to the Perspectives faculty at the annual May workshop.

5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

As we are in the stage of planning and implementation we will need to have the data before we have a clearer picture of what is working and what might need to be changed.

6) What evidence do you have that the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes?

No data at this point to answer this.

7) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The last program review took place in 2009-2010.

Form E-1-A for Boston College Undergraduate Programs

Program: Perspectives/ Perspectives in Western Culture

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

1. Students completing the Perspectives in Western Culture course will be able to intelligently discuss the original works and central ideas from a wide range of ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophers and theologians of the Western cultural tradition.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to closely read, interpret, and explain ideas found in major philosophical and theological texts. Additionally, they will be able to discuss important connections between these thinkers and texts.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate some of the principles that guide their ethical choices and to identify the intellectual roots of those principles.
4. Students will be able to write clear, well-reasoned essays on theological and philosophical topics.
5. Students will demonstrate an ability to think and speak critically about questions of the ultimate meanings and principles of their own lives, and will have a grasp of a variety of philosophical and theological approaches to questions of human and spiritual realities.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department's major handouts?)

Learning outcomes are accessible via the Philosophy and Theology Department web sites and a brochure published and distributed by the Philosophy Department. These will have to be updated on the web site and in the program description.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

Two measurements are used to assess the outcomes of the Perspectives program: first, a quantitative instrument is administered at the beginning and end of the course, which assesses a number of variables related to learning outcomes a randomly selected sample of final essays will be gathered by the Director of the Program and analyzed to assess qualitatively the achievement of learning outcomes articulated above. (The quantitative instrument will be administered every odd year, and the qualitative analysis

every even year).

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Director of the Perspectives Program will appoint a panel of Philosophy and Theology faculty who have background and experience in data analysis to review the findings of the quantitative surveys. This faculty panel will present its findings to the Perspectives faculty in a dedicated session of the program's annual May Workshop. Additionally, the Director will appoint a committee of faculty representatives from both the Philosophy and Theology Departments to read and summarize the randomly selected sample of final essays. The panel will evaluate these reflections as they relate to learning outcomes and will report these findings to the Perspectives faculty at the annual May workshop.

5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

The quantitative survey and essay evaluations used for data collection have recently been developed. Therefore, results of this data are yet to be determined. For the past 20 years, the Perspectives faculty has used dedicated sessions in the three-day May workshops to discuss and make changes to the curriculum. Decisions about these curricular changes result from faculty consensus regarding classroom experiences and course outcomes. These sessions have been a wonderful experience of faculty sharing their experiences of helping students to appropriate the material and themes of the course more richly. The evaluative measures we've now put in place will serve to formalize aspects of this process.

6) What evidence do you have that the changes have resulted in improved learning outcomes?

The faculty looks forward to the findings of the evaluations to show more explicitly the extent to which the goals and learning outcomes of the program are achieved.

7) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The Program was reviewed as part of a self-study within the Philosophy Department Review process in Spring, 2010.