# Real graduates. Real talk. *Major* Impact.

See where economics can really take you.



## Rohun Pai

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**School:** University of Michigan
**Year:** 2014
**Major:** Economics & Political Science

### Why did you major in economics?

It seemed like a good major for 1) getting a job in the business world and 2) understanding how humans make decisions as individuals and on the behalf of organizations.

### Favorite econ class or topic? Why?

I took a class called American Industries my sophomore year. My professor, Jim Adams, was (and still is) super engaging and took a history-oriented approach to understanding the structure, conduct, and performance of markets like cars, airlines, beer, etc. It was an awesome way to dive in and understand so many of the "why's" behind industries that dominate our lives.

### Biggest econ myth you've heard—and why was it wrong?

I think people can tend to look at economics as being EITHER a qualitative social science OR quantitive and finance-oriented. To me, the myth is the either-or dichotomy. Economics is quite a bit of both. It is fundamentally about how and why human beings make various decisions and that requires both an understanding of qualitative and quantitative concepts. It is not really about theory or math. It is all about behavior—and that's universal.

### What advice would you give your first year self?

The courses you take in your first year provide you with tools that will be helpful in understanding not just economics, but human behavior more broadly. Focus on understanding the fundamentals of the toolkit and applying them in and - especially - out of economics classes. Using what you learn for policy and/or finance-related work is just barely scratching the surface of all that you can understand and do.

### Any fun, unexpected, or relatable story from studying econ?

When doing homework or practice questions set, my friends and I would occasionally raise and cross our arms forming an 'X' like you would see at the intersection of a supply and a demand curve. We would then move one or both arms to model out what was happening in whatever scenario was detailed in the question. It was just a helpful way to visualize the situation and arrive at the answer. After a few times of doing this at the library, however, we could not avoid the stares of other students. Turns out - sans context - doing that with your arms kind of looks like you are making gang signs. If you can believe it, that is frowned up in many circles. We were asked to cut back on that.

### "I almost majored in..." (and why you stuck with econ).

I did not get into the undergraduate business program (which pushed me deeper into economics), but I did also consider the organizational studies program at Michigan. I love observing organizational dynamics up close where I work and from afar with organizations I follow closely (like the Michigan Football team and organization for example). I stuck with econ because I liked the quantitative underpinnings and was not sure those were as heavily emphasized with organizational studies. If I was to do it all again, I would consider a double major with that program or even psychology. Economics would get top billing though.

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