The primary goals and objectives of the Humanities-Philosophy department are to familiarize students with the study of fundamental questions that arise from different areas of human experience through an integrated approach. The program’s main objective is to expose students to the disciplines of Humanities/Philosophy within the modes of reflection and expression. The Humanities discipline encompass such areas as: philosophy, religion, and history. Philosophy encompasses the visual arts, which include expressions such as painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, film, the performing arts, music, theater, dance, poetry and prose.

Essentially, the objective of the Humanities/Philosophy program is
to give a sense of wholeness to human experience and provide opportunities in the way of self-development through a synoptic world-view while honing critical reasoning skills. Furthermore, the program offers lower division prerequisites for any four-year Humanities and Philosophy majors.

The program does not offer an AA Degree in Philosophy. Finally, we have only one instructor, who is part-time teaching the single Philosophy class offered at Merritt College.

It is hoped that with the fading of the budget crises, the English/Humanities department will once again have the means to offer more humanities and philosophy courses in order to meet the needs and interests of students. This would not only help in the growth of the English/Humanities, but also, spark more interest and enthusiasm in English and the humanities.

Course Offerings

Currently the only Philosophy class offered at Merritt College is the Introduction to Philosophy class that meets twice a week, and is a three unit class. Additional higher level Philosophy classes are offered at Laney and Berkeley City College.

Curriculum:

1. Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years? The following questions have been answered by Merritt College’s only philosophy professor, Larry Long. On 10/15/15 Philosophy Professor Larry Long wrote: “I am not quite sure how to answer that. It was moved from the Division II (math) some five or six years ago. David Strohl who wrote up the district course outline (undated) did a teacher classroom observation in 2010, and Ann Elliott did the same in 2015 after it was moved to Humanities. I am unaware of any department curriculum updates, or plans of the department for curriculum improvement. The
department has been actively engaged in setting goals for SLO's in the curriculum and have been successful in that regard.”

The effectiveness of the curriculum? Student retention, and program completion: I cannot answer the second part of this as I am not privy to that information, but as far as class retention, I have always begun each class with an enrollment of 40 (max) and end each semester with 35 or more. Retention is good.

2. Please indicate how many active courses are in the department inventory. There is only one philosophy course offered within Merritt College’s English & Humanities department.

3. How many of those have been updated in the last 6 years?

*** (Confirm this with Larry) None of the courses have been updated.

4. If courses have not been updated within the last 6 years, what plans are in place to remedy this?

The current chairs professors Isela Santana and Todd Johnson have discussed hiring an additional philosophy teacher to join our adjunct pool, as well as have recommended that an additional online philosophy class be added. Our hope is that by hiring an additional philosophy teacher, more development of Merritt’s philosophy course could take place since the bulk of the department members are English instructors. Also, one of our department members, Dr. Chriss Foster is the department member who has taken the most graduate level philosophy classes, and is therefore the closest thing we have to a dedicated philosophy instructor. Dr. Foster has analyzed the current philosophy course at Merritt College and strongly recommends that an additional professor be hired so that Merritt College can offer additional courses. To this end, Dr. Foster and Prof. Santana have interviewed an adjunct professor and have
already begun to discuss ways the philosophy classes could be made more challenging, including requiring students to draft more essays in lieu of multiple choice questions and quizzes.

5. Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this? Our lone philosophy professor, Larry Long answered this question: “The only copy of the Peralta Community College Course Outline, as submitted by David Strohl is undated, so I do not know that. As for my own curriculum/syllabus, I update it every year.”

6. What are the department’s plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline? Dr. Foster and Prof. Santana have interviewed an adjunct professor and have already begun to discuss ways the philosophy classes could be made more challenging, including requiring students to draft more essays in lieu of multiple choice questions and quizzes. The current suggestion on the table, so to speak, is to offer an intro to philosophy class, and then add an intermediate level philosophy class.

7. What steps has the department taken to incorporate student learning outcomes (SLOs) in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?

The Student Learning Outcomes for the intro. Philosophy class are: define and critique philosophical ideas and concepts from a historical perspective, investigating their impact on present day values, evaluate the positive and negative consequences of different philosophical concepts and positions, analyze and write critically about the impact of philosophical thinking on society and culture, develop and clarify one’s own value
system. The instructor makes use of: exams, essays, written exercises, and oral presentations to assess student progress and achievement. The outcomes are set and clearly specified on the instructor’s course syllabus.

8. If applicable, describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes? (Note: if your department has no certificate or degree offerings and does not offer a course as part of one of the College’s associate degree programs, then skip questions 3.h. and 3.i.)

The first S.L.O.: “define and critique philosophical ideas and concepts from a historical perspective” relates directly to the institutional outcome (I.L.O.s): communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, as well as civic engagement & ethics. The second S.L.O.: “investigating their impact on present day values” relates directly to the I.L.O.s: communication, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. The third S.L.O. : “evaluate the positive and negative consequences of different philosophical concepts and positions” directly relates to the I.L.O.s: communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, civic engagement & ethics. And the last S.L.O. “analyze and write critically about the impact of philosophical thinking on society and culture, develop and clarify one’s own value system” directly relates to: communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, as well as civic engagement & ethics.

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i. Provide one program level outcome (PLOs), and the assessment tool that will be used to measure the program level outcome this fall 2016 and spring 2016.
The department and the division currently host norming sessions that evaluate specific assignments in specific courses, and evaluates how those essays are linked to the department SLOs and PLOs. The tool used to evaluate the SLOs and PLOs are student essays, specifically chosen by the philosophy instructor.

j. How are the SLOs and PLOs, if applicable, mapped to the college’s Institutional Learning Outcomes? (See Attachment B for copy of the Laney College Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

The first S.L.O.: “define and critique philosophical ideas and concepts from a historical perspective” relates directly to the institutional outcome (I.L.O.s): communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, as well as civic engagement & ethics. The second S.L.O.: “investigating their impact on present day values” relates directly to the I.L.O.s: communication, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. The third S.L.O. : “evaluate the positive and negative consequences of different philosophical concepts and positions” directly relates to the I.L.O.s: communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, civic engagement & ethics. And the last S.L.O. “analyze and write critically about the impact of philosophical thinking on society and culture, develop and clarify one’s own value system” directly relates to: communication, critical thinking, cultural awareness, as well as civic engagement & ethics.

Recommendations and priorities: The curriculum is current and effective. There have been several suggestions to add more course offerings, as well as to hire more adjunct faculty to teach multiple philosophy courses. Currently, since there are no pre-requisites or co-requisites to any of the courses offered by the
English/Humanities department, students can enroll in any philosophy class that interests them.

**Instruction:**

1. Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?

Currently, the department chairs have been pushing for a hybrid or online philosophy class to be added. This proposed class would require students to be somewhat computer literate and would build on their existing computer knowledge. The hybrid and online class offer students more opportunities to attend school despite transportation or commuting issues. Additionally, the proposed hybrid course would make use of “moodle software” which many of our instructors receive training on during the FLEX days held at the beginning of each semester, as well as at the beginning of the summer semester.

2. How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?

All offered courses are evaluated by the senior faculty including the dean. Currently Merritt is assessing all offered courses making sure that all of them are linked to Merritt’s I.L.O.’s. This has been a priority for the whole college. By evaluating the course S.L.O.’s and making sure that they support Merritt’s I.L.O.’s, the course objectives are kept up to date and are consistent with our institutions primary objectives.

3. Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? Identify factors that are affecting enrollments.
From monitoring the BI Tools, it is clear that for the past two semesters, fall 2015 and spring 2015 respectively, the philosophy course has begun the class with at least 40 students and usually finishes with about 35 still enrolled by the end of the semester. This ballpark figure seems to be a general estimation of the number of students who are interested in taking this class at Merritt College.

4. Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? Please describe the criteria and considerations used in the scheduling process. Currently, many of the English and humanities classes are offered during the hours of 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and with renovations currently being made in the D building, we have been told that there is not enough physical space for additional classes during those popular hours. Therefore, a hybrid philosophy class or an online philosophy class could be offered while offering more scheduling flexibility for the instructor and the students.

5. Recommendations and priorities.

Currently, our American, multi-cultural society consists of many different cultures and traditions, our language has become immensely complex. Therefore, what is needed at Merritt College are instructors who are flexible enough who value and demonstrate multi-culturalism in their teaching. And, the awareness of the faculty member in regards to the already mentioned elements defines his/her ability as a caring, compassionate and a successful educator and communicator.

Also the English/Humanities department should collaborate more with other departments in other schools to evaluate our course offerings in order to better serve their student.

Student Success:
1. Describe student retention and program completion (degrees, certificates, persistence rates) trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates? Essentially, one of the most important and productive ways through which students become engaged in the art of learning is through collaborative learning. Since every student brings with them a unique history through which the world is perceived, collaborative learning allows those perceptions not only to be shared, but also, analyzed. Hence, everyone becomes engaged in playing not only the role of a student but teacher as well. By using this pedagogy to create learning communities, students will be encouraged to ask more frequently for help when they need it, as well as help them to understand that they are not alone in their struggles and academic strivings.

2. Identify common challenges to learning among your students? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department’s efforts to access these services. What are your department’s instructional support needs? The English/Humanities department views a classroom of thirty-five or more students, each from a unique culture and background, as a classroom of sixty novice critical thinkers interested in improving their written and oral communication and presentation skills. Hence, the department’s pedagogy should bring to life students immense sense of awe, wonder and curiosity out of which the entire classroom participates and becomes engaged in the subject at hand. This, in turn, creates an environment of openness and trust between the student and the instructor. While this is an important guiding principle for our department, it remains a challenge to find instructors who practice a nurturing, multicultural pedagogy.
3. Describe the department’s effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?

Our philosophy professor, Larry Long provided the following answer: “David Strohl who wrote up the district course outline (undated) did a teacher classroom observation in 2010, and Ann Elliott did the same in 2015 after it was moved to Humanities. I am unaware of any department curriculum updates, or plans of the department for curriculum improvement. The department has been actively engaged in setting goals for SLO's in the curriculum and have been successful in that regard.”

4. Recommendations and priorities.

Philosophy enrollment, retention and success rates

The department has offered only those courses that have historically proven to be successful not only in terms of high enrollments and retention, but also, student success. Those classes that did not meet student’s needs were ultimately forced into cancellation and have not been offered. Again, more instructors and more classes should be offered at Merritt College to help us build the program.

Challenges

What sort of philosophy of education can best serve a society and its citizens? Without education, no member of any society can truly be a healthy and a functioning citizen. This is simply because a thoughtful human existence demands and requires layers of decision-making moments. And what sort of fruits will be born from those decisions will entirely depend on how the decision-maker has been educated. Let us be clear though. Education here is not simply meant or defined as “Institutions of Higher Learning,” where one enters into an environment specifically designed to “teach”. The term education here is defined as any environment
that promotes and encourages reflection, creativity, critical examination of the most basic to the most complicated ingredients of life. Only such an environment will bestow upon her students the adequate decision making tools. Hence, it is only through education that people are able to live with and through awareness, understanding, forgiveness and compassion- components that are essential to a harmonious and meaningful existence for both the individual and society.

One of the enormous challenges facing the instructors in the English/Humanities department is student’s reading, critical and analytical abilities, which are crucial in helping students’ success not just in philosophy, English and humanities courses, but in academia altogether. There are currently no tutors available in the Philosophy department at this time and only one part-time instructor. However, for part-time instructors to have paid-office-hours, they must have at least two teaching assignments, equivalent to six hours, which is not possible due to the budget crises. This, in turn, leaves students without the assistance outside of the scheduled class, as well as only having only one instructor qualified to teach philosophy classes. In addition, the student learning center is not sufficiently staffed leaving student’s academic needs unfulfilled.

One way that this challenge could be met, is by offering more classes in Logic (Philosophy 10), and also, helping link the Logic course to the Critical Thinking 5 courses.

Perhaps the two most important keys in assuring the departments success in the way of supporting its students is hiring an additional part-time instructor, and also, being provided a budget for a student assistant.

The goal of the department at both the course and program level regarding the assessment of student learning is twofold: First, to create an environment where collaborative learning takes place. It
is hoped that this environment will bring forth the element of “presence” which carries within it the qualities of listening, observing, thinking, critiquing, learning, and teaching. These are invaluable tools that will provide enormous assistance to students who decide to further their education.

Aside from attendance, which could demonstrate their interest in the course, students are also evaluated on their engagement in the course and their completion of course work.

Attendance is not only an important part of the evaluation process, but is also crucial to the student’s understanding of the course materials, which are needed in doing the course work. Without a firm understanding of the course materials, it would be impossible to become properly involved in the course work that could result in a poor course-work performance. Also, without attendance, there can be no participation, and thus, no contribution.

Although every instructor assesses student learning according to his/her own teaching pedagogy, the goal is to have modes of assignments (presentation, papers, quizzes, etc.) where students can demonstrate the areas in which they are most comfortable, qualified and confident. In this way, students are evaluated not only on their knowledge of the course materials, but also their creativity in the way of presenting them.

In addition, learning and understanding is a gradual process and students naturally reveal their understanding and knowledge of the course materials throughout the semester. And, of course to what degree they have matured will be revealed by the ideas they share in the classroom and through their written works.

**Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)**

k. Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and other categories of
As already stated, we only have one adjunct philosophy instructor, and we need more.

l. Describe your current use of facilities and equipment.

According to philosophy professor Larry Long: “I can only speak for myself, but the class room I am in is dismal at best (A137) All the furnishing look like left overs, the "Smart" box doesn't work, the size / shape of the room is awful,...etc.

m. Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?

According to philosophy professor Larry Long: “I can only speak for myself, but the class room I am in is dismal at best (A137) All the furnishing look like left overs, the "Smart" box doesn't work, the size / shape of the room is awful,...etc.

n. If your department experienced a reduction in resources, describe the impact of that reduction on the overall educational quality of your unit and the College.

In the past 15 years we in the English/humanities department have had 3 full-time staff retire with no replacements hired. The impact of this has forced the English department to hire more adjuncts to help make up for the shortage of full-time professors. Also, full-time professors are required to do more extra-curricular work in terms of assessment.

o. How does the department plan to sustain the quality of instruction and/or services offered through your department in the current environment of reduced resources? The department has tried to adjust by hiring more adjunct professors to teach the many classes we offer. We as a
department have also decided to meet more regularly for the purpose of improving our instruction.

p. What does the department recommend that the college do to maintain quality educational programs and services?

q. Please provide any other recommendations and priorities. (Use the appropriate request forms within Attachment D.)

There is only one part-time instructor, and it would be enormously beneficial if the division could provide a budget for a second part-time instructor.

Naturally, as the English/Humanities department grows and additional courses are created and offered, there would be a need to hire an additional part-time instructor. This would not only help in the continuous success of the department, but would also play a crucial role in student success at Merritt College.

It is also imperative that only those classrooms be assigned to the philosophy and humanities courses that would make in-class group activities and exercises possible.

Community Outreach and Articulation

For Career and Technical Education Programs:

a. Describe the department’s connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How are you assessing this?

Currently, the department has no connection to the industry. However, some employers require their employees to enroll in such classes in order to attain a greater awareness
pertaining to their field of expertise.

Currently, the department chairs have been pushing for a hybrid or online philosophy class be added. This proposed class would require students to be somewhat computer literate and would build on their existing computer knowledge. Additionally, the proposed hybrid course would make use of “moodle software” which many of our instructors receive training on during the FLEX days held at the beginning of each semester, as well as at the beginning of the summer semester. Students would subsequently be more prepared for the job market by honing their computer skills as well as improving their skills at oral and written communication, as well as critical thinking.

b. What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates? What are the employment projections (numbers of replacement and new positions) for these job titles over the next 10 years using the California Employment Development Department Labor Market Information? (http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/Content.asp?pageid=1004, and http://www.laney.edu/wp/educational-master-plan/2010-educational-master-plan/ for the Merritt College Educational Master Plan, Chapter II, pps. 18-30.)

c. What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement? Increasingly, I am told by my colleagues who teach subjects other than English and Humanities that students should have had some experience presenting their information in an oral presentation, offering the student the opportunity to think critically, while presenting in an extemporaneous manner.

For transfer programs:
e. Describe the department’s efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. How is the program preparing students for upper division course work? Critical thinking is a primary objective in our critical thinking classes and it is a necessary skill in four-year institutions, as well. Higher level humanities courses require longer readings and longer essays, so this type of academic challenge in our philosophy class will undoubtedly help students be prepared for the greater challenges that await them at four-year colleges.

f. Has there been a Transfer Model Curriculum identified for your program? Has it been implemented? If not, what are the plans to do so? Not applicable.

For all instructional programs:

g. Describe the department’s efforts to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.

Since English/Humanities/philosophy courses fulfill certain categories of the general education that every student must complete, it is hoped that after completing a philosophy, students leave with a better understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. The solid foundation will hopefully aid the student as they continue onto a four-year college or decide to reenter the job market.

h. Please indicate how many of the full and part time faculty have been evaluated in the last three years. For faculty that have not been evaluated in the last three years, what are your plans to become current. As of the beginning of spring 2016 semester, all of the faculty have been evaluated and evaluations are current.
i. Recommendations and priorities.

All of the English/Philosophy/Humanities courses meet the general education requirements for both AA degree and transfer to four-year institutions. The Philosophy and humanities courses also meet the undergraduate requirement for a Bachelors degree in both Philosophy and Humanities. Though Merritt College does offer an AA in Humanities and Arts, it is not currently offering an AA in Philosophy, which could be helpful not only in the growth of the Merritt’s Humanities/Philosophy program, but also, to students who are interested in majoring in Philosophy.

To help the department grow and to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves, the co-chairs will continue to meet with the faculty and the Chair persons of the Humanities and Philosophy Departments of various four-year institution such as CSU San Francisco, CSU Hayward, CSU San Jose, UC Berkeley and UC Davis to not only make necessary refinement to the Merritt English/Humanities/Philosophy program, but also, to adequately prepare students for both lower and upper division courses in the fields of English, humanities and philosophy.
| Q1: Please select the program you are reviewing: | PHIL |
|———-|———-|
| Q2: Name of Reviewer | Knappenberger |
| Q3: Is the narrative information complete and all elements of the program review are addressed? (Q.1) | Incomplete, COMMENTS Although the questions from the PR Handbook are listed, the format is very hard to follow. There is a lot of narrative addressing the questions, but portions are missing such as SLO discussion, improvements, data, discussion of instructional strategies and appendices. |
| Q4: Is the analysis of data thorough? (Q.2) | Incomplete, COMMENTS The data is not included. There is anecdotal narrative, but not supported by data. |
| Q5: Are the conclusions and recommendations well-substantiated and relate to the analysis of the data? (Q.3) | Incomplete |
| Q6: Are the discipline, department or program planning goals articulated in the report with the goals addressed noted with areas of concern? (Q.4) | Incomplete |
| Q7: Are the resource requests connected to the discipline, department or program planning goals and aligned with the college goals? (Q.5) | Incomplete |
| Q8: What rating do you recommend? | Not accepted, COMMENTS This one may have been difficult given that it is one class. I would refer to and input the data for the class and complete the review using the template. The template will help align the statements with data and ensure that all components are included, especially since the author is asking for some resources (i.e. another instructor and offerings). |
Part II. Choose one of the Ratings Below and Follow the Instructions.

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<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted.</td>
<td>1. Complete the signatures below and submit to the Vice President of Instruction.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Provide commentary that indicates areas in the report that require improvement and return the report to the discipline, department or program chair with a timeline for resubmission to the validation chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionally Accepted.</td>
<td>3. Provide commentary that indicates areas in the report that require improvement and return the report to the discipline, department or program chair with instructions to revise. Notify the Dean and Vice President of Instruction of the non-accepted status.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Accepted.</td>
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</tbody>
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Part III. Signatures

Validation Team Chair

Samantha Kessler

Print Name

Signature

Date: 3-15-16

Discipline, Department or Program Chair

Iseta Gonzalez-Santana

Print Name

Signature

Date: 3-2-16

Received by Vice President of Instruction

Norma Ambroz-Galaviz

Print Name

Signature

Date: 3-19-16