

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

5/29/25

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:

1. engaging the quest for truth and meaning that generate theological insight in Christianity and other religious traditions;
2. exploring the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology;
3. understanding the dynamic relationship between religious truth-claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal;
4. engaging the various disciplinary methods required for theological reflection, including textual, historical, social, and cultural analysis; and
5. 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?)

Beginning in F22, the Theology Undergraduate Program Assessment Committee (TUPAC) collects indirect data derived from the following customized student feedback questions which are administered at the end of each semester to all undergraduates enrolled in Theology core courses via the University's course evaluation system; the items directly address the Theology core goals:

1. This course has helped me understand the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology.
2. This course has helped me understand the relationship between religious truth claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal.
3. This course has familiarized me with the scholarly exploration of religious faith.
4. This course has helped me understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.
5. This Core Theology course has helped me relate theological inquiry to the enduring questions animating the broader liberal arts tradition.

Students respond to each of these statements by assigning them a number on a 1-5 scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. (Note: for the results of this year's survey, see section 5, below.)

In addition to these indirect data, the TUPAC acquires direct evidence by collecting and scoring student work, focusing on both specific sections and types of standard core theology courses on the one hand, and specific theology core learning goals on the other. For example, during AY2024-2025, ca., 100 papers from CT core courses were collected and scored by TUPAC using a committee-designed rubric in order to assess student learning on theology learning goal #3. It is the intent of the TUPAC to conduct such large-scale assessment projects involving student work every two years or so, since such undertakings are excessively time-consuming and are not feasible on a yearly basis.

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 (DUS) constructs a process for assessing the individual learning goals, then interprets the data collected. The TUPAC drafts recommendations based on these data and analysis, and the DUS presents these 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, takes place in the Spring Semester every year or, if necessary, in the following Fall.

The current TUPAC members are:

Matthew Kruger (DUS, *ex officio* chair)
Boyd Coolman
Lisa Cahill
Yonder Gillihan
Daniel Josilyn-Siemiatkoski
James Keenan
Michael Magree
Mark Massa
Erik Owens
Matt Petillo
Stephen Pope

At the conclusion of a TUPAC member's term, a new member is elected by the department.

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?)

Assessments took two major forms. First, student self-report data via end of year survey. Second, a major assessment project on one of the core course options within the CT track.

Core survey assessment

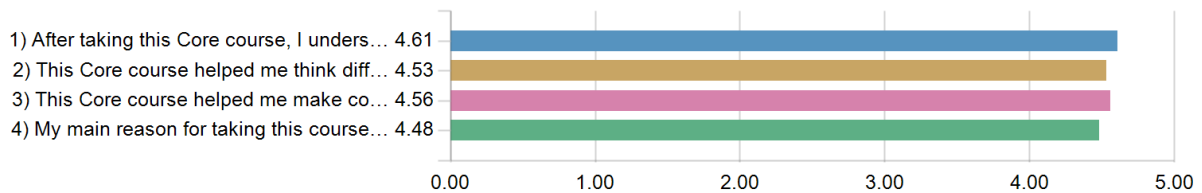
Table for -Spring 2025.

Raters Students

Responded 1669

Invited 2003

Response Ratio 83.33%



F24 Theology Core Student Feed Summary

Description of Table Data:

The above table provides the overall responses from students on whether they found the course provided them with knowledge

Observations on S25 Theology Core Student Feed Summary: Over 1600 students submitted feedback in S25, representing a response rate of 83.3% of total students enrolled in THEO core courses in that semester. The TUPAC and the department consider the numbers to be very, very good – students by a wide margin perceive that *all* five of the THEO core learning goals are being well-addressed by *every* mode of the core, whether it is Perspectives, PULSE, or the Standard Theology core (STT- plus CT-designated).

While there are definitely some minor differences (some of which might be statistically significant), those differences do not appear to be *practically* significant, since even the lowest score overall shows **that, overwhelmingly, students believe that their THEO core classes are addressing all of the THEO core learning goals well.** Both the TUPAC and the larger Theology Department find this result unsurprising, since the THEO core learning goals were based on what the department designed the THEO core to address. Neither the TUPAC nor the Theology Department as a whole consider it necessary to change any element in the THEO core program at this time; discussion focused on further encouragement to keep the learning goals clearly in mind when designing course syllabi and assignments.

Second, a major assessment of assignments within the God, Self, and Society subset of core courses was accomplished. Papers were requested from F24 courses at the end of the semester. A selection of these was assigned to members of the TUPAC to assess using a committee designed rubric. After the assessment project, feedback from the members of the TUPAC was received in the form of paragraphs on the project and an additional in person listening session. This feedback was presented to the Theology Department at its final faculty meeting in April of 2025.

93 papers graded
1-6 pages in length
15 sections of GSS
Scores indicated that
we are generally
successful...

understand the dynamic relationship between religious truth-claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal.	Understands the relationship between religious truth-claims and their moral implications. (I.e., connects a doctrine/belief with specific behaviors)	Understands the dynamism of the relationship between claims and implications. (I.e., that the relationship between the claims and implications moves in both directions, from claim to behavior and from behavior to claim)	Understands the personal elements of moral implications.	Understands the societal elements of moral implications.
Average score	1.14	1.03	1.08	1.33

Papers were graded on a 0-2 scale in four categories broken out from the various aspects of the learning goal. As indicated by the numbers, the assessment determined that students are generally satisfying the outcomes of the learning goal. Shortcomings of the assessment were noted by TUPAC members, as a standardized assignment was not requested, and this limited the effectiveness of comparison between classes. Nonetheless, TUPAC members were generally positive about the outcome of the assessment and concluded that the project provided further indication that we are meeting our learning goals for our theology core courses.

Further discussion at the faculty meeting explored the possibility of using a shared assignment in future assessment projects. The faculty also emphasized the importance of considering the learning goals for development of our syllabi in the future.

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

A full program review of the Theology Department was conducted in 2012.

In addition to that, in the summer of 2020 the department conducted a self-study of the new THEO core which was implemented in AY2019-20.

Furthermore, in AY2022-23, the TUPAC conducted a post-3rd year review of the new theology core which was implemented in AY2019-20.