

# *“What Can I do With a Bachelor’s Degree in... Philosophy?”*

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## **Facts about a Philosophy Degree**

- A philosophy degree is not designed to prepare you for a specific career, but instead, to give you a broad and general understanding of the world, our place in the world, and our values. The skills acquired through the degree are usually what serve as credentials for getting a job.
- Any career which demands training in critical and abstract thinking could be enhanced by a background in philosophy.

## **Skills Possessed by Philosophy Majors**

- Summarize complicated material and solve problems
- Comprehensive command of grammar and vocabulary
- Formulate and defend ideas and concepts
- Concentrate for long periods of time
- Analyze cause and effect
- Appreciate others’ perspectives
- Proficiency in analytical and synthetic reasoning
- Analyzing relationships between factors

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## *Possible Job Titles for Philosophy Majors*

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### **Law**

Philosophy is an excellent major for students preparing for law school and a career as a lawyer. It prepares you not only for the kinds of logical reasoning and conceptual analysis necessary to do well in law school, but also teaches you the ethical and political traditions which underlie our legal system. Philosophy majors consistently score high on the LSAT relative to students majoring in other fields. If you wish to combine legal work with other specializations, such as biotechnology, environmental science, communications, or foreign languages, consider a philosophy minor (either the department's general minor, or the special minor in Philosophy of Law) to supplement your major, and this will help make you more attractive to law schools.

### **Education**

Philosophy and critical thinking courses are taught at the community college level and at virtually every public and private four-year college and research university in the country, as well as at some public and private high schools. A philosophy minor can be an excellent addition to the portfolio of someone planning to teach in another humanities area in high school, and a philosophy major can prepare you to teach general humanities courses in public and private high schools. Teaching at the college level requires an advanced degree, building on work that usually begins with an undergraduate philosophy major.

### **Journalism**

Philosophy is a useful area of study for potential journalists. Aside from teaching you to write well, analyze facts critically, and developing your research skills, courses in ethics, political philosophy, and the history of ideas expand your conceptual repertoire and provide essential background knowledge for informed journalists whose work will make a positive contribution towards educating their society. Although it is also advisable to work on a student paper and get practical experience writing for journals and magazines, a philosophy major gives you a solid foundation for becoming an insightful and persuasive writer. For this reason also, even if you are majoring in Communications, Media, or a Journalism program, a philosophy minor may be an invaluable addition to your training for a career in journalism.

## **Publishing**

The diverse world of publishing employs many people with backgrounds in the humanities, including philosophy majors. From editors in charge of list-building at university presses, to agents working in education publishing, to acquisitions staff at large publishing houses with substantial non-fiction lists, to managing editors responsible for finding and selecting material for more specialized magazines and journals, there are many different sorts of opportunities open in the diverse world of publishing. Any major in humanities, including philosophy, is usually seen as good preparation for work in many of these different areas.

## **Politics and Public Policy**

Like political science or government, a philosophy major is often excellent preparation for positions in state or national civil services, policy research institutions, jobs as congressional aides and researchers, and so on. If you are planning to go on to take an advanced degree in public policy, government administration, international affairs, or similar programs, an undergraduate major in philosophy will provide an excellent basis for further study in applied political fields. Among a field of graduate-program applicants who have usually majored in political science or economics, a philosophy major may stand out. Similarly, a philosophy minor may complement a major in political science, history, or languages as part of a solid portfolio for further work in politics.

## **Public Relations**

The writing and analytic skills which philosophical studies help to develop are essential tools for work in different kinds of public relations fields. If the student also has some experience with the media, and can develop a good ability to make oral presentations to groups of visitors, individual callers, donors, etc., then his or her philosophical training will enable them to convey complex ideas to the targeted audiences. An ability to help justify an institution's work, its future projects, and to develop consistent policies on controversial issues, can also be a vital asset for PR work with larger organizations.

## **Fundraising and Nonprofit Work**

Students with degrees in philosophy are well prepared for any job in which difficult value-judgments and comparative analyses have to be made. This often suits them for work in college and university administrations, e.g., in admissions, or in major foundations, or other non-profit enterprises devoted to various social causes. In addition, fundraising for various non-profit interests often involves not only good written and spoken skills, but an ability to explain and justify why the organization's work is worthy of devotion, has long-term promise, or fulfills basic human needs. Many foundations and think-tanks also hire general researchers, who need the sorts of skills provided by prior training in philosophy.

## **Religion and Ministry**

Students who go on for advanced degrees in theology or into seminaries to study for the ministry often start with an undergraduate degree in philosophy, which is often as good as a theology or religious studies major for these purposes. Especially if the student has theoretical interests, it is good to have some training in philosophy if planning to work in areas related to theology. Here is

a case where a philosophy minor or an interdisciplinary major involving both philosophy, biblical languages, and religious studies, can be a powerful combination.

### **Business and Management**

Many students with undergraduate majors or minors in philosophy go on to successful careers in business or management. Large firms often look for people who have a great all-round liberal arts education—which trains their mind for analysis—excellent communication skills, and an understanding of people. Of course any career in business or management will involve a lot of on-the-job training, and the student will have to learn particular knowledge not supplied by a philosophy degree or any other liberal arts major. But philosophy often provides a good basis on which to build. Students thinking of going on for MBA degrees need not major in business or economics alone; the best MBA schools like to admit students who have shown interests in other areas, such as history, languages, and philosophy, in addition to finance and management. Students with some background in philosophy are often better prepared for the kind of logical thinking required for more advanced administrative science and long-range planning.

### **Art and Architecture**

Preparation for professional work in art and architecture often requires either advanced technical training or a graduate degree, but some background in philosophy is often very helpful for the student who wants to think theoretically about these creative endeavors. Both in aesthetics and in other areas, such as theories of meaning, culture, and society, philosophy has been a significant inspiration for innovation in art and architecture, and some training in philosophical disciplines provides a basis for a mature understanding of these disciplines, an understanding that extends beyond the technical competencies they also require.

\*The content was adopted from: <http://www.fordham.edu/philosophy/undergraduate/careers.htm>

# Career Resources for Philosophy Majors

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## Specific Resources

**Hofstra Philosophy Department:** <http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/Colleges/HCLAS/PHI/>

**American Philosophical Association:** <http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/index.html>

**Ephilosopher.com:** <http://www.ephilosopher.com/news.php>

**Jobs in Philosophy:** <http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/phil/ag/jobs/>

**Women in Philosophy:** <http://www.uh.edu/~cfreelan/SWIP/>

## General Resources

**\*CareerSearch:** <http://www.careersearch.net/Hofstra>  
(username-hofstra, password-career)

**Occupational Outlook Handbook:** <http://www.bls.gov/oco>

**Riley Guide:** <http://www.rileyguide.com>

**\*Spotlight On Careers:** <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org>  
(username-lacn, password-holland)

**\*Vault:** [http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib\\_main.jsp?parrefer=6123](http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=6123)  
(You will be prompted for your Novell username and password)

\*These websites require you sign in using a username and password.

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## *Hofstra Philosophy Department*

### *Alumni Careers: a Sample*

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Danielle Rosen, 2006	Teaching English in Japan
Kenneth Levin-Epstein, 2005	Ph.D candidate of Philosophy at Syracuse University
Brook Rosini, 2004	Ph.D. candidate, Germanics and Theory & Criticism Univ. of Washington at Seattle
Ouzy Azoulay, 2003	Attorney
Ted Lincoln, 2003	Event Planner, Experient Inc.
Nicole Foglia, 2002	Kindergarten Teacher, Special Ed. Class
Maria Carrua, 2002	English Teacher
Etan Weiss, 2002	Judaic Studies Teacher
Mubeena Chitalwalla, 2001	International Consultant (Dubai)
George Kaneris, 2000	Studying Real Estate at Cornell Univ.
Rob Goldberg, 1999	Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Cognitive Neuroscience
Matt Tedesco, 1997	Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Colorado
Shannon Steffen, 1997	M.B.A. in technology management; Entrepreneur
Richard Gilman-Opalsky, 1996	Professor of political Philosophy, University of Illinois-Springfield
J. David Eldridge, 1995	Attorney
Rajesh Bhawnani, 1994	Compliance Officer
Lisa Henning, 1987	President of a Business Networking Organization
Elisa Winter, 1985	Personal Chef

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