

# Why major in philosophy?



## Q: What can I do with a philosophy major?

- A: Anything!
- Famous philosophy majors
  - Stephen Breyer, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; Rudi Giuliani, former Mayor of New York City; Thomas Jefferson, U. S. President; Robert McNamara, former Secretary of Defense; David Souter, Supreme Court Justice; Carl Icahn (finance one of Forbes top 10 richest people); Bruce Lee; William Bennet; Alex Trebeck; George Soros; Steve Martin
- Philosophy is one of the fastest growing majors in the College of A&S

# Philosophical skills are in demand



- Critical thinking
- Analyzing complex issues
- Communication
- Reading comprehension
- Clear and precise writing

# Philosophy majors score very well on graduate and professional admissions exams

- LSAT (Law School Admissions Test)  
Philosophy is tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> place
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam) Philosophy is 1<sup>st</sup> on Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing portions
- GMAT (for business school)  
Philosophy is 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Average GRE Scores by Intended Graduate Major, 7/1/01-6/30/04** [\[1\]](#)

<u>VERBAL REASONING</u>		<u>QUANTITATIVE REASONING</u>		<u>ANALYTICAL WRITING</u>	
<b>1. <u>PHILOSOPHY</u></b>	589	<b>1. Physics / Astronomy</b>	738	<b>1. <u>PHILOSOPHY</u></b>	5.1
2. English Lang. & Lit.	559	2. Mathematics	733	2. English Lang. & Lit.	4.9
3. Humanities & Arts – other	558	3. Engineering – Materials	729	3. Arts & Humanities – other	4.8
4. History	543	4. Engineering – Electrical	728	4. History	4.8
5. Arts – History, Theory	538	5. Engineering – Chemical	727	5. Political Science	4.8
6. Religion	538	6. Engineering – Mechanical	723	6. Religion	4.8
7. Physics / Astronomy	534	7. Engineering – other	714	7. Anthropology/Archaeology	4.7
8. Library/Archival Sciences	533	8. Engineering – Industrial	710	8. Arts – History, Theory	4.7
9. Anthropology/Archaeology	532	9. Business – Bank. & Fin.	709	9. Education – Higher	4.6
10. Foreign Lang. & Lit.	529	10. Economics	706	10. Foreign Lang. & Lit.	4.6
11. Political Science	522	11. Computer & Info. Sciences	704	11. Sociology	4.6
12. Economics	504	12. Engineering – Civil	702	12. Communications	4.5
13. Mathematics	502	13. Chemistry	682	13. Economics	4.5
14. Earth/Atmos./Marine Scs.	495	14. Earth/Atmos./Marine Scs.	637	14. Education – Secondary	4.5
15. Engineering – Materials	494	<b>15. <u>PHILOSOPHY</u></b>	<b>636</b>	15. Library/Archival Sciences	4.5
16. Biological Sciences	491	16. Biological Sciences	632	16. Physics / Astronomy	4.5
17. Engineering – other	490	17. Architecture	614	17. Psychology	4.5
18. Arts – Performance/Studio	489	18. Business – other	609	18. Biological Sciences	4.4
19. Chemistry	487	19. Natural Sciences – other	603	19. Chemistry	4.4
20. Sociology	487	20. Agriculture	596	20. Earth/Atmos./Marine Scs.	4.4
21. Education – Secondary	486	21. Business – Accounting	595	21. Education – Curr. & Instr.	4.4
22. Engineering – Chemical	485	22. Humanities & Arts – other	594	22. Education – Eval. & Res.	4.4
23. Natural Sciences – other	482	23. Political Science	589	23. Engineering – other	4.4



# LSAT Scores

TABLE 2. Average 2007-2008 LSAT Scores

Rank	Major field	Average score	No. of students
1	Physics/Math	160.0	577
2	Economics	157.4	3,047
3	Philosophy/Theology	157.4	2,581
4	International Relations	156.5	1,520
5	Engineering	156.2	2,197
6	Government /Service	156.1	578
7	Chemistry	156.1	632
8	History	155.9	4,169
9	Interdisciplinary Studies	155.5	652
10	Foreign Languages	155.3	1,084
11	English	155.2	5,899
12	Biology/Natural Sciences	154.8	2,201
13	Arts	154.2	1,438
14	Computer Science	154.0	682
15	Finance	153.4	2,267
16	Political Science	153.1	15,181
17	Psychology	152.5	4,355
18	Liberal Arts	152.4	3,892
19	Anthropology/Geography	152.2	808
20	Accounting	151.7	1,439
21	Journalism	151.5	3,408
22	Sociology/Social Work	151.2	3,123
23	Marketing	150.8	1,574
24	Business Management	149.7	4,629
25	Education	149.4	484
26	Business Administration	149.1	1,984
27	Health Professions	148.4	703
28	Prelaw	148.3	1,078
29	Criminal Justice	146.0	4,016



# Philosophy and Law School I

- In addition to improving LSAT scores, majoring in philosophy is great preparation for legal education in general
- Development of problem solving skills at a very high level of abstraction
- Development of reading comprehension and interpretive skills
- Critical analysis of complex textual material
- Ability to evaluate sophisticated arguments
- Ability to write and speak clearly, to ask the right questions
- Development of skills in organizing and integrating ideas in a systematic way

# Philosophy and Law School II

- Don't just take our word on it, The Law School Admissions Council (LSAC.org) characterizes the LSAT as:
  - “... designed to measure skills that are considered essential for success in law school: the reading and comprehension of complex texts with accuracy and insight; the organization and management of information and the ability to draw reasonable inferences from it; the ability to think critically; and the analysis and evaluation of the reasoning and arguments of others.”
- This is exactly what Philosophy teaches you!



# The Value of Philosophy

- The study of philosophy is valuable *in itself*
- Philosophy is at the core of a liberal arts education
- Philosophers strive to uncover wisdom in every dimension of human existence
- They study classical and contemporary sources that have played a central role in shaping western thought
- Philosophy teaches the power of reflection: the ability to stand back from what's taken for granted and to scrutinize it
- Cultivation of learning and thinking for their own sakes
- Expansion of one's horizons, personal growth
- Insight into human needs, desires, and potential

# Becoming a Major I

- 30 hours of philosophy – *with a lot of freedom*
- Only 6 required courses:
  - Intro to Philosophy
  - Intro to Logic
  - Intro to Ethics
  - History of Philosophy Parts I and II
  - Seminar
- Also, minor in Philosophy with 15 hours, of ANY PHI courses.
- Contact Danielle Wylie: [d.j.wylie@msstate.edu](mailto:d.j.wylie@msstate.edu)

# Becoming a Major II

- Or, consider becoming a major in Philosophy with a concentration in Religion
- The benefits of the Philosophy major, plus you can get
  - Exposure to the great religions of the world
  - A route to pre-ministry/pre-seminary
  - Cultural understanding (e.g. China, India) that's great for International Relations/Studies/Business
  - Also, minor in religion with 15 hours of any REL courses
  - Contact Albert Bisson: [ABisson@philrel.msstate.edu](mailto:ABisson@philrel.msstate.edu)