Can philosophy majors get jobs?

Philosophy is fascinating and gives you a chance to grapple with some of the deepest questions around. But some students fear that majoring in philosophy will leave them forever asking a more mundane question: “Would you like fries with that?” Is majoring in philosophy really a fast track to a job in fast food, or no job at all? Consider the following:

- Last year at OSU 3426 Employers posted 13,131 jobs for graduates. Of those 13,000 jobs, over a third (4466) were for all majors.
- According to the 2014 numbers, the median starting salary for philosophy BAs is $39,700 and the median mid-career salary is $78,300. By the middle of their careers, philosophy majors have a higher median salary than Accounting, Business Administration, or Marketing majors.
- Philosophy is consistently ranked among the highest-scoring majors on every graduate exam.

In addition to pursuing careers in business, academia, and the law, philosophy majors are also surprisingly well represented in the technology industry. As one recent article states, “[M]any leaders of the tech world — from LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman to Flickr founder Stewart Butterfield — say that studying philosophy was the secret to their success as digital entrepreneurs.”

It’s no accident that those who study philosophy go on to do well in a wide variety of different careers. A philosophical education cultivates key skills that are useful in virtually any profession: the ability to think carefully about big ideas, analyze and critically assess arguments, and write clearly about complex topics.

In sum, there is ample evidence that you can use a philosophy major or minor to become a better, more employable professional.

“You go into the humanities to pursue your intellectual passion, and it just so happens as a byproduct that you emerge as a desired commodity for industry.... Such is the halo of human flourishing.”

— Dr. Damon Horowitz, philosopher and Director of Engineering at Google

A philosophy minor requires only 18 credit hours. A philosophy major easily accommodates 29-32 hours of upper-division coursework in another major. For students considering law careers: OSU and the Department of Philosophy offer a 3+3 option for early law school admissions in Oklahoma. Your first year of law school completes your last thirty hours of your OSU undergraduate degree in philosophy.

Thinking about majoring? Contact Anthony Valentine, Undergraduate Advisor for Philosophy (405) 744-5658 anthony.valentine@okstate.edu

Oklahoma State University Department of Philosophy, © 2014