

**BA Honours Philosophy  
First Year Epistemology  
Reading List**

The required readings are just that: they give you what you need to know. You should also do as much of the recommended reading as you can, and dip into the supplementary readings on topics that particularly interest you.

Required

a) Textbooks

Adam Morton, A Guide Through the Theory of Knowledge (OUP)

b) Classics

Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, Meditations 1 & 2.

Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy (OUP), first four chapters.

A. J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge (Pelican), first three chapters

Of these, the Morton book is probably the most useful to you. Buy it: it is not expensive. It is the one I usually have in mind in selecting the contents of the lectures I give. Philosophy honours students will encounter the classic texts in other parts of their studies. For those of you that are not philosophy majors, the Russell book will be particularly useful.

Recommended

a) Textbooks

Jonathan Dancy: Contemporary Epistemology (Blackwell), everything except chapters 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13.

Charles Landesman: An Introduction to Epistemology (Blackwell), chapters 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7.

Keith Lehrer: Theory of Knowledge (Routledge), chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Landesman is very good on perceptual knowledge. The Dancy is a standard text, very good on all topics with which it deals, but it is not intended for beginning students. Philosophy honours students will want to have it, because they will use it constantly in all three years of their undergraduate studies. But the chapters mentioned above are reasonably accessible to first year students, if used in conjunction with the

(less demanding) Morton book. Lehrer is very good on the theory of justification, although not easy.

## b) General

Bernard Williams: Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry, Chapter 2.

P. F. Strawson, "Perception and its Objects", in Philosophy and Identity, ed. G. MacDonald, reprinted in the Dancy anthology listed below.

Willard v. Quine, "Two dogmas of empiricism", in Moser (ed), A Priori Knowledge (see below).

Quine is one of the two most influential short philosophical essays written this century, and the focus of all subsequent discussion of a priori knowledge. It is also very attractively written--indeed, it can seem much easier than it really is. I strongly recommend the Williams to all students: it is enormously stimulating. Strawson is a modern classic in the philosophy of perception.

## Supplementary

Jonathan Dancy, ed: Perceptual Knowledge, in the Oxford Readings series.

Irvin Rock: Perception (Scientific American Library, 1984)

[Rock is a psychologist of perception, but this introductory article is very useful to philosophers interested in perceptual knowledge.]

Brian Skyrms: Choice and Chance, 3rd. ed. (Wadsworth), chapters 1 and 2.

Nelson Goodman: Fact, Fiction and Forecast (Harvard UP)

[Two classics on the problems of induction. The Skyrms is an excellent, thoroughly accessible textbook.]

Ian McFetridge, "Explicating 'x knows a priori that p' ", in his Logical Necessity and Other Essays (Blackwell)

Paul Moser, ed: A Priori Knowledge (in the Oxford Readings series).

[The Moser has a particularly useful editors introduction.]

Mark Sainsbury: Paradoxes (OUP), chapter 4.

[Another textbook, excellent on the problems of induction. Harder than Skyrms.]

Roderick Chisholm: "The myth of the given", in his Foundations of Knowing (Princeton UP), reprinted in Linda Alcoff, ed., Epistemology: the Big Questions

Laurence Bonjour: "The elements of coherentism", in his The Structure of Empirical Knowledge, extract reprinted in Linda Alcoff, ed., Epistemology: the Big Questions

[Two modern classics in the theory of justification.]

G.E. Moore, "A defense of common sense", and "Proof of an external world", in his Philosophical Papers (Routledge)

Barry Stroud: The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism (OUP)

[The Moore is a classic discussion of skepticism: Stroud is probably the most influential contemporary discussion of skeptical reasoning.]

Finally, here are three general books on philosophical methodology and on writing philosophical essays that you may find useful. They will be particularly helpful to non-philosophy majors, who do not have the benefit of tutorials.

A. P. Martinich: Philosophical Writing (Blackwell)

Jay Rosenberg: The Practice of Philosophy (Prentice Hall)

Adam Morton: Philosophy in Practice (Blackwell)

Martinich is very good on the writing part of writing philosophy. Rosenberg is very sensible on matters of style and content. Morton is a longer book, covering a wide spectrum of philosophical topics, and is philosophically richer than the other two. You should also remember that there is a large collection of past sessional papers in Ep and Meth in the Philosophy Department office. In preparing for your final examination, it is a good idea to set yourself to answer under examination conditions a few questions chosen from those papers.