

PPE

Suggested Reading

PPE comprises three subjects – Philosophy, Politics, and Economics – so it is important that you think about all three before making an application. Alumni of the Oxford course (the first university to offer PPE) include a host of political luminaries and heads of state including our current Prime Minister, David Cameron, Labour leader Ed Miliband, and the Burmese leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. The degree does not just fit you for Politics. PPE graduates can be found in a range of careers in both the public and private sector: CEOs, actors, authors, and successful businessmen and media moguls.

Below are some suggestions of where you might want to start exploring the subject. See our **Economics**, **Philosophy**, **Politics** reading lists for more suggestions. The key to enjoying something and getting the most out of it is to follow your nose and look into what interests you. Starting off with something more general and then asking yourself ‘What do I want to know more about?’ will help guide you towards reading which you will find interesting.

PHILOSOPHY

1. **Think** by Simon Blackburn is an accessible introduction to philosophy which argues for its continued relevance to the way we live. The book covers the major thinkers and big questions, while giving you the tools to take your exploration further. Another very good introduction to the subject is Thomas Nagel’s **What does it all mean?**
2. There is a podcast series called **Philosophy Bites** available on iTunes. Almost all of them are good so pick what grabs you.
3. The **Very Short Introduction** series is excellent and includes titles on a lot of the big names in philosophy – Nietzsche, Kant, Schopenhauer, Plato, and Descartes among others.

POLITICS

4. **Keep up to date with the news**

Magazines like The Week (<http://subscription.theweek.co.uk/subscribe/>) and The Economist (<https://subscriptions.economist.com>). Both magazines have heavily discounted or free introductory offers for students in particular – check their websites.

5. **Be aware of your sources**

Try to read accounts of the same event from more than one source, to get a sense of different interpretations. A good one is to start with the Guardian, and then compare the Telegraph coverage of the same stories.

ECONOMICS

1. **Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything**, Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. This is a definitive introductory text for anyone considering studying Economics at university and, if you like it, you can also check out **Superfreakonomics!**
2. **The Undercover Economist**, Tim Harford.
Another excellent introductory text which explores how Economics impacts our everyday

lives in unexpected ways. If Harford's website for more

Oxbridge
INTERVIEWS

you like this, have a look at of his work, <http://timharford.com/>.

Philosophy Suggested Reading

Do we act freely? How do we construct just political states? What is it to know something rather than merely believe it? Philosophy (from an Ancient Greek word meaning 'love of wisdom') is the study of fundamental questions of reality, morality, language, reason, the mind, and much more. What distinguishes it from other disciplines is the emphasis on a critical and systematic approach and a reliance on rational argument. The study of Philosophy is an excellent training for a variety of careers. You will learn to think critically, analyse arguments, and understand their hidden assumptions. This will enable you to produce well-constructed arguments of your own, and express them clearly both verbally and on paper. The skills you will gain from studying Philosophy are highly transferable, both within other academic disciplines and, later on, in fields as varied as journalism, politics, business, law, the arts, and medicine.

We have put together some suggestions below to help you start exploring Philosophy but the key to enjoying a subject and getting the most out of it is to follow your nose and look into what interests you. Starting with something more general and then asking yourself 'What do I want to know more about?' will help guide you towards reading which you will find interesting.

6. **Think** by Simon Blackburn is an accessible introduction to philosophy which argues for its continued relevance to the way we live. The book covers the major thinkers and big questions, while giving you the tools to take your exploration further. Another very good introduction to the subject is Thomas Nagel's **What does it all mean?**
7. Bertrand Russell's **The Problems of Philosophy**, available on Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>) is a classic, but accessible, text from the Nobel Prize winning philosopher and author.
8. The **Very Short Introduction** series is excellent and includes titles on a lot of the big names in philosophy – Nietzsche, Kant, Schopenhauer, Plato, and Descartes among others.
9. There is a podcast series called **Philosophy Bites** available on iTunes. Almost all of them are good so pick what grabs you.
10. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/> is a great tool to use for reference – the Wikipedia of Philosophy.
11. Slavoj Zizek is a contemporary philosopher and a real intellectual powerhouse. This is a short animated video he made with the RSA, but it is worth investigating his other work: <http://www.thersa.org/events/rसानimate/animate/rसानimate-first-as-tragedy,-then-as-farce>.

Ethics

Ethics is a great place to start in your exploration of Philosophy as it has a lot of immediate relevance to our day to day lives. The BBC has some good introductory material on Ethical theory, and relates it to key contemporary issues such as abortion, contraception, lying and torture:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/>.

Politics Suggested Reading

Politics is the study. How governments interact. Look up the details of your course.

International politics

Politics of a family to how do you run the world. Undergraduate degrees tend to focus on high-level political structures.

1. Keep up to date with the news

Magazines like The Week (<http://subscription.theweek.co.uk/subscribe/>) and The Economist (<https://subscriptions.economist.com>). Both magazines have heavily discounted or free introductory offers for students - check their websites for details or speak to your school librarian about taking out a subscription.

2. Be aware of your sources

Try to read accounts of the same event from more than one source, to get a sense of different interpretations. A good one is to start with the Guardian, and then compare the Telegraph coverage of the same stories. The Financial Times

3. What do you think?

Think about what you read. Looking at one issue more in depth i.e. reading about it in different newspapers and 'comment is free' – what do you think?

4. Andrew Marr is very good on British politics and history, especially in **History of Modern Britain**

5. Jonathan Powell's memoir about the Blair government is very entertaining, **The New Machiavelli**

6. Jeremy Paxman just published a book on the First World War and he also made a documentary based on it, **Great Britain's Great War**

7. Rory Stewart writes very well on Iraq

8. 'Why Nations Fail' is great on development and political economy, although it's a bit more academic

9. Another, more introductory book on aid is 'The Bottom Billion' by Paul Collier

10. On political theory, Michael Sandel did a series of Reith lectures for the BBC on ethics, politics and economics (the Reith lectures are generally quite good and are all available as podcasts) and there is also

11. Kymlicka's 'Introduction to Political Philosophy'.

12. I'm not sure if you want to use anything fictional, but you can never go wrong with 'Yes, Minister'.