

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

5/16/22

### 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?)

Students enrolled in theology core courses are:

- engaging the quest for truth and meaning that generate theological insight in Christianity and other religious traditions;
- exploring the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology;
- understanding the dynamic relationship between religious truth-claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal;
- engaging the various disciplinary methods required for theological reflection, including textual, historical, social, and cultural analysis; and
- relating theological inquiry to the enduring questions animating the broader liberal arts tradition.

- 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?)

The department had previously collated 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. Those add-on course evaluation questions were as follows:

1. This 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, recognizing that this process of collection of indirect data was insufficient to meet the current criteria of best assessment practices, the undergraduate director with the support of the chair and department, has established an assessment staff, process, and tentative schedule for the theology core and major that will be able to collect direct data, evaluate it, and make recommendations based thereon. While we will continue to use these two questions to assess student perception, the

undergraduate director has successfully fulfilled the core assessment goals for AY2021-22 (which were submitted in the Core E1A from 2021), namely:

- “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.”

The theology department now has a standing assessment committee (now: TUPAC) with a rotating slate of elected members who began their terms in the late Fall of 2021. In the Fall of 2021, the TUPAC established a working schedule of both theology core and major assessment. In the Spring of 2022, the TUPAC began assessing learning goals in the theology major. **The committee is set to begin assessing learning goals of the theology core in the Fall of 2022. Notably, this will contribute to the post-third year assessment of the new theology core, which was implemented in the university core beginning in the Fall of 2019.**

- 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 Theology Undergraduate Program Assessment Committee (TUPAC), led by the director of undergraduate studies constructs a process for assessing the individual learning goals, then interprets the data collected. The TUPAC constructs recommendations based on these data and analysis, and the undergraduate director will present this to the chair and department executive committee, before presenting them to the department as a whole. This collation of data, analysis, and recommendation from the previous Spring and Fall semesters, is currently scheduled to take place in the Spring Semester every year.

For example, during AY2021-2022 TUPAC: 1) formulated the assessment schedule for core and majors’ learning outcomes; 2) generated an associated rubric; 3) scored a “signature assignment” paper based on the selected learning outcome of interest; 4) discussed the findings and formulated next steps for academic year 2022-23. The final meeting of the spring semester addressed the assessment plan for the upcoming year; during the summer, this plan is refined by the TUPAC Chair, possibly in consultation with Provost Office personnel. TUPAC activities and recommendations are communicated to the broader faculty at Theology department meetings.

The current TUPAC members are:

- Jeffrey L. Cooley (DUS, ex officio chair)
- Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones (1-year term ending F2022)
- Fr. Liam Bergin (1-year term ending F2022)
- Yonder Gillihan (2-year term ending F2023)
- Dieter Roth (2-year term ending F2023)

At the conclusion of a TUPAC member’s term, a new member is elected by the department. Thus, in the Fall of 2022, the theology department will be electing two new members to serve two-year terms (note:

the one year terms are a feature of the committee's novelty in order to allow for staggered service terms).

- 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?)

Since the theology core is new and there is another core review scheduled after the third year of implementation, there have been no changes.

The new TUPAC, which only began its work in earnest in the late Fall of 2021 and has begun its assessment by focusing on the learning goals for the theology major, has not yet begun to evaluate the theology core learning goals. As noted, the TUPAC will turn its attention to the theology core in the Fall of 2022.

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

A full program review of theology 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. The new theology core will be subject to another self-study in the Fall of 2022.