

MSc Development Studies: Preliminary Readings 2025-26

Students who will be taking the MSc in Development Studies may want to get a head start on reading. Here we include some recommended readings and other materials that are accessible via the internet, as well as some books that you may want to purchase and read beforehand.

1. Four books to read before you take the course

Simon, D. (2019) *Key Thinkers on Development*. London: Routledge. Second edition. (A few of the entries can be previewed [here](#)).

Chang, Ha-joon (2014) *Economics: The User's Guide: A Pelican Introduction* (Penguin).

For students who have not studied economics before, this highly accessible book will provide you with most of the foundation you need to engage with the economic ideas you will discover on the course. For students who *have* studied economics, it will provide you with a perspective on the discipline that you may not have encountered before.

Kohli, A. (2004) *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge University Press). The cases this book considers will be referred to throughout the course. Kohli discusses some of the ideas in his book [here](#).

Finally, *A Radical History of Development Studies* edited by Uma Kothari (2005, 2019) is well worth reading. The first two chapters are available [here](#).

2. Excerpts from three key books on the DV400 core course

Sen, A. (1999) [*Development as Freedom*](#), Introduction and Chapter 1. A classic contribution that explores the philosophical foundations of a liberal approach to development.

Ferguson, J. (1994) [*The Anti-Politics Machine*](#), an influential critical anthropological account of development policy and practice inspired by the ideas of Michel Foucault. Here you can find an excerpt published in *The Ecologist*.

Chang, Ha-joon (2003) [*Kicking Away the Ladder: The Real History of Free Trade*](#), FPIF Special Report (December). This is from a landmark book that puts the challenges of twenty-first century development into historical perspective.

3. Short readings and podcasts:

[‘The planet’s economist: has Kate Raworth found a model for sustainable development?’](#), Hettie O’Brien, *The Guardian*, Long Read, 8 June 2023.

Mann, Laura (2020) [‘An interview with Professor Thandika Mkandawire on African knowledge](#)

[systems](#)', April.

Baguios, A. et al. (2020) '[How to be Anti-racist in Aid](#)'. A discussion from the Aid Re-Imagined initiative, moderated by ID alumnus Arbie Baguios, with Stephanie Kimou (PopWorks, Africa), Marie-Rose Romain Murphy (Haiti Community Foundation and ESPWA, Inc and Naomi Tulay- Solanke (Community Healthcare Initiative).