PRELIMINARY READING IN PHILOSOPHY
Pembroke College, 2017-18

This preliminary reading list is for Pembroke students taking PPE, Philosophy & Psychology, Philosophy & Modern Languages, and Philosophy & Theology.

In their first year course, Philosophy students take a paper called Introduction to Philosophy. This paper is divided into Logic, General Philosophy and Moral Philosophy. You are encouraged to read as much as you can from the preparatory readings given below; doing so will certainly help make your first year easier!

Logic

This course is an introduction to logic. There is one set text:

Volker Halbach
The Logic Manual

General Philosophy

The course concentrates on topics connected to knowledge, reasoning, mind and body, personal identity, free will and the existence of God. Useful introductory texts are:

Thomas Nagel
What Does It All Mean?
E. Conee and T. Sider
Riddles of Existence
Bertrand Russell
Problems of Philosophy [available online]

All three contain discussions of topics in general philosophy which will be covered in your first year, in particular the first six chapters of Russell’s book, chapters 1 and 6 of the Conee and Sider book and chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Nagel book. Nagel’s book contains, in addition, discussions that will be relevant to your study of Moral Philosophy.

Moral Philosophy

This part of the course introduces some key themes in moral philosophy through a study of J.S. Mill’s utilitarian ethics.

John Stuart Mill
Utilitarianism [available online]
Roger Crisp
Mill on Utilitarianism
J J C Smart & B. Williams
Utilitarianism: For and Against

Crisp is an excellent introduction to Mill’s views. Smart and Williams contains both a modern development of utilitarianism (by Smart) and important criticism (by Williams).

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