

People often think about philosophy as referring to one's personal outlook on life. This is true, but not the complete truth. The study of philosophy is a way for people to express their own outlook on life, and also to learn to defend their perspective through appropriate reasoning. Philosophers are masters at creating rational arguments for their positions, and at evaluating the arguments of others.

**What really matters in life.** The subject matter of philosophy includes the most profound of topics. This is because philosophy is the study of what really matters in life. Because philosophers have to study the foundations of existence, they often develop a strong understanding, at least generally, of all of the various areas of human inquiry. Philosophers understand both literature and science. (Indeed, what we now call science was once called "natural philosophy.") Philosophers understand both religious belief and atheism; they understand both logic and rhetoric; they understand both high art and popular entertainment. In short, the skill of philosophy is that it allows you to live and succeed in an increasingly diverse world.

**Graduate and professional school.** In terms of the national average, philosophy majors dominate on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Whether that is because philosophy makes you smart, or it is because being smart makes you choose philosophy, it is clear that philosophers are able to perform very well on standardized exams. This skill is valuable not just for increasing your odds of getting into the graduate and professional school of your choice, but also for demonstrating your abilities to potential employers (particularly ones that might require some kind of aptitude test).

## Ambrose Advantages

**A community of dynamic thinkers.** Studying philosophy at St. Ambrose involves engaging oneself in a community of dynamic thinkers, and using this engagement, in the words of the university's mission, to "enrich their own lives and the lives of others."

**Personal and professional ethics.** The special focus of the department is on personal and professional ethics. We study the development of personal character, which includes the cultivation of moral reasoning skills necessary for participation in the social world. As part of this development, we look at the history of ideas in order to see where we are, and better determine where we want to go as individuals and active members in creating a just society.

**Engaging and engaged faculty.** St. Ambrose philosophy professors have written detective novels, enacted conflict resolution programs in Davenport Public Schools, worked with paranormal



investigators on campus, attained a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, served on medical ethics review boards at local hospitals, and taught leadership courses in Croatia.

## Career Opportunities

The study of philosophy opens individuals to possibilities that they otherwise might not see. As a result, it prepares students for a diverse array of careers. Such preparation is essential in a world in which, for reasons both within one's control and beyond one's control, people tend to change careers.

Jobs that philosophy majors can succeed at include **lawyer, minister, technical writer, teacher, editor, publisher, mediation specialist, counselor, museum curator, social worker, activist, and ethics adviser** for businesses and hospitals, among many others.

## Alumni Success Stories

"I had an incredible experience at SAU and couldn't imagine going anywhere else for college. It was a perfect fit and gave me the opportunity to explore different studies and paths that interested me.

“I was drawn to the theatre and philosophy programs especially and quickly realized these would be not only my majors, but my passions as well. Philosophy has influenced every aspect of my life and I grew tremendously in the program. I was exposed to many different thinkers and types of philosophy and each class served to shape the mindset I have today and the way I view the world around me.

“As an actor/director and teaching artist, philosophy has been an active part of my professional life in regards to how I analyze plays, explore the depths of characters, and find the deeper meanings in works to better reach an audience. The knowledge I acquired through SAU, theatre, and the philosophy department will stay with me and continue to grow for the rest of my life.”  
— Tim Stompanato (SAU 2013), actor, graduated with majors in philosophy and theatre. See how he continues his work in the world at [www.timstomp.com](http://www.timstomp.com)

“I came to Ambrose largely undecided about my major and uncertain about my general direction in life. Thinking about my post-college future was hazy at best, and I was interested in so many subjects that I really couldn’t figure out what I wanted to do.

“And then I took my first philosophy class: Intro to Philosophy with Joe McCaffrey. I was immediately hooked—line and sinker—and from then on, I knew that I couldn’t not major in philosophy! It was such a weird feeling, because I had never felt so compelled before in my life.

“Studying philosophy lent my thinking a new level of rigor and allowed me to form a clearer picture of my own opinions, attitudes, and biases about the world, and it helped me express myself more logically and cogently in the process. Plus, the philosophy faculty members at SAU are such kind and unique people, and always seemed to have time to talk and philosophize with me outside of the classroom.

“I want to be clear, though: when you study philosophy, you don’t end up with a clear-cut, tailor-made career like engineering or nursing. That’s not what philosophy is for. Rather, you end up with a particular set of skills (albeit considerably different skills than Liam Neeson’s), ones that equip you for thinking complexly about complex problems and examining the world—and yourself—to the fullest. It’s demanding and challenging, but unbelievably worthwhile.” — Courtney Averkamp (SAU 2012), graduate student in religious studies at University of Illinois, graduated with a major in philosophy and a minor in Spanish.

## What Some of Our Graduates Are Doing

A few of our St. Ambrose philosophy graduates:

- > Babble.com, blogger development manager
- > Chicago, singer and stage actor
- > Clarke College, chair and professor of philosophy
- > East Village Open Mic Night, comedian and producer
- > Handicapped Development Center, case manager and supervisor
- > Mundelein Seminary, seminarian
- > Red Frog Events, technology manager
- > St. Ambrose University, professors of philosophy, psychology, theology and communication
- > The Roman Catholic Diocese of Nashville, bishop
- > University of Minnesota Honors Program, associate academic adviser

## Your Career: Networking, Internships and Jobs in the Quad Cities

The Quad Cities is a welcoming and fun place to live as a college student. More than that, it offers a great community to help you prepare for—or even start—your career. With its rich history, the Quad Cities offers a variety of events, entertainment and educational opportunities.

St. Ambrose and the Quad City community are known for activism and volunteerism, especially in the area of peace and justice. Students have a number of opportunities to become involved in associations such as the Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) Coalition, Quad-Citians Affirming Diversity, Churches United and River Action.

These organizations contribute to the Quad Cities’ exceptional opportunities for networking, internships and jobs.

## Get in Touch With Us Today

We invite you to visit St. Ambrose to learn more about the opportunities here. Our quality academic programs provide one of the best private education values in the Midwest. Check it out for yourself: contact our Admissions Office, 563/333-6300 (toll-free 800/383-2627) or [admit@sau.edu](mailto:admit@sau.edu), or go online to [www.sau.edu](http://www.sau.edu).

*St. Ambrose University offers a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy degree. Minors are also offered in this discipline. For complete curriculum information and course descriptions, consult the Course Catalog at [www.sau.edu/catalog](http://www.sau.edu/catalog).*