

## ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE

### PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS – READING LIST

The PPE course at Oxford falls into two parts. The first year is devoted to preparation for the Preliminary Examination, taken in June. There is little choice in the subjects which must be taken in the first year, although there is some flexibility in the way each subject can be approached. The regulations governing this part of the course are as follows:

#### INTRODUCTORY ECONOMICS

The *best introduction to economics and the modern economy is online and free*. It's called **CORE** and can be accessed here: <http://www.core-econ.org/>. It's worth reading at least the introductory chapters. You can also order a paperback copy.

Other good introductory textbooks are *Microeconomics* and *Macroeconomics* both by Daron Acemoglu, David Laibson, and John List.

In the first year, we focus on the building blocks of economic understanding. In microeconomics, these include consumer and producer theory, cost analysis, market structures, intertemporal choice, welfare economics and externalities. In macroeconomics, these include the determinants of national income and employment, national income accounting, inflation, unemployment, open economy macro-economics, fiscal & monetary policy.

You will also develop your understanding of mathematical methods in economics, including the study and application of functions, the use of graphs, fundamental issues in differential and integral calculus and optimisation theory with applications to economics.

#### INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

The three-hour paper consists of the following three sections, and candidates are required to answer at least one question from each section:

- (I) Logic
- (II) General Philosophy
- (III) Moral Philosophy

There is one set text for the Logic course: Volker Halbach, *The Logic Manual* (Oxford University Press, 2010). It can be purchased at the publishers webpage: <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199587841.do#.UBGD4Ks7XLI>. Support materials to be used in conjunction with *The Logic Manual* may be found at: <http://logicmanual.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/index.html>. Students coming up to Catz are not expected to have read the Logic Manual in advance. Those wishing to do some preparatory work are encouraged to read Chapter 1 of Mark Sainsbury, *Logical Forms* (Blackwell) in which a number of the central concepts of Logic are explained.

Although General Philosophy does not rely on a single set text, close and careful reading of the books listed below (under 'Philosophy') will prove very helpful when you come to tackle this part of the course. Topics to be studied include: knowledge, scepticism, perception, induction, primary and secondary qualities, the relation of mind and body, personal identity, and free will.

Moral philosophy is based on the study of John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*, ed. R. Crisp (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998). Topics covered in the context of studying Mill's work include: hedonism, utility and desire; Mill's proof of utilitarianism and the naturalistic fallacy; act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism; integrity, individuality, justice, equality and rights. You are advised to read Mill's *Utilitarianism* before you come up to Oxford.

## INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

The paper will contain questions on:

### (a) *Theory of Politics*

Questions will be set on the following topics: (i) the nature and the grounds of rights; (ii) the nature and grounds of democracy; (iii) the role of civil society; (iv) power in the democratic state; (v) the nature and grounds of liberty; (vi) state paternalism; and (vii) free speech.

Questions will also be set on the following texts: (i) John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*; (ii) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*; (iii) Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; (iv) Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; (v) John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*.

### (b) *Practice of Politics*

Questions will be set on the following topics: (i) regime types; definition and measurement of variations between types of democracy; (ii) political institutions and practice outside the advanced industrial democracies; stability, state capacity and state formation; (iii) the state and its institutions (executives, legislatures, parties and party systems, electoral systems, courts, constitutions and centre-periphery relations); (iv) parties and party systems; political values and identity politics; (v) social movements, populism, and revolutions.

At the end of the first year it is possible to choose between continuing the tripartite study of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, or taking any one of the possible bipartite options – Philosophy and Politics; Philosophy and Economics; Politics and Economics.

You ought not to concern yourself with making this choice until well on in the first year, since the first-year syllabus is designed to introduce you to each branch of the School and thus enable you to make an informed choice. The following reading list is intended to provide an introduction to the course. It is not comprehensive nor, on the other hand, is it a minimal preparation. The books suggested below are chosen rather to give an insight into various parts of the syllabus as well as to provide stimulating reading.

## **READING LISTS**

### **ECONOMICS**

If you want to do some (lighter) background reading below is a selection of books on important topics. We are not suggesting that you read all or even most of them, but dipping into a few will give you a good feel for the subject. In chronological order:

*The Great Economists: How Their Ideas Can Help Us Today*, Linda Yueh, Viking, 2018

*Economics for the Common Good* by Jean Tirole, Princeton University Press, 2017

*Phishing for Phools: The Economics of Manipulation and Deception Hardcover* by George A. Akerlof and Robert J. Shiller, 2015

*Who Gets What and Why: The New Economics of Matchmaking and Market Design* by Alvin Roth, 2015

*The Undercover Economist Strikes Back: How to Run or Ruin an Economy* by Tim Harford, Abacus, 2014.

*Thinking Fast, and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, 2013

*Why Nations Fail* by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, Crown, 2013

*Poor Economics* by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, 2012

*Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy* by Raghuram Rajan, Princeton University Press, 2011

*Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism*, by George A. Akerlof and Robert J. Shiller 2010

*The Art of Strategy: A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business and Life* by Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff, W.W. Norton 1993

*How Markets Fail: The Logic of Economic Calamities* by John Cassidy, Penguin, 2010

*Superfreakonomics: Global Cooling, Patriotic Prostitutes and Why Suicide Bombers Should Buy Life Insurance*, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, Penguin, 2010

*The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008* by Paul Krugman, Penguin, 2009

*The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* by Paul Collier, Oxford University Press 2008.

*The Economic Naturalist: Why Economics Explains Almost Everything* by Robert H. Frank, Virgin, 2008

*The Logic of Life Uncovering the New Economics of Everything* by Tim Harford, 2008

*A Very Short Introduction to Economics* by Partha Dasgupta, OUP, 2007

*The Undercover Economist* by Tim Harford, Abacus, 2007

*Freakonomics* by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, Penguin, 2005

*The Age of Diminished Expectations* by Paul Krugman, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, MIT Press, 1997

*The Armchair Economist* by Steve Landsburg, Simon & Schuster, 1995

*Thinking Strategically: The Competitive Edge in Business, Politics, and Everyday Life* by Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff, W. W. Norton 1993

*The Great Crash, 1929* by John Kenneth Galbraith, Penguin (Business), 1992

*Micromotives and Macrobehavior* by Thomas Schelling, W.W. Norton, 1978 (2006 2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

*The Strategy of Conflict* by Thomas Schelling, Harvard University Press, 1960 (1990 3<sup>rd</sup> ed)

*The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times, and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers* by Robert Heilbroner, Penguin 1953 (2000, 7<sup>th</sup> ed)

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The following reading list is meant as a further introduction to the course. For *Moral Philosophy*, you might find it helpful to read one or more of the following books in conjunction with Mill's *Utilitarianism*:

Darwall, S. *Philosophical Ethics* (Westview, 1998), chapters 12-13.

Donner, W. 'Mill's Utilitarianism', In J. Skorupski (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Mill* (CUP, 1997), pp. 255-92.

Skorupski, J. *John Stuart Mill*. (Routledge, 1989), chapter 9.

For *General Philosophy*, you should begin by reading one or other (and preferably both!) of the first two of the following books, and then follow up those issues that you find most interesting.

\*\* Simon Blackburn, *Think* (OUP, Oxford, 1999)

\*\* Earl Connee and Theodore Sider, *Riddles of Existence* (OUP, Oxford, 2005)

Thomas Nagel, *What Does it all Mean?* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987)

Jonathan Dancy, *An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1985)

Thomas Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (OUP, Oxford, 1986)

Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (OUP, New York, 1986)

## **POLITICS**

To prepare for the theory section of the course, you should begin with Jonathan Wolff's *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* or Adam Swift's *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians* and then the set texts by Rousseau, Marx, and Mill. You may also find it helpful to read *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entries on these authors.

For the second part of the syllabus, 'The Practice of Politics' here are some good introductory texts. In all cases consult the most recent edition available.

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries*

Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*

David Held, *Models of Democracy*

Darren Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*

Jack Goldstone (ed) *Revolutions: theoretical, comparative and historical studies*

Professor Louise Fawcett, Tutors in Politics

Professor Philipp Koralus, Tutor in Philosophy

Professor Alexander Teytelboym, Tutor in Economics

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