Assessment for PHIL 101, 102, 103
M. Thune

Goal:
Upon completion of this course, students should have developed appropriately robust critical thinking skills.

Plan of Assessment:
By the end of the semester, students should be able to demonstrate their level of critical thinking skills by identifying what they take to be the strengths and weaknesses of a given philosopher’s theory, viewpoint, or systematic philosophy as a whole. Finely-tuned and well-developed skills can be measured against less well-developed skills in the extent of the student’s ability to be objective. That is, while students may certainly have their own viewpoint on a given issue, their critical thinking skills can be assessed by how well they are able to transcend their subjective feelings and/or prior assumptions and identify objective reasons or evidence that would count in favor of, or against, the relevant philosophers’ viewpoints. Hence, assessment will involve having the students write papers (towards the end of the semester) in which they are required to critically engage a given issue or philosophical theory about which there is disagreement among philosophers. Their answers will be evaluated in terms of the quality of thought and level of demonstrated objectivity. For example, papers containing language such as “I didn’t like philosopher so-and-so’s theory” generally reflect less well-developed critical thinking skills than papers containing language such as “While I see why philosopher so-and-so might be inclined toward that theory, I find it implausible for the following reasons…” The level of critical thinking skills expected will be consonant with what is generally thought appropriate for beginning philosophy students at the community college level.