

## Mandatory

- ***Political Philosophy - A Complete Introduction: A Teach Yourself Guide* - Phil Parvin**
- *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*

## Economy

- Tim Harford, *The Undercover Economist*
- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*
- John Lanchester, *Whoops! Why Everyone owes everyone and no one pay*
- Jang, Ha-Joon, *Kicking Away the Ladder or Good Samaritans*
- Paul Collier, *Bottom Billion*
- Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*

## Ethics/Philosophy

- *Practical Ethics* - Peter Singer
- *What Money Can't Buy* - M.Sandel
- ***Justice* - M.Sandel**

## Society/Equality

- *Between the World and Me* - **Ta-Nehisi Coates**
- *Social Movements 'Between the Balcony and Barricade'*
- *Living Dolls: The return of sexism* – Natasha Walters

## IR/Geopol.

- *Global Issues* - Richard Payne
- *Divide* - Matt Taibbi
- *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* - Nicholas Kristof
- *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* - Elinor Ostrom

## Thought Provoking

- *How to lie with statistics* – Darrell Huff
- ***Predictably Irrational* – Dan Ariely**
- *The Tiger that Isn't: Seeing Through a World of Numbers* by Andrew Dilnot and Michael Blastland
- *Freakonomics 1 & 2*
- *The News: A User's Manual* by Alain de Botton (Media, Pop Culture)

- Arguably – Christopher Hitchens
- Letters to a Young Contrarian: Christopher Hitchens (Philosophical realization about social movements; democracy, value of thinking)

## Politics

- ❑ Imagined Communities by Benedict Anderson
  - ❑ Nations and Nationalism by Ernest Gellner
  - ❑ Nationalism and Modernism by Anthony D. Smith
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## Political Philosophy

Sophie's World and The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat are both fictionalised introductions to political philosophy. These are intended to be very light introductions to the discipline so whilst worth reading this should be remembered. These are – perhaps – particularly useful for very young speakers with no background in the subject.

Adam Swift's book is designed for students (and, jokingly, politicians) and is arguably the best and easiest to read introduction to political philosophy. This is very useful for debating but also for Modern Studies.

### Basic

- Sophie's World – Jostein Gaarder
- The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat – Steven Lukes
- Think – Simon Blackburn (Not really political philosophy but a useful introduction to philosophy.)

### Next Level

- Justice – Michael Sandel\*
- Political Philosophy: A beginners' guide for students and politicians - Adam Swift\*
- An Introduction to Political Philosophy – Jonathan Wolff
- Contemporary Political Philosophy – Will Kymlicka
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/>)
- Political Philosophy – Dudley Knowles
- Political Obligation – Dudley Knowles

### American Politics

- Race of a Lifetime –
- Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President – Ron Suskind
- Conscience of a Liberal – Paul Krugman
- What's Wrong with America – Thomas Frank\*

If you read the above, find the subject fascinating and have an interest in history and power the magisterial biographies of Lyndon B. Johnson by Robert Caro cannot be praised highly enough.

## **British Politics**

The first two books in particular are useful guides to British politics. The first is largely about issues in British politics whilst the second is a great introduction to the institutions of government.

- Debates In British Politics Today - Lynton Robbins and Bill Jones
  - The British Polity – Philip Norton\*
  - The Political Class – Peter Osborne
- Development
- The End of Poverty – Jeffery Sachs
  - Poor Economics - Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo\*
  - How to spend \$50 billion to make the world a better place - Bjorn Lomborg
  - Dead Aid – Dambisa Moyo
  - The White Man's Burden – William Easterly

## **Economics & Finance**

The Dismal Science doesn't need to be dismal. Many of the books in the micro-economics section are fun, interesting and will challenge your preconceptions. They are all very readable and many are humorous. I've added – in the 2012 version – some background on financial news and commentary and one book on game theory.

### **Financial news and commentary**

- <http://www.zerohedge.com/>
- The Big Short – Michael Lewis\*
- Boomerang – Michael Lewis
- More money than God – Sebastian Mallaby
- Why Everyone owes everyone and no one pay - John Lanchester

### **Game Theory**

Game Theory: A very short introduction – Ken Binmore

### **Micro-economics or behavioural economics**

- The Cartoon Introduction to Economics: Micro-economics – Klein & Bauman
- Freakonomics - Steven Levitt\*
- SuperFreakonomics – Steven Levitt
- Thinking, Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman
- The Undercover Economist - Tim Harford
- Predictably Irrational – Dan Ariely
- The Logic of Life - Tim Harford
- The Armchair Economist – Steven Landsburg
- More Sex Is Safer Sex – Steven Landsburg

## **Macro-economics or world-wide economics**

- The Cartoon Introduction to Macroeconomics – Grady Klein
- Open World: The Truth About Globalisation - Philippe Legrain
- False Dawn – John Gray\*
- Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them - Philippe Legrain
- The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World - Niall Ferguson and Simon Prebble
- The Roaring Nineties – Joseph Stiglitz
- The Return of Depression Economics and The Crisis of 2008 – Paul Krugman

## **Ethics**

Ethics is the area of philosophy that looks to address questions about morality. Many of the biggest and best debates are ethical debates – abortion, euthanasia, what rights do humans have, do animals have rights and so on. An understanding of ethics helps in many debates.

- Ethics Bites Podcast: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/whats-on/ethics-bites>
- Causing Death and Saving Lives – Jonathan Glover
- Practical Ethics - Peter Singer
- Healthy Respect – Downie, Calman, Schrock and Macnaughton (Specifically for medical ethics)

## **Gender and sexuality**

Motions on gender and sexuality are increasingly common – even as schools motions – and therefore a new category within the list needed to be added.

- Feminism: A Very Short Introduction – Margaret Walters
- Female Chauvinist Pigs – Ariel Levy
- Living Dolls: The return of sexism – Natasha Walters
- Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters – Jessica Valenti
- Gender, Justice and the Family – Susan Moller Okin
- <http://www.feministing.com>
- And linking to international relations: Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics by Cynthia Enloe.

## **Environment**

The first two books are good guides to the issues surrounding climate change and global warming.

- The Rough Guide To Climate Change – Bob Henson
- Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide To Global Warming – Bjorn Lomborg
- We Are The Weather Makers – Tim Flannery
- Six Degrees: Our Future On A Hotter Planet – Mark Lynas

## Health

- The New Politics of the NHS: from creation to reinvention - Rudolf Klein
- Motivation, agency & public policy: of knights and knaves, pawns and queens - Julian LeGrand,
- Escape Fire - Don Berwick

## History

Some history books give a solid background to many issues and debates. Speak to your history teachers but some things that may be useful are the below

- Conversations with History podcast –<http://conversations.berkeley.edu>
- The Penguin History of the United States – Hugh Brogan
- The Reformation – Diarmid MacCulloch
- The Best and the Brightest – David Halberstam

## International Relations & Development

- The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations
- The Writing On The Wall: China and The West In The 21st Century - Will Hutton
- We Did Nothing – Linda Polman
- War Games – Linda Polman
- Rise To Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938 - Stephen E. Ambrose & Douglas Brinkly
- Six Days – Jeremy Bowen\*
- Understanding International Conflicts – Joseph Nye
- East West North South: Major Developments in International Politics – Geir Lundestad
- Globalisation and Fragmentation. International Relations in the 20th Century – Ian Clark
- A World of Nations: The International Order Since 1945 – William R Keylor
- The Cold War – John Lamberton Harper

## Law

- The Rule of Law – Tom Bingham\*
- Law: A very short introduction – Raymond Wacks
- Philosophy of Law: A very short introduction – Raymond Wacks
- How the Law Works: A friendly guide to the legal system – Gary Slapper
- Learning Legal Rules – James Holland
- Is there a duty to obey the law? (For and against) – Christopher Wellman and John Simmons
- Freedom and Fulfillment – Joel Feinberg
- The Law Machine – Marcel Berlins and Clare Dyer
- Crimes Against Humanity – Geoffrey Robertson QC

## Military Affairs

- Lions, Donkeys and Dinosaurs – Lewis Page\*
- The Utility of Force – General Sir Rupert Smith

## **Nuclear Weapons**

- The Spread of Nuclear Weapons – Sagan & Waltz
- Thinking about nuclear weapons: Principles, problems and Prospects – Michael Quinlan
- Public Speaking and Debating Skills
- Lend me your Ears - Max Atkinson
- Letters to a young contrarian - Christopher Hitchens
- Arguably – Christopher Hitchens

## **Science**

- A Brief History of Almost Everything – Bill Bryson\*
- Bad Science - Ben Goldacre
- The Science of Discworld – Pratchett, Stewart and Cohen
- Trick or Treament? Alternative Medicine – Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst

## **Sociology**

All the books here are easy to read and are useful introductions to elements of sociology.

- Murder in Amsterdam – Ian Buruma\*
- Gang Leader For A Day – Sudhir Venkatesh\*
- McMafia – Misha Glenny\*
- The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better is a book - Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett
- Sex and Reason – Richard Posner
- Bowling Alone – Robert Puttnam
- The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Neighbourhood - David Simon and Ed Burn

## **Sport**

Perhaps surprisingly, there are quite a few debates about sport. These debates do not rely on an encyclopaedic knowledge of sport but rather an understanding of why sport matters and how it matters to society.

- What sport tells us about life – Ed Smith\*
- Bounce – Matthew Syed
- Beyond a Boundary – CLR James
- Moneyball – Michael Lewis\*

Statistics

Debaters need to be able to interpret data, research and statistics. Both books here are great at showing how numbers can be misinterpreted or 'spun' deliberately and give advice on how not to be thrown by this.

- A Mathematician Reads The Newspaper – John Allen Paulos
- The Tiger That Isn't - Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot
- How to lie with statistics – Darrell Huff

## **Terrorism**

A very good introduction to the issues surrounding terrorism is the West Wing episode 'Isaac and Ishmael'. This episode explores the issue of terrorism exceptionally well.

The books recommended here are fairly advanced:

- Terrorism: How To Respond – Richard English
- Lawless World – Phillipe Sands QC
- No End To War: Terrorism In The Twenty First Century – Walter Laquer

Other sources: TV, film, and novels

## **Some novels**

Novels such as 1984 (Orwell), Brave New World (Huxley), Our Man In Havana (Greene), Thank You For Smoking and Boomsday (both Christopher Buckley) are all extremely thought-provoking.

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- Justice – Michael Sandel
  - Political Philosophy: A beginners' guide for students and politicians - Adam Swift\*
  - Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump – Joseph Stiglitz
  - The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future – Joseph Stiglitz
  - Causing Death and Saving Lives – Jonathan Glover
  - The End of History and the Last Man – Francis Fukuyama
  - We Are The Weather Makers – Tim Flannery\*
  - War Games: The Story of Aid and War in Modern Times – Linda Polman
  - Understanding International Conflicts – Joseph Nye
  - The Rule of Law – Tom Bingham
  - The Utility of Force – General Sir Rupert Smith
  - Bad Science - Ben Goldacre

- The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better - Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett
- What sport tells us about life – Ed Smith
- Terrorism: How To Respond – Richard English

### **Books to recommend for kids' reading list**

- Justice by Michael Sandel
- Nationalism & IR
- The Shallows by Nicholas G. Carr

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- Political Philosophy
- Applied Ethics
- Metaethics and Ethics
- Misc. Works (Useful?) in Normative Contexts
- Language and Metaphysics (definitely niche in debate, honestly unnecessary)

#### Art

## **Economics:**

### **Business Cycle Macro**

- Martha Olney, *Macroeconomics as a Second Language*
  - Skip if you've taken macroeconomics. Everyone just needs some kind of primer to learn the jargon and the basics. I actually haven't read this book: I just looked around for one that looks like it's a decent take on introductory material.



- Paul Krugman:
  - [A Dark Age of Macroeconomics](#)
  - [A History Lesson for Allan Meltzer](#)
  - [America's Chinese Disease](#)
  - [China's Water Pistol](#)
  - [Core Logic](#)
  - [Currency Wars and the Impossible Trinity](#)
  - [IS-LMentary](#)
  - [Japan 1998](#)
  - [Liquidity Preference, Loanable Funds, and Niall Ferguson](#)
  - [Macro Policy In a Liquidity Trap](#)
  - [More on Friedman and Japan](#)
  - [Myths of Austerity](#)
  - [Optimal Fiscal Policy In a Liquidity Trap](#)
  - [Sam, Janet, and Fiscal Policy](#)
  - [Self-Defeating Austerity](#)
  - [The Doctrine of Immaculate Transfer](#)
  - [The Humbling of the Fed](#)
  - [The Instability of Moderation](#)
- Krugman's blog is the clearest explanation of macroeconomics you're ever likely to get. Start out with "IS-LMentary" and then jump around from there until you've read them all. Then keep reading his blog <http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/> daily to stay up to date on what's happening in macro news. Note - his political analysis is iffy, focus on the economics.
- Atif Mian and Amir Sufi, *House of Debt*
  - This is a solid work that explain basic business cycle macroeconomics and the most recent "Great Recession" we were/are in. Useful to get a handle on macro and speak confidentially about the most recent crisis/demand-side recessions/what creates risks of such recessions.

## Development Economics

- Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics*
  - Read this, and then don't say dumb things about the global poor.
- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*
  - Great (and very political, for a work by economists) treatise on how economic development can occur or fail. Should be read in comparison to and contrast with *The Dictator's Handbook*: in many ways it is similar, but the differences are worth noting. Pay attention for the large role of norms and inertia in WNF that is excluded by the selectorate theory in TDH.

## Microeconomics and Finance

- Martha Olney, *Microeconomics as a Second Language*
  - Skip if you've taken microeconomics. Everyone just needs some kind of primer to learn the jargon and the basics. I actually haven't read this book: I just looked around for one that looks like it's a decent take on introductory material.
- Matt Levine, "Money Stuff" column: sign up to have it sent to your email [here](#)
  - Smart, clear, and funny way to understand finance (as well as micro and law, as they often intersect). The first week, reading it will be difficult: repetition solves. By a few months in, you'll have a level of understanding of markets and micro news that's more than sufficient to engage in almost any topic.

## Feminism:

- bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*
  - A seminal book for many reasons. Her intersectional analysis of both the oppressed and oppressor have strands that have since become mainstream, but many parts still worth consideration are still more obscure.
- Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*
  - The integration of women into the existing patriarchal power structure created a counter-reaction: the flourishing of an unattainable standard of beauty that allowed men to retain many elements of power. The combination of massive economic rewards to doing so (through new female consumption in the market) along with the easy bigotry of many men shackled women with an enormous burden through the (quite new, historically) ideal of femininity: beauty. Wolf expertly explores how that notion transformed the lives of women in the workplace and outside of it. Though her focus is undoubtedly upper class (and thus white), it serves to only illustrate how disadvantaged even the best-off women are.

## Race:

- James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*
  - Letter from a Region of My Mind is one of my favorite works ever written. It also is an incisive look into race and society.

- Cornel West, *Race Matters*
  - Before he went off the deep end, Cornel West wrote a slim and accessible book that explored contemporary racial issues from philosophical, political, and sociological angles. His solutions are thin, but that's not really the point here.

## Domestic (Intranational) Politics:

- Bawn et al., "[A Theory of Political Parties](#)"
  - Decenter political analysis from politicians seeking reelection. Start thinking about who wants power, and how they get politicians into power. Interest groups capture political parties, and use them to accomplish policy goals. The explanation of what drives politics in this is masterfully done.
- Hacker and Pierson, "[After the 'Master Theory'](#)"
  - Extending on the same idea above: policy is the goal, and parties are the means of groups achieving those goals. But policy isn't just a goal to be fought over: it shifts the playing field. For as long as a business is subsidized, it can lobby powerfully: lose its subsidy, and it not only can no longer lobby - it may go out of business. Policies from tariffs to social security to civil rights enduringly alter the political fights of the future by changing the strength of - and even creating or destroying - the groups that push to create change.
- Torben Iversen and David Soskice, "[Information, Inequality, and Mass Polarization: Ideology in Advanced Democracies.](#)"
  - Before clicking on the link above, first take a read of this [Vox piece](#) which includes a partial summary of the article. It answers the fundamental question: what are the forces that drive nations to be more like the US, UK, and Ireland (lower polarization, high inequality, and center-right political outcomes) rather than France, Sweden, and Denmark (crazy polarization, low inequality, and leftist political outcomes)? Note the role of presidential systems in somewhat limiting polarization and pure parliamentary systems in increasing it (not mentioned in article).

## International Politics and Conflict:

### Theory

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, *The Dictator's Handbook*

- As far as I'm concerned, this should be a debater's starting point for debating IR/politics/business. Selectorate theory is relatively easy to explain, easily applied, and has many virtues in terms of validity and parsimoniousness. Read this book as a how-to manual, learning selectorate theory and then taking each subsequent chapter as an application of the theory. The book is simplified to be read by a lay audience, so don't be intimidated to pick it up
- David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains*
  - Much like the book above, read *Out of the Mountains* as a how-to guide for debating about conflict and control. The theory of competitive control is smart and Kilcullen takes the time to apply it to many cases after laying it out in the book. The greatest virtue of the theory will be the ability to shut on any horrible "hearts and minds" argumentation you get from opponents as silly and simplistic.

Difficult:

- Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*
  - The classic statement of modern realism. The international system is characterized by anarchy, leading for a need for states to ensure their survival. Understanding realism in IR theory is important because it's at the center of the vast majority of academic thinking, what many people assume in debates, and what you likely implicitly believe/read in the news.
- Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*
  - Wendt's book is in many ways a mirror of Waltz's, and is the seminal statement of constructivist IR theory. Broadly attacking critical theorists who deny any structure to IR (agreeing with realists, liberals, and game theory types), realists who claim anarchy demands realism (agreeing with liberals and game theory types), and game theory/rationalist views that deny the role of state (agreeing with realists [and liberals?]), Wendt argues states construct and are constructed by their ideas of other states and the international order. Solid layout of modern IR divisions as well as smart aspects to the theory.
- Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power & Interdependence (4th Edition)*
  - [haven't read yet; seminal text in neo-liberal theory]
- Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*
  - Is an ally mobilizing troops a sign of rescue or a betrayal? Depends on what the person looking at it assumes. To understand the ways policymakers act, you have to understand how they perceive (and misperceive) the world, regardless of what higher-level IR theory you believe in. Jervis's book brings psychology to IR in quite useful ways.
- Things on Identity Politics
  - Patrick Deneen, of *Why Liberalism Failed*
    - Conservative take against IP
  - Edward Luce (*The Retreat of Western Liberalism*)

- Mark Lilla (*The Once and Future Liberal*)
- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (*How Democracies Die*)

## Terrorism

- David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla*
  - They hate us for our freedom? Probably not. This book is an excellent treatment of how the conflict we call the "War on Terror" emerges, and how it can be "won".
- Allen Kreuger, *What Makes a Terrorist*
  - Spoiler alert: terrorists aren't poor Muslims. But they do think a lot about poor Muslims. This book has some neat data and explanations why terrorists tend to be middle-class/wealthy in middle-class/wealthy nations.

## Law

### Legal Theory

- H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law*
  - A bit dry, but an important argument for how to understand law. The argument for legal positivism.
- Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire*
  - The rehabilitation of natural law theory into something serious. Every claim about judges having to read laws "morally" starts here. Unfortunately, deeply purposivist in its theory (which I strongly disagree with).
- Generic legal theory textbook (make sure it covers critical legal theory/critical race theory)
  - Basic arguments on the purposes of punishment, the way to read the Constitution/laws generally, and skeptical claims about reading the law as the raw use of power should be any decent collection.

## Philosophy:

### Political Philosophy

Shorter reads:

- Brink Lindsey, "[The Poverty of Natural Rights Libertarianism](#)"
  - Natural rights are insufficient grounds for libertarianism. Also a great introduction to thoughts about tradeoffs inherent in justice.
- Thomas Nagel, "[The Problem of Global Justice](#)"
  - Is there a principled reason for belief in an obligatory Rawlsian social contract on the national level, but not on the global level? Yes.

Longer reads:

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*
  - The classic consequentialist argument for political and civil liberties. Don't ignore the room for the state he leaves when he discusses how private oppression is as bad as governmental.
- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
  - The classic argument for social liberalism from a contractualist approach.
- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*
  - The classic argument for libertarianism.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader* **[Parts I, III, and IV]**
  - Skip *Das Kapital*, but you really should get to know the arguments for Marxism as a social theory and a normative theory. They're quite good.
- Friedrich Hayek, either *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* or *The Constitution of Liberty*
  - You want to be able to make the case for strong economic liberty, and Hayek's argument is one of the better ways to do it. Make sure to separate out the normative/pragmatic arguments interwoven in his work.

## Applied Ethics

- Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*
  - Your basic "argue anything other than utilitarianism must be premised on bias, then apply utilitarianism to a bunch of subjects" book.
- Judith Jarvis Thompson, "[A Defense of Abortion](#)"
  - The best argument for (and against, if you pay attention) abortion.

## Metaethics and Ethics

- R.M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*
  - The definitive argument for utilitarianism, in my opinion.
- Jean-Paul Sartre, "[Existentialism is a Humanism](#)"

- The classic statement of existentialism. I myself am more partial to Camus, so I recommend taking a look at *The Myth of Sisyphus* if you're looking for more existentialism.
- T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*
  - Scanlon's metaethics are excellent to grapple with, and his contractualism has some appealing features
- Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity*
  - In many ways the best form of updated Kantianism. I myself am more partial to Julia Markovits, so I recommend taking a look at *Moral Reason* if you're looking for a stronger metaethical foundation for constructivist metaethics.
- Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices*
  - Foot is one of the leaders of modern virtue ethics theory... which I have my problems with as a theory. But Foot's brilliant and worth reading.
- J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*
  - Classic case for moral skepticism. I don't think it's very good, but it nicely summarizes the usual skeptical arguments against objective morality.

Difficult:

- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*
  - It's big, it's long, it's the deontology OG. You can also read *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the where Kant in much shorter form sketches the argument against Humean skepticism and (implicitly) for a non-utilitarian theory. Kant is unnecessarily difficult, but is also worth it.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*
  - One of many works I could have recommended that communicate the skeptical argument against morality on genealogical (how we have come to have/know good and bad) rather than metaphysical grounds.

## Misc. Works (Useful?) in Normative Contexts

- Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*
  - Ethics, rationality, personal identity, and population ethics. Great book, will make you smarter - unlikely to show up in a debate round, though it makes for some great out-of-the-box opp strategies.
- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*
  - Basically, everything in society is designed to control you, and all social organizations are a form of power expressed to dominate. Not too different from other forms of skepticism [Mackie, Nietzsche] from a debater's point of view.

## Language and Metaphysics (definitely niche in debate, honestly unnecessary)

- Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*
  - PI is a work of sheer genius. It is a classic exploration of language, and shows that many philosophic puzzles are linguistic confusions. Perhaps the most key takeaway is the "meaning is use" argument.
- Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*
  - Marrying Wittgenstein's insights with a traditional project of metaphysics, this series of three lectures actually just has just two parts. Firstly, the use of names (of kinds of things or of individual thing) is only coherent if what they mean is not a description at all (*contra* Wittgenstein) but the actual kind, or thing. Secondly, there are *a posteriori* necessary truths about those kinds/things. Importantly, that means we can learn about what we are referring to essentially (rather than contingently) when e.g. science makes progress.
- Martin Heidegger, *Being in Time*
  - The father of a large portion of the continental tradition, this work flips metaphysics on its head. At heart the argument is that understanding the being of humans has to precede any understanding of the being of things humans find/create in their lives. It's also worth trying to understand, as everything from Sartre to Gadamer to Foucault to Derrida and others is, in a deep sense, just a variation on Heidegger.

## Art

- Arthur Danto, *What is Art?* [Ch.1-2 only]
  - The key idea here is to understand how to make his argument for art being "embodied meaning". Chapter one lays out his theory and has excellent examples of major works of art and artists you should be able to name drop. Chapter two applies the theory to a fun case of the restoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel - treat it as a how-to for approaching an art question using his theory.
    - [As for what Danto calls a "wakeful dream" - do not be distracted by it. It's really just an explanation of how art is different from embodied meaning *only you* can access (e.g. a dream). Just to be clear, he calls "condition that captures the skill of the artist" which entails the meaning of works "can be shared. They are accordingly not private". Personally I would refer to the two conditions as "embodied meaning"



and "transmission" (e.g. conveyance of the public aspect of the meaning) rather than "wakeful dream" to avoid sounding like a dick, but note that embodied meaning is really the core of the theory anyway.]

- Roland Barthes, "[The Death of the Author](#)"
  - The good news: it's six pages. The bad news: it's a difficult read. Ultimately the defining statement that art has to be liberated from the interpretation of the artist. Along with it is a brief statement of poststructuralism - "there is no underlying ground" - as a theory of what interpretations are valid after the death of the author: all of them.