

## PHILOSOPHY READING LIST

**Some suggestions for those intending to read philosophy and/or beginning a philosophy course.**

### **General introductions (in approximate order of difficulty)**

- Edward Craig *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford)
- Thomas Nagel, *What Does it All Mean?* (OUP). Short, readable.
- Simon Blackburn, *Think* (OUP). Readable and engaging.
- Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (OUP). A classic, nearly 100 years old but still readable.
- A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Penguin). Another classic, this one from the 30s - skip the long Introduction, and dive into Chapter One!

### **Others (in no special order)**

- Douglas Hofstadter & Daniel Dennett (eds), *The Mind's I* (Penguin) Idiosyncratic but fun collection of pieces, many by philosophers, on the nature of the mind.
- Paul Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness* (MIT Press)
- Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind* (Penguin). The philosophy of mind has been a particularly hot topic in recent years: these last two are very good introductions.
- A. F. Chalmers. *What is This Thing Called Science?* (Open Univ.). Excellent intro. to philosophy of science.
- Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (CUP). Vigorous-this book will challenge a lot of your ethical ideas.
- Jonathan Glover, *Causing Death and Saving Lives* (Penguin). Another book on practical moral issues like abortion, euthanasia, etc.
- J. J. C. Smart & Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism, For and Against* (CUP). Is morality about aiming to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number?
- Bernard Williams, *Morality* (Penguin). A very short introduction to some questions about the status of morality (e.g. can moral claims be objective? are they merely subjective?)
- Simon Blackburn, *Being Good* (Oxford). A longer but perhaps rather more accessible introduction.
- Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Fontana). Not easy but important.
- Jonathan Wolff, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* (OUP). Accessible, based around various issues
- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (OUP). A bit more advanced, and structured round different schools of political thought.
- Michael J. Loux, *Metaphysics* (Routledge). A good recent introduction.

- R. M. Sainsbury, *Paradoxes* (CUP). A nice introduction to paradoxes like "This sentence is false" which apparently is true if it is false and false if it is true.
- Ian Hacking: *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?* (CUP).
- Samuel Guttenplan, *The Languages of Logic* (Blackwell). A smattering of formal logic is part of every philosopher's tool kit. This is similar in level and content to the first term Formal Logic course.
- Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (Routledge). Should appeal to mathematicians-old but still worth reading.

### **Great Dead Philosophers (some of the more accessible texts)**

- Plato, *Meno* and *Euthyphro*
- Descartes, *Meditations*
- Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*
- Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and *Dialogues on Natural Religion*.
- J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*.

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