



Economics Reading Lists 2019-20

ECONOMICS READING LIST

Welcome to the NCH Faculty of Economics!

Economics is a multifaceted subject, and each year of your studies will include a mix of different approaches. You will find all the years include some mathematics or mathematical analysis, some graphical analysis, and some essay-writing or verbal analysis. All of the readings here are appropriate for someone with no background in Economics, and can be read before starting your course. None of these readings are compulsory before starting the course.

Also, as you are aware, an academic Economics course will not directly teach you about the practices of managing a company, or how to read the Finance pages of the newspaper, or how to predict the growth rate of the Chinese economy for next year. Instead, you will learn a wide range of the skills, theories, and ideas that underlie all of those practical applications, as well as the basics of the knowledge required to do such analysis in your future careers or in postgraduate study. Much of your time with us will be focused on how to ask the right questions, rather than learning "the right answers"!

Below is a selection of good and accessible titles for students who would like to read some Economics before starting their degree. These are neither course textbooks nor required first-year reading: they are intended to give some background to the subject, and awaken interest.

If you would like to access course textbooks in advance of the start of the course, please contact the College and we will advise on suitable readings.

COURSE: POPULAR AND ACADEMIC ECONOMICS

- Hayley, S. and A. Chrystal (2018) Economics: A Primer. Oxford University Press. (*)
- Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson (2005) Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Cambridge University Press.
- Frank, R. (2008) The Economic Naturalist: Why Economics Explains Almost Everything. Virgin Books. (Similar to Levitt & Dubner, 2007; reading both is unnecessary)
- Levitt, S. D. and Dubner, S. J. (2007) Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything. Harper Perennial (Very similar to Frank, 2008; reading both is unnecessary)

- Diamond, J. (1997) *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody*. Vintage.
- Dasgupta, P. (2007) *Economics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. (*)
- Dixit, A. and B.J. Nalebuff (2008) *The Art of Strategy: A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business and Life*. W. W. Norton & Co. (*)
- Schelling, T. (2006) *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. W. W. Norton & Co. (*)

The books denoted with (*) are more technical in terms of the economic theory content, but all the books listed are suitable for a general audience with no Economics background. None of these books reflect exactly the type of reading you should expect to read for your core readings in Economics courses, once at NCH.

Leisure/fiction reading to help your studies

In addition, for your first-year International Development course and generally all good Economics, it will be important that you develop an ability to understand how people solve problems in circumstances different to your own, so that you learn to understand when you can predict other people's behaviour from your own, and when you should not.

The International Development course, especially, requires some ability to understand that some people live under constraints that we might find hard to imagine. If you are on the Economics Major, you will take this course in your 1st year; if you are on the PPE(Economics) degree, you will take it in your 2nd year.

At NCH, we have found that, although it is not citeable on examinations, reading relevant fiction helps frame the mind in such a way that related academic ideas will be absorbed more easily. The below is a long list: please pick whatever you like, but try to read at least one book on it, with a view to learning something about what it is like to live in a part of the world that you don't know, as a person who does not have other feasible options. In the International Development course, you will learn about theoretical concepts that describe real circumstances; these books will be useful in understanding the real implications of living with those circumstances.

Some Suggestions:

- E.M. Forster (1924): *A Passage to India*. (a classic that illustrates the problems of NorthSouth cooperation well; focused on India)
- Joseph Conrad (1902): *The Heart of Darkness*. (a classic that illustrates the attitudes of Europeans, set in Africa)
- Helen Fielding (1994): *Cause Celeb*. (if you don't mind "chick-lit", this is probably one of the best fictitious books out there for learning about the challenges of modern Development! Set in a fictitious African country and London.)
- Monica Ali (2003): *Brick Lane*. (especially the parallel story set in Bangladesh; slightly leaning toward "chick-lit")
- Khaled Hosseini (2003): *The Kite Runner*. (set in Afghanistan)

- Barbara Kingsolver (1998): *The Poisonwood Bible*. (set in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- John Le Carre (2000): *The Constant Gardener*. (perhaps less Development content than the rest, but if you're not in the mood for classics or light entertainment, this will do... Set in Kenya.)

I do hope that these help you maintain your enthusiasm for the subject, and perhaps find new topics or thoughts of interest, which we will be delighted to discuss with you on your arrival.

If you have any questions about the course, please do not hesitate to get in touch! We look forward to meeting you later in the year.

With best wishes,

Dr Marianna Koli

Head of the Faculty of Economics