

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum
5/25/21

Department/Program: THEOLOGY

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

The following are the learning outcomes as of Fall 2016:

Theology core courses should enable students to:

1. Appreciate and constructively engage the universal, perennial quests for truth and meaning that generate theological insight in Christianity and other religious traditions;
2. Demonstrate a working understanding of the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology, especially as expressed in Scripture and the Creeds;
3. Understand and constructively engage the dynamic relationship between religious truth claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal;
4. Constructively engage the various disciplinary methods required for theological insight, including textual, historical, social, and cultural analysis;
5. Be able to relate theological inquiry to the enduring questions animating the broader liberal arts tradition in an academic environment that welcomes diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes for all core sequences are posted on the Theology Department website. <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/theology/undergraduate/core-in-theology.html> Additional learning outcomes specific to each course sequence are printed on course syllabi.

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

Currently, the department collates data from two course evaluation questions that were added to all theology core courses' student evaluation forms for the purpose of assessing how successful our core courses are in fulfilling two of our new learning goals. We designed this targeted assessment to show us what we most need to focus on next year as the new learning outcomes are implemented. Those add-on course evaluation questions are as follows:

1. The Core Theology course has helped me understand the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology.

2. This Core Theology course has helped me understand the relationship between religious truth claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal.

However, the undergraduate director intends on establishing an assessment process and schedule for the theology core and major that focus on empirical data (i.e., evidence from syllabi, student work, enrollments, etc.) rather than student perception. To that end, while we will continue to use these two questions to assess student perception, the undergraduate director has set additional the goals for AY2021-22:

1. Deliver a proposal to the department in the Fall of 2021 to create a Theology Undergraduate Program Assessment and Advisory Committee (hereafter TUPAAC), and, if approved, to begin assessment work with this group in the Spring of 2022. The committee should be comprised of full time faculty members who teach regularly within the standard theology core. Its purpose is: a) to establish means and rubrics for assessing both the core and the major, b) to implement that assessment, and c) to conduct initial interpretation of the resulting data and to make potential recommendations for curriculum modifications if necessary. Additionally, the TUPAAC will assist the undergraduate director with a handful of advisory tasks as they come up through the year.
2. Establish a schedule for assessment of each of the core's and major's learning goals to be executed over the next few academic years.

- 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?)

Currently, the Department Chair and the Undergraduate Program Director collate and evaluate the data at the end of the academic year. The information is shared with the entire Department.

In the future, the plan is that the TUPAAC will conduct initial interpretation of the resulting data and to make potential recommendations for curriculum modifications if necessary. The undergraduate director will present these to the chair and executive committee for evaluation and presentation to the department at the final department meeting of the academic year to allow for consideration and planning over the summer, and department discussion and voting (if necessary) at the first meeting of the following academic year.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

The data as collected continue to confirm the strengths of our current practice even after the AY2019-20 implementation of the new theology core. Since the theology core is new and there is another core review scheduled after the third year of implementation, there have been no changes.

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

A full program review was conducted in 2012.

In addition to that, in the summer of 2020 the department conducted a self-study of the new theology core implemented in AY 2019-20. The results of that study confirmed that the department had the staffing and available seats necessary for students to fulfill their theology core, and that students felt that the new theology core fulfills the learning goals of the theology core as well as the old theology core did.