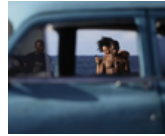




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What Can You Do With a Humanities Ph.D., Anyway?

The choice to leave academia does not have to mean life as a barista.

ELIZABETH SEGRAN | MAR 31 2014, 2:56 PM ET

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J.J. Gould, *Atlantic* editor and politics Ph.D., at his desk in the Watergate (The Atlantic)

There is a widespread belief that humanities Ph.D.s have limited job prospects. The story goes that since tenure-track professorships are increasingly being replaced by [contingent faculty](#), the vast majority of English and history Ph.D.s now roam the earth as poorly-paid adjuncts or, if they leave academia, as [baristas](#) and bookstore cashiers. As English professor William Pannacker [put it in Slate a few years back](#), “a humanities Ph.D. will place you at a disadvantage competing against 22-year-olds for entry-level jobs that barely require a high-school diploma.” His advice to would-be graduate students was simple: Recognize that a humanities Ph.D is now a worthless degree and avoid getting one at all cost.

Since most doctoral programs have never systematically tracked the

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employment outcomes of their Ph.D.s, it was hard to argue with Pannacker when his article came out. Indeed, all anecdotal evidence bade ill for humanities doctorates. In 2012, the Chronicle of Higher Education [profiled](#) several humanities Ph.D.s who were subsisting on food stamps. Last year, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* [eulogized](#) Margaret Mary Vojtko, an 83-year-old French adjunct who died in abject poverty after teaching for more than two decades at Duquesne University, scraping by on \$25,000 a year before being unceremoniously fired without severance or retirement pay.

Recent studies suggest that these tragedies do not tell the whole story about humanities Ph.D.s. It is true that the plate tectonics of academia have been shifting since the 1970s, reducing the number of good jobs available in the field: “The profession has been significantly hollowed out by the twin phenomena of delayed retirements of tenure-track faculty and the continued ‘adjunctification’ of the academy,” Andrew Green, associate director at the Career Center at the University of California, Berkeley, told me. In the wake of these changes, there is no question that humanities doctorates have struggled with their employment prospects, but what is less widely known is between a fifth and a quarter of them go on to work in well-paying jobs in media, corporate America, non-profits, and government. Humanities Ph.D.s are all around us— and they are not serving coffee.

The [American Historical Association](#) (AHA) and the [Modern Language Association](#) (MLA) have staked out the position that the lack of reliable data about employment outcomes is hindering any productive discussion about the future of academia. Both organizations are currently undertaking major studies that will comprehensively document the career trajectories of generations of humanities Ph.D.s. Preliminary reports released in the past few months show that [24.1 percent](#) of history Ph.D.s and [21 percent](#) of English and foreign language Ph.D.s over the last decade took jobs in business, museums, and publishing houses, among other industries.

Adjuncts have every reason to be angry. Apart from their abysmal pay, they are often treated as second-class citizens by their departments and colleagues. But their fate is not the only option for those who do not land tenure-track positions.

Until recently, the best available employment data came from the U.S. Survey for Doctorate Recipients, completed by doctoral candidates when they file their dissertations. Experts told me that this is not an ideal time to conduct a census, since many Ph.D.s only begin looking for non-academic work after graduation or take an adjunct position before getting a corporate job. But even when you take into account the limitations in the data, it is clear that Ph.D.s have been successfully finding alternative careers for a long time: the [1995](#) survey found 16.6 percent of humanities Ph.D.s were going into management-level positions outside the academy, while 4.9 percent would work in media and the arts.

Part of the reason we don’t see this story as clearly is that Ph.D.s who leave tend to be less vocal about the horrors of academia. “The people who end up in adjunct jobs are the most embittered about the profession,” Robert Townsend, director of the Washington Office of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and co-author of the AHA report, told me. “They are most likely to talk about how they feel about the job market and this creates a certain misimpression about the overall outcomes of humanities Ph.D.s.” Adjuncts have every reason to be angry: Apart from their abysmal pay, they are often treated as second-class citizens by their departments and colleagues. But their fate is not the only option for those who do not land tenure-track positions.

The latest data goes against the conventional wisdom that humanities Ph.D.s are not qualified to work outside the ivory tower. On the contrary, Paula Chambers, founder of [Versatile Ph.D.](#), a service that prepares graduate students for the non-academic job market, says she has seen humanities Ph.D.s find work in virtually

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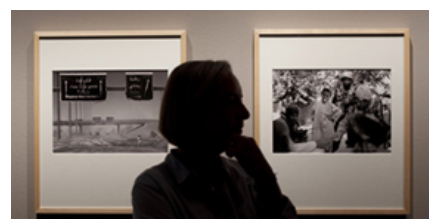
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Photojournalist Anja Niedringhaus
Killed in Afghanistan

every industry: a Ph.D. in Greek and Roman history landed a marketing job at a wine estate; a Ph.D. in English serves as a VP at an educational technology company; a Ph.D. in British history is a branch chief at the National Parks Service; a Ph.D. in Classics is a director at a hedge fund; the list goes on. Victoria Blodgett, director of Graduate Career Services at Yale University, told me, “People who take their Ph.D.s into other realms are not necessarily being hired for their content expertise, but for their process skills: the ability to do excellent research, to write, to make cogent arguments.” These skills, it turns out, are in high demand.

So why are humanities Ph.D.s outside academia so invisible? One reason is that within academic departments there is a culture of stigmatizing doctoral candidates who take non-academic posts, making them less inclined to stick around and contribute to debates about the future of the field. When I spoke to Rosemary Feal, executive director of the MLA, she said, “There is a discourse of failure and shame that intimidates Ph.D.s and makes them feel not good enough if they don’t get an academic job.” This dynamic is a byproduct of a value system that prizes intellectual pursuits over business and industry. “Some dissertation advisors are prejudiced against many jobs outside academia that Ph.D.s pursue and find highly satisfying: They cannot imagine a ‘life of the mind’ unless you become a scholar,” Feal explained.

These values are reinforced at an institutional level when departments and advisors are rewarded with grants and better rankings when their graduate students get academic appointments. “For the longest time graduate schools were in a state of denial about non-academic placements because it was in their interest to maintain the fiction that a majority of their Ph.D. students were getting good tenure-track jobs,” Chambers says. The prejudice against non-academic careers crippled efforts to collect data about the employability of humanities doctorates.

“There is a lot of bias in the sample of what departments are tracking,” Green says. “Ph.D.s who slink away from their programs and take jobs that they find very rewarding in business, government, or a non-profit—but are not faculty positions—typically become non-entities within their graduate programs.”

Since most departments did not keep accurate accounts of where their Ph.D.s were ending up, they could not realistically inform prospective students about their chances of getting an academic job upon graduation, which is perhaps why so many felt betrayed when there were no tenure-track jobs waiting for them after years of graduate study. “The question is, do you owe these incoming students faithful information?” Green asks. “I think the answer is yes, because otherwise how do you expect them to make an informed, responsible decision?”

Humanities Ph.D.s typically secure non-academic jobs through their own networks, without the support of their departments. For those Ph.D.s who ultimately find work outside academia, the job-hunting process is often longer and harder than it needs to be. Few universities offer humanities doctoral candidates career counseling for non-academic jobs, which would help them market themselves and leverage alumni networks. Services like Versatile Ph.D. have stepped in to offer a supportive environment for Ph.D.s to explore alternative careers, but there is now a growing consensus that universities need to be doing more to change the culture of graduate programs.

The MLA and the AHA have begun to put pressure on universities to better educate graduate students about their non-academic career options. With a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, they have jointly embarked on a project that will comprehensively document employment outcomes of humanities Ph.D.s and recommend policy changes. “We ought to be doing more as a profession to make it clear what the likelihood is of getting an academic job and to prepare graduate students for more expanded career horizons,” Feal says.

As a solution to the shrinking academic job market, several top Ph.D. programs

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have [opted](#) to reduce the number of incoming doctoral candidates to limit their oversupply. However, some argue that this approach does not recognize that many humanities Ph.D.s will go on to positively impact other industries, as many already have. "Academic institutions hold a responsibility to advance knowledge," Blodgett argues. "We should be in the business of putting Ph.D.s in government, non-profits, the media and lots of industries where we will be better off if we have people who are trained to think as deeply as they are."

333

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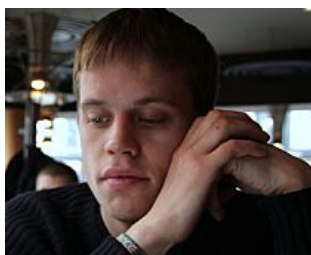
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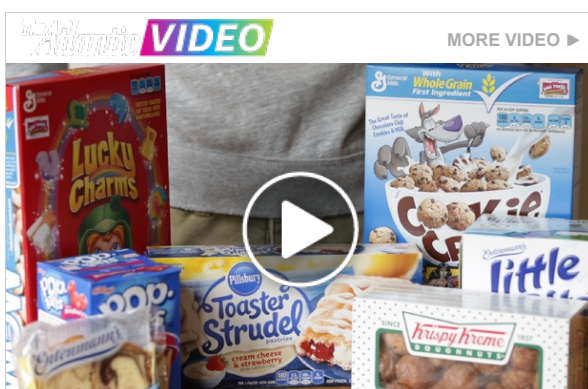
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James_Blair · 6 days ago

The best place to go to is the non-profits. The skill sets are actually often complementary for the transition. There can also be a community of people with the same background. Fundraising ability and presentation skills matter alot. But not all Ph.D.'s in the humanities are created equal. Consider for example the well-connected offspring of the wealthy educated at private schools and with an endless series of potential contacts in the private sector for employment. Those people tend to fall into incredible jobs. But for the more ordinary person, many of those opportunities are contacts are not going to available.

32 ^ | v · Reply · Share

CreateSir → James_Blair · 6 days ago

Historically, liberal arts degrees were for rich kids who didn't have to worry about whether they were going to be able to find a job or pay student loans after graduation.

They still are.

48 ^ | v · Reply · Share

hunt3002 → CreateSir · 6 days ago

FYI - Liberal arts degrees also include the Science and Math of STEM. Liberal arts simply means it's not a professional or technical degree.

43 ^ | v · Reply · Share

NA → hunt3002 · 5 days ago

Where did you get this definition?
Sciences and Maths get B. Sc. degrees, not B. A. degrees.

9 ^ | v · Reply · Share



hunt3002 → NA · 5 days ago

Depends on the school actually. Some schools have both options, some have BAs or ABs only and some BS degrees. They're also still housed in the Liberal Arts colleges with a core curriculum that fully encompasses all general areas of study. It's a common definition with root in Medieval European Universities.

31 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



msmischief → NA · 5 days ago

Actually, the difference between a B. Sc. and a B.A. is supposed to be mastery of a foreign language. My mother got a B.A. in chemistry. Her twin sister got a B.Sc. in English.

11 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



NA → msmischief · 5 days ago

That's a pretty backwards university schema, then. Chemistry is obviously a science which lacks art, and English is obviously an art which lacks science.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



badphairy → NA · 5 days ago

Well, you're just...completely wrong about that.

21 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



NA → badphairy · 5 days ago

Right, let's see here.

In English (and other arts degrees) they employ the Scientific Method to verify a testable hypothesis, then use double-blind, untainted results to draw applicable conclusions?

In Chemistry (and other science degrees, like Physics, the one which I studied) we qualitatively use figurative illustration to describe the inner struggle of mankind?

Hmm, wait, NONE of that happens. In fact, just the opposite. I guess I'm not completely wrong about that after all.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



msmischief → NA · 5 days ago

Yes, you're completely wrong, because you are applying an irrelevant criterion. It doesn't matter what you think it should be.

20 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



NA → msmischief · 5 days ago

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B...>

Wikipedia has a similar idea to the one I have. It seems you're just using a now-obsolete version of the idea.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



badphairy → NA · 5 days ago

Because wikipedia is the authority you want to be citing here. Okay Sparky.

18 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



NA → badphairy · 4 days ago

It is just a source of information that cites other sources of information. Feel free to back up the OTHER side of the claim being made here with equally valid citations of any kind that aren't complete bunk (wikipedia, as much as you'd like it to be, isn't bunk, you just have to know how to use it properly).

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



mkt42 → NA · 4 days ago

So if it's to be wikipedia, let's do a test. Think of a famous scientist. What was his undergraduate degree, BS or BA?

The first four names of contemporarv or near contemporarv

scientists that I think of are:

Steven Hawking, BA, Oxford (University College)
Stephen Jay Gould, BA, Antioch College
E. O. Wilson, BS, Univ of Alabama
Neil deGrasse Tyson, BA, Harvard

That's just my list. For a non-subjective list, let's look at the most recent Nobel prize winners in physics, chemistry, and medicine:

Francois Englert, degree unlisted, but it was an engineering degree so probably not the equivalent of a BA, Universite Libre de Bruxelles
Peter Higgs, BSc, Kings College
Martin Karplus, BA, Harvard

[see more](#)

12 · [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



NA → mkt42 · 3 days ago

This shows is that some universities do and some universities don't. Great.

1 · [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



mkt42 → NA · 2 days ago

It also shows that you were wrong when you claimed that "Sciences and Maths get B. Sc. degrees, not B. A. degrees."

And that hunt3002 was correct to say "Liberal arts degrees also include the Science and Math of STEM. Liberal arts simply means it's not a professional or technical degree."

8 · [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



NA → mkt42 · 2 days ago

Is this a general rule or perhaps an old convention? Do modern universities IN GENERAL continue to do this practise? If so, I will rescind my original statement. But if the vast majority don't do this, then the argument for the general case can't be made, and I will stand by what I say. So is this a modern international phenomenon that most universities currently practise?

· [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



mkt42 → NA · 17 hours ago

I don't know about other countries, but science undergraduates in the USA frequently get BA degrees. Harvard's class of 2013 had 1,616 BA awardees -- and 35 BS awardees. Yale doesn't conveniently list its numbers. Princeton doesn't have a BS degree at all; it does have a BSE degree but that is only for engineering majors -- science majors only get BA degrees.

<http://news.harvard.edu/gazett...>

<http://www.princeton.edu/ua/se...>

Many small liberal arts colleges don't offer BS degrees at all, only BA degrees. But they have long been recognized as producing more than their share of future science and math PhDs, as e.g. this National Science Foundation report notes.

<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/...>

I can already anticipate your response: what about the other schools? Trust me, there are science BAs aplenty at them. Follow the links and search for new ones if you don't believe me.

2 · [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



taxgeek → NA · 4 days ago

At MIT you can get a bachelor of science in literature.

Not a joke: <http://web.mit.edu/catalog/deg...>

9 · [Reply](#) · [Share](#)



David J. Bandelwitz → taxgeek · 4 days ago



David J. Bonderevitch taxgeek · 6 hours ago

I got a bachelor of science in art at MIT. Many schools offer BA degrees in math and science. The difference at most schools is that a BS generally has more required courses specific to your field, making it considered a "professional" degree. A BA is generally considered a liberal arts degree, with less required classes in your field and more in other fields.

^ | v · Reply · Share >



James Blair CreateSir · 6 days ago

Or who go on to top medical or law schools.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



NYBamBam James Blair · 5 days ago

Those well-heeled Ph.D.'s you described are the only ones who get tenure track jobs and well-paid non-academic gigs these days, assuming they capped off their privileged education with an Ivy League or 'top 5' department in the country (for their discipline).

And since America is now a terminally class-stratified society, those Ph.D's from more humble backgrounds are the ones adjuncting themselves into bankruptcy, serving you coffee or asking you if you want that with fries..

Class mobility is dead in America..No where is that more true than in the American academy. Corporate America looks like an egalitarian utopia by comparison.

29 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



matimal NYBamBam · 14 hours ago

I got a tenure track job without being from a rich family or from a 'top 5' program. It's a large community college with no research support and a lot of administrative work, but its a full-time academic job. We need to broaden our horizons a little, here.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Christopher Pflaum · 6 days ago

I have a PhD in a high-demand area, finance, and there have always been more academic job openings than candidates. That was fortunate for me but I eventually left academia. My undergraduate degree, however, is in English. I have often been asked, "You were an English major, how come you are so good at finance?" My answer, "The logical approach to solving a business problem is not very different from that of explicating a poem." Another benefit, I can write, a skill that has served me extremely well in my positions in academia, government and the private sector. We disparage the humanities at our peril.

106 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



CapitaineDeLaPalice Christopher Pflaum · 6 days ago

The thing is, I learned how to write and explicate poetry without paying a university to give me a piece of paper that says that they checked my ability to do so.

I don't think anyone is disparaging the act of learning here - but the humanities are areas most adapted to autodidactic learning. Going into debt to get skills you can develop for free is foolish.

You need access to a decent lab to really learn modern chemistry and biology. Less so for physics and computer science. But the internet can get you pretty much as deep into the humanities as you'd like to go, mostly for free, and certainly for less than the cost of a PhD. Unless you have to publish (i.e. you're hell bent on getting into the academy) there's really no reason to pay for a humanities PhD.

31 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



dsch CapitaineDeLaPalice · 6 days ago

but the humanities are areas most adapted to autodidactic learning.

I think this is materially untrue, or at least only true to the extent that even the subjects 'most adapted to autodidactic learning' are so inaccessible to prospective autodidacts that it doesn't make a

inaccessible to prospective autodidacts that it doesn't make a difference.

But I do agree with the not going into debt part.

32 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



kodiak1221 → dsch · 6 days ago

In what ways are they inaccessible?

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dsch → kodiak1221 · 6 days ago

<http://www.marxists.org/refere...>

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → dsch · 6 days ago

"I think this is materially untrue"

I disagree, and stand by my statement. Autodidactic learning doesn't require learning in a vacuum. If you need help with, to pull an example from the aether, Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind (as one undoubtedly would!), you can find and use the same commentaries and philosophical resources you'd have at a university without paying tuition. The only thing you "miss out" on is getting a particular professor's pet theories in person, and I think my use of quotes in that phrase should adequately convey my assessment of the value of that experience.

Why anyone would willingly delve in Hegel is a question I'll leave to the philosophers. The poets are too busy being poetical. :)

12 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dsch → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 6 days ago

That relies on a conception of philosophy on the basis of a knowing subject and objects of knowledge (bourgeois science), i.e., I can read a book and obtain the knowledge contained within for myself. But Plato, for one, would argue that philosophy can only be imparted in discourse. You can make similar arguments for other fields.

To drop the H-bomb again, Hegel is actually very important to concepts of the poetic (and art in general). The image of the genius poet producing in splendid isolation is itself a recent phenomenon.

Edit: Also, there is the economic aspect. If you are doing full time work, it's unlikely you'd have the time and access to materials (university libraries) to get anywhere.

28 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → dsch · 6 days ago

I'm not going to argue regarding the necessity or ubiquity of the rigorous and structured study of philosophy, except to say that there are relatively few PhD level humanities programs in which more than a passing familiarity with Hegel is a necessity.

Of course, those who choose to study Hegel will steadfastly defend his importance.

I will, however, take issue with this:

"If you are doing full time work, it's unlikely you'd have the time and access to materials (university libraries) to get anywhere."

If you're doing "full time work," then you fall into the category I explicitly excluded from the likely autodidacts in my first statement when I said: "Unless you have to publish (i.e. you're hell bent on getting into the academy) there's really no reason to pay for a humanities PhD."

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dsch → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 5 days ago

You are absolutely right. I didn't take into account the context of your initial reply to the OP.

Regarding Hegel: I only have the most superficial grasp of him, but even though, yes, few programs *require* familiarity, I would maintain that any serious work in the humanities (certainly in literary theory and philosophy) is done in the shadow of Hegel or in perilous disregard of him.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → dsch · 5 days ago

You're perfectly free to maintain that. In fact, that argument could start a great discussion in a humanities classroom or workshop.

But if you bring it up at the trading desk or the proverbial water cooler, you're likely to get some strange looks.

Also, are you allowed to be reasonable like this? I may have to revoke your interwebs pass ...

:)

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dsch → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 3 days ago

I have special dispensation from the High Googleplex to occasionally not act like a complete jerk. It's like the license to kill given to double-oh agents.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



msmischief → dsch · 5 days ago

So find another person to talk to. Given the wonders of the Internet, that shouldn't be so difficult.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ivan the Terrible Poster → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 6 days ago

And you can get any physics textbook ever used in a school on Amazon. I wouldn't be inclined to bet on the talent of the autodidact physicist over that of the trained professional, and I wouldn't expect the quality of thinking of the autodidact philosopher to rival that of one who spent years learning from and discussing with other intelligent and well-read philosophers.

Hell, the aspiring physicist can get pretty much every lab apparatus he'd use in a four-year program online too; arguing on messageboards would be more the humanities equivalent of sculpting a spectrometer out of your own turds.

34 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 6 days ago

I think that, on a spectrum, basic physics is the most accessible of the sciences - certainly through the first year of college level physics (basic Newtonian physics, electromagnetism, etc.) And yes, most of those toys you can either make yourself or buy relatively cheaply.

Of course, the first year of college level physics doth not a physicist make, and some of the more advanced toys are not available online, or for less than your tuition. That goes even for an Bachelor of Science program, much less for a PhD level program in physics. It's hard to get time at a particle accelerator or a major observatory as an autodidact.

The study of the humanities, however, is essentially limited to books.

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ivan the Terrible Poster → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 6 days ago

No. It's not. It's about other people. Those are your training apparatus, different people who've spent meaningful amounts of time thinking carefully about the same things who know things you don't and who use language and form complex logical chains different from the ones occurring your own head. In absence of that, against dead literature and only adapted to the wonderfulness of your own unexamined internal narrative, you usually get TimeCube guy. I'm not sure why this is a difficult or non-obvious concept for something called "humanities".

The literature's just a jumping-off point, and a poor substitute since we can't bring Hegel into the room and interrogate him at length.

36 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 5 days ago

Why do you seem to think that the only place you can get feedback from or interaction with "other people" is by paying for the privilege at a university?

Being an autodidact doesn't mean being a hermit crab.

But mostly, you'll be talking with people about things you've read.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ivan the Terrible Poster → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 5 days ago

You're not likely to talk to people who've dedicated a lot of real thought to the subject, who all have the same basic common pool of knowledge, in an environment that sustains structured discussion on a level higher than your Sunday book club, and spending much more time doing it. An academic environment is a vastly more efficient environment for learning and intellectual engagement than anything you're going to find outside an academic environment.

Again, it's sort of vaguely maybe kinda sorta possible to get nearly similar results elsewhere, but to go from that to declaring screwing around on your own equally valid is utterly obtuse. Being a dilettante isn't the same thing as a subject expert or advancing a field of knowledge just because they both involve some level of doin' stuff.

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 4 days ago

You can find undergraduate level discussion lots of places, Ivan.

You do understand that this part of the thread isn't about "advancing a field of knowledge," right? Did you read it from the beginning? Undergraduate level skills. That's all we're talking about here.

Yes, if you want PhD level of understanding and research, you need to go through a PhD program. But that knowledge won't really be useful outside of the academy, at least, not in the areas covered by the humanities. Which, again, is what we're talking about here.

It is entirely feasible to get yourself an undergraduate level of knowledge in the humanities without matriculating at an accredited institution of higher education.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ivan the Terrible Poster → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 4 days ago

It's becoming clear that you really just ultimately want this to be true, badly, for some reason; and that there's nothing I could possibly say that won't get a "nuh-uh, you can totally self-educate in your bedroom. school is a lie!"

...and I'm not a student, I'm a professional.

So I'ma bow out.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CapitaineDeLaPalice → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 4 days ago

Funny, I was thinking about how you seem very devoted to the idea that "nuh-uh, you can only learn at a university, always, in every circumstance, no exceptions!"

Of course, I've actually acknowledged times and circumstances where you do need a university, or something like it. But to get a basic undergraduate understanding of the humanities? Nope.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



badphairy → CapitaineDeLaPalice · 5 days ago

And most people don't have parents willing to let them build a particle accelerator in the garage, like Michio Kaku did.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



matimal → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 6 days ago

You won't get useful feedback from other academics. Nor will you get the chance to teach or do lab or research work.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ivan the Terrible Poster → matimal · 6 days ago

Yeah, no shit. It's vaguely theoretically possible to learn most subjects without other people, but not near as quickly or as well. That's why we bother with this whole teaching thing rather than just plunking kids down in a library and checking in when they turn 21 in the first place. When the subject is a detailed study of *how human beings think and communicate*, that's doubly true.

34 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



lighten up → Ivan the Terrible Poster · 5 days ago

So what if the humanities doctor has access to others of his kind? What do they ultimately produce? In the end it's just an overpriced book-of-the-month club. these academics yap about other people's work and ideas, speak in obscure abstractions and ten dollar words. Their defining productive achievement is some abstruse dissertation that perhaps 20 people will read and forget. Of course they have no jobs, they have no useful skills. Their uselessness is not lost on the world

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



badphairy → lighten up · 5 days ago

You know how I know that not only do you not have a degree, you don't know any "academics"? Perhaps you should think about that.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



lighten up → badphairy · 5 days ago

How do you know? Actually I have a B.A. from Yale University (JE '95). I speak from experience. In the four years I spent there I had only two professors I respected. One was Michael Roemer, an accomplished film director, and the other was the writer Robert Stone. The professional academics were mere pondscum, enamored of their own jargon and the insignificant and inbred world they lived in. Parasites who livelihood depends on critiquing the work of others. A degree in any area outside of the hard sciences, or medicine, is intellectual masturbation. I also have two sisters in law pursuing Ph.D's and I can see how useless their work is and how ill-equipped they are for a productive life in the real world. I assume from the size of the chip on your shoulder that you are somehow involved in academia. If so I pity you.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



badphairy → lighten up · 5 days ago

None. I left because I don't want to spend five extra hours a week

nope, left it because I don't want to spend five or six hours/week backbiting other faculty in useless stupid meetings that have nothing to do with pedagogy.

It's odd, I went to a private undergraduate institution and a grad school associated with a land-grant university. I respected quite a number of my professors, such that I adjuncted long enough to hate it.

You're making me glad I didn't go to an Ivy, although I was accepted. I'd rather go to less of a "name" school and have a far better experience than you obviously did.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

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