

A sample of recent press coverage of philosophy and of those who have studied philosophy

“To Be a Good Doctor, Study the Humanities”
Pacific Standard, May 23, 2018
Angira Patel

As a philosophy major in college before medical school, I believe I learned what it means to be a good doctor equally from my humanities classes as from my science classes. Studying the humanities helps students develop critical-thinking skills, understand the viewpoints of others and different cultures, foster a just conscience, build a capacity for empathy, and become wise about emotions such as grief and loss. These are all characteristics that define a good doctor.

A 2009 study found that, once they reach medical school, students who majored in humanities as college students perform just as well as, if not better than, their peers with science backgrounds. Furthermore, a 2010 study assessed the medical school performance of humanities and social science majors who omitted traditional science classes in college, versus those who had a traditional pre-medical preparation. Both groups of students performed at an equivalent level in medical school...A more recent study from [2018] shows that medical students who are exposed to the humanities demonstrate higher levels of positive skills and qualities such as empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, wisdom, emotional appraisal, self-efficacy, and spatial reasoning—all important in being a competent, good doctor. The same study found that humanities exposure is inversely correlated with negative qualities that can be detrimental to physician well-being, such as intolerance to ambiguity, physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness.

Interested in medicine? Consider taking PHIL 136 (Medicine & Morality).

“How Your Philosophy Degree Can Lead to a Career in Data Science”
Silicon Republic, January 28, 2019
Eva Short

Even though philosophy may seem to many an unusual discipline from which to move into data science, John Hearty [data science manager at NuData Security] argues that philosophy skills are useful to data science. “Data science is a field with a lot of conditional decision-making. ... Creating something useful in these complex and conditional circumstances is usually about working out what matters, and which tools and data are going to provide the greatest upside during the time available.

“Philosophy tends to equip you well for reasoning through ambiguous and interdependent problem spaces, by equipping you to objectively identify what really matters, separate concerns and produce a practical, success-maximizing plan...Philosophy also arms one well for the hypothesis-driven, logical practice of data science.”

PHIL 111 (Introduction to Logic) provides a solid foundation in reasoning.

“What Can You Do With a Philosophy Degree?”
Times Higher Education, October 3, 2019

Philosophy graduates have highly transferable skills that are valuable to employers. The skills learned [in a philosophy program], including clear and analytical thinking, persuasive writing and speaking, innovative questioning and effective reasoning, give a solid foundation for entering the workforce and are beneficial in careers that require problem-solving and assessing information from various angles.

Graduates secure work in a variety of disciplines after their degree, such as teaching, PR or politics. Communications, publishing, HR and advertising can be attractive options for philosophy graduates, as well as law, banking, the civil service, business and science. Others go on to further study, research, academia and/or lecturing in philosophy or a related field.

Those who specialize in ethics, for example, have opportunities to apply their knowledge to medical ethics committees, while those who studied political philosophy may veer towards journalism.

All PHIL courses emphasize writing, but PHIL 219 (Social & Political Philosophy) emphasizes application to current political issues.

“Want to Work on A.I.? Study Philosophy or Communications, Execs Say”
Fortune, October 3, 2018
Lucinda Shen

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—companies everywhere appear to be fighting for workers in the STEM fields to get a head start in building artificial intelligence capability. But as companies continue to push into uncharted, albeit promising, territories around A.I., they’re also looking for hires in so-called softer fields to help A.I. mature ethically and free of the unwanted biases that come with their human makers.

In other words, it’s not just about STEM skills. Fortune 500 and Global 500 executives said they also seek psychologists, philosophers, and interpreters. “We decided to build a whole division around responsible A.I.,” said Ana Paula Assis, president of IBM’s Latin America unit. “The types of skills we’re bringing in are psychologists, philosophers, that type of profile, that can solve really complex philosophical problems and think about what’s the best way to address that.”

Consider autonomous cars, for example. What if a self-driving vehicle is confronted with a choice between striking a pedestrian and avoiding her, only to crash and harm the passenger? Workers with skills in the humanities, Assis said, may be better equipped to answer those tough ethical questions.

PHIL 317 (Philosophy of Mind) explores the kinds of frameworks used for developing A.I.