PRELIMINARY READING IN PHILOSOPHY
Pembroke College, April 2020

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:

Simon Blackburn  
Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy

Bertrand Russell  
Problems of Philosophy [available online]

E. Conee and T. Sider  
Riddles of Existence

Thomas Nagel  
What Does It All Mean?

All four 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, chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Nagel book and all chapters of the Blackburn book. Nagel’s book contains, in addition, discussions that will be relevant to your study of Moral Philosophy.

**General Philosophy - Online Resources**

You may wish to read and think about the following links from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. These are on the six topics covered in the General Philosophy course:

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/  
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/skepticism/  
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/induction-problem/  
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/  
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freewill/  
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/
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*
- Kryster Bykvist: *Utilitarianism: A Guide to the Perplexed*

Crisp is an excellent introduction to Mill’s views. Smart and Williams contains both a recent defence of utilitarianism (by Smart) and important criticism (by Williams). Bykvist’s book is a useful short introduction to utilitarianism.

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