

Philosophy

Applying the major to life after St. Olaf



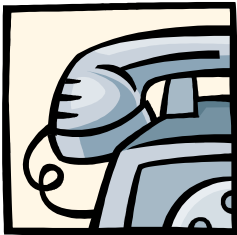
Think Your Way into Your Future...

St. Olaf alumni provide ample evidence that a major in philosophy is excellent preparation for an array of pursuits. Our graduates are following successful, fulfilling career paths in many fields, including the following:

- Communications
 - Design
 - Education
 - Finance
- Graduate Degrees
- Health and Human Services
 - Law
- Management
- Religious Leadership
- Science and Technology
- Service Industries

Below are examples of what some of our graduates are doing now, organized alphabetically according to the above categories. This information was gathered from alumni in an informal survey conducted by the Philosophy Department. Remarks provided by the alumni point to the value of philosophy to different kinds of employers and to life in general.

In most cases the road leading to these careers had twists and turns along the way, but a common thread emerged in many of the stories: that study in philosophy provided the skills to navigate the road and discover much treasure along the way.



COMMUNICATIONS

Philosophy helps you develop clear, concise, and effective communication skills.

Corporate PR and Communications Coordinator
Panasonic Toyota Racing

Accounting, Design, Marketing and Public Relations

20 Below Studio (*Architecture and design firm*)

“I have found my education in philosophy extremely useful; philosophy guides the way you think, as well as how you approach situations and problems ... it improves the expression and clarity of thought...”

IS Strategy, Customer Segments

Best Buy

Freelance Writer

Director of Communications and Evaluation

College of Continuing Education; University of Minnesota

“Philosophy majors are well suited for this position as they know what motivates people, how to persuade people, and what ethical boundaries should exist.”



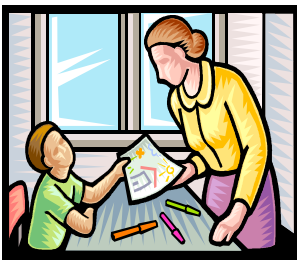
DESIGN

Philosophy helps you see how pieces come together to make a whole.

Architect

James Dayton Design, Ltd.

“My philosophy major finds its way into all aspects of my life (academically, professionally, personally) and I consider it one of the most important investments of my time at St. Olaf.”



EDUCATION

Philosophy helps you understand the thought process.

High School English Teacher

White River Junction, VT

Instructor, English as a Second Language

Taiwan and Hong Kong

Professor
University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

Supervisor of Federal and State Programs for At-Risk Students
Minnesota Department of Education

Assistant Dean
University of Maryland School of Law



FINANCE

Philosophy helps you develop creativity and understand abstract concepts.

Principal
Investment Firm

“In my experience the investment world is a lot less about numbers than you think and a lot more about abstract concepts and creativity. Philosophy students can be a natural fit for a career emphasizing these job skills.”

Principal
Split Rock Partners Investment Firm

“I have found that the education and perspective I gained as a philosophy major (combined with my economics major) have been fantastic assets in formulating my thought processes and communicating them coherently (whether in written or verbal form) when evaluating potential investment opportunities.”

Owner
Linwood Capital, an Energy Price Risk Management and Consulting Firm

Reflecting on entering the job market after college, this alumnus wrote, “Philosophy is the weight room for the mind ... I could speak, write, listen, read, think, and learn better and faster than the other job candidates.”

Owner, Financial Consulting Company

“While [philosophy] may not seem like a ‘real’ major, I find that a solid grounding in ethics, logic, and understanding underlying assumptions has been very valuable throughout a career that has encompassed both business and academia.”



GRADUATE DEGREES

Philosophy helps you learn to learn.

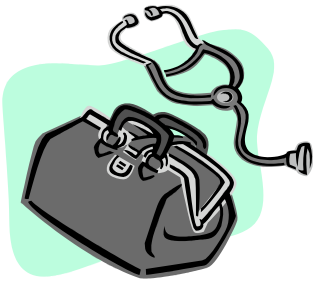
Student of International Affairs

The George Washington University

“The most challenging aspect of the curriculum is the international political theory, and I feel much better prepared than many of my classmates who focused on political science (or other fields) as undergraduates. For students interested in international affairs, the *ideal* study plan would include a major in philosophy supplemented by a semester abroad, economics, and a foreign language.”

Graduate Student in Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Georgetown University



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Philosophy helps you value others.

Lead Developer

Health Care Systems Department, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Statistical Research Associate

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Clinical Analyst

Fairview Health Services

Graduate, completing medical internship

University of Nebraska College of Medicine

“Philosophy has served me well in medicine ... we deal with people in profound moments in their lives -- from happiness to fear to death -- on a regular basis. Philosophy provided me with a lot of tools for dealing with and relating to people in those very human moments.”

Pediatrician

In Private Practice in Southern California

“I am challenged daily with situations where the application of logic and ethics are put to use, and I feel that my ‘liberal arts’ education has made me a better physician.”

Psychiatrist

“I did my pre-med requirements after St. Olaf, spent a year in Asia teaching English and studying Chinese and then went to the University of Minnesota medical school (where I am now on the admissions committee).”

Social Work Planning Aide

Ramsey County

“The study of philosophy has helped me to think systematically and to write logically and concisely. This ability is valuable ... when I’m developing proposals for new programs.”

Medical School Student

“Much of the work medicine deals with is an assessment of a patient’s situation and what to do about it, and thus much discussion and many arguments are put forth in day to day work. An understanding of ideas, arguments, logic, etc., is most useful.”

Private Practice OB/GYN

McFarland Clinic

Paramedic, Rescue Diver, Army National Guard

Kansas City



LAW

Philosophy helps you recognize whether or not an argument is logically sound.

Graduate

Yale Law School

*Clerk for the Honorable James B. Loken, Chief Judge,
Eight Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals*

“Law school might be a sensible choice for some students who are interested in political philosophy or the philosophy of law, but would prefer shifting their focus toward the places where these ideas are applied rather than continuing to deepen their understanding of theory.”

Law Student

American University Law School

“I think my philosophy major contributed significantly to my success in law school. I’m easily able to think on my feet, argue in the classroom and think about both sides of an argument. I think philosophy is perfect for those also interested in law school.”

Attorney

Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago

Associate Attorney

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld Law Firm, Dallas Office

Mediator and Arbitrator

Wilson McShane Corporation

Attorney/Partner; Specializing in Supreme Court Issues

Winston & Strawn



MANAGEMENT

Philosophy can enhance your
general problem solving abilities.

President & CEO

Perfection Learning

Manager of Special Projects

The Appraisal Institute

“To effectively analyze and communicate ... it is crucial that one be able to understand the nuances of words, follow the flow of logic, discover inconsistencies and problems, and identify opportunities and areas for further exploration. Philosophy taught me to do this kind of critical analysis.”

Lead Planning Analyst

Target Stores Finance

“Advanced logic and critical thinking skills were key in ... success. My philosophy major helped me develop all the necessary skills for this role.”

Manager

McLaine and Mass

“I have enjoyed a wonderful career path since graduating from St. Olaf. I have always told folks that, while at St. Olaf, I learned how to solve problems and make good decisions. I believe my philosophy major is an important aspect of being able to say this.”

Project Manager

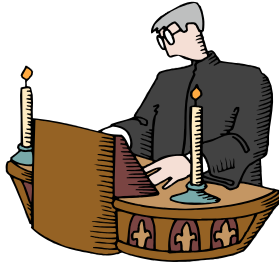
Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield

“My stance on education and any major you decide on is to study what you are interested in and are passionate about ... [H]ow can you be “unsuccessful” if you take on something you really care about and excel at? So my advice is don’t worry so much about the vocation or job philosophy or any major will provide you with, rather explore and confirm what way of thinking, skills, and understanding you want to acquire.”

Chief Operating Officer

Walker Art Center

“I have found my background in philosophy to be profoundly helpful for the kinds of analytic and conceptual thinking required for my career.”



RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

Philosophy helps you interpret text and apply it to situations.

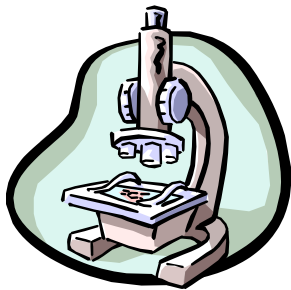
Lead Pastor

Vinje Lutheran Church

“Preaching the Gospel to a post modern world is often shaped by questions of epistemology. How do we know what we know of God, the Gospel, and the scriptures?”

Youth Minister

“Truly, a degree that encourages reflection and critical thinking and refines articulation.”



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Philosophy helps you analyze and synthesize large bodies of information.

Technical Editing

During an interview for his current job the interview panel told this man that they were ecstatic that he was a philosophy major because they “always do the best at this type of work.”

Sr. Business Analyst

River Source Investments

“Logical thinking and planning skills are not too far removed from programming skills. Also, writing skills learned through philosophy aide with precision and clarity of thought, which are useful in interpreting technical documents and programming language.”

Systems Analyst

Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology, Iowa State University

Technical Consultant

West Publishing

“The study of philosophy, I feel, teaches one to be a thinker, and it polishes this important skill to a level seldom found in other disciplines.”

Software Tester

“In software circles numerous definitions of the word ‘quality’ have been proposed over the years. Is it conformance to requirements? Lack of defects? Customer satisfaction? I don’t have the ultimate answer, but my philosophy background helps me sort out the various points of view.”



SERVICE INDUSTRIES

Philosophy helps you incorporate your own values into programs for action.

Grocery Buyer

Whole Foods Market

“Philosophy majors should be good at finding education in everyday life, and applying themselves to finding personal solutions.”