



Careers in Philosophy

Stephan T. Mayo

What can you do with a degree in philosophy? More than you might imagine. One of the most common misconceptions about majoring in philosophy is that the only career it prepares you for is teaching philosophy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Philosophy graduates pursue careers in law, business, education, government, healthcare, technology, and numerous other fields. What makes a philosophy degree so versatile is that it doesn't train students for just one occupation. Instead, it develops intellectual abilities that can be applied to almost any profession.

Employers don't simply need people who know things. They need people who know how to think.

Philosophy majors learn to analyze complex problems, evaluate competing arguments, identify faulty assumptions, and communicate their ideas clearly and persuasively. They also develop an appreciation for ethical reasoning—an increasingly important ability in a world where technological advances often outpace our understanding of their consequences.

These skills are particularly valuable in a rapidly changing economy. Specific technical knowledge may become outdated, and entire professions may be transformed by artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies. But the ability to think critically, solve unfamiliar problems, and make sound judgments will remain essential.

Where Can Philosophy Take You?

A philosophy degree can provide a strong foundation for careers in a wide range of fields:

- Law and Public Policy: Legal analysis, advocacy, government service, and public administration.
- Business and Entrepreneurship: Management, strategic planning, consulting, and organizational leadership.
- Education: Teaching, educational administration, curriculum development, and academic research.
- Healthcare: Medicine, healthcare administration, medical ethics, and health policy.
- Technology: Artificial intelligence ethics, technology policy, user research, and responsible innovation.
- Communications and Media: Journalism, publishing, public relations, and professional writing.
- Nonprofit and Social Services: Community advocacy, nonprofit leadership, social work, and public service.

Some of these professions require additional degrees, certifications, or specialized training. But philosophy can provide an excellent intellectual foundation for pursuing them.

The Advantage of a Double Major

Philosophy also combines exceptionally well with other academic disciplines.

A philosophy and business double major, for example, combines practical business knowledge with training in ethical reasoning and critical analysis. Philosophy and political science can provide excellent preparation for law school or public service. Philosophy and psychology offer complementary perspectives on human behavior, while philosophy and computer science bring together technical expertise and the ability to examine the ethical implications of emerging technologies.

In each case, philosophy adds something distinctive: the ability to question assumptions, examine problems from different perspectives, and think beyond the boundaries of a single discipline.

In Their Own Words

“What I plan to achieve with a dual major in Philosophy and Art is an advanced understanding of the nature of art. The critical thinking and problem solving skills that I receive from my philosophy courses help me explore new concepts that push me to experiment with my artwork. This will add to my portfolio that I must present when applying for graduate school. As an artist, you must always question what ‘art’ is. The philosophical approach not only helps me understand what art is, it helps me consider the possibilities of what art can be.”

— Felipe Alcantara, Philosophy and Art Double Major

Your Future Is Not Limited to One Career

The greatest advantage of a philosophy degree may be that it prepares you for possibilities you haven’t even considered yet.

You may enter college with one career in mind and discover an entirely different calling along the way. You may change professions several times during your working life. You may eventually find yourself pursuing opportunities that don’t even exist today.

A philosophy education gives you intellectual tools that can help you navigate those changes with confidence.

Philosophy doesn’t tell you what you have to become. It gives you the intellectual foundation to become almost anything you choose