



SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

Why study a Philosophy degree?

[Why Entrepreneurship is a Perfect Match for the Liberal Arts Student](#)

“[A] successful liberal arts education is learning how to question assumptions about the world. It necessitates the strengthening of creative thinking skills, alongside learning how best to harness the powers of individual ambition and inquisitiveness. All of these qualities sound perfect for ... the humble, hardworking entrepreneur ... some of the best entrepreneurial visionaries and business success stories were bred within the liberal arts college setting”.

[Why Liberal Arts Graduates Can Be Great Developers](#)

“Today’s best developers combine innovation, agility and creativity. And it turns out that there are many people with a liberal arts education have all three!”

[A Liberal Arts Degree Can Be More Beneficial Than Most People Think](#)

“Liberal studies prepare students to be well-rounded, critical-thinking adults. Liberal arts students aren’t savants, confined to just one area of expertise; they are creative problem-solvers and competent communicators, enriched by diverse backgrounds in humanities that can also incorporate STEM classes. The liberal arts prepare students to be well-prepared, civic minded participants in society.”

[That 'Useless' Liberal Arts Degree Has Become Tech's Hottest Ticket](#)

"Studying philosophy taught me two things," says Butterfield, sitting in his office in San Francisco's South of Market district. "I learned how to write really clearly. I learned how to follow an argument all the way down, which is *invaluable in running meetings*. And when I studied the history of science, I learned about the ways that everyone believes something is true--like the old notion of some kind of ether in the air propagating gravitational forces--until they realized that it wasn't true."

[Degrees that Pay You Back - Wall Street Journal](#)

“Your parents might have worried when you chose Philosophy as a major. But a year-long survey of 1.2 million people with only a bachelor's degree by PayScale Inc. shows that graduates in *Philosophy earned 103.5% and 97.8% more, respectively, about 10 years post-commencement*. Majors that didn't show as much salary growth include Nursing and Information Technology.”

[I Think Therefore I Earn](#)

“Figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show *philosophy graduates*, once derided as unemployable layabouts, *are in growing demand from employers*. The number of all graduates in full-time and part-time work six months after graduation has risen by 9% between 2002-03 and 2005-06; for philosophy graduates it has gone up by 13%.”

[What Can You Do with a Philosophy Degree?](#)

“Philosophy teaches you how to think for yourself and how to analyse and communicate ideas in an understandable, balanced and well thought-out manner. Find out what you can do with these skills.

[I Work Therefore I Am: Why Businesses Are Hiring Philosophers](#)

“*Companies are turning to professional thinkers to help them reflect and work through difficult decisions*. Who should a business leader turn to in times of crisis? You might presume a lawyer or a coach – but how about a philosopher? Busy executives in Silicon Valley and beyond are enlisting the services of “practical philosophers” to help them work through difficult decisions.”

[What Can You Do with A Degree in Philosophy?](#)

“High-profile philosophy graduates such as poet TS Eliot, film director Woody Allen, martial arts actor [Bruce Lee](#), civil rights leader Martin Luther King and former US president Bill Clinton are all examples of how the subject can broaden your employment horizons as well as your thinking.”



[Where Can Philosophy Take Me?](#)

“Philosophy is the ultimate “transferable work skill”. With its emphasis on reason and argumentation, philosophy is an excellent preparation for a career in law, religion, business, international diplomacy, social work, medical management or writing as well as post-graduate education.”

[Katy Tur on Her Philosophy Degree: ‘It Allows Me to Ask Questions’](#)

“Katy Tur’s advice for undergrads studying philosophy? Don’t let anyone tell you your major isn’t useful. ‘I graduated with a B.A. in philosophy and it was *by far the best major I could have taken in college*’, the NBC News correspondent, a graduate of the University of California Santa Barbara, explained in an interview for [College Game Plan](#). .. the course of study *opened doors*. ‘It *allowed me to do anything that I wanted to do*. I wasn’t pigeon-holed to a certain subject.’”

[Beyond Academia](#)

“Beyond Academia, published by the American Association for Philosophy, is intended to provide guidance in the form of *resources, information, and advice to philosophers who are interested in exploring a wide range of professions outside of academia*. It includes many links to resources for non-academic career opportunities; data on non-academic careers, including new academic placement data and analysis; and biographical essays of philosophers who have successfully found ways to use their philosophical training outside of academia. *Beyond Academia* also provides recommendations for department chairs and placement officers on maintaining connections with philosophers working outside academia and preparing philosophy students for non-academic careers.”

[Where next? Unlocking the potential of your Philosophy degree](#)

“Using this employability guide is a way to help you, as a philosophy student, *reflect on the skills you are gaining as you study, and gather evidence of these skills being put into practice.*”

[Opting for the Life Examined](#)

“Philosophy is being embraced ... by a new generation of college students who are drawing modern-day lessons from the age-old discipline as they try to make sense of their world, from the morality of the war in Iraq to the latest political scandal.”

[Where the Smart Students Are](#)

“Philosophy remains *the only humanistic discipline that really teaches students to think critically and analytically*, which is why philosophy students remain the leading performers on professional school exams like the LSAT. *Even in the 21st century, smarts matter — to lawyers, to doctors, to problem-solvers in all fields, as well as to a good life.*”

[Philosophy is Back in Business](#)

“The financial and climate crises, global consumption habits, and other *21st-century challenges call for a “killer app.” I think I’ve found it: philosophy*. Philosophy can help us address the (literally) existential challenges the world currently confronts, but only if we take it off the back burner and apply it as a burning platform in business.”

[5 Reasons Why Philosophy Majors Make the Best Entrepreneurs](#)

“There’s something to the idea that a line of study in a realm completely opposite of business can set you up to be a great entrepreneur. Rather than being taught how to run a business, spending your years of education learning to think in a way that will help you start, grow and lead a business offers something that’s often overlooked.

Nick Miller, of the restaurant software company Gather, is a co-founder and CEO who attributes his success to his education in philosophy. And he’s in good company—*numerous accomplished entrepreneurs* like Reid Hoffman and Peter Thiel *credit their philosophy backgrounds for their success.*”



[The Benefits of a Philosophy Major](#)

*“What employer wouldn’t want an articulate employee with great critical reasoning skills? Of course, I’m not attempting to make the claim that a business major, or a political science major, is never useful. But matching the content of the courses taught in these majors to jobs in business or policy should not be assumed. **Given the fluid, uncertain nature of the job market and the technology used in work, is it really impractical to become skilled at information analysis, problem solving, and argument?** I don’t think so.”*

[Philosophers Find Degree Pays off in Life and Work](#)

“For all the jokes about them, *philosophy majors appear to do remarkably well...* [Those who] fell in love with philosophy almost by accident ... went on to careers in other fields. But for the most part they are convinced that their studies, which covered logic and ethics among other topics, helped them in their jobs and their lives. Their professional success may stem from the fact that philosophy students seem more likely than those with other degrees to attend graduate or professional school. Of 20 philosophy majors interviewed from the four universities, only four had not added a graduate or professional degree.”

[The Management Myth](#)

“Most of management theory is inane, writes our correspondent, the founder of a consulting firm. *If you want to succeed in business, don’t get an M.B.A. study philosophy instead!*”

[The Danger of Picking a Major Based on Where the Jobs Are](#)

“In his new book, Professor Peter Cappelli argues that *banking on a specialized degree’s usefulness is risky*. One of the concerns raised is that the proliferation of very vocational majors, like casino construction or these sorts of things, because you’re really taking a huge risk for error. If casinos aren’t hiring the year you graduate with a casino construction degree—what are you going to do? You’d be better off with a liberal arts degree, partly because you would have learned more. The other thing about these majors is that they’re not costless to pursue, these very vocational majors, because there’s a bunch of things that you could have been learning that you’re not.”

[Philosophy degrees and famous or successful people who have 'em](#)

The American Philosophical Association has created [a list of well-known people who have 'studied philosophy'](#). [Here's a poster](#) of well-known people who have philosophy degrees.

[Is Philosophy the Most Practical Major](#)

“Philosophy is ... one of the most competitive disciplines ... philosophers honor each other by disagreeing with each other. The number of objections could be a sign of the importance of the arguments. From such experiences I learned the difference between the merely wrong, and the valuably wrong.”

[Expertise and Employability in Philosophy](#)

“Arguably the single most important barrier to enhancing employability in philosophy is a propensity amongst some employers and students to underestimate *how much value philosophy graduates can bring to an organisation*. This tendency has been encouraged by the current political rhetoric that frames employability in vocational and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) terms ...”

[Profiles of Non-Academics with Philosophy Degrees](#)

“There are lists of [famous philosophy majors](#) and [philosophy majors in the news](#), and some of the interviews [here](#) are with people outside of academia who have philosophy degrees.”