A HISTORY FRESHER’S SHORTLIST

In the first-year students study one period of British Political History, one period of British Economic and Social History, and one period of European history. It is important for you to put aside some time over the summer months to do some introductory reading. Listed below are some outline books on the subjects and periods encountered in the first and second years. NB: it is not expected that you would read any more than a handful of these books, according to your interests, but please be sure to do so.

Thereafter the best preparation for the Cambridge History degree is a wide reading of books which take a slightly less conventional approach to the subject, because you will find your appreciation of the past enhanced by new ways of looking at it. Also listed below are some titles which you should find stimulating, and which should awaken interest in other periods. You might also consider subscribing to the magazines ‘History Today’ or the ‘BBC History Magazine’ (the latter gives better coverage of the ancient and medieval periods), both of which convey news of the latest historical research in accessible format.

Travel and museum-visits are two further ways of exploring the past and its fragmentary residue. Those within striking distance of London are strongly advised to visit the Victoria and Albert Museum, as a means of sampling material evidence from a wide range of cultures, within the fabric of an archetypal Victorian public institution.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like further guidance.

INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH HISTORY:

R. Fraser, A People’s History of Britain (2003) might be an interesting place to start. It aims to cover all ‘key events and dates’ in digestible format. But it must be read critically, as an unusual modern example of ‘Whig’ history.

(i) Medieval

J. Campbell (ed.), The Anglo-Saxons (Penguin, 1982)
M. Keen, English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348-1500 (Penguin, 1990)
C. Platt, Medieval England: a Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to AD 1600 (London, 1978)

(ii) Early Modern


(iii) Modern

HISTORICAL METHOD AND PRACTICE:
J. Gardiner, *What is History Today?* (Basingstoke, 1988)

INTRODUCTION TO EUROPEAN HISTORY:

**POLITICAL HISTORY:**
R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Early Middle Ages 400-1000* (Oxford, 2001)

**CULTURE, RELIGION AND BELIEF:**
R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994)
J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (first published in 1860)
J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985)
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY:
J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, Modelling the Middle Ages: Economic Development in Theory and Practice (Oxford, 2001)
P. Aries, Centuries of Childhood: a Social History of Family Life (Penguin, 1973)

POLITICAL THOUGHT:
B. Redhead (ed.), Political Thought from Plato to Nato (London, 1984)
J. Coleman, A History of Political Thought: from Ancient Greece to Early Christianity, and A History of Political Thought: from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance (both Blackwell, 2000)
S. Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton, 1979)

EXTRA-EUROPEAN HISTORY:
E. Williamson, The Penguin History of Latin America (Penguin, 1992)
A. Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples (Faber, 1991)
V. G. Kiernan, European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960 (Leicester, 1982)
J. Belich, Making Peoples: a History of the New Zealanders, from Polynesian settlement to the end of the nineteenth century (Honolulu, 1996)