LD Reading Suggestions

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While general reading is no substitute for topic-specific research, there is no end to the useful background reading you could do for LD. These few suggestions are selective and idiosyncratic; they are in no sense complete. I have broken the recommendations down by type of source: secondary sources, anthologies, and primary sources. Some of the books mentioned are out of print, but all should be available used online (try www.bookfinder.com).

If you have not read moral and political philosophy outside KNDI, a secondary overview may be the best place to start. Three good ones for beginners are *The Individual and the Political Order* (Norman E. Bowie and Robert L. Simon), *Social Philosophy* (Joel Feinberg), and *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (James Rachels). A more philosophically sophisticated overview is *Moral Theory* (Mark Timmons). You might not want to read it cover to cover, but a helpful old textbook from a Thomistic natural law perspective is Austin Fagothey's *Right and Reason*. There is no need to read all of these books. Just read a couple of them and you will be prepared to encounter original sources. Be warned: secondary overviews like those mentioned above are mostly exposition of other people's views, but they also contain the author's own assessment of each view. As you read, be very careful to distinguish the author's own views from the views-he issummarizing.

When you are ready to read some actual philosophy, an anthology of excerpts of primary sources may be the best place to start. Anthologies are more expensive than single-author books, but they contain key selections from many books and articles that would be prohibitively expensive and inconvenient to buy separately. Anthologies give you a concentrated taste of many different authors, allowing you to meet them "face to face" without slogging through their entire books. Used anthologies are quite inexpensive and can often be purchased cheaply at library book stores and sales. Because anthologies are sold as textbooks and the textbook market changes constantly, there are many good ones available. Some current examples are *Morality and Moral Controversies* (ed. John Arthur), *What is Justice?* (eds. Robert C. Solomon and Mark C. Murphy), and *Moral Philosophy* (ed. Louis Pojman; at only \$20, this one is a bargain if you must buy new). One classic legal theory anthology is *Philosophy of Law* (eds. Joel Feinberg and Hyman Gross).

Any serious LD student needs to read some classic authors in more complete form. Two books every LD student should read cover to cover are John Locke's Second Treatise of Civil Government and John Stuart Mill's On Liberty. David Hume's essay "Of the Original Contract" is a helpful criticism of social contract theory. I believe that Thomas Hobbes is more valuable than most LD students think, and one can get a good basic grasp of his Leviathan by reading Chapters 6, 11, 13-19, 21, and 26-29. Two short foundational works of modern moral theory are Mill's Utilitarianism and Immanuel Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals; the latter is extremely dense, and Section III may be skipped without much loss. Students who want to see how Kant applies his Groundwork theory to politics and moral issues should look at the Metaphysics of Morals. Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics provides a helpful contrast to Kant and Mill; see especially Books I-III, V, and X. Students who want to read John Rawls's classic Theory of Justice can focus on Chapters I-III, and those looking for Nozick's libertarian response can focus on Chapter 7 of Anarchy, State, and Utopia. Michael Sandel's Liberalism and the Limits of Justice provides the most sophisticated "communitarian" critique of Rawls- and Nozick-style liberalism. Finally, every debate student should read Plato's Gorgias, not to find LD arguments but rather to reflect on the ethics of rhetoric and debate.