The field of psychoanalysis has gotten the Hollywood treatment over the past decade, being featured on a hit TV show, *The Sopranos*, and two movies starring Billy Crystal and Robert De Niro, *Analyze This* and *Analyze That*.

In the same period, the number of college students earning psychology degrees has jumped 22%; the Princeton Review pegs it as the second most popular major today. No doubt students have visions of striking it rich, listening to patients' problems while collecting $100-an-hour fees.

The reality is that few psychology majors move on to graduate school--and the career path for the rest of the group: not so rich. Psychology majors during their first few years out of school typically make around $35,000; those with 10 to 20 years' experience are pulling in $54,000. Those are the second-lowest incomes in both cases in our study of the most lucrative college majors. Only criminal justice majors fare worse.

The most lucrative college major today: computer engineering. Those with less than five years' experience are making $60,500, while those with 10 to 20 years' experience are banking $104,000 per year. "Everything today has a computer in it," says Al Lee, director of quantitative analysis at PayScale.com, an online compensation comparison tool.

Today's computer engineering majors are designing the integrated circuits that move information around, and employers like AT&T (nyse: T - news - people), Cisco Systems (nasdaq: CSCO - news - people) and Hewlett-Packard (nyse: HPQ - news - people) can't hire enough of them.

To gauge the most lucrative majors, we turned to PayScale.com, which collects real-time salary information from 10 million users. They looked at 20 popular majors where most of the graduates go into the private sector; thus, some popular majors, like education and social work, were excluded.

We looked at median salaries to wipe out outliers at the top and bottom ends of the scale. Salaries included bonuses and commissions, but excluded any stock compensation. All jobs were included in the data, not just those specific to the major. Anyone who acquired an advanced degree was excluded from the study.

If you're looking for a big paycheck straight out of school, think about an engineering degree. The four highest paid majors for people with less than five years' experience were all engineering-based, with computer engineering leading the way. "It is a matter of supply and demand," says Lee, adding, "Engineers tend to stay at their jobs longer, so getting the good people right out of college is important." Despite the high pay, the number of engineering degrees issued has barely budged the past 10 years; 67,000 degrees were handed out in 2006, the latest year available.

One reason the number of engineering degrees has not grown much is that the programs tend to be very rigorous. This benefits the engineering students who can complete the coursework, though--employers know they're typically getting competent people straight out of school, and therefore are willing to dole out generous salaries.

There are several majors with better growth potential than the assorted engineering degrees. Engineering salaries tend to start high, but there is not huge growth on an annual basis. Witness the difference between engineering salaries for those with little experience compared to those with 10 to 20 years' experience: The
experienced jobs tend to pay 55% to 60% higher. Meanwhile, the economics, finance and math majors are pursing jobs with salaries that often double once they've gotten some decent experience under their belts.

"The kinds of majors where you learn to integrate mathematics and science with the everyday world have a tremendous benefit in terms of earnings potential," says PayScale.com's Lee. These include economics, engineering, finance and mathematics.

For those still set on that psychology degree, plan on getting a doctorate, because a master's alone is not going to add much juice to your earnings potential. The typical salary for someone with a master's in psychology and 10 to 20 years' experience was $56,500, just $2,500 more than psych majors without advanced degrees.

Those numbers are scarier than anything Tony Soprano ever unleashed in Dr. Melfi's office.

In Pictures: Most Lucrative College Majors

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<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
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*Source: PayScale.com*