TRANSMITTAL for UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS:
Changes or Proposals

I. INFORMATION:

1. Program Title: Philosophy Minor Program
2. Department(s): Department of Philosophy (and History)
3. College(s): College of Arts and Sciences
4. Proposal prepared by: Intiaz Moosa Date: 10/01/15
5. Check all that apply
   - [ ] New program
   - [x] Existing program
   - [ ] Change in course name
   - [ ] Change in number of credits
   - [ ] Change in major
   - [x] Change in minor
   - [ ] Change in course content
   - [ ] Change in emphasis/option
6. Other Programs/Departments Consulted (Requires letters of comment from all Departments or Programs substantially affected):
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 
7. Catalog year (and semester) of Implementation: Semester Spring Year 2017
8. Have all courses in this program been approved? Yes [x] No [ ]
   If "No" which courses have not been approved?
9. Attach Request Narrative
   Include in narrative on attached pages a rationale for the requested changes or creation of program. Include clarification concerning any courses that have not yet been approved. If requesting a program change also include a listing of course array for both the current and proposed program.
10. UNIT APPROVALS: Requires signatures of all Department Chairs and Deans whose programs will be substantially affected by the changes or proposal. Signature lines for the affected Departments and Colleges (noted in "6" above), are on the addendum to this form. These signatures should be obtained prior to review by all other shared governance levels.

Department Curriculum Committee Chair (optional) ____________________________

Department/Program Chair ____________________________ 10/12/2015

College Curriculum Committee Chair ____________________________ 10/21/15

Dean of College ____________________________ 10/31/15

University Curriculum Cmtt. Chair ____________________________ 10/27/15

Academic Policy & Program Cmtt. Chair ____________________________ 11/24/15

Faculty Senate Chair ____________________________

Provost / Vice Chancellor ____________________________

Chancellor ____________________________

*NOTE: The master copy of this transmittal & accompanying documents must be filed in the Provost's office upon final approval. The Provost's office will notify all appropriate administrative offices (Registrar, Dean(s), Department Chair(s)) of approvals & necessary actions to implement changes.

Revised December 2012
Signatures of Additional Department & Colleges Affected

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Revised December 2012
1. Why the change?
The proposal is to simplify the requirements for students to get a philosophy minor: while 24 credits will still be required for a minor, the current 3 required courses will no longer be required, but instead students with a minor in philosophy will have to take at least one 300 level or above philosophy course. (This is made explicit in the summary at the very end.) Philosophy program is at present serviced by, what amounts to, two full-time philosophy instructors. Hence hard choices have to be made: either the philosophy program makes a priority of servicing other departments (like Art, Biological Sciences, and Business) as well as General Education Requirements of the student body as a whole, or it seeks to maximally benefit those declared philosophy minors, by offering courses specifically designed for them. The department cannot, with the current staff, effectively do both. Philosophy program, it has been decided, is most useful to this institution if it offers courses that serve departments and students other than those who intend to specialize in philosophy. The result is, Philosophy Minor Program is now less stringent and less demanding, and philosophy devotees may find it more difficult to get the courses they want. Nevertheless, the department is fully committed to providing proper training in philosophy, and to serve reasonably well, even those minoring in philosophy. It so turns out that the three courses currently required for getting a minor in philosophy are not absolutely crucial for gaining a core understanding of philosophy. I will discuss each, and explain why:

2. One Proposed Change: “Logical Reasoning” (PHIL 230) will no longer be required for Philosophy Minor.
To be able to think critically and to distinguish with ease correct from fallacious forms of reasoning, are basic goals of the Philosophy Minor Program. That was the initial reason for making this course mandatory. However, if not all, most of philosophy courses taught by this department introduce elements of correct logical argumentation, and make critical thinking a key component of the course. I will not deny formal training in a course dedicated wholly to this task would be an asset. But students minoring in philosophy, even without having taken a course in logical reasoning, cannot avoid being constantly exposed to, and thereby given ample opportunities of acquiring adequate facility in, correct and critical reasoning.
3. Second Proposed Change: “Ancient Philosophy” (PHIL 221) will no longer be required for a Philosophy Minor.

The initial reason for requiring philosophy minors to take PHIL 221 was, Plato and Aristotle are not only great thinkers, they are the founders of this enterprise called Western Philosophical Tradition. However, multiple courses discuss ideas of Plato in particular, but even Aristotle. A cross-listed Philosophy/Political Science course (PHIL 308), offered by Political Science Department, is heavily invested in examining the political philosophy of the ancients. Several other courses (PHIL 201, PHIL 301, PHIL 310) certainly discuss Plato, but even Aristotle. Furthermore, views are changing about the importance of the ancients, given the very different challenges and realities we moderns face today. Is Plato so indispensable for doing philosophy today? Why not give a student the choice to take a course on contemporary ethical issues, or on Eastern Philosophy, if he/she cannot take both?

4. Third Proposed Change: “Science and Philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment” (PHIL 323) will not be required for Philosophy Minor.

A case could be made that philosophers of 17th and 18th Century, such as Descartes, Hume and Kant, are as important for the development of modern philosophy as is Newton to the development of physics. However, PHIL 323 does not deal with the main philosophical ideas of Descartes, Hume and Kant, as was the original course PHIL 223 (which was modified five years ago to PHIL 323, so as to meet the General Education Multidisciplinary designation). The present course focuses more on the interface between science and philosophy --- a rather different focus. In other words, this course should have been dropped as a required course some time ago. As for the ideas of Descartes and Kant, all sorts of philosophy courses now taught do this anyway.

5. Fourth Proposed Change: New requirement for a Philosophy Minor is at least one 300-level course (or above) in philosophy.

Be it noted that, despite proposing to drop the above-mentioned three courses, these are significant courses. Were we to offer a major in philosophy, or were the student in question intending to take graduate courses in philosophy, it would make more sense to make these courses mandatory. But most minors will not end up doing graduate work in philosophy (and those who do, would perhaps take them anyway). All but one philosophy courses at the 300-level were reworked to meet the prior (now defunct) General Education Multidisciplinary requirement. Teaching these courses for the last 5 years or so, the department has realized that these multidisciplinary philosophy courses are especially enlightening and informative; and hence philosophy minors should be required to take them. At the 400-level, the only philosophy course presently offered is "Independent
and surely students could substitute a 300-level course, for a course in independent study, where students can attempt first-hand at doing original work in philosophy.

6. Summary of the proposed Change to the Philosophy Minor Program:

Current Philosophy Minor

Philosophy Requirements, 24 Total Credits

Required Courses: 9 cr. hrs.
PHIL 221 Ancient Philosophy 3 cr.
PHIL 230 Logical Reasoning 3 cr.
PHIL 323 Science and the Philosophers in the Age of Enlightenment 3 cr.

Directed Electives: 15 cr. hrs.
Five additional PHIL courses

PROPOSED Philosophy Minor

Philosophy Requirements, 24 Total Credits

Required Course: 3 cr. hrs.
At least one PHIL course at the 300 level or higher.

Directed Electives: 21 cr hrs.
Seven additional PHIL courses