

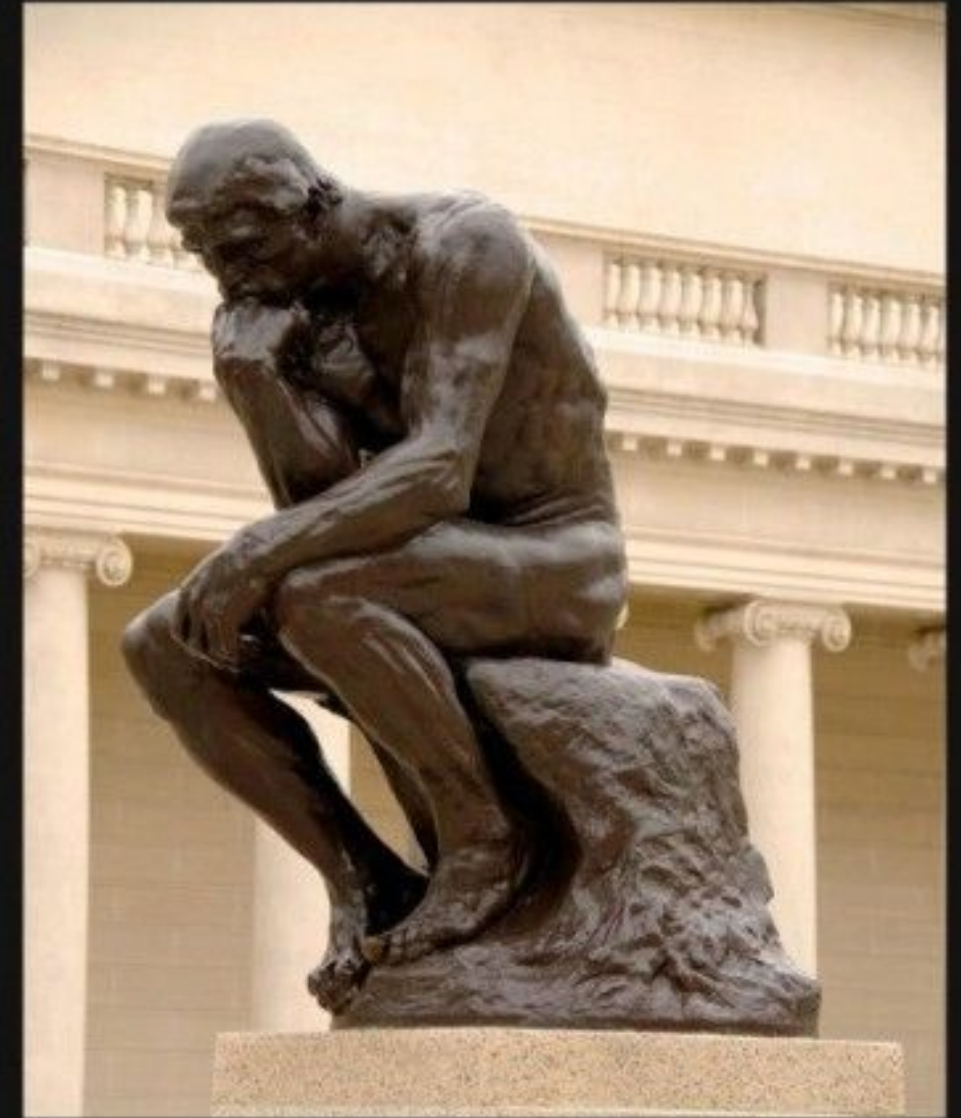
# Why Major in Philosophy?

Advice for USU Undergraduates



UtahStateUniversity

Thinking about a Major?



Major in thinking.

Fall 2025



# Presentation Outline

- 1. Introduction: Thinking about Majoring in Philosophy?**
2. The Instrumental Value of Studying Philosophy
3. The Intrinsic Value of Studying Philosophy
4. Why You Should Major In Philosophy @ USU: Program Strengths & Highlights
5. Getting the Most out of Your Philosophy Major: Specific Advice/Requests for USU Philosophy Majors





Mike Ashfield

April 28, 2014 · 🧑🏻



A Public Service Announcement from the Polis of Athens: Never leave philosophical texts where they can warp young, impressionable minds. Only YOU can prevent the corrupting influence of philosophy on the youth.— with **Amanda Ashfield**.



You, Matthew Sears, Emily Richard and 41 others

12 comments

philosophy news





# Thinking About Majoring in Philosophy?





# Thinking About Majoring in Philosophy?

## You Are Not Alone!





# Thinking About Majoring in Philosophy? We Can Help!

## Philosophy Directory

### Faculty



[Michael Ashfield](#)

Assistant Professor

[mike.ashfield@usu.edu](mailto:mike.ashfield@usu.edu)



[Brittany Gentry](#)

Assistant Professor

[brittany.gentry@usu.edu](mailto:brittany.gentry@usu.edu)



[Charlie Huenemann](#)

Section Coordinator, Full Professor

[charlie.huenemann@usu.edu](mailto:charlie.huenemann@usu.edu)



[Harrison Kleiner](#)

Associate Professor, Associate Vice Provost

+1 435 797 2388

[harrison.kleiner@usu.edu](mailto:harrison.kleiner@usu.edu)



[Michael Otteson](#)

Assistant Professor

[michael.otteson@usu.edu](mailto:michael.otteson@usu.edu)



[Rachel Robison-Greene](#)

Assistant Professor

[rachel.robison@usu.edu](mailto:rachel.robison@usu.edu)



# Thinking About Majoring in Philosophy? We Can Help!

Postdoc



Alex Barrientos

Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

[alexander.barrientos@usu.edu](mailto:alexander.barrientos@usu.edu)



Affiliated Faculty



Francisco Lopez Frias

Kinesiology and Health Science  
Assistant Professor



# Presentation Outline

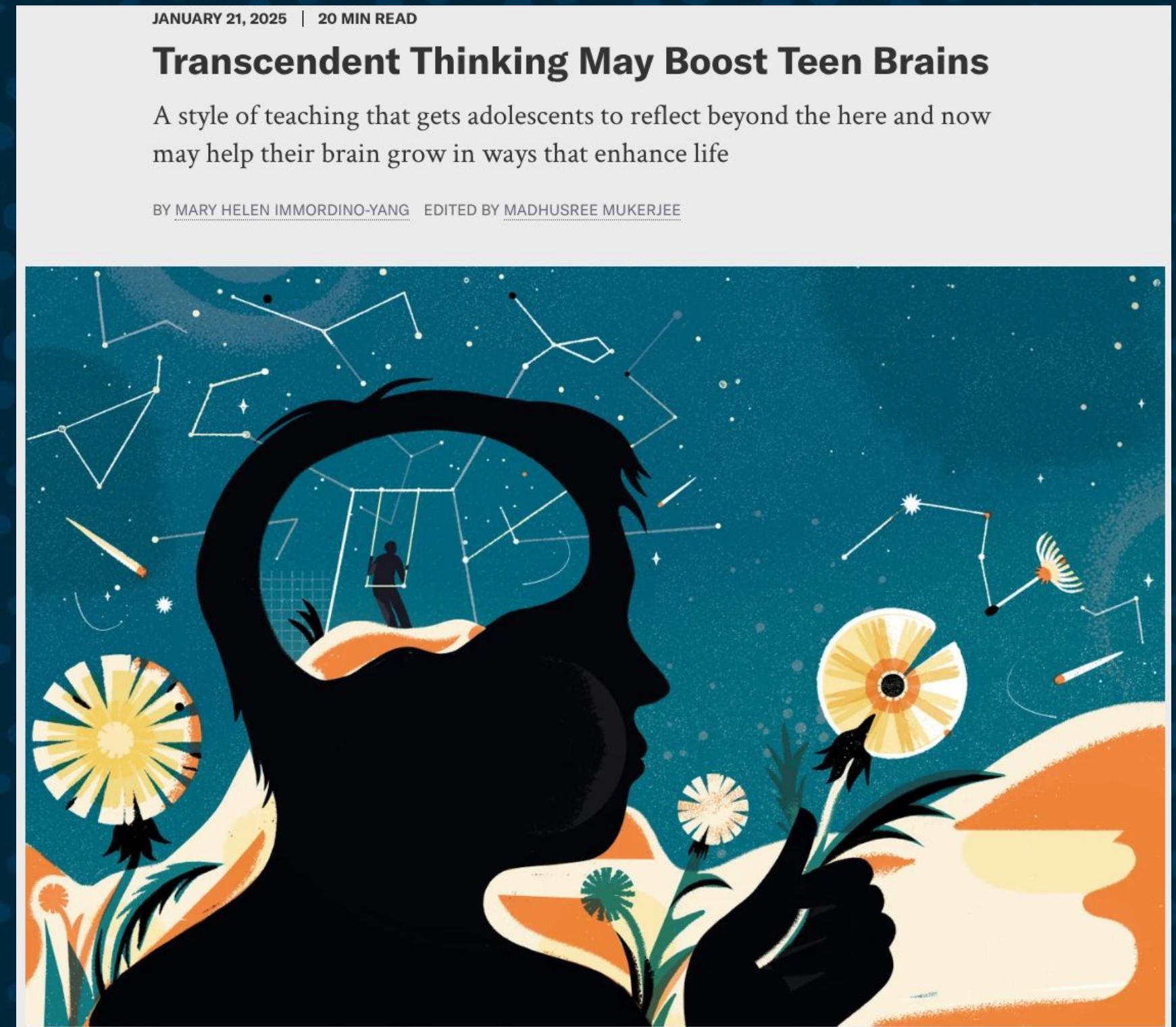
1. Introduction: Thinking about Majoring in Philosophy?
- 2. The Instrumental Value of Studying Philosophy**
3. The Intrinsic Value of Studying Philosophy
4. Why You Should Major In Philosophy @ USU: Program Strengths & Highlights
5. Getting the Most out of Your Philosophy Major: Specific Advice/Requests for USU Philosophy Majors



# Philosophy's Instrumental Value

You're going to spend your entire life experiencing the world from inside your head.

You may as well make it an interesting place to live!





# Philosophy's Impact on Intellectual Traits

## The impact of philosophy education on intellectual traits: An informal report for the Executive Committee of the American Philosophical Association

Michael Prinzing & Michael Vazquez

 Download

### Abstract

Philosophers often claim that studying philosophy helps people to become better thinkers. Thanks to a grant from the American Philosophical Association, we were able to test this claim empirically, using a large sample of students (N = 122,352) graduating from 369 colleges and universities across the United States between 2010 and 2019. We investigated whether philosophy majors show more growth than non-philosophy majors in intellectual traits like open-mindedness and a tendency to think carefully and thoroughly, as well as more personal forms of growth that might be fostered by philosophical study (e.g., self-understanding). Additionally, although this was not our primary question, we sought to better understand what students who major in philosophy are like. Specifically, we examined the demographics of philosophy majors, the other subjects that they tend to study when they double major, and the patterns of adding and dropping of philosophy majors between freshman and senior year.

<https://philarchive.org/rec/PRITIO-26>

<https://philpapers.org/rec/PRISPD>



# Philosophy's Impact on Intellectual Traits

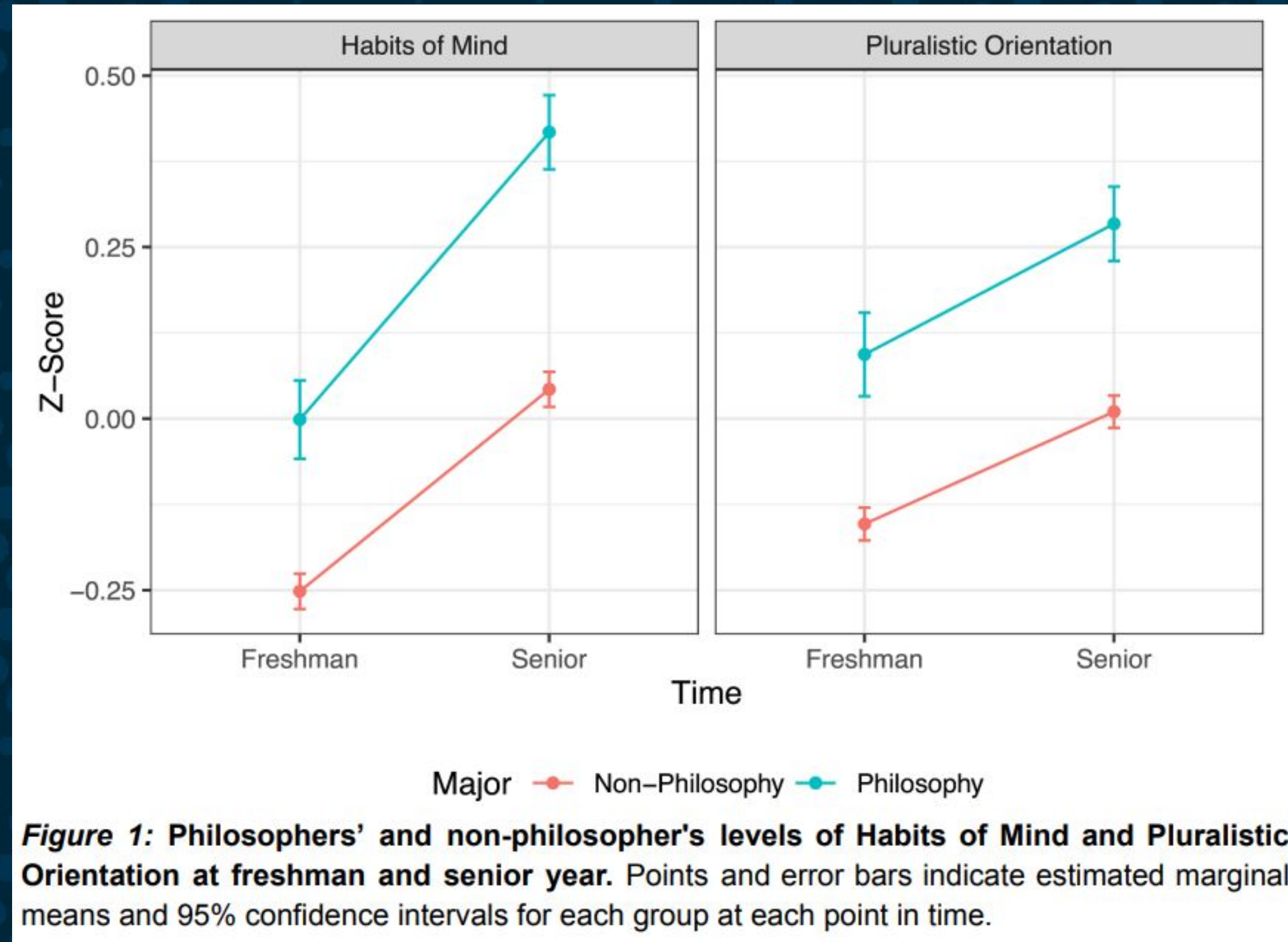
The sample includes  $N = 122,352$  students graduating from 369 colleges and universities across the United States between 2010 and 2019.

A small proportion of these students major in philosophy (1.3%). 413 intended to major in philosophy when they arrived on campus freshman year and 1,623 completed a philosophy major by senior year.

<https://philarchive.org/rec/PRITIO-26>



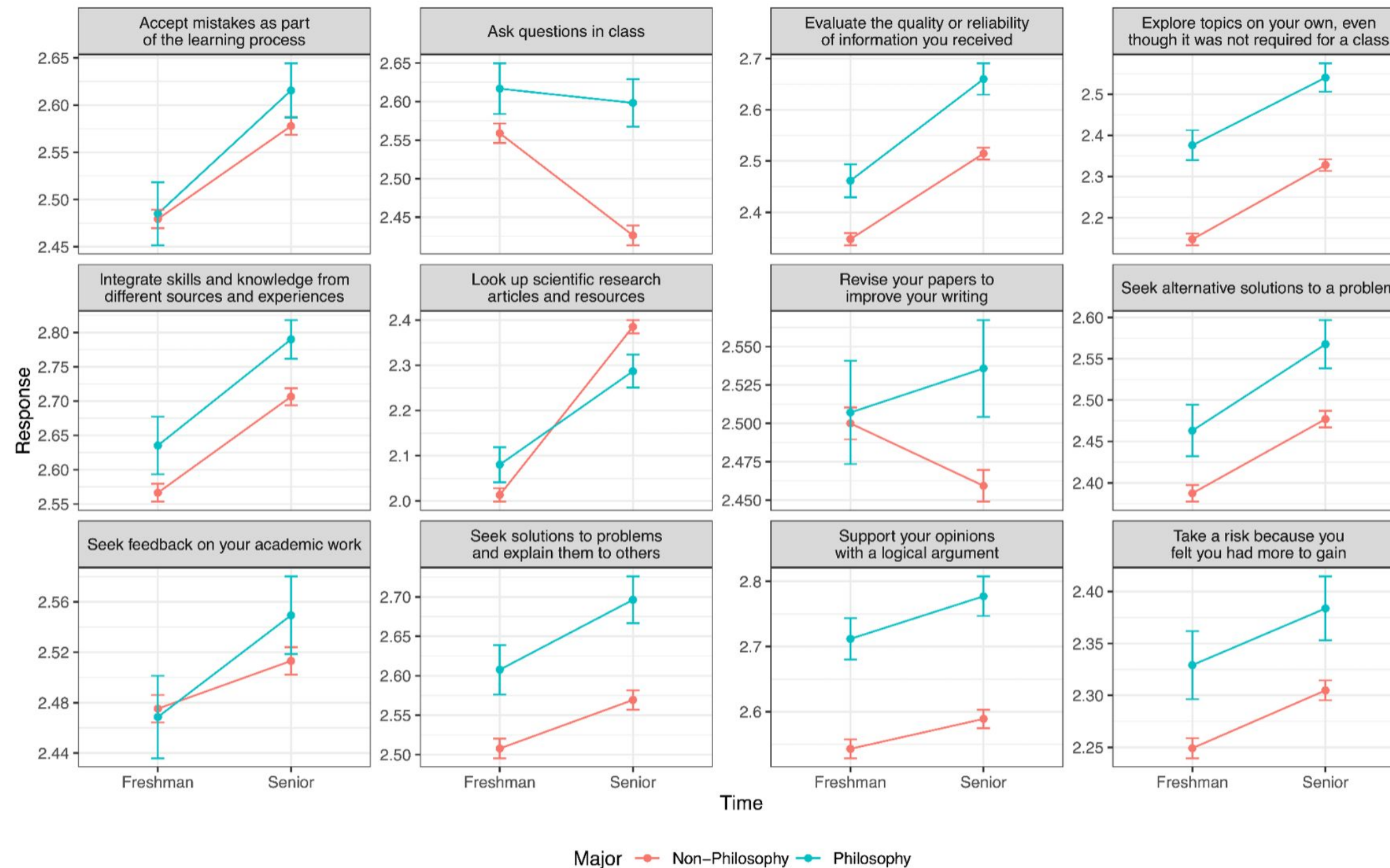
# Philosophy's Impact on Intellectual Traits



<https://philarchive.org/rec/PRITIO-26>



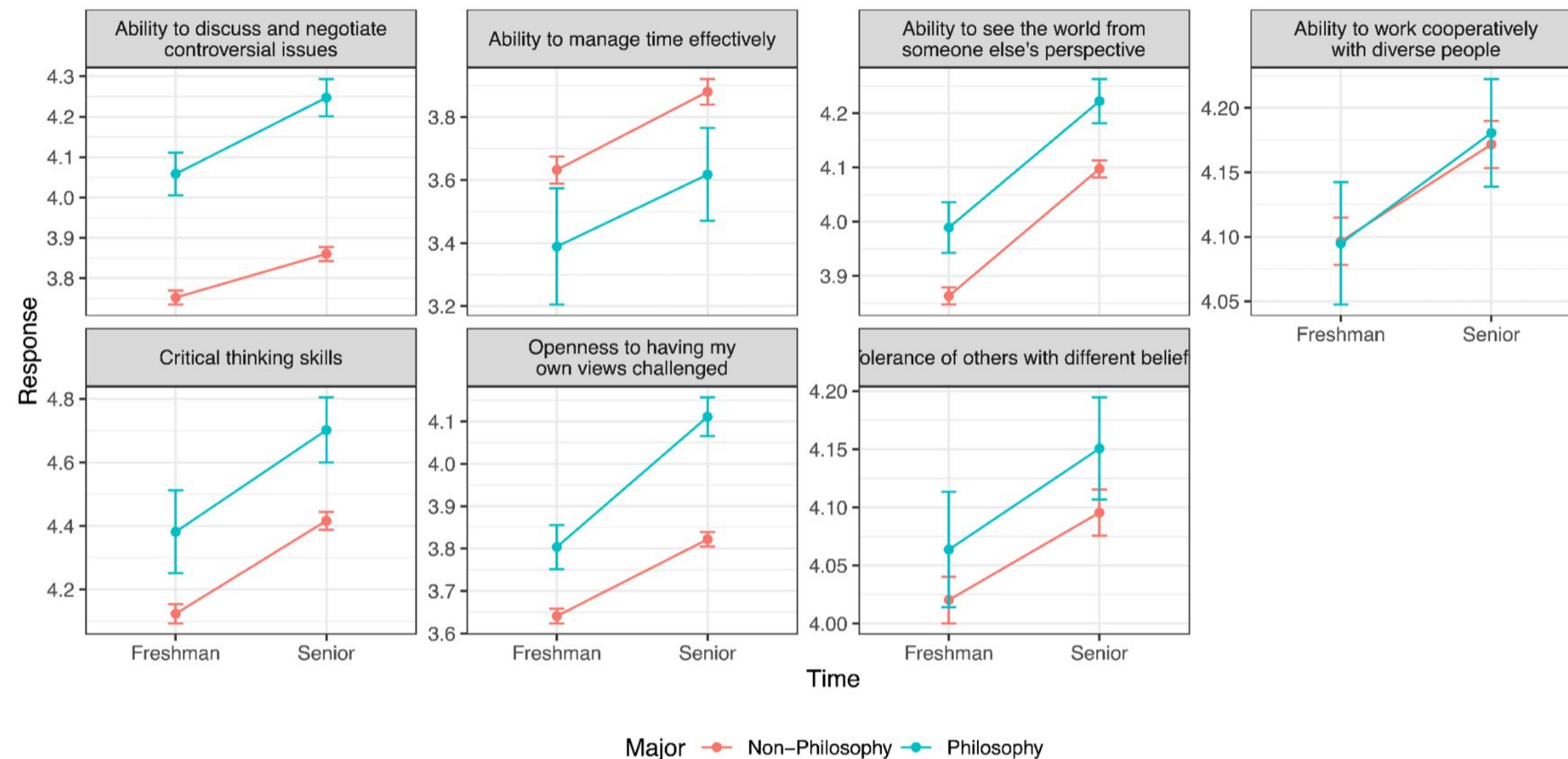
# Philosophy's Impact on Intellectual Traits



**Figure 4: Philosophers' and non-philosophers' levels for each Habits of Mind item at freshman and senior year.** Points and error bars indicate estimated marginal means and 95% confidence intervals for each group at each point in time.



# Philosophy's Impact on Intellectual Traits



**Figure 5: Philosophers' and non-philosopher's levels for each Pluralistic Orientation item at freshman and senior year.** Points and error bars indicate estimated marginal means and 95% confidence intervals for each group at each point in time.



# Check out the Follow-Up Study Too!

## Studying Philosophy Does Make People Better Thinkers

Michael Prinzing & Michael Vazquez

*Journal of the American Philosophical Association*:1-19 (forthcoming) [Copy](#) [BIBTeX](#)



PhilArchive

[More download options](#)

### Abstract

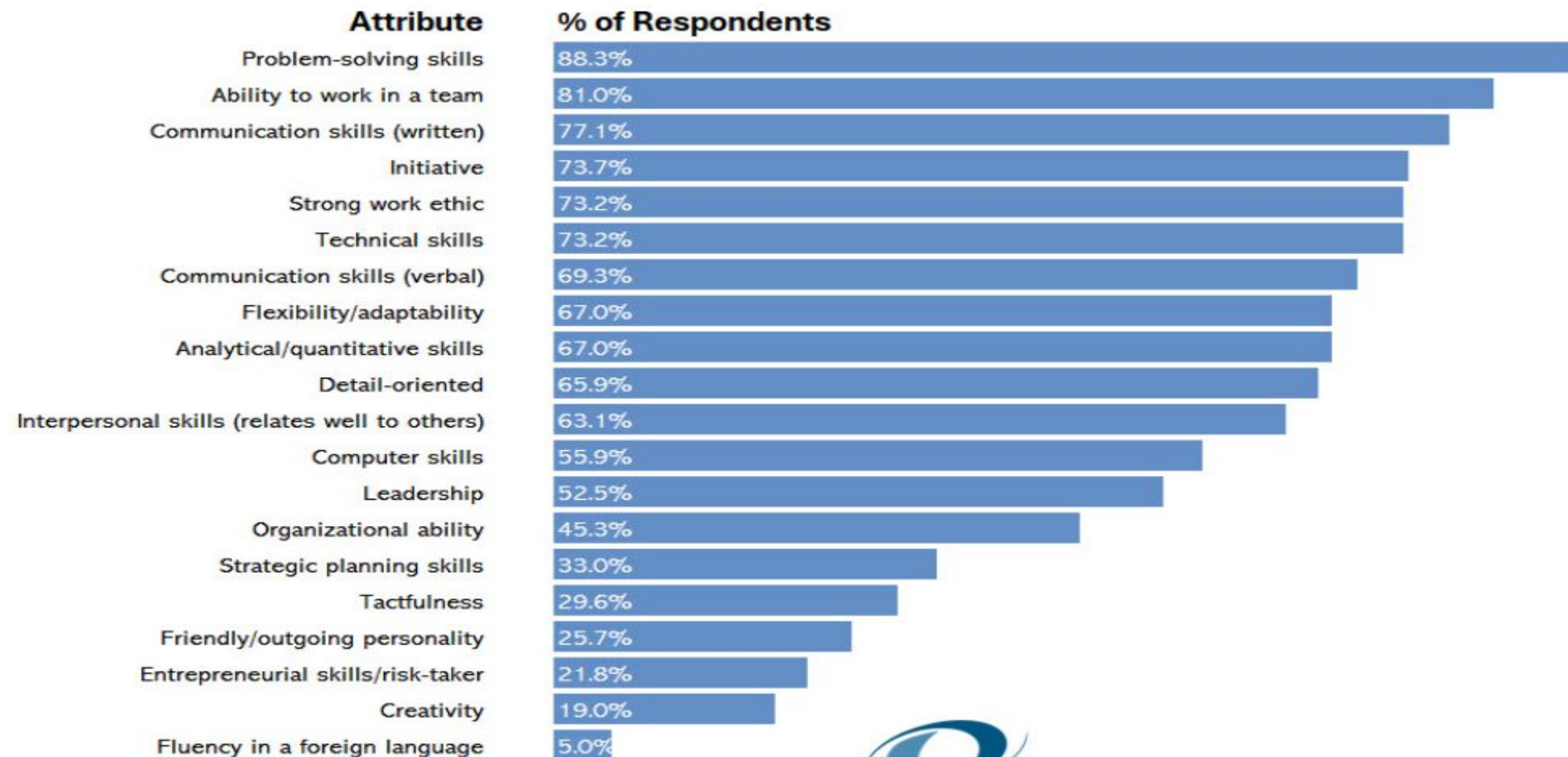
Many philosophers think that doing philosophy cultivates valuable intellectual abilities and dispositions. Indeed, this is a premise in a venerable argument for philosophy's value. Unfortunately, empirical support for this premise has heretofore been lacking. We provide evidence that philosophical study has such effects. Using a large dataset (including records from over half a million undergraduates at hundreds of institutions across the United States), we investigate philosophy students' performance on verbal and logical reasoning tests, as well as measures of valuable intellectual dispositions. Results indicate that students with stronger verbal abilities, and who are more curious, open-minded, and intellectually rigorous, are more likely to study philosophy. Nonetheless, after accounting for such baseline differences, philosophy majors outperform all other majors on tests of verbal and logical reasoning and on a measure of valuable habits of mind. This offers the strongest evidence to date that studying philosophy does indeed make people better thinkers.



# Most Sought After Employable Skills

**Figure 1**

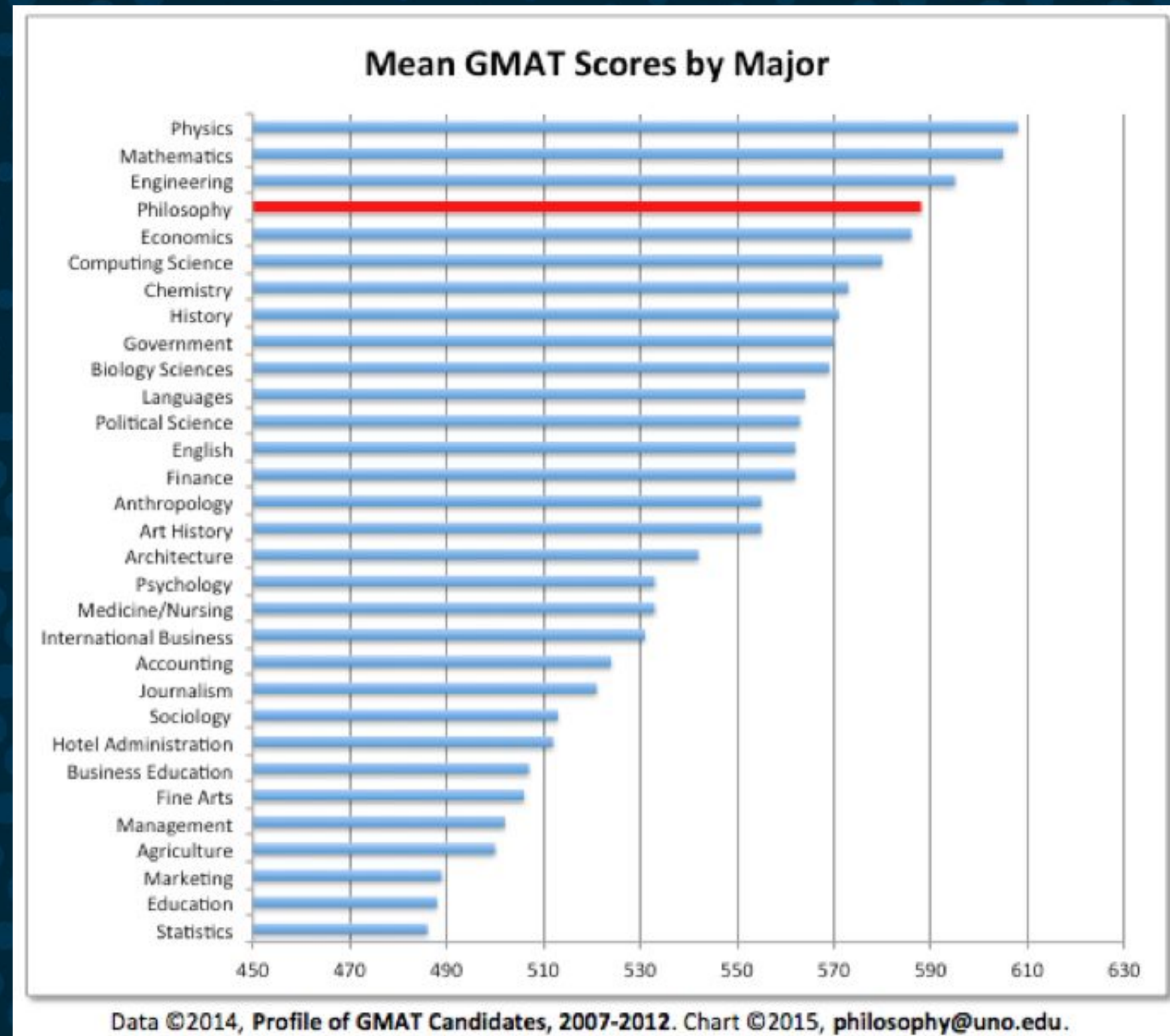
## Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidate's Resume



Source: Job Outlook 2025  
National Association of College and Employers



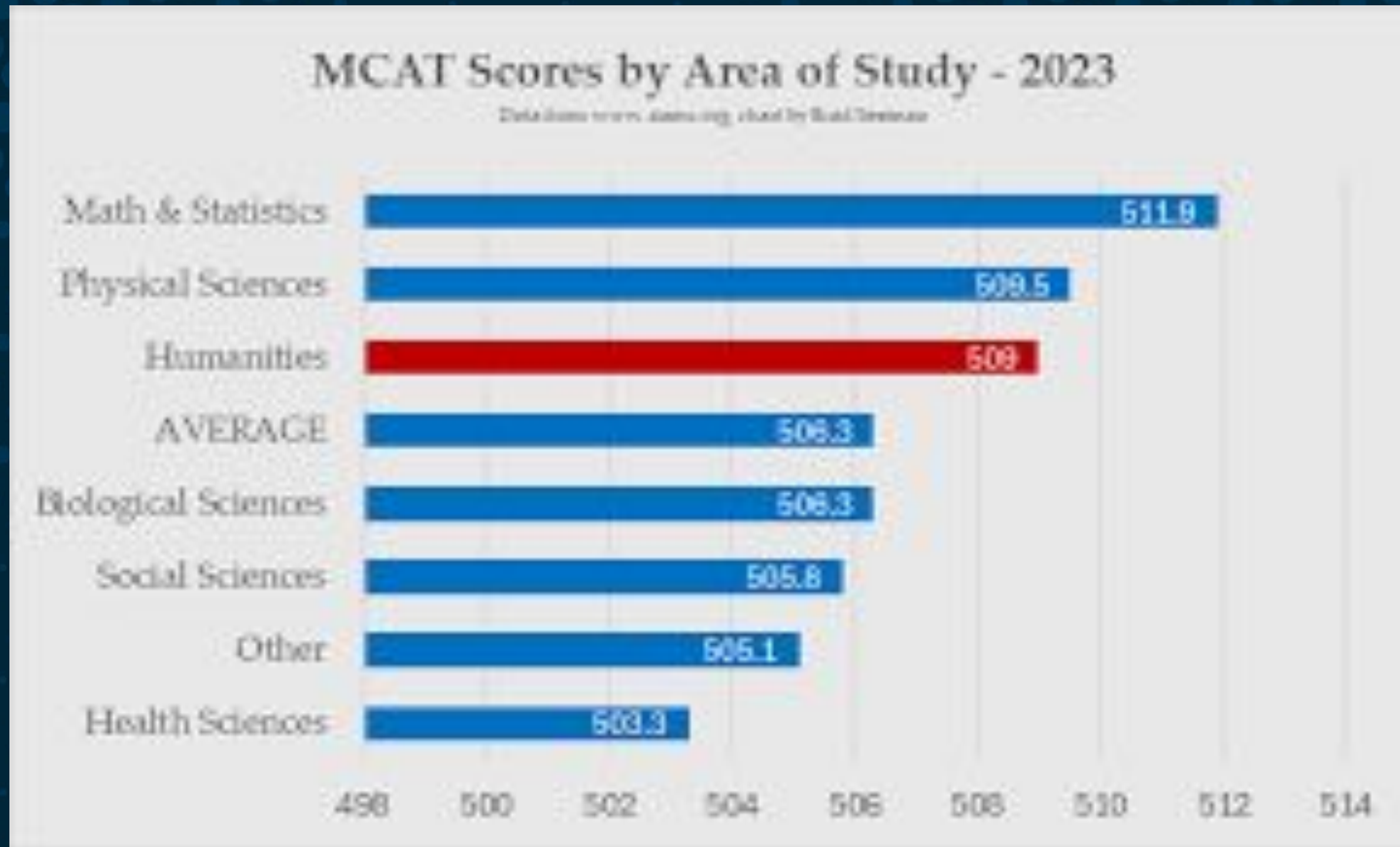
# GMAT Scores By Major (2015)



<https://dailynous.com/value-of-philosophy/charts-and-graphs/>



# MCAT Scores By Area of Study (2023)





# Med School Admission Rates

## By Area of Study (2023)

Major	Acceptance Rate
Biological Sciences	43%
Humanities	52%
Math and Statistics	52%
Other	42%
Physical Sciences	50%
Social Sciences	43%
Specialized Health Sciences	40%

<https://collegelearners.org/medical-school-acceptance-rates-by-major/>



# LSAT Scores By Major (2022)

Law School Admission Council		Applicants by Major				Enrollment Year				
						2022				
Major Category	Major	Mean High LSAT	Median High LSAT	Mean UGPA	Median UGPA	Applicants	Admitted	% Admitted	Enrolled	% Enrolled
SOCIAL SCIENCES HELPING PROFESSIONS	POLITICAL SCIENCE	156.03	156.00	3.46	3.56	13,693	10,134	74.0%	8,858	64.7%
OTHER: ANY AREA NOT LISTED	ANY AREA NOT LISTED - OTHER	151.35	151.00	3.31	3.39	5,335	3,101	58.1%	2,667	50.0%
SOCIAL SCIENCES HELPING PROFESSIONS	PSYCHOLOGY	155.07	155.00	3.42	3.52	3,958	2,840	71.8%	2,466	62.3%
SOCIAL SCIENCES HELPING PROFESSIONS	CRIMINAL JUSTICE	148.82	149.00	3.33	3.42	3,672	2,100	57.2%	1,851	50.4%
BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	161.71	162.00	3.52	3.62	3,263	2,553	78.2%	2,147	65.8%
ARTS & HUMANITIES	ENGLISH	157.30	157.00	3.49	3.60	2,979	2,274	76.3%	1,973	66.2%
ARTS & HUMANITIES	HISTORY	158.95	159.00	3.50	3.62	2,900	2,293	79.1%	1,990	68.6%
ARTS & HUMANITIES	PHILOSOPHY	159.47	160.00	3.49	3.60	2,502	1,889	75.5%	1,622	64.8%
ARTS & HUMANITIES	ARTS & HUMANITIES - OTHER	156.64	157.00	3.47	3.58	2,395	1,744	72.8%	1,471	61.4%
SOCIAL SCIENCES HELPING PROFESSIONS	SOCIOLOGY	153.91	154.00	3.40	3.51	2,000	1,341	67.1%	1,160	58.0%
ARTS & HUMANITIES	COMMUNICATIONS	154.17	154.00	3.39	3.50	1,861	1,314	70.6%	1,118	60.1%
BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	FINANCE	157.22	157.00	3.47	3.53	1,792	1,312	73.2%	1,109	61.9%
BUSINESS AND	BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	153.35	153.00	3.31	3.40	1,639	1,052	64.2%	884	53.9%

All content ©2023 Law School Admission Council, Inc.

<https://dailynous.com/value-of-philosophy/charts-and-graphs/>



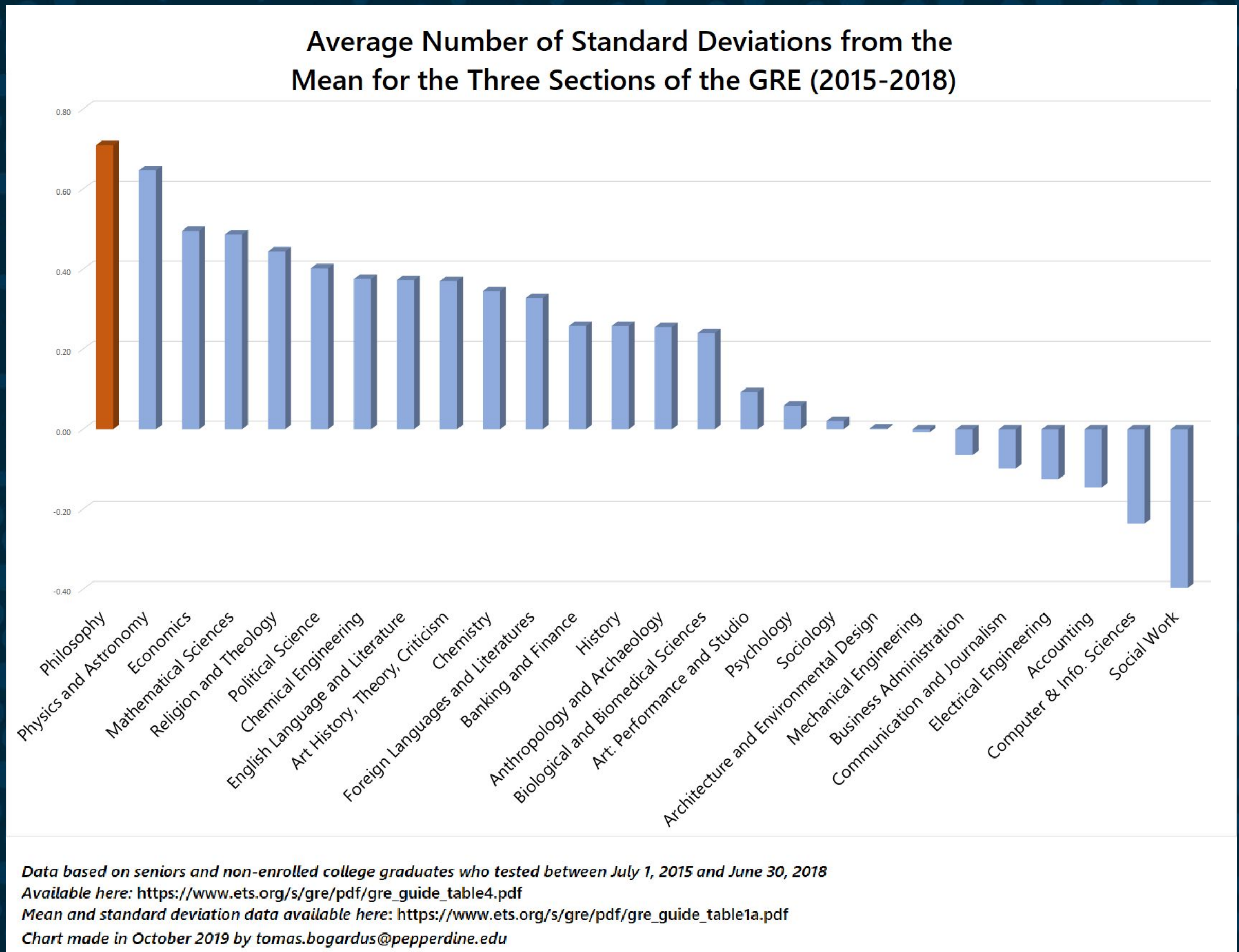
# GRE Scores By Major (2019)

	Verbal	Verbal #SD from mean	Quant	Quant #SD from mean	Writing	Writing #SD from mean	Writing (Converted)	Total Raw Score	Average #SD from Mean
<b>Philosophy</b>	160	1.16	154	0.10	4.3	0.87	141.33	455.33	0.71
Physics and Astronomy	156	0.68	162	0.97	3.8	0.29	144.67	462.67	0.65
Economics	154	0.45	160	0.75	3.8	0.29	144.67	458.67	0.50
Mathematical Sciences	153	0.33	163	1.07	3.6	0.06	146.00	462.00	0.49
Religion and Theology	157	0.80	151	-0.22	4.2	0.76	142.00	450.00	0.44
Political Science	156	0.68	152	-0.12	4.1	0.64	142.67	450.67	0.40
Chemical Engineering	152	0.21	161	0.86	3.6	0.06	146.00	459.00	0.37
English Language and Literature	157	0.80	149	-0.44	4.2	0.76	142.00	448.00	0.37
Art History, Theory, Criticism	157	0.80	150	-0.33	4.1	0.64	142.67	449.67	0.37
Chemistry	153	0.33	158	0.53	3.7	0.17	145.33	456.33	0.34
Foreign Languages and Literatures	156	0.68	151	-0.22	4	0.52	143.33	450.33	0.33
Banking and Finance	151	0.09	161	0.86	3.4	-0.17	147.33	459.33	0.26
History	156	0.68	148	-0.55	4.1	0.64	142.67	446.67	0.26
Anthropology and Archaeology	156	0.68	149	-0.44	4	0.52	143.33	448.33	0.26
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	153	0.33	154	0.10	3.8	0.29	144.67	451.67	0.24
Art: Performance and Studio	153	0.33	151	-0.22	3.7	0.17	145.33	449.33	0.09
Psychology	152	0.21	149	-0.44	3.9	0.41	144.00	445.00	0.06
Sociology	152	0.21	149	-0.44	3.8	0.29	144.67	445.67	0.02
Architecture and Environmental Design	150	-0.03	155	0.21	3.4	-0.17	147.33	452.33	0.00
Mechanical Engineering	148	-0.27	158	0.53	3.3	-0.29	148.00	454.00	-0.01
Business Administration	150	-0.03	151	-0.22	3.6	0.06	146.00	447.00	-0.06
Communication and Journalism	150	-0.03	149	-0.44	3.7	0.17	145.33	444.33	-0.10
Electrical Engineering	147	-0.38	158	0.53	3.1	-0.52	149.33	454.33	-0.12
Accounting	149	-0.15	152	-0.12	3.4	-0.17	147.33	448.33	-0.15
Computer and Information Sciences	146	-0.50	156	0.32	3.1	-0.52	149.33	451.33	-0.24
Social Work	148	-0.27	144	-0.98	3.6	0.06	146.00	438.00	-0.40
Data based on seniors and non-enrolled college graduates who tested between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2018									
<a href="https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table4.pdf">https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table4.pdf</a>									
Mean and standard deviation data can be found here: <a href="https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table1a.pdf">https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table1a.pdf</a>									

<https://dailynous.com/value-of-philosophy/charts-and-graphs/>



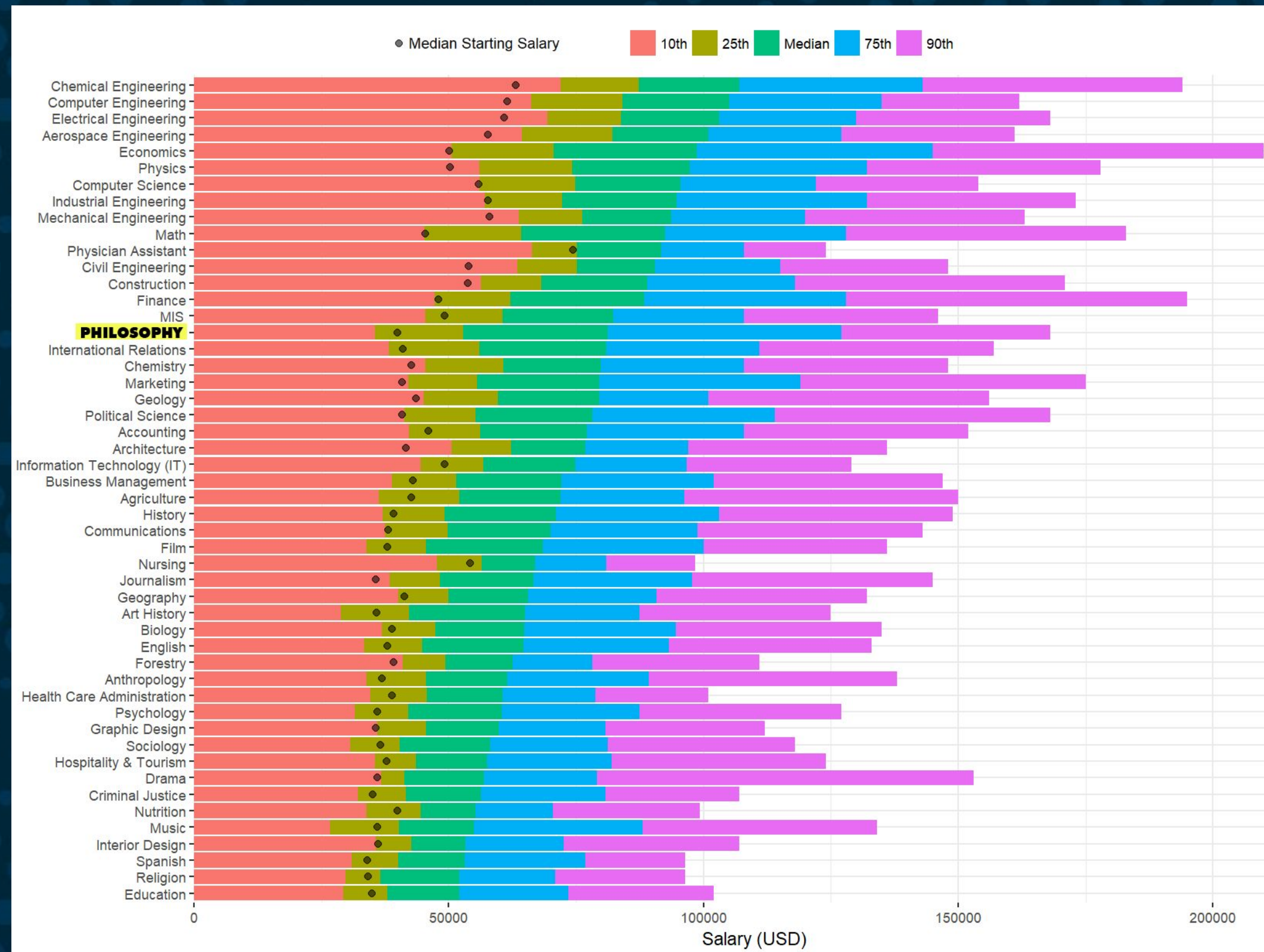
# Average # Standard Deviations From Mean on the GRE (2015-18)



<https://dailynous.com/value-of-philosophy/charts-and-graphs/>



# Median Earnings by Major





# Summing Up

## Studying Philosophy Is Useless

Except to Scientists, Businesspeople, Attorneys, Physicians, Clergy, Artists, Influencers, Activists, War Heroes, and Citizens of a Democracy



BRYAN W. VAN NORDEN

APR 21, 2023

<https://bryanvannorden.substack.com/p/studying-philosophy-is-useless>

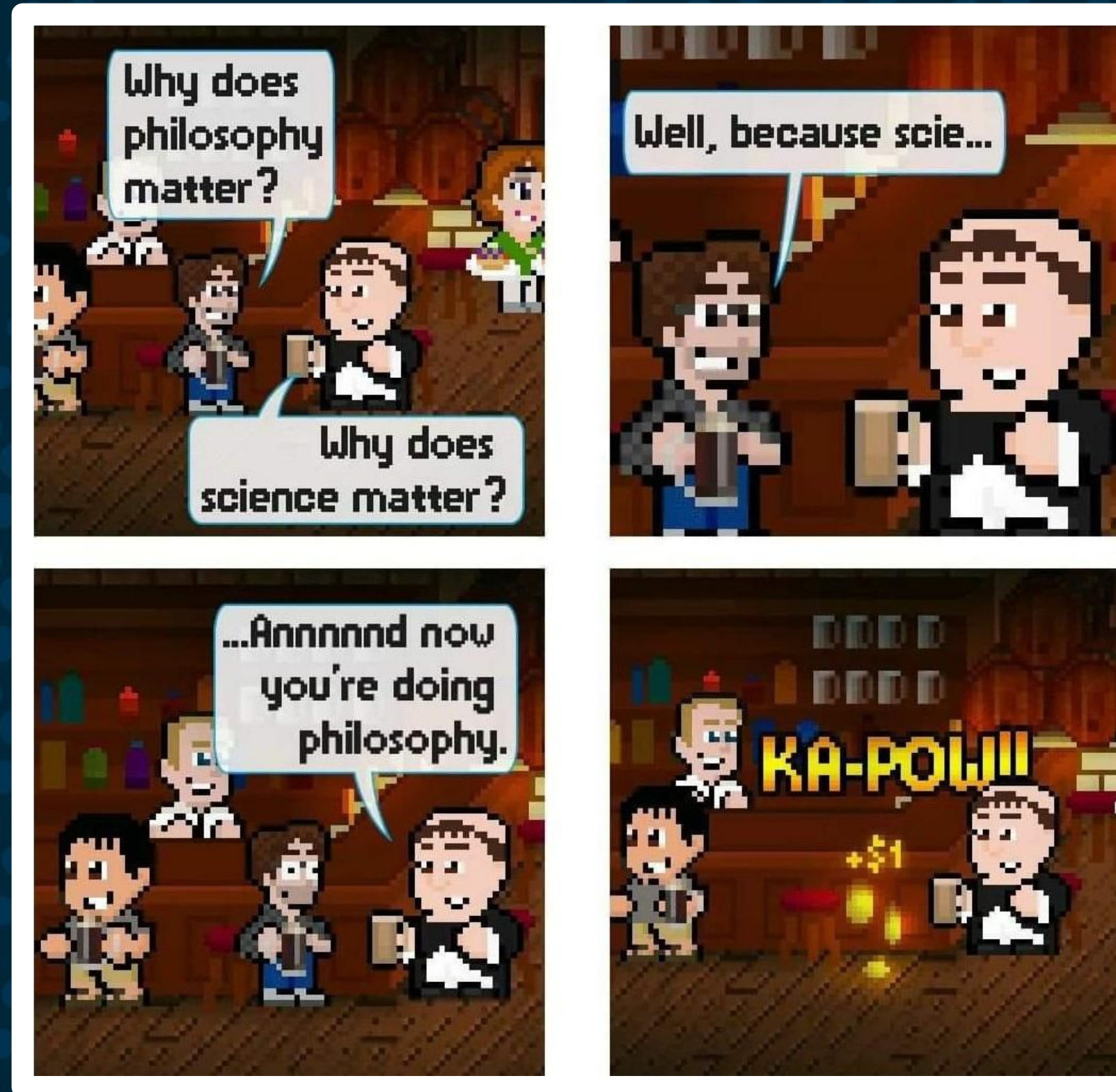


# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction: Thinking about Majoring in Philosophy?
2. The Instrumental Value of Studying Philosophy
- 3. The Intrinsic Value of Studying Philosophy**
4. Why You Should Major In Philosophy @ USU: Program Strengths & Highlights
5. Getting the Most out of Your Philosophy Major: Specific Advice/Requests for USU Philosophy Majors



# Philosophy's Intrinsic Value





# The Examined Life

- “The unexamined life is not worth living.”
- “Philosophy begins in wonder” - Aristotle
- Asking questions about who we are and how we should live our lives
- It is an unavoidable part of being human
- We cannot choose whether we are philosophers: only if we are good or bad ones



# Philosophy and Human Life

- There is no aspect of human life that is not touched by philosophical questions. They are the foundation for everything else.
- Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, and aesthetics



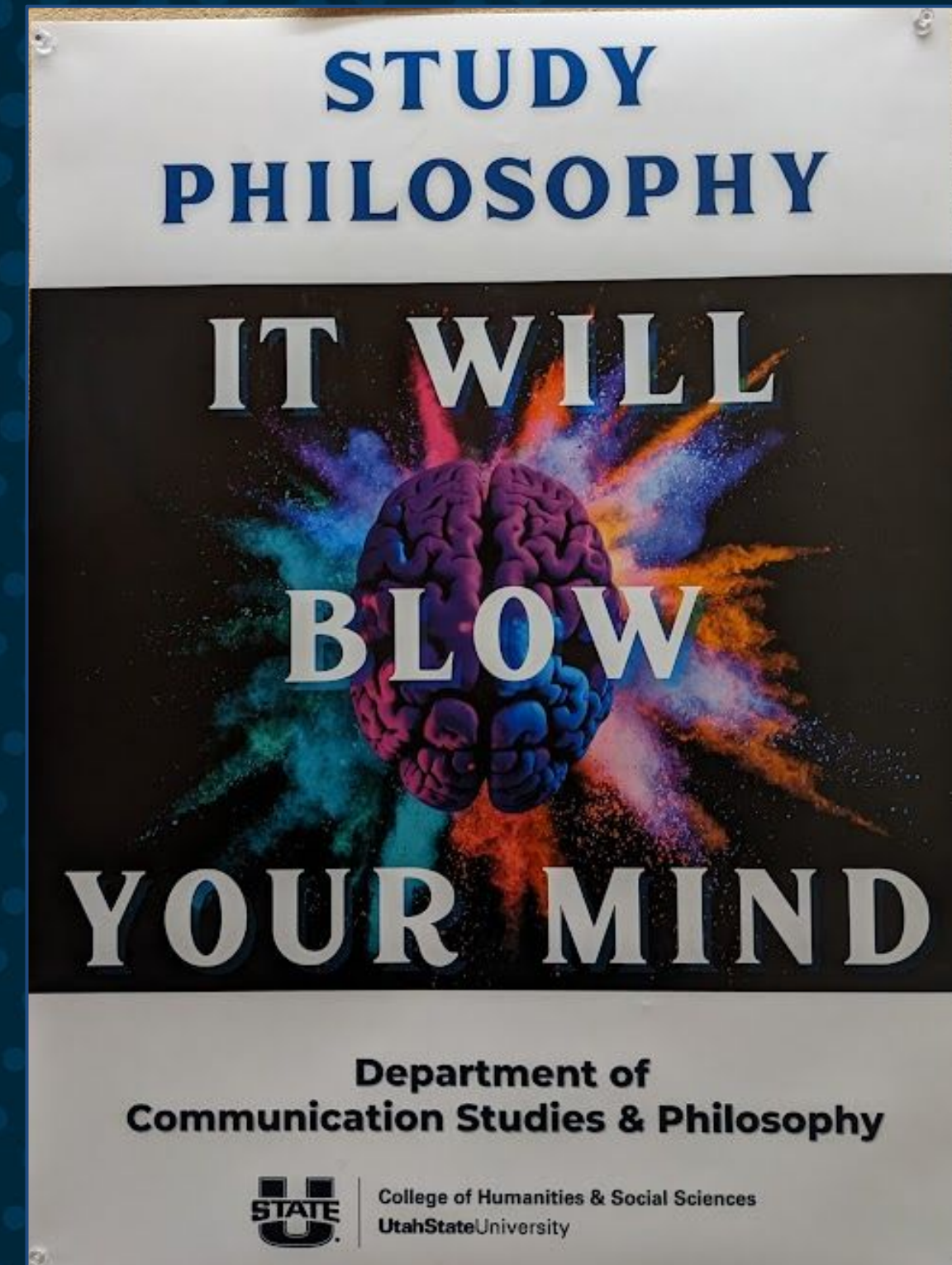
# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction: Thinking about Majoring in Philosophy?
2. The Instrumental Value of Studying Philosophy
3. The Intrinsic Value of Studying Philosophy
- 4. Why You Should Major In Philosophy @ USU: Program Strengths & Highlights**
5. Getting the Most out of Your Philosophy Major: Specific Advice/Requests for USU Philosophy Majors



# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

Program Strengths & Highlights!



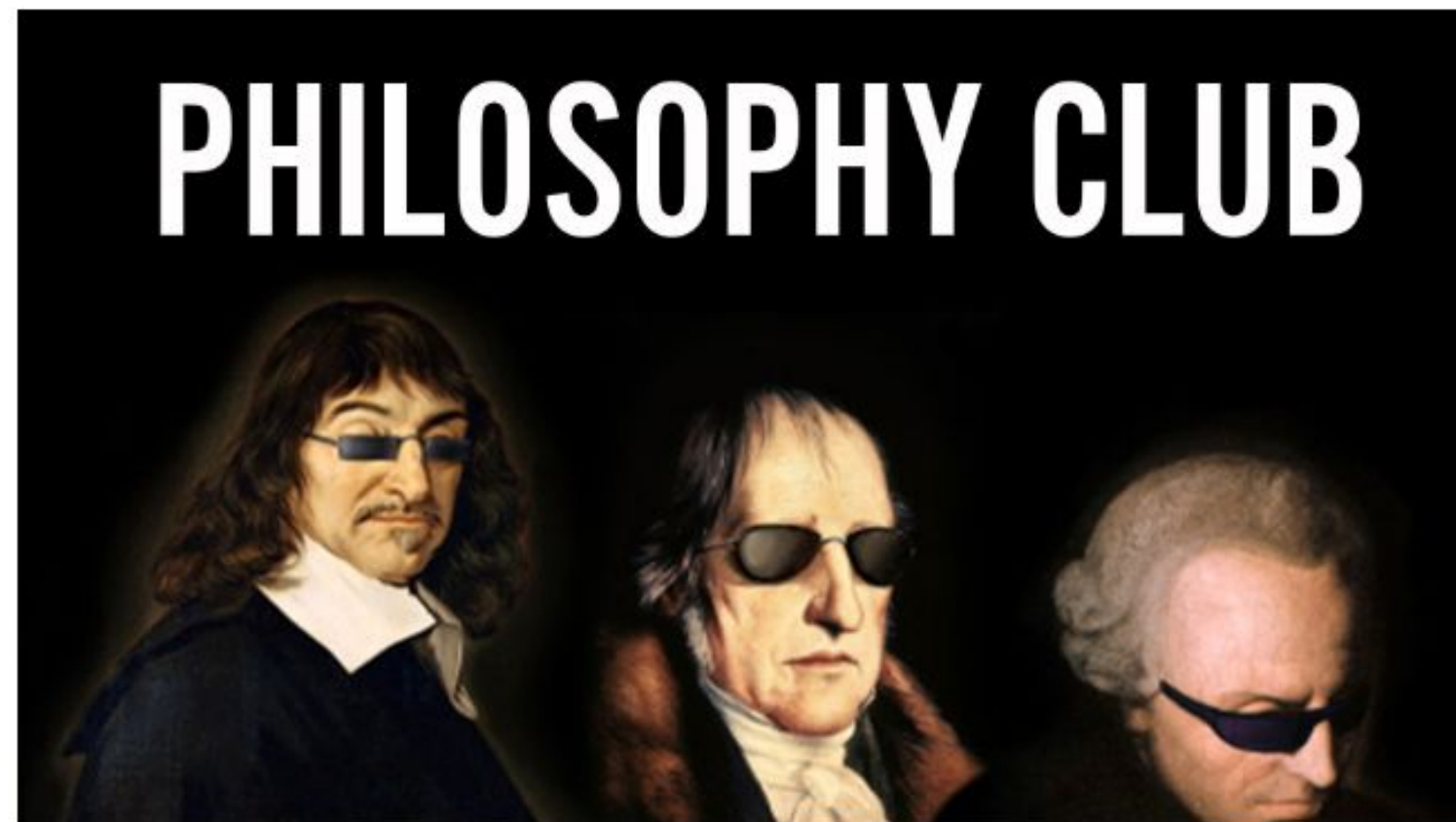


# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

**Program Strengths:** our thriving Philosophy Club!

## Philosophy Club

This club is open to anyone interested in philosophy. Members participate in a supportive atmosphere, promote philosophy in the local community, provide social activities, and engage in discussion of all issues in the domain of philosophy.



FOR THE LOVE OF WISDOM,  
DON'T MISS THE

## Philosophy Club Valentine's Day Party!



**This Thursday, Feb. 13th @ 5pm, Old Main 203**

**Come for the free food, stay for the philosophical insights into the nature of love!**



College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
UtahStateUniversity



# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

**Program Strengths:** Philosophy Homecoming Hike!





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

Program Strengths: Public-Facing Philosophy



**CELEBRATE  
WORLD  
PHILOSOPHY DAY**

in conjunction with  
**Logan Library**

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO  
THIS FREE EVENT!**

**Thur, NOV. 21  
5pm-6:15pm**

**Logan Public Library  
Community Room B**

*\*Light refreshments will be provided*

**ASK US  
Anything**

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

**THE PHILOSOPHER IS IN**

**U STATE** | College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
UtahStateUniversity

**E  
T  
H  
I  
C  
S**

Monday,  
April 7, 2025  
6:00 pm

Open to the  
public!

Topic:  
Ethics  
and  
Chatbots

**S  
L  
A  
M  
!**

**WEBER STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
Richard Richards  
Institute for Ethics  
contact  
rgreene@weber.edu  
for information

Location:  
Grounds For Coffee,  
27 N Main, Logan, Utah

Sponsored by:  
The Richard Richards Institute for Ethics,  
The Utah State Philosophy Club, The Weber  
State Philosophy Club, and Grounds for  
Coffee

**GROUND  
S  
for coffee**



# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

## Program Strengths: AI Ethics Collaboration with CAI & Data Analytics

### USU's College of Humanities & Social Sciences Hosts Conference on Ethics of AI

September 23, 2024



USU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences Hosts Conference on the Ethics of AI





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?



USU Ethics Bowl Team!

## USU Ethics Bowl Team Heads to National Competition

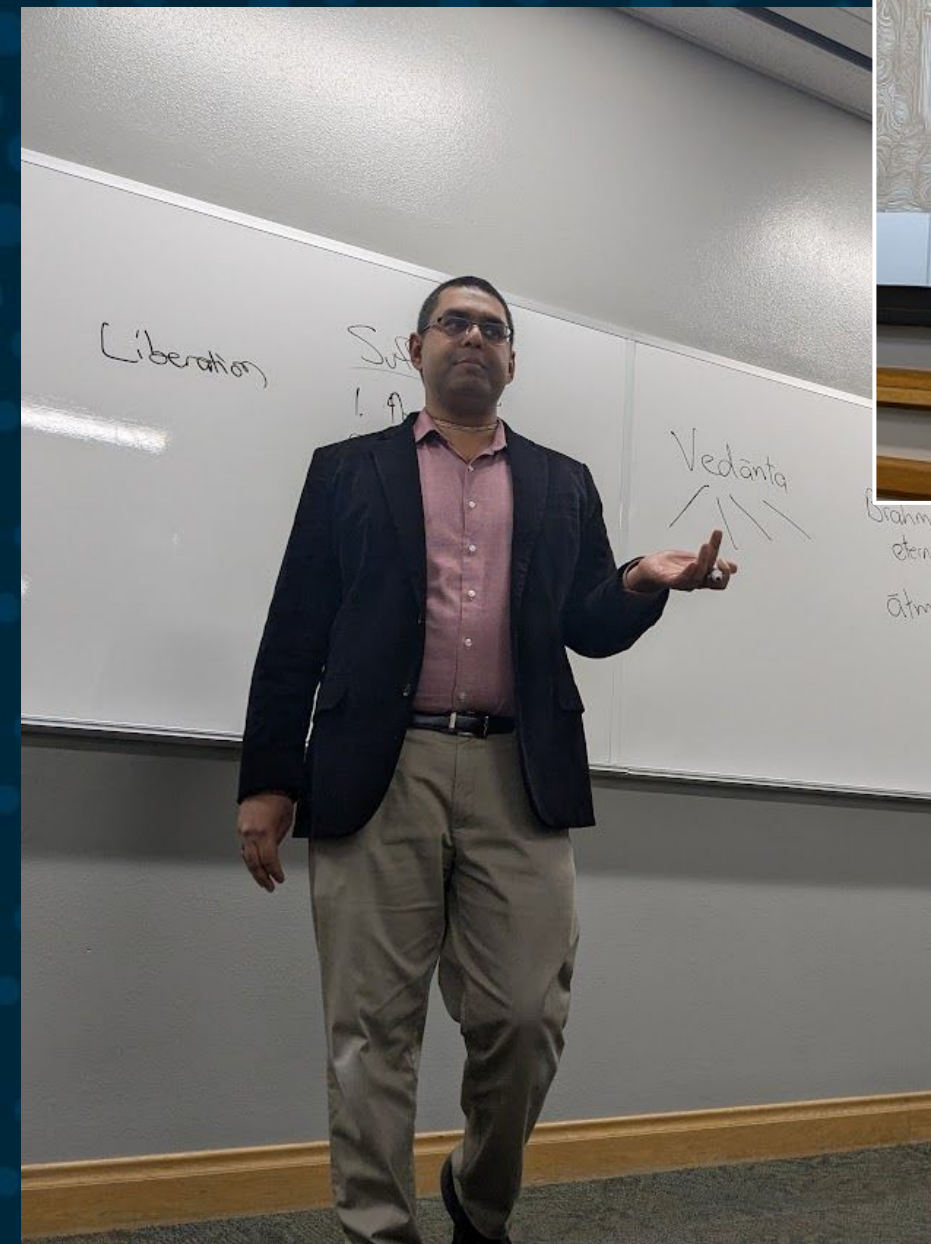
By [Andrea DeHaan](#) | February 18, 2025





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

Program Strengths: Vibrant Colloquia Series!





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?



## PHI SIGMA TAU HONOR SOCIETY

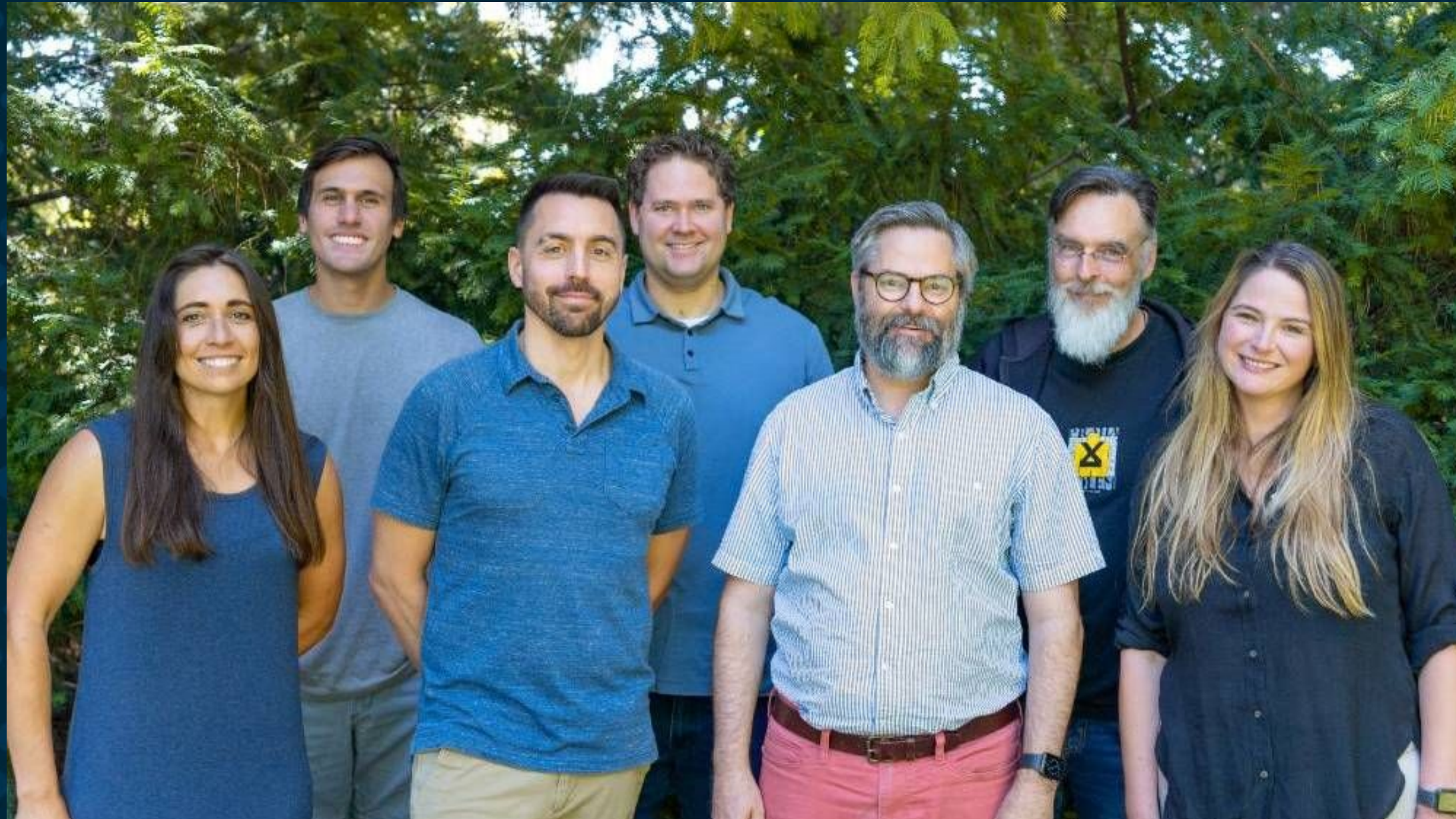
THE INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY FOR PHILOSOPHERS





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

**Program Strengths:** Incredible Faculty!





# Why Major in Philosophy @ USU?

**Program Strengths:** Even More Incredible Classmates!





# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction: Thinking about Majoring in Philosophy?
2. The Instrumental Value of Studying Philosophy
3. The Intrinsic Value of Studying Philosophy
4. Why You Should Major In Philosophy @ USU: Program Strengths & Highlights
- 5. Getting the Most out of Your Philosophy Major: Specific Advice/Requests for USU Philosophy Majors**



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

1. **Consider Registering Philosophy Officially as your First Major** (simply email [brendan.lee@usu.edu](mailto:brendan.lee@usu.edu)), but consider a certificate OR second major for enrichment and adaptability



**Brendan Lee**

Academic Advisor, Instructor

+1 435 797 3800

[brendan.lee@usu.edu](mailto:brendan.lee@usu.edu)

[Home](#) [Browse](#) [Search](#) [By Interest](#)

## Philosophy, Politics, and Economics - Cert

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

### About This Certificate

This certificate program provides students with important foundational knowledge of these three disciplines and more fully completes their understanding of these ideas. The program introduces students to the principal texts that define these disciplines based on direct and comprehensive readings of them rather than second or third-hand accounts or interpretations of the original texts.

[REQUEST INFORMATION](#)

[ADVISING](#)

#### At a Glance

**College:** [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)  
**Department:** [Political Science Department](#)  
**USU Locations:**  
• Logan campus



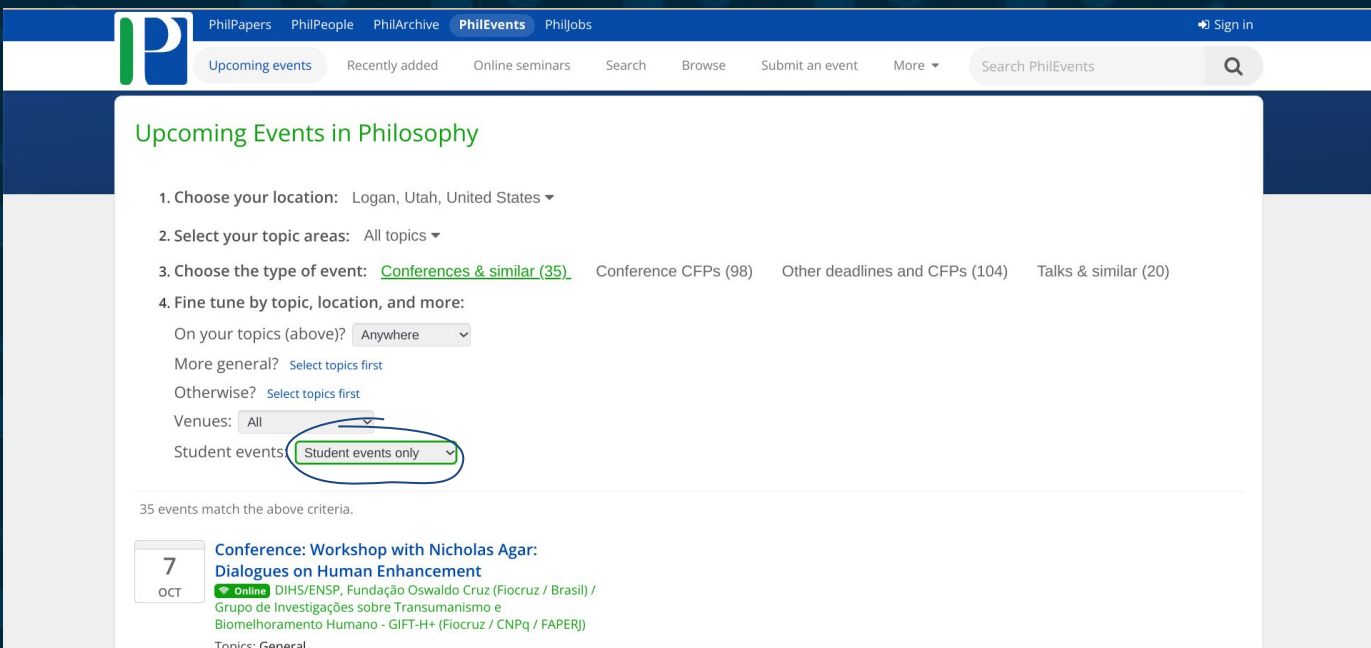




# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

3. If possible, **send your work off** to undergraduate conferences and/or journals:

a. Philevents.org can filter for “student events only”



b. Check the Undergraduate Philosophy Journal Database

A screenshot of a spreadsheet titled "Philosophy Undergraduate Journals and Conferences". The spreadsheet has columns A through I. The rows list various journals and their details. The first row is a header, and the following rows are data entries for different journals.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Name of Journal	University Affiliation	Specialization (e.g. ethics, analytic, or general philosophy)	Accepts (e.g. papers, abstracts)	*Typical* Application Time Frame (e.g. December through May)	Attributes (e.g. diversity initiative)	Accepts recent grads?	Notes	URL
2	A Priori	Brown University	The Journal encourages submissions addressing topics on the margins of traditional analytic philosophy, including essays on philosophy of race, philosophy of gender, and non-Western philosophy.	Papers no more than 20 pages	Early January	committed to highlighting the work of students from groups underrepresented in philosophy			<a href="https://www.brown.edu/academics/philosophy/a-priori/home">https://www.brown.edu/academics/philosophy/a-priori/home</a>
3	Acta Cogita	Eastern Michigan University	Any topic	11-12 page papers no longer than 4,000 words	Early fall, late summer				<a href="http://www.emu.edu/acta-cogita/journal/">http://www.emu.edu/acta-cogita/journal/</a>
4	Aletheia	Texas A&M	Any	2000-5000 words in length (submissions slightly above or below this limit are welcome) Include an approximately 100-word abstract Include a work citations page	Mid-October (23 Oct. 2020)				<a href="https://philosophy.tam.u.edu/aletheia/">https://philosophy.tam.u.edu/aletheia/</a>
5	Almagest	University of Toronto	Must be related to the history and philosophy of science (and technology) in some form. Papers	Papers no more than 5,000 words	Late January				<a href="https://www.almagestjournal.ca">https://www.almagestjournal.ca</a>



# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

4. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute:

a. The Hamilton College Summer Program in Philosophy





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

4. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute:

b. The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

## 4. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute:

c. The many Undergraduate Diversity Institutes in Philosophy, including the **Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institutes (PIKSI)** and several more detailed here:


<https://www.apaonline.org/page/diversityinstitutes>





# Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider following [usuphilosophy.com](https://usuphilosophy.com) to stay updated!



**USUPhilosophy**

Happenings in and around the USU Philosophy program

<b>E T H I C S</b>	Monday, April 7, 2025 6:00 pm
Topic: Ethics and Chatbots	Open to the public!
<b>WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY</b> Richard Richards Institute for Ethics contact rgreene@weber.edu for information	
Location: Grounds For Coffee, 27 N Main, Logan, Utah	
Sponsored by: The Richard Richards Institute for Ethics, The Utah State Philosophy Club, The Weber State Philosophy Club, and Grounds for Coffee	

**USU PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIA SERIES**

**HELD IN OLD MAIN 115**

<b>JAN 10</b> @ 3:30PM	<b>DR. RAVI GUPTA</b> Charles Redd Professor of Religious Studies, Department Head, USU Department of History	<b>SPECIAL GUEST</b>
<b>JAN 24</b> @ 4:30PM	<b>DR. MICHAEL OTTESON</b> Assistant Professor of Philosophy, USU Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy	
<b>FEB 21</b> @ 4:30PM	<b>DR. BRITTANY GENTRY</b> Assistant Professor of Philosophy, USU Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy	
<b>MAR 06</b> @ 4:30PM	<b>DR. RICHARD SHERLOCK</b> Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, USU Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy	<b>DISTINGUISHED GUEST</b>
<b>MAR 21</b> @ 4:30PM	<b>DR. ALEXANDER BARRIENTOS</b> Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Philosophy, USU Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy	
<b>APR 11</b> @ 4:30PM	<b>DR. HARRISON KLEINER</b> Vice Provost, Associate Professor of Philosophy, USU Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy	

**Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy**

**College of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
Utah State University