Recommended Reading

for Those Interested in Philosophy

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Ancient

• The Pre-Socratics, various collections and translations.

• Plato, *Republic, Apology, Crito, Symposium, Phaedrus*
  Recommended: *Five Dialogues*, G. M. A. Grube, trans.
  *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper, ed.

• Aristotle, *Ethics, On the Soul (De Anima), Poetics, Physics, Metaphysics*

  Recommended: *On The Good Life*, Michael Grant, ed.
  *Selected Works*, Michael Grant, ed.

  Recommended collections & secondary sources:

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Medieval

• Augustine, *Confessions, City of God*

• Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

• Meister Eckhart, *Sermons*

• Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*

  Recommended collections & secondary sources:
  • Ralph Lerner & Muhsin Mahdi, eds., *Medieval Political Philosophy*, Cornell (1963)

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Enlightenment

• Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* and *Discourse on Method*

• Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*


• Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason, Critique of Pure Judgment, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, What is Enlightenment?,* Perpetual Peace°

Recommended collections & secondary sources:

• Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment,* Princeton (1968)


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Utilitarian & Pragmatism

• Bentham, *A Fragment on Government, Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation, Panopticon*°

• Mill, *Utilitarianism, On Liberty*°

• James, *Pragmatism, The Varieties of Religious Experience, The Meaning of Truth, Essays in Radical Empiricism*

• Dewey, *The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism, How We Think, Democracy and Education, Experience and Education,* Art as Experience, Freedom and Culture

Recommended collections & secondary sources:


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Idealism

• Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit, Science of Logic, Introduction to the Philosophy of History,* Aesthetic Lectures°


• Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*°
• Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, Essay and Aphorisms*

• Emerson, Nature,* Self-Reliance,* The Over Soul,* Representative Men*

Recommended collections & secondary sources:
• Rudiger Bubner, ed., German Idealist Philosophy,* Penguin (1997)
• Karl Ameriks, The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism,* Cambridge (2000)

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Existentialism & Phenomenology

• Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground,* Crime and Punishment, Demons, The Brothers Karamazov

• Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling* Sickness Unto Death,* Either/Or; Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, The Present Age*

• Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* The Birth of Tragedy,* Untimely Meditations (On The Uses and Disadvantages of a History for Life), The Gay Science,* Beyond Good and Evil,* On the Genealogy of Morals,* Twilight of the Idols, The Will to Power

• Husserl, Ideas, Logical Investigations, Cartesian Meditations, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy


• Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, The Visible and the Invisible, The World of Perception*

• Sartre, Being and Nothingness, The Imaginary, Existentialism is a Humanism,* No Exit,* Nausea*

• Camus, The Stranger,* The Myth of Sisyphus,* The Rebel*

• de Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity,* The Second Sex
• Levinas, *Totality and Infinity, Otherwise than Being, Ethics and Infinity,* *Entre Nous*  
  Recommended: Adriaan T. Peperzak & Simon Critchley, eds.,  
  *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Indiana (2008)

  **Recommended collections & secondary sources:**
  • William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy,*  
    Anchor/Doubleday (1962)  
  • Timothy Mooney & Dermot Moran, eds., *The Phenomenology Reader,*  
    Routledge (2002)


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**Political, Psychoanalytical & Linguistic Sources**

  **for 20th century Theory**
  • Marx, *Capital, Communist Manifesto*  

  • Bakunin, *God and the State,* *Statism and Anarchy, Bakunin on Anarchism*  
    *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice,* Guerin, ed., Klopper, trans.

  • Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*

  • Freud, *Civilization and It’s Discontents*  

  • Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology, Tristes Tropiques, The Savage Mind, Myth and Meaning*  


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**Critical Theory**
  • Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment, Minima Moralia, Negative Dialectics, Aesthetic Theory*  


  • Benjamin, *Critique of Violence, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,*  

  • Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization, One Dimensional Man,* *Negations, An Essay on Liberation,* *The Aesthetic Dimension*
Recommended collections & secondary sources:

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Post-Structuralism, Post-Modernism & Deconstruction

• Derrida, *Writing and Difference, Of Gramatology, Specters of Marx, The Gift of Death, Deconstruction in a Nutsbell*  
  Recommended: *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, Peggy Kamuf, ed.

• Foucault, *The Order of Things, Discipline & Punishment, Madness and Civilization, History of Sexuality, Power/Knowledge*  

• Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*  

• Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense, Difference and Repetition*, co-authored with Felix Guattari:  
  *A Thousand Plateaus, Anti-Oedipus, What is Philosophy?*

• Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*

Recommended collections & secondary sources:  

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Some Recent Developments In Continental Philosophy

• Badiou, *Being and Event, Philosophy of the Event*  

• Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, *Being Singular Plural, The Creation of the World or Globalization, A Finite Thinking*  

• Agamben, *Homo Sacer, The Open, The Coming Community*, *The Time That Remains, The Man Without Content*  

• Marion, *Being Given, God Without Being, In Excess, Prolegomena to Charity*  

• Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology, Looking Awry, Event, Violence*  

• Brassier, *Nihil Unbound*  

• Meillassoux, *After Finitude*  

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Note: Titles marked with an asterisk (*) denote shorter and/or more accessible works. This does not mean that they are “easy” or just a few pages in length per se, rather that the motivated or interested reader should be able to read the text in a reasonable amount of time and have a fair chance of comprehending its movements and arguments.

Also: Although only occasionally specified above, anthologies, readers, and collections can be quite useful to beginning and intermediate students of philosophy. Consider such carefully in order to get a well-translated and organized collection representing the thinker, movement, or topic in question.

Perhaps most importantly: Don’t neglect secondary literature that helps situate, unpack, and elucidate upon the more difficult primary texts listed above. Such literature shouldn’t replace reading the primary texts, but can be very helpful in understanding it.

Final recommendations for beginners: If you’re new to philosophy, consider Oxford’s *A Very Short Introduction* series to any number of the thinkers, texts, and movements listed above, as well as Donald Palmer’s *Looking At Philosophy: The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy Made Lighter*. These guides may not be of use to students who have been reading philosophy for some time, but for beginners they can be quite helpful. Another helpful resource—to both beginners and intermediate students—might be Frederick Copleston’s *A History of Philosophy* (in multiple volumes). And, finally, more advanced readers will usually find Cambridge’s *Companion* series also quite useful.