What Can I Do With A Major In...

Philosophy?

Compiled by the staff at the SUNY Oneonta Career Development Center

Introduction

Philosophy is a field of study that deals with the basic aspects of human nature and experience. Philosophy majors seek to understand their values and beliefs, interactions between individuals and society, search for a personal direction or purpose in life, and develop a basis for ethical decisions. Students with a philosophy major may pursue jobs in teaching, law, the ministry, interdisciplinary programs, or jobs involving a general background of humanistic education. Philosophy is a major that lets students develop a strong sense of character and the personal skills needed to have a successful career.

Functional Skill Set for Philosophy Majors:

Problem solving
Communicating in logical manner
Debating skills
Theory development
Open-mindedness
Objectivity
Oratory skills
Deductive reasoning
Interest in pursuing, exploring and explaining intangible ideas
Self-discipline
Curiosity
Close, extensive reading
Work independently
Examining ideas from more than one point of view
Understanding and summarizing complex information
Using library, internet, and resources to gather information and answer questions.
Open to differing points of view when interacting with others.
Related Career Titles for Philosophy Majors:

- Administrative Assistant
- Announcer
- Arts Consultant
- Assistant Buyer
- Associate Pastor
- Author
- Business Administrator
- Campus Minister
- Campus Religious Coordinator
- Chaplain
- Church Building Engineer
- Church Camp Director
- Church Secretary
- Claims Adjuster
- Clergy
- College/University Professor
- Columnist
- Consultant
- Counselor
- Credit Analyst
- Critic
- Customer Service Representative
- Denominational Executive
- Diplomat
- Director of Religious Education
- Editor/Writer
- Editorial Assistant
- Employment Interviewer
- Financial Aid Counselor
- Financial Consultant
- Foreign Service Officer
- Fund-raiser
- Grant Coordinator
- Guidance Counselor
- Hospital administrator
- Insurance Underwriter
- Journalist
- Lawyer
- Librarian
- Loan Officer/Counselor
- Lobbyist
- Museum Technician
- Paralegal Assistant
- Professor
- Public Policy Manager
- Public Relations Representative
- Public Service Official
- Publisher
- Rabbi
- Religious Bookstore Worker
- Religious Education Teacher
- Religious Educational Administrator
- Religious Researcher
- Research Analyst
- Sales Representative
- Salvation Army/Worker
- Seminary Administrator
- Social Worker
- Systems Analyst
- Technical Writer
- Underwriter
- YMCA/YWCA Worker

Some Organizations that Typically Employ Philosophy Majors:

- Adult education programs
- Advertising agencies/departments
- Bookstores
- Business & Industry
- Colleges & Universities
- Commission on Civil Rights
- Consulting firms
- Consulting Services
Consumer Product Safety Commission  Mental health organizations
Department of Energy  Museums/Libraries
District, jurisdictional, national, and National and State Endowments for
world divisions of denominations the Humanities
Electronic media organizations  Newspapers/magazines
Environmental agencies  Non-profit agencies
Federal Communications Commission  Organizations serving the arts
Federal Municipal Archives  Political parties
Federal, State and Local Government  Professional/Trade Associations
Foreign Service  Public interest research groups
Health Science Funding Agencies  Publishing companies
Healthcare settings  Real estate companies
Hospitals  Religious Organizations
Insurance corporations  Research organizations
Local churches/synagogues  Social Service Organizations
Marketing research  Vocational-technical educational
departments/organizations  programs
Medical and professional schools

Start a Strategic Plan:

Develop aptitudes for analytical thinking, logic and statistics in order to apply philosophy
to a broad range of professions such as law, government, finance, management
consulting, and related areas.
Join related student or professional organizations.
Seek related summer or part-time work experience or internships in area(s) of interest.
Take computer courses to increase employment opportunities.
Develop one or more concentrations, such as mathematics, medical or business ethics,
science, religion, etc.
Sciences, College Student Personnel, etc.
Develop excellent verbal and written communication skills.
Gain related work experience.
Acquire master’s degree in Library and Information Sciences.
Take counseling courses.
Obtain master’s degree in social work or counseling for therapy positions.
Learn federal, state, and local job application process.
Serve on college newspaper staff.
Develop excellent writing and desktop publishing skills.
Take courses, minor or double major in journalism, advertising, or English.
Become a student member of a related professional group.
Minor in business.
Get related experience through internships or part-time jobs.
Obtain leadership role(s) in campus organization(s).
Develop computer skills in word processing, databases and spreadsheet programs.
Obtain appropriate seminary training for clergy.
Become certified through a denomination for specialized staff positions. 
Gain related experience through local churches or religious organizations. 
Participate in related professional organizations. 
Join debate groups. 
Develop excellent research skills. 
Hone verbal and written communication skills. 
Gain related experience through volunteer or paid positions. 
Obtain law degree. 
Obtain Ph.D. for most teaching and research positions. 
Combine with a master’s degree in specialized area, e.g., Library and Information

**Professional Organizations and Associations for Philosophy Majors:**

- American Association of Political Consultants [www.theaapc.org](http://www.theaapc.org)
- American Political Science Association [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)
- Idealist [www.ideal.org/](http://www.ideal.org/)

Revised 12-7-10
# PHILOSOPHY
What can I do with this major?

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<th>AREAS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL/COMMUNITY SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>Nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Develop excellent verbal and written communication skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Social service organizations</td>
<td>Gain related work experience.</td>
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<td>Fund Raising</td>
<td>Public interest research groups</td>
<td>Volunteer in relevant organizations.</td>
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<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>Obtain master’s degree in social work or counseling as well as applicable state licensure for therapy positions.</td>
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<td>Volunteer Coordination</td>
<td>Mental health agencies</td>
<td>Become familiar with grant writing techniques.</td>
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<td>Grant Writing</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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| **RELIGION/MINISTRY** | Local churches or synagogues | Obtain appropriate seminary training for clergy positions. |
| Clergy | District, regional, national, and world denominational headquarters | Become certified through a denomination for specialized staff positions. |
| Administration | Religiously affiliated schools, colleges, and universities | Gain related experience through volunteering with local churches or religious organizations. |
| Missions | Local, national, and international mission fields | Develop applicable foreign language skills for international mission work. |
| | Religious organizations | Seek leadership positions in campus religious organizations. |
| | | Complete an internship or summer position with a religious camp or missionary organization. |

<p>| <strong>EDUCATION</strong> | Colleges and universities | Obtain a doctorate degree for opportunities in teaching and/or research. |
| Teaching | Adult education programs | Develop one or more concentrations, such as mathematics, medical or business ethics, science, or religion. |
| Research | Vocational-technical educational programs | Gain related experience through internships, volunteering, or part-time employment. |
| Administration | Professional or graduate schools including medical | Earn a master’s degree in a specialized area (e.g., Library and Information Sciences, College Student Personnel, or Counseling). |
| Student Affairs | | Seek campus leadership positions such as peer mentor or resident assistant. |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOVERNMENT</strong></td>
<td>Federal, state, and local government</td>
<td>Become familiar with federal, state, and local job application processes.</td>
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<td>Commission on Civil Rights</td>
<td>Supplement curriculum with courses in political science, public administration, or business.</td>
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<td>Consumer Product Safety Commission</td>
<td>Complete an internship in government or related area.</td>
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<td>Federal Communications Commission</td>
<td>Become involved in student government.</td>
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<td>Foreign Service</td>
<td>Participate in cultural groups and organizations.</td>
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<td>Federal Municipal Archives</td>
<td>Write for campus publications focused on national and international affairs.</td>
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<td>National and State Endowments for the Humanities</td>
<td>Develop skills in computers, statistics, and data analysis.</td>
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<td>Legislative, executive, or judicial officials</td>
<td>Acquire foreign language competency and travel experience for international positions.</td>
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<td>Political action committees</td>
<td>Earn a graduate degree in political science or public administration for advancement.</td>
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<td>Special interest groups</td>
<td>Volunteer with the staff of a government official.</td>
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<td>Political parties</td>
<td>Participate in local or national campaigns.</td>
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<td>Campaigns (national, state, or local)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ETHICS</strong></td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Obtain Ph.D. for most positions.</td>
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<td>Medical and professional schools</td>
<td>Participate in related professional organizations.</td>
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<td>Colleges and universities</td>
<td>Join debate groups.</td>
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<td>Consulting services</td>
<td>Develop excellent research skills.</td>
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<td>Research organizations</td>
<td>Hone verbal and written communication skills.</td>
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<td>Health science funding agencies</td>
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<td>Environmental agencies</td>
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<td><strong>LAW</strong></td>
<td>Law firms</td>
<td>Obtain law degree.</td>
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<td>Corporations</td>
<td>Develop excellent research and writing skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Federal, state, and local government</td>
<td>Participate in debate or mock trial.</td>
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<td>Private practice</td>
<td>Maintain a high grade point average.</td>
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<td>Special interest groups</td>
<td>Gain experience through part-time employment or internships in legal settings.</td>
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<td>Universities</td>
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### AREAS

**WRITING**  
- Editing  
- Technical Writing  
- Journalism  
- Advertising  
- Public Relations

**BUSINESS**  
- Management  
- Sales  
- Human Resources  
- Market Research  
- Finance  
- Insurance

### EMPLOYERS

**WRITING**  
- Publishing companies  
- Magazine and newspaper companies  
- Professional and trade associations  
- Advertising agencies and departments  
- Electronic media organizations

**BUSINESS**  
- Business firms  
- Insurance companies  
- Banks  
- Retail stores  
- Marketing research departments or organizations  
- Real estate companies

### STRATEGIES

**WRITING**  
- Serve on college newspaper staff.  
- Develop excellent writing and desktop publishing skills.  
- Take courses in journalism, advertising, public relations, or English.  
- Gain related experience.  
- Become a student member of a related professional group.

**BUSINESS**  
- Minor in business.  
- Gain related experience through internships or part-time jobs.  
- Obtain leadership role(s) in campus organization(s).  
- Develop computer skills in word processing, database management, and spreadsheet programs.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Philosophy students develop many transferable skills that can be utilized in a variety of careers and jobs, demonstrating the flexibility and capacity for growth that employers find valuable. These skills include analytical, organizational, research, as well as oral and written communication skills.
- Other related skills that are attractive to employers are idea generation, problem formulation and problem solving, diverse data integration, adaptation to change, the ability to elicit hidden assumptions, persuasion, and summarization of complicated material.
- An undergraduate degree qualifies one for entry-level positions in business, nonprofit organizations, and government.
- Graduate and/or professional studies usually lead to careers in law, medicine, ministry, finance, psychology, counseling, diplomacy, ethics, and related areas.
- Ph.D. is required for college/university teaching and research.
- Concentrations with other areas can include mathematics, religion, science, history, women's studies, Eastern philosophy, and medical or business ethics.
- Develop aptitudes for analytical thinking, logic, and statistics in order to apply philosophy to a broad range of professions such as law, government, finance, management, consulting, and related areas.
- Join related student or professional organizations.
- Seek related summer or part-time work experience or internships in area(s) of interest.
- Take computer courses to increase employment opportunities.