

The Earning Power of Philosophy Majors

It's been said in many places before: A degree in the humanities isn't exactly marketable to employers (less kind critics have called those degrees “useless”). But there's one humanities major whose graduates are doing quite well in the job market—and it's philosophy majors.

Every year, the company surveys 1.4 million college alumni from over a thousand U.S. colleges on their employment and income. Although philosophy majors rank 75th on PayScale's overall list of majors at mid-career earnings, it's the top humanities bachelors degree in their ranking—from early career all the way to later career.



PayScale

“We hear again and again that employers value creative problem solving and the ability to deal with ambiguity in their new hires, and I can't think of another major that would better prepare you with those skills than the study of philosophy. It's not terribly surprising to see those graduates doing well in the labor market. We've seen quite a few executives—CEOs, VPs of Strategy—who studied philosophy as their undergrad program,” says Lydia Frank, the senior editorial director at PayScale.

Experts say that while philosophy majors might not come out of college with the skill-set that business majors have, they have creative problem solving abilities that sets them apart. And indeed, there's a stellar roster of CEOs and executives who have degrees in philosophy (including Silicon Valley entrepreneur Peter Thiel).