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Top/Best/Most

A philosophy degree earns more than an accounting degree

By **Jane Wells**
January 30, 2015 7:14 AM
Top/Best/Most



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We talk a lot about the need for good jobs in America, but good-paying jobs often require certain skills. Engineering, science and technical degrees are seen as highly prized, and not without merit.

However, you don't necessary need to major in software development or computer science to go far in this world. You can make a good living with a philosophy degree. Or English literature.

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About Top/Best/Most

Top/Best/Most is the ultimate list mash-up – this CNBC/Yahoo! Finance co-production takes a look at the week's top lists, offering viewers a digestible bite of the "must know" in the list world. Our series features the top lists, the best moments, and the most buzzed goings-on of the week.

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This should be a huge relief to parents putting their children through college and wondering how junior is ever going to be able to pay the bills after earning a master's degree in Elizabethan poetry.

Research from [Payscale.com](#), [Bankrate.com](#) and [TheRichest.com](#) suggests that people with degrees in the humanities can go on to well-paying jobs. Granted, engineering grads still stand to make the most, more than six figures, according to Payscale.com. Bankrate pegs physicians as having the highest median pay at \$172,000, but it costs \$137,000 on average to become a doctor. However, not too far down the financial food chain are some interesting degrees which don't require you to write code or cure disease to earn enough to pay back your college loans and then some.

No. 5—JOURNALISM

According to Payscale, graduates of journalism school have starting median salaries of \$38,100 which jump to \$67,700 by midcareer. Broadcast journalism graduates start out a little lower, but jump a little higher midcareer to \$68,800 in "report"-able income (report, get it? Heh, heh). TheRichest.com points out that "those with a background in journalism also tend to be in high demand in lucrative areas such as marketing and communications." Bottom line: just because you study journalism doesn't mean you're going to make a living as a journalist.

No. 4—ENGLISH LITERATURE

See "journalism" above. A degree in one area doesn't mean you're going to make a living there. If you can understand Shakespeare, maybe you can understand a business plan, or at least know how to market a company using iambic pentameter. Like journalists, English lit grads can go into other careers like marketing, PR or publishing. Payscale.com reports median mid-career salaries are \$71,400, which is slightly more pay than the average for people with degrees in business administration!

No. 3—POLITICAL SCIENCE

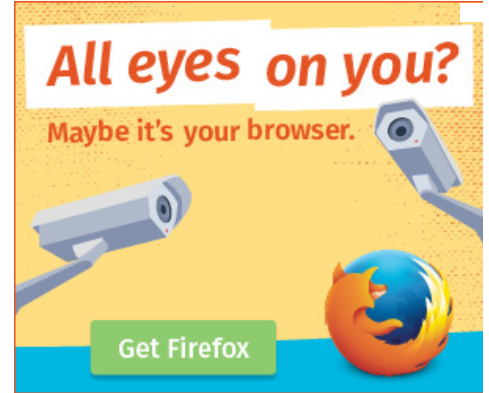
"Government jobs are notoriously highly paid," said TheRichest. Really? Well government lobbying jobs certainly are, and companies often look for grads with knowledge of public policy. Payscale.com says while median salaries for poli sci grads start around \$40,000, by midcareer they can nearly double to \$78,500. Definitely good enough for government work.

No. 2—INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Skip the poli sci, go straight to IR. Payscale says this is one of



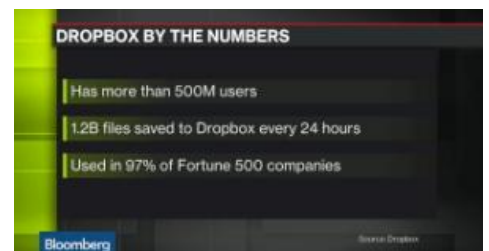
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Can Dropbox Live Up to \$10 Billion Valuation?



the best-paying degrees to have, with median incomes by the middle of your career at \$85,700.

AND HERE'S THE ZINGER ...

No. 1—PHILOSOPHY

I think, therefore I ... make money! Graduates with philosophy degrees have "higher earnings potential than many other arts and humanities-related fields," said TheRichest. Payscale reports midcareer median salaries are \$84,000 for your modern day Kant or Descartes. Why? Well, let's be logical. Which is exactly what philosophy programs require of students ... logic. Thinking is hard, it requires analysis, and those who can do it well can get a good job ... which is a good philosophy to have.

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