Guide to Syllabus and Reading for First Year PPE Students

1. The First Year PPE Course

In the first year you will study all three PPE subjects, working towards an examination in June, at the end of Trinity Term. Candidates will take three papers:

(i) Introductory Economics
(ii) Introduction to Philosophy
(iii) Introduction to Politics

Anticipated First-Year Tutorial Schedule

	Michaelmas Term	**Hilary Term**	**Trinity Term**
Economics	Microeconomics & Quantitative Methods	Macroeconomics & Quantitative Methods	Revision tutorials
Philosophy	Logic & General Philosophy	Logic & Moral Philosophy	Revision tutorials
Politics	Practice of Politics	Practice of Politics	Theory of Politics
		Political Analysis	

2. Reading Lists

(i) Economics

An important part of the preparation for studying economics is to take an interest in current economic issues by reading a variety of newspapers and periodicals; the best starting point is to read the weekly The Economist. There are also some interesting and readable introductory books that will help you to think about the questions economists want to answer, and how the tools of economic analysis are used. Look at the following books and read through two or three you are most interested in:

- David Smith *Free Lunch: Easily Digestible Economics* (Profile Books)
- Paul Krugman *The Accidental Theorist* (Norton)
- Paul Krugman *The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008* (Penguin)
- K. Binmore *A Very Short Introduction to Game Theory* (OUP, 2007)
- Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot *The Tiger that Isn't: Seeing through a World of Numbers* (Profile Books, 2007)
- Roger E. Backhouse *The Penguin History of Economics* (Penguin, 2002)

The course will begin with microeconomics. There is no prescribed textbook for this course, but CORE textbook is the most referenced one during your first year. The recommended reading list is:

For introductory level reading (if you have not studied economics before):

1. Begg, D., G. Vernasca, S. Fischer and R. Dornbusch Economics, McGraw Hill
2. Lipsey, R. and A. Chrystal, Economics, Oxford University Press.

For principal reading:

1. CORE: The Economy. Link: https://core-econ.org/the-economy/

2. Varian, H. R., Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach, Norton*
3. Morgan, W., Katz, M. L. and Rosen, H. S., Microeconomics, McGraw-Hill*
4. Frank, R. Microeconomics and Behaviour, McGraw-Hill*
5. Perloff, J., Microeconomics-Theory and Applications with Calculus, Pearson*

CORE book is a foundational book for studying economics during your first year in Oxford. You are encouraged to skim this book over the summer prior your arrival to Oxford. Varian is a more advanced and rigorous textbook and is recommended if you want continue economics in years 2 and 3. We recommend you to buy either Varian or MKR textbooks if possible (but if not, you will be able to find library copies in Oxford). If you have studied A-Level Economics, chapters 1, 2 and 7 of MKR would be valuable preliminary reading. Chapter 1 from Varian is suitable for introductory reading.

If you have not done at least AS-level mathematics, or if you feel that your mathematical background is weak, we strongly recommend that you work to improve your maths skills before you arrive in Oxford. You could work from any textbook covering the material for A-level Pure Maths Modules 1 and 2 – a mathematics teacher at school may be able to suggest one. Alternatively you could use a book intended for economists which starts at the level of GCSE maths:

Geoff Renshaw *Maths for Economics* (Oxford University Press, any edition)* Chapters 1 to 7
or
Ian Jacques *Mathematics for Economics and Business* (Prentice-Hall, 5th or later edition)* Chapters 1 to 4

Either of these books would be useful to you during the first year; as preparation you should work through the suggested chapters. The level of algebra and calculus required is at the level of A-level maths; it is essential that you work through lots of practice questions to acquire fluency. If you have not done A-level mathematics, please let Lincoln PPE team know about it, we will sign you up for a crash-course in mathematics.

In the upcoming weeks, you will be e-mailed the electronic Maths Workbook prepared by Prof. Margaret Stevens with a list of assignments to be handed in on week 1.

(ii) Philosophy

The most important thing in starting philosophy is to acquire the technique of philosophical argument and the best way to do this is by reading philosophy of the highest quality.

The first year syllabus in philosophy is divided into three parts:

Moral Philosophy

You should read the central text:

- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. by Roger Crisp, OUP.* (Or there's a free version available here.

And if possible either of the following introductions to Utilitarian ethics:

- Julia Driver (2012). *Consequentialism.* London: Routledge.
- Krister Bykvist (2010). *Utilitarianism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum.

General Philosophy

The General Philosophy course is not based on a single particular text, but is devoted to questions in metaphysics (the nature of reality), epistemology (the theory of knowledge), and philosophy of religion (among others, theories about knowledge of God's existence or absence).

That said, two texts by Descartes and Hume come up repeatedly, and you should prepare by reading through these texts (the free versions available online will be fine).

- René Descartes, *Meditations*. Available here.*
- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.* Available here.*

Also, if possible, have a look at any of the following:

- Annalisa Coliva & Duncan Pritchard (2021). *Skepticism.* London: Routledge. Chapter 1.
- Linda Zagzebski (2007). *The Philosophy of Religion: An Historical Introduction*. London: Blackwell. Chapter 7.
- Michael McKenna & Derk Pereboom (2016). *Free Will: A Contemporary Introduction.* London: Routledge. Chapter 2.

Logic

For the logic part of the course, you will use the following textbook:

- V. Halbach, *The Logic Manual* (Oxford University Press, 2010)*.

Do not be intimated by the formalism and intricacies of the text – simply have a first look and read as far as you can follow. You will devote a lot of time to careful study and problem sheets during the first term, and your tutor will take you through the material step by step.

(iii) Politics

The first year of your politics course consists of three parts. It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with some core readings within each of these themes.

Introduction to the Practice of Politics

The first part that you will be doing is Introduction to the Practice of Politics. We will examine a range of topics within the study of politics, including: (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.

Two books that offer an introduction for this section of the course are:

- Lijphart (2002) Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries. Yale: Yale University Press.*
- Robert, William Clark, Matt Golder and Sona Nadenicheck Golder (2013) The Principles of Comparative Politics. 2nd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage.*

Introduction to Political Theory

The second section of the politics course is dedicated to Political Theory. In this part of the course, students will be familiarised with core topics with political philosophy, especially pertaining to the

study of democratic states. A range of topics will be discussed such as: the nature and grounds of democracy; power and influence in the democratic state; ideology; civil society; public choice approaches to democracy; the nature and limits of liberty.

As preparation for this part of the first year course, you should read:

- Wolff, Jonathan (1996) An Introduction to Political Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.*
- Adam Swift (2013), *Political Philosophy,* Third Edition. Polity.

If possible, also read the following primary sources:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto.*
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762), especially Book 1, chapters 6-8, Book 2, Book 3, chapters 10-18, Book 4.

Introduction to Political Analysis

The third part of the course provides an introduction to methodology and the logic of empirical political analysis. Specifically, in students will learn how political scientists use data to test their theories.

The following book provides a good introduction to methods in politics:

- Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten (2013) The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*