

PATHWAYS TO PHILOSOPHY

<http://www.philosophypathways.com>

The Pathways Experience

The best way to introduce Pathways is to let the students speak from themselves:

"I feel that you opened the flood gates for the pursuit of learning about Philosophy and when Pathways went onto the web it must have been a radical and constructive move that brought Philosophy to the masses and also the way of learning it in line with the 21st century."

Lynne Beckett

A. Introduction to Philosophy

"I start feeling gripped by the subject. The logical difficulty that you pointed out with the 'no-self' theory struck me like a thunderbolt."

Ivan Hung

B. Philosophy of Mind

"I wanted to thank you for your wonderful course. I have truly been inspired to continue with philosophy for the rest of my life. I wish though that I were younger and could go to school and begin filling the holes that have become so clear to me in my education since looking seriously at philosophy. The way you pulled the ideas of these Ancient Philosophers together was amazing. You gave continuity to the development of ideas that was clear and firm. I admit I had difficulty with some parts and some philosophers but with every new lesson I found myself trying hard to focus and develop a philosophical way of seeing and questioning things."

Wilfredo Crespo

C. Ancient Philosophy

"I can't tell you how much I enjoyed your program. When I first found out about the program I was excited because it seemed to be just what I was looking for. And believe me, I was not disappointed!"

Timothy O'Keefe

D. Philosophy of Language

"This project is a wonderful undertaking and I have such positive feelings about long distance, electronic learning. The future of cross cultural education is unbelievable."

Patrick Hudson

E. Moral Philosophy

"I've just mailed to you my last essay for the metaphysics course. It's been a difficult year for me but one of the best parts was struggling with 'The Ultimate Nature of Things'. I enjoyed the readings as well as the essays which were challenging without being overwhelming, at least not too overwhelming ;-). I've appreciated your comments on my essays...your consistently positive attitude as well as your patience."

Jack Tracey

F. Metaphysics

Questions and Answers

What is Pathways?

*I pictured paths through a forest with travellers and their guides
converging on a central clearing ("Philosophy from a Distance").*

Human beings are prompted to explore the world of philosophy by a variety of different experiences, and for a variety of reasons. Not everyone is looking for the same thing. Pathways meets this need in a practical way, by providing a choice of six programs, each with its own distinct character and challenge. What the student discovers, however, is that philosophy is not many things but one thing in different forms: the attempt to think in an original and disciplined way about what it means to be *us*, what it means to talk about a *world*, and the nature of our *relation* to that world.

Who are Pathways programs for?

The majority of Pathways students combine their studies with a full-time career. In the USA, occupations of Pathways students have included: consular attaché, Dominican monk, social worker, school teacher, rabbi, psychiatrist, marketing director, architectural woodworker, aerospace engineer, IT manager, police officer, violinist, venture capitalist, plastic surgeon, hospice chaplain, *Newsweek* correspondent, cinematographer, theology professor, business consultant, actress, prison chaplain, and mental health counsellor. There are also Pathways students in their teens, or retired, or looking after a family. Some Pathways students have masters degrees and doctorates, while others have never set foot inside a university.

Who is running the project?

The distance learning program is devised and run by Dr Geoffrey Klempner, Director of Studies of the International Society for Philosophers. Dr Klempner book, *Naive Metaphysics*, is based on a series of lectures written for the Workers Educational Association, where he has worked as a Philosophy tutor since 1987. Many of the ideas for the Pathways programs were first tried out with these evening classes, and also with undergraduate students at Sheffield University.

Have I got what it takes to study philosophy?

In order to benefit from studying philosophy, you need to have imagination as well as a capacity for logical thinking. The task of the philosopher requires patience, integrity and above all modesty in the evaluation of one's intellectual powers in the face of problems that refuse to yield to quick, easy solutions. Philosophy above is for people who want to question. If all you are looking for is a ready-made system of beliefs, then philosophy is not for you.

What if I want to go to university?

Departments of philosophy are keen to recruit students who have pursued independent study of the subject. However, they will naturally prefer those who can offer hard evidence of their ability and potential. All Pathways students receive a tutor's report on completing their program which can be used to support their application for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree course. Pathways mentors can also provide references and testimonials for university applications.

What if I have no plans to go to university?

When you complete your Pathways program you will receive a Certificate validated by the International Society for Philosophers. In addition, you will be able to use your Pathways work as a starting point for study towards our Associate and Fellowship awards. (See *Associate and Fellowship Programs*.)

How is the Pathways course structured?

There are six Pathways programs. Each program is divided into fifteen units. You can choose to receive units at intervals of between one and four weeks, or ask for your units to be sent on request. Your mentor will write an 800 word letter in response to each piece of course work or essay that you send for appraisal. To complete the program you will be required to produce five set essays of around 800 words.

What programs are on offer?

The choice is wide-ranging. There are programs in the philosophy of mind, ancient philosophy, the philosophy of language, moral philosophy and metaphysics. There is also a program based on a series of science fiction short stories covering most of the major problem areas in philosophy.

Could I do a Pathways program?

If you have got this far, the answer is probably, Yes. None of the programs is easy, but each is designed to be accessible to students with no prior knowledge of philosophy, while being sufficiently challenging to hold the interest of more experienced students. – If you put the work in, your efforts will be well rewarded!

The Pathways Programs

A. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY *The Possible World Machine*

– A lively and accessible survey of the central questions of philosophy, using dialogues and original science fiction stories.

How different might the world have been from the way it actually is? Thinking about possible worlds is an important tool of philosophy. Such ‘thought experiments’ challenge our intuitions concerning the limits of logic and meaning. The program is based on a series of original short stories each raising a different philosophical problem or theme. Topics covered include the idea of philosophical knowledge, freedom of the will, the existence of the soul, knowledge and scepticism, our knowledge of other minds, the objectivity of moral values, the criteria for personal identity, our fear of death, appearance and reality, space and time, the reality of the past, the definition of truth, fatalism and the future, the existence of possible worlds.

B. PHILOSOPHY OF MIND *Searching for the Soul*

– A look at the mind-body problem, raising the question of the physical basis of consciousness, and our knowledge of ourselves and others.

What is the relationship between mind and body? We shall be investigating the background to Descartes’ argument in the *Meditations* for a dualism of mental and material substances, based on the impossibility of doubting the existence of the ‘I’ that says, ‘I think.’ After subjecting Descartes’ argument to close scrutiny, we shall examine specific questions arising from the dualist theory, such as the interaction between soul and body, and the idea of disembodied souls. We shall then look at alternatives to mind-body dualism, including the theory that the mind is identical with the brain, and follow up the consequences of the competing views for our conception of ourselves and our place in the world.

C. ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY *The First Philosophers*

– How did philosophy begin? We examine the ground breaking ideas and arguments of the inventors of philosophy, up to the time of Socrates.

How did philosophy begin? Some time around 600 BC in ancient Greece a radically new idea took root. Beliefs about a world derived from religious dogma and often lurid myths handed down from generation to generation gave way to the idea of *logos*, the notion of a universe structured on rational principles, a structure which human beings could uncover with the aid of reason and logic. Exactly how the idea arose remains a mystery. But it was the seed of all that has subsequently come under the name of 'Philosophy' right up to the present time. By delving into the fragments that have been preserved of the theories and writings of these first, 'pre-Socratic' philosophers, such as Thales, Anaximander, Zeno and Parmenides, we shall encounter problems and paradoxes that remain unsolved to this day, as well as getting a feel for what the enterprise of philosophy is about.

D. PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE *Language and the World*

– What is language? How do words enable us to have thoughts about a world outside us? Exploring the notions of reference and meaning.

How does thought relate to reality? One answer is, 'Through the medium of language.' That answer, a major outcome of developments in philosophy in the 20th century, implies a necessary priority of language over thought. The nature of thought, and of truth as the mark of what thought attains when it succeeds in representing how things are can only be approached, or so it is claimed, via the analysis of the workings of language. In this course, we shall take a detached and moderately sceptical view of these developments, focusing on the ambitious claim of the philosophy of language to provide the basis for resolving many of the central problems of philosophy.

E. MORAL PHILOSOPHY *Reason, Values and Conduct*

– What is the basis of moral and value judgements? Do they reflect an objective reality of moral facts, or are they merely subjective?

Why should I be moral? The view that it is in one's own self-interest to consider the possible harm one's actions might do to others encounters the difficulty that sometimes it can appear very much against one's interests to act morally. The question that raises is whether a rational basis can be found for acting morally in cases where doing so does not agree with one's self-interest. Many attempts have been made, but most have foundered on a persistent logical gap between facts and values, or between what *is* the case and what one *ought* to do. We shall examine whether this gap can be surmounted, and the consequences either way for our ethical beliefs.

F. METAPHYSICS *The Ultimate Nature of Things*

– Defining the nature of truth and the nature of existence. Can the gap be bridged between the world as we experience it and objective reality?

Is there essentially more to existence than the familiar objects of sense perception, or the underlying structures that science describes? Are there forms or structures that lie beyond the mundane world of empirical inquiry, objects whose nature can only be approached through pure reasoning? While many philosophers today remain sceptical about such a possibility, others continue to hold theories that are unashamedly 'metaphysical' in this sense. One theory formulated over two centuries ago that still finds adherents today is Berkeley's 'immaterialism': the view that our familiar material world of objects in space is ultimately composed of mental entities, such as perceptions in the mind of God. We shall be looking at this and other, similar theories and examining their claims to credibility.

Welcome to Pathways!

You are about to embark on a journey of discovery. Ahead lie the treasures of philosophy, more than enough to occupy a lifetime's study and reflection. We merely ask for eight hours a week of your time over the next thirty weeks or so. Our aim is to provide an introduction to the subject that is not only genuinely useful, but also user-friendly. Complex ideas do not always require complicated explanations, provided one takes things one step at a time.

You may be considering this course because you have definite plans to apply for a place at university to read for a philosophy degree. If you do decide to join Pathways, we promise to do all we can to help you achieve your aim. Even if you decide to pursue an alternative access route, however, we trust that you find our introductory materials useful in orienting you towards the academic study of philosophy.

Alternatively, your reason for wishing to enrol with Pathways may simply be that you are curious about philosophy and want to learn more. In that case, we hope you will find the Pathways experience stimulating and enjoyable, and that our course is able to provide you with something of lasting benefit, whether or not you choose to pursue the subject further. – Whatever your reasons for joining up we shall be very glad to have you aboard!

Studying philosophy

Philosophy is not an easy subject. You will find the course demanding, and at times frustrating. Those seeking to improve their physical strength or fitness are familiar with the saying, 'No pain, no gain.' The same is true of mental skills. Philosophical thinking demands nothing less than your very best if you wish to make real progress. The ability to follow a long chain of reasoning, or to trace abstract relations between concepts can only be developed over a period of time. No-one is born a philosopher. Yet anyone who has ever experienced the fascination of philosophical problems has the potential to develop that sense of wonder into an effective instrument of philosophical inquiry.

But what is philosophy? It is one of the features of the subject that it is periodically drawn to questioning and redefining itself. There is not (and never will be) any fixed body of philosophical doctrines. There is not even agreement about the problems, methods or techniques of philosophy. The map is repeatedly being redrawn, history forever being retold. Yet if one takes a broad view, the picture is far from one of anarchy and discord. Throughout the history of philosophy perennial questions appear and re-appear, schools and traditions meet as often as they diverge, and, occasionally, a problem that seemed intractable receives a definitive solution. Ultimately, just what philosophy is, or can be, is a question you will have to answer for yourself, through your personal experience of grappling with its problems.

Following a Pathways program

Some of the most engaging philosophical issues are raised by the innocent-seeming question, 'What is an introduction to philosophy?' In our view, that is what makes writing programs for the Pathways course more than merely an academic exercise. The philosopher is constantly drawn to re-examining basic principles. For despite all the mind-boggling complexities of present day academic philosophy, the root problems have always been capable of being expressed in straightforward, non-technical language. In each Pathways program, that is what we have sought to do.

There are a few simple tips for success in following a Pathways program. When you receive each course unit, read it carefully. Try to think about the questions as you go along, argue with the text. Use the margin to pencil in your answers, or to record your thoughts and queries. Then have a look at some recommended reading. (You should expect to purchase at least one book from the reading list for your program.) After you have weighed up the arguments, go back to the course unit again. When you feel you are ready, gather together your ideas and questions in the form of numbered

notes or an informal letter. (It helps to imagine you are explaining the issues to a friend who doesn't know anything about philosophy.) If there are points that you do not understand or that still confuse you, just say so! And don't rush: The whole process should take around a fortnight.

Remember:

There is no such thing as a foolish question.

But also:

Always consider the possibility that you may be wrong.

Your tutor will respond promptly to your letter (by which time you will have received the second course unit). Then the same process begins again. After each third unit, however, you will be given a list of suggested essay titles. Choose the one you feel best able to tackle (you may find that you are struggling to begin with!). You will find the notes on 'Writing a Philosophy Essay' helpful at this point. The length to aim for is somewhere between 750 and 1,500 words. Don't feel hurt by any of the criticisms your tutor makes of your work. You should aim for continual improvement. The last of your five essays should be your best!

The next stage

What then? In our view, completing all fifteen units of any one of the half dozen Pathways programs should fully equip the student to tackle philosophy in the more formal, academic environment of a degree course. There you will learn about the vast range of philosophical problems and projects, as well as getting the chance to discuss your ideas with other students on your course: arguably, the single, most important aspect of studying philosophy at university.

If you feel that full-time study at university is not for you, however, there remain other ways to pursue your interests. If you live in the UK, an Open University degree is one option you might consider. Birkbeck College London offers an excellent four-year Honours Degree in Philosophy, taught two or three nights a week, for students whose work or domestic commitments prevent full-time study. Birkbeck is also responsible for running the University of London External BA program, which attracts distance learning students from all over the world. On a less ambitious level, many local and community colleges offer pre-university part-time day or evening courses. In the UK, you can study at a local college for a Philosophy A-level. Alternatively, if your Pathways program leaves you with an appetite for more of the same, then you have another five programs to choose from!

However you choose to pursue your philosophical studies, remember that you are beginning something that may well change the course of your life: an adventure into the world of ideas. Start as you mean to go on. Be critical. Don't accept things at face value. And, above all, enjoy the learning experience!

Writing a Philosophy Essay

There is no technique, or recipe, or set of guidelines for writing an essay in philosophy. – That statement might not appear very helpful. To the beginner, the very idea of a philosophy essay seems mysterious, and the prospect of having to write one quite intimidating. Any attempt to explain the nature of philosophical writing in the abstract, however, merely serves to deepen the mystery. All one can say is that once you have started to grapple with various actual examples of such writing, you will begin to form an idea of the type of approach that is needed. Then, all you can do is have a go yourself. In short, like the very first things we were taught as infants, one learns by imitation and by trial and error.

But why is it necessary to write philosophy anyway? Isn't it enough just to study the works of philosophers? Writing – whether in the form of books, articles, essays, or dialogues – is, quite simply, the way one works at philosophy. Reading, thinking, talking philosophy are all parts of the process. But none of these is a satisfactory substitute for the discipline of expressing your thoughts on paper. (The lone figure of Socrates is perhaps the only recorded exception to this statement.) A student who has not yet produced his or her first piece of written work has simply not reached first base. – That is why at Pathways we encourage our students to get into the practice of writing from the start.

By 'writing' one does not mean simply jotting down thoughts as they come into your head, though this too can be an initial part of the process. Philosophical writing involves constructing an argument. It is reflective and self-critical. Even when the writing flows, the words form an organised structure. For all the wide variations in style and presentation, the writings of philosophers possess a common architecture, which is none other than that of logic itself.

What is so special about writing a philosophy essay, as opposed to an essay on any other subject? – Simply that the cogency of one's argument depends solely on reasoning and logic. The appeal to observations, or to the results of experiments or surveys, or to any other forms of recorded data has no place in a philosophical argument. – At the risk of over-simplifying, the subject matter of philosophy is not the way things, as a matter of contingent fact, happen to be in our world, but rather how things must be in every logically possible world.

Unfortunately, one all-too-easily becomes a victim of the mystique of philosophy, the thought that while a few exceptional individuals might possess the extraordinary vision or powers of reasoning needed to create works of philosophy, the most one can aspire to as a mere student is to be able to read and appreciate the writings of others: in short, to be a consumer, but never a producer.

There are two replies to this. The first is that studying philosophy is an active, not a passive process. If you do not try to produce examples of philosophical writing yourself, you will find that you are severely handicapped in your ability to appreciate the productions of others. There is no better way to test your understanding of a theory or an argument than to attempt to express it in your own words. And since it is hardly possible to agree with everything you read (since the writings of philosophers themselves disagree!) you need some way of testing your disagreements, of seeing whether your criticisms of a piece of philosophy are valid. The only sure way is to express those criticisms in writing, where their validity can be subjected to further examination.

'Yet surely the fact that thoughts and ideas are not written down does not detract from their intrinsic quality?' – Beautiful thoughts are like cut flowers: condemned to swiftly wither and fade. Only through the medium of the written word can there be any reliable hope of bringing such thoughts back to full bloom. (But only a hope: libraries of philosophy books would become mausoleums if there was no-one left who could grasp the meaning and purpose of the words written therein.)

Secondly, you will find if you take the plunge that it is not so difficult as it might seem to put your thoughts down on paper. There is no mystique. To begin with, just write the way you would naturally speak. If you can argue with someone, then it does not require too great an effort to argue with yourself, to choose a topic where you find that both sides of an argument seem to 'have a case', and then give a voice to each of your conflicting viewpoints. In a written form, that is the essence of the oldest and most respected form of philosophical writing: the dialogue. (Virtually all of Plato's works are of that form.) If you feel stuck, why not give that method a try? – But then you will find that the difference between a dialogue and a more conventional essay format is, after all, relatively superficial, a matter of style rather than of content.

There is no single thing that every essay in philosophy sets out to do. – A philosophy essay can be an attempt to persuade the reader to accept a certain view, or reject some other view. It can be a means of clarifying your own ideas about a theory or problem, or exploring the logical consequences of a theory as a preliminary to examining whether the theory itself is tenable. It can take the form of a survey of different attempts to solve a problem, or a contrast of the strengths and weaknesses of two or more theories. – A philosophy essay may be any combination of these, and more.

What all the examples in the previous paragraph have in common is, to repeat, argument. You are making a case. You cannot assume that the reader holds the same views as you, so each point has to be argued for, or else clearly labelled as an unargued assumption. At the end of the day, the success of your essay depends on the strength of the arguments you have been able to muster, or the clarity with which you have represented a given philosophical issue. (But then again, clarity is not everything: success is measured against the difficulty of the task you have set yourself.)

If there is no recipe and no standard format, can one at least say how one gets started? – Imagine a blank page. What is going to be your first sentence? Well, we may assume that your essay has a title, so, logically, the first thing the reader wants to see is something that will explain the title, or enlarge upon it, or perhaps put it in context. You are thus engaged in the first of many component tasks that will add up to a finished essay: the task of justifying its existence.

Perhaps you have set out to examine a theory held by a certain philosopher: 'According to Descartes, mind and body are two substances, not one. What did he mean by that claim?...'. You might go on to say that you intend to examine how Descartes defined 'substance', as a preliminary to giving an analysis of his argument for the dualism of mental and material substances.

Or maybe the title of your essay is in the form of a question, such as, 'How do I know I am not dreaming?' The first thing the reader wants to know is why that is a problem. People don't normally go around doubting whether they are dreaming or awake! So you need to begin by sketching in a context that will make the question intelligible. Thus, 'The experiences we have when we are awake seem, subjectively, to have a different quality to the experiences we have when we are dreaming. But how can one prove that the difference in subjective quality corresponds to a real difference in the ultimate source of the two experiences? Might not the whole of my so-called "waking experience" merely be a coherent dream?...'.

Once you have written your first paragraph, that is half the battle. The rest is a matter of following the argument wherever it leads (as Plato advised). If you have succeeded in planning out the main features of the argument in advance, all well and good. Alternatively, you may find yourself answering questions or responding to objections from your imaginary reader that you had perhaps not thought of when you began the essay. Then the direction that your thoughts take in response to this internal prompting may catch you completely by surprise. When that happens, it can be unsettling at times, but also very exciting. You have witnessed the process of a new idea coming to light, an idea that has arisen from you yourself. – That is all the philosopher strives for.

Philosophy from a Distance

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BROWSING through a second-hand shop a couple of years ago, I came across a complete Charles Atlas course dating from the 50's. It was poignant to imagine the recipient in his living room, tensing and stretching through those lonely weeks and months, dreaming all the while of newsprint images of men posing as Greek statues, and bullies with sand kicked in their faces.

Following a distance learning programme in philosophy might seem like the intellectual equivalent of the Charles Atlas course. However, there is one vital difference. Instead of slavishly rehearsing exercises, you stretch your mind through an extended process of dialogue. You learn to think and argue with someone who can argue back. Above all, philosophy is about the meeting of two minds in the pursuit of truth, the Socratic art and science of dialectic.

The idea of starting a correspondence school of philosophy first came to me as I shuffled through the yellowing sheets with their blurred sketches of arms, legs and torsos. How would you do it? What would you call it? I pictured paths through a forest with travellers and their guides converging on a central clearing. Anyway, the name seemed right. Pathways to Philosophy.

Give the student a choice of half a dozen self-contained, book length programmes. Divide each programme up into, say, fifteen units to be posted at fortnightly intervals. Be prepared to respond at length to your students' notes and queries, the thoughtful and the bizarre, sending back detailed annotations with each essay. Make sure to designate times when you will be there at the other end of a telephone line in case a student needs a bit of extra support, or gets stuck, or just wants a sounding board. These are the basic ingredients you need for a correspondence school of philosophy. And one more thing. You will have to write – or find – around half a million words of original course materials.

What kind of person joins a distance learning programme in philosophy? Or, more to the point, what kind of person ought to join? Any seven-stone weakling can develop muscles given time, but to learn philosophy you need a genuine appetite for the subject.

If you are simply tired of losing arguments and want to win some for a change, then you would benefit more from assertiveness counselling. If you want to dazzle your friends and enemies with your argumentative and rhetorical skills, then a legal training will serve your needs nicely. But if you have a taste for high altitudes; if you are *not* looking for an idea, or a person, to follow; if you value honesty above certainty, and freedom of thought above all else, then – possibly – a Pathway to Philosophy may be just the thing you are seeking.

Introductory Book List

Here is a selection of just some of the many books available for the student starting out in philosophy. All but one are available in paperback. Depending on one's taste or natural ability, any one of these would be suitable for someone who had never encountered a philosophy book before. The first of the four sections contains books that ease one into the subject relatively gently. The books in section two are a little more difficult, though still accessible to beginners who are prepared to make the extra effort. Section three contains classic texts (available in various editions), while section four is reserved for examples of texts you might be looking at if you followed one of the Pathways programs.

Section One

Brenda Almond *Exploring Philosophy* (Blackwell).

Originally published by Penguin as *The Philosophical Quest*, this revised and expanded version is an engaging and personal approach to the problems of philosophy, based around a fictional correspondence with a philosophical muse.

Lewis Carroll *Alice in Wonderland and Through The Looking Glass*.

The author was a mathematician who published original papers on logic in the scholarly journals of the day. These 'children's stories' contain many intriguing logical, semantic and philosophical puzzles. See if you can spot them!

Jostein Gaarder *Sophie's World* (Orion).

A philosophical novel originally from Norway that spent several months in the British top ten hardbacks list. Written for teenagers, it has proved popular with readers of all ages. Good at conveying the wonder of philosophy, its ambitious scope means that some individual philosophers are treated rather too glibly.

Thomas Nagel *What Does It All Mean?* (OUP).

A short, easy to read introduction, based on lectures to American college students. However, it does little more than pose the problems, leaving the reader to do all the hard work of thinking about them (not a bad thing).

Robert Pirsig *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (Vintage).

An exhilarating read, even for those who are not interested in either Zen or motorcycles. This novel was included on the Oxford University 'Introduction to Philosophy' book list.

Jenny Teichman and Katherine Evans *Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide* (2nd Ed, Blackwell).

The biggest book in this section and very comprehensive, included here because a number of students have commented that it is very user-friendly. I agree, but don't try to tackle too much at one time!

Nigel Warburton *Philosophy: The Basics* (2nd Edition, Routledge).

A book that has sold extremely well, covering issues and arguments from the main areas of philosophy in a clear and concise way.

Bernard Williams *Morality* (Penguin).

A short introduction to the problems of moral philosophy, focusing on our reasons for being moral, and including criticism of utilitarian accounts of ethical judgement that appeal to the principle of the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number'.

Section Two

Sir Alfred Ayer *The Central Questions of Philosophy* (Penguin).

A challenging approach to the problems of philosophy, which shows the well-known British philosopher's lucidity and intelligence.

Laurence Goldstein *The Philosopher's Habitat* (Routledge).

An original and accessible survey of the main areas of intellectual activity of the philosopher. As an aid to study, a number of questions are included at the end of each chapter.

Anthony Grayling (Ed.) *Philosophy: A Guide Through the Subject* (OUP).

Based on undergraduate courses taught at the University of London, these two impressively large volumes give a good picture of the state of the art in academic philosophy today.

Martin Hollis *Invitation to Philosophy* (Blackwell).

An original approach to the problems of philosophy, presented in a readable style. Some of the arguments are subtle and need to be taken at a slower pace.

Calvin Pinchin *Issues in Philosophy* (Macmillan).

Designed as an A-Level text book, this gives a good overview of the topics that would be covered in a typical first-year degree course.

Bertrand Russell *A History of Western Philosophy* (Unwin).

Highly entertaining and readable. Russell had strong views about his predecessors, and expressed them with great perception and wit. Good for dipping.

Roger Scruton *Modern Philosophy* (Reed).

A wide-ranging survey of problems investigated by twentieth-century philosophers up to the present date. A rallying call against narrow specialism and the rise of the philosophical 'technocrats'. His more recent book *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Philosophy* (Duckworth) is also worth a look.

Sir Peter Strawson *Analysis and Metaphysics* (OUP)

An elegant work, based on a series of lectures given at Oxford and recently at the Beijing Philosophy Summer School, China. Strawson helped bring about a revival of interest in metaphysics amongst British philosophers in the 1960's.

Jonathan Westphal *Philosophical Propositions* (Routledge)

An interesting approach, which concentrates on analysing the nature of philosophical arguments. Good if you like logic.

Richard E. Creel *Thinking Philosophically: an introduction to critical reflection and rational dialogue* (Blackwell 2001)

"This book does not cover all the fields of philosophy (for example Logic is missing), but I like this book very much, as it begins by helping the reader to acquire a lively sense of what philosophy is, how it began, why it persists, and how it is related to other fields of study, especially science. Creel also provides methods for thinking about or discussing philosophical problems. He then explores three fields in detail: Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Value, and Metaphysics, each of them explained, defended, and critiqued in numerous positions." (Simone Klein)

Anthony Harrison-Barbet *Mastering Philosophy* (2nd Edition Palgrave 2001)

"Another very good, bit more demanding book. It investigates a wide range of problems within a generally historical framework from the Ancient Greeks through to the present day. The book provides many review questions with some guided answers and comments to encourage the reader to engage actively in philosophical problems and the book also contains extensive suggestions for further reading." (Simone Klein)

Fernando Savater *The Questions of Life- An Invitation to Philosophy* (Polity Press 2002)

"A book that has, deservedly, sold over 70,000 copies in Spain and has been translated into 10 languages. Savater here presents an overview of the main philosophical themes, whilst engaging us with his own views and arguments. Savater shows how philosophizing infuses all aspects of life and is not merely a compartmentalized catalogue of opinions. As can be seen from the subtitle Savater asks us to try to think philosophically for ourselves this book goes a long way to helping us achieve that. Each chapter is accompanied by a set of provoking questions and an appendix with biographies of important thinkers complements the book." (Brian Tee)

Roger Trigg *Philosophy Matters* (Blackwell Publishers 2002)

"Trigg takes the view that philosophy is a method of thinking rather than a collection of facts. This method, one of rational investigation that leads to knowledge, is then defended from various challenges such as relativism, naturalism and scientism. The result is a rewarding and innovative re-instatement and introduction to the origins, nature and role of philosophy." (Brian Tee)

Christopher Falzon *Philosophy Goes to the Movies, An Introduction to Philosophy* (Routledge 2002)

"An original introduction, this book uses examples from films to guide the reader through the some basic philosophical problems. This is a great device for those with no previous knowledge of philosophy because the questions raised are given concrete and familiar formulations, a change from the tendency to abstraction in some other introductions. One of the consequences of reading the book is that not only does one have grounding in philosophy, but also that when watching the films again we can impress (or annoy) our friends with what we have learnt." (Brian Tee)

Section Three

George Berkeley *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713).

A joy to read. Berkeley presents some of the most perplexing arguments in philosophy in a gripping and deceptively lucid style.

René Descartes *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641)

Descartes broke with tradition and sought an audience for his views outside the philosophical 'schools'. The originality of the arguments combined with the confessional style makes this an exciting read, but in parts quite difficult for a beginner.

David Hume *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779).

Published posthumously, these lively and brilliantly written dialogues represent a challenge to religious thinking no less relevant today than in Hume's time.

Plato *Phaedo* (around 385 BC).

Recounts the last day of Socrates' life. While waiting for the hemlock, he discusses with his close friends arguments for the immortality of the soul. Guaranteed to bring a tear to the eye.

Ludwig Wittgenstein *The Blue and Brown Books* (Blackwell).

An underground classic. Originally, notes dictated to a few students between 1933 and 1935, stencilled copies were widely circulated. Shows the development of Wittgenstein's later views on mind and language.

Section Four

Miller and Smith (Eds.) *Thought Probes* (Prentice Hall).

A very entertaining handbook, exploring philosophy through science fiction short stories by such writers as Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Roger Zelzany, Frederik Pohl. Recommended for Pathways Program **The Possible World Machine**. (This book is currently out of print, but is available from libraries.)

Kirk, Raven and Schofield (Eds) *The Presocratic Philosophers* (2nd Edition CUP).

Don't be put off by the rather scholarly format. The book contains translations of the 'fragments' of the Greek philosophers who lived up to the time of Socrates, together with a concise philosophical commentary. Recommended for Pathways Program **The First Philosophers**.

Peter Carruthers *Introducing Persons* (CUP).

A lively, original inquiry into the nature of consciousness, our knowledge of others, and the criteria of personal identity. Includes questions for study. Recommended for Pathways Program **Searching For the Soul**.

Simon Blackburn *Spreading the Word* (Blackwell).

A text book giving a comprehensive and challenging survey of current issues in the philosophy of language, written by one of the leading contributors to recent debates. Recommended for Pathways Program **Language and the World**.

Timothy Sprigge *The Rational Foundations of Ethics* (Routledge).

An closely argued investigation into the nature of ethical truth, and the prospects for establishing moral judgements on a rational basis. Includes a useful historical survey. Recommended for Pathways Program **Reason, Values and Conduct**.

David Hamlyn *Metaphysics* (CUP).

An authoritative but accessible introduction to the problems of metaphysics, giving a sense of the range and the difficulty of the questions addressed by metaphysicians today. Recommended for Pathways Program **The Ultimate Nature of Things**.