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## Liberal-Arts Degrees Pay Off in the End

At the peak of their careers, graduates who studied humanities and social sciences out-earn other majors.

By Susannah Snider, From *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, May 2014

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Jim Bastardo

A liberal arts degree is paying off for Dana Di Somma.

Humanities and social science degrees don't get much respect these days. A weak job market and wallet-busting college costs make choosing a major that segues smoothly into a profession seem like a better bet for paying off student loans and launching a great career.

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But the liberal arts can be surprisingly bankable, especially during peak earning years. Between the ages of 56 and 60, liberal arts majors out-earn those who majored in other fields, such as business or nursing, by about \$2,000 annually, reports the Association of American Colleges and Universities. "It's about what you can do, not just what you majored in," says AAC&U spokesperson Debra

Humphreys. Successful job seekers demonstrate relevant professional experiences and show that they can think critically and communicate clearly.

A liberal arts and social sciences background worked for Dana Di Somma, who graduated from St. Bonaventure University in western New York with a degree in political science in 2008. She landed a stateside job with an Italian cosmetics company, where her coursework in international politics and her study-abroad experience help her collaborate comfortably with Italian and Chinese colleagues. “If I could go back, I’d choose the same major,” says Di Somma. “I’m well rounded, and politics and business go hand in hand.”

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