Choose one question from each section to answer in the time allotted.

Ancient:

1. Compare and contrast the accounts Plato and Aristotle give of political change, respectively, in Book 8 of the Republic and Book 5 of the Politics. What are the differences and how do you explain them? Which account seems better to you and why?

2. On a number of occasions in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics Aristotle emphasizes the importance of habituation as a resource for the development of moral virtue (“by habituating citizens, lawgivers make them good; this is the wish of every lawgiver,” NE 2,1). However, near the end of the Republic’s myth of Er, Socrates reveals the hazards of “practicing virtue by habit without philosophy” (Rep 619 c-d). Does this apparently different assessment of the value of habituation point to a fundamental difference between the evaluative political theoretical frameworks of Plato and Aristotle?

Medieval

1. One scholar of medieval philosophy said: "Marsilius (of Padua) lived as it were in different world than Thomas Aquinas." Is this a fair assessment of the differences between the political philosophies of Thomas and Marsilius?

2. What were the particular challenges medieval political philosophers faced in trying to incorporate insights drawn from ancient authors into an understanding of the good human life based on Scripture? Compare and contrast the way in which two specific medieval philosophers responded to those challenges.

Early Modern

1. One of the seminal events in the history of political philosophy was Rousseau's critique of his early modern predecessors. What is that critique? How successful (valid, justified, true) is it?

2. Compare and contrast at least two of the following thinkers on their proposed “solutions” to the proper relationship between church and state: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Montesquieu.

American:

1. To what extent did the American founders erect a democratic constitutional order? In what ways has American constitutional practice become more and less democratic since the founding?

2. In Federalist essay no. 47, Publius maintains that the concentration of legislative, executive, and judicial powers is the “very definition of tyranny.” A) Why does he believe that such a concentration is tyrannical? What are the values and goals that result from the separation of powers? B) What means does he explore and reject in order to maintain the constitutional separation of powers? What values or beliefs concerning human nature, government, power and such can we adduce from his discussion of these means? C) What are the key elements for his solution set forth in Federalist no. 51 for maintaining the constitutional separation? D) What might Publius say about our system today in light of his concerns over the separation of powers?
Choose one question from each section to answer in the time allotted.

Ancient:

1. Compare and contrast the accounts Plato and Aristotle give of political change, respectively, in Book 8 of the *Republic* and Book 5 of the *Politics*. What are the differences and how do you explain them? Which account seems better to you and why?

2. On a number of occasions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* Aristotle emphasizes the importance of habituation as a resource for the development of moral virtue (“by habituating citizens, lawgivers make them good; this is the wish of every lawgiver,” NE 2.1). However, near the end of the *Republic*’s myth of Er, Socrates reveals the hazards of “practicing virtue by habit without philosophy” (*Rep* 619 c-d). Does this apparently different assessment of the value of habituation point to a fundamental difference between the evaluative political theoretical frameworks of Plato and Aristotle?

Early Modern

1. One of the seminal events in the history of political philosophy was Rousseau's critique of his early modern predecessors. What is that critique? How successful (valid, justified, true) is it?

2. Compare and contrast at least two of the following thinkers on their proposed “solutions” to the proper relationship between church and state: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Montesquieu.

Late Modern:

1. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast what it means to be a genuine individual for J. S. Mill and for Friedrich Nietzsche.

2. For thinkers of the late modern period, conflict was seen as either essential to liberty and a vibrant polity, or condemned as a "disease" that threatens law and order. Discuss the significance of conflict for the political thought of two thinkers from this period. Whom do you find persuasive, and why? Make sure to elucidate the meaning of "conflict" in their thought.

Critical:

1. How does Jürgen Habermas’s analysis of the decline of the public sphere both draw on, and go beyond, Horkheimer and Adorno’s chapter on “Enlightenment as Mass Deception” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*?

2. Is human emancipation possible through reason? Why or why not? In answering this question, pick two critical theorists and make sure to explain their respective understandings of reason and emancipation.
Choose one question from each section to answer in the time allotted.

**Ancient:**

1. How did Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle describe and evaluate the regimes of the two most powerful Greek cities at their time: Sparta and Athens? Which description and set of evaluative principles seem best to you? Why?
2. In his *Politics*, Aristotle devotes chapters 1-5 of Book II to a critique of the best regime of Plato’s *Republic*. In this essay, first briefly recap the main elements of Aristotle’s critique, and then critically assess it. Is the critique fair to Plato’s dialogue and its political-philosophic teaching? What role does the critique of the *Republic* play in Aristotle’s development of his own political science?

**Medieval:**

1. Compare and contrast the ways in which the Islamic philosopher Alfarabi and the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas selectively adopt and adapt the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle to make them compatible with Scriptural religion.
2. What are the main elements of Augustine’s critical assessment of ancient Rome, and what role does this critique play in the overall argument of his *City of God*? Is there anything in Augustine’s critique that you would criticize or contest?

**Early Modern:**

1. Probably the aspect of early modern political philosophy that has come under sharpest attack has been the doctrine of the state of nature as being unhistorical and contrary to what we can easily observe about human nature. How much merit does this critique have? Does it apply equally to the three classic state of nature theorists—Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau? Just what is(are) the point(s) of these thinkers in positing a state of nature?
2. How does Hobbes use the idiom of social contract to attack civic republicanism and a public-political conception of freedom? How does Rousseau use the same idiom to defend them? Does the methodological individualism of social contract theory lead to substantive political conclusions of a particular kind (authoritarian, liberal, or republican)? Why or why not?

**American:**

1. To what extent did the Founders’ Constitution establish, to quote Lincoln, “government of the people, by the people, for the people”?
2. According to Lincoln the Declaration of Independence is the center of the American political tradition. Select one thinker from the founding era and one from the twentieth century and explain the role of the Declaration in their political thinking. On the admittedly limited basis of this comparison, assess whether Lincoln’s account of the tradition holds up.
**Contemporary:**

1. Drawing on three contemporary theorists, answer the following questions: what is the relationship between democracy and liberty? Does democracy promote liberty, and if so, how? Do democracy and liberty ever conflict? If so, under what conditions? Make sure to clarify what is meant by “democracy” and “liberty” in each theorist’s work.

2. What are the key criticisms that have been made of Rawls's political philosophy? Which are the strongest in terms of textual evidence and philosophical punch? Which are more dubious or rhetorical in character? Explain and defend your answer.

**Feminist:**

1. There is a lot of disagreement among feminist theorists. Outline what you see as the most important areas of debate over the last sixty years. Notwithstanding the areas of controversy you identify, does there remain any common core to feminist theory?

2. Must feminist political theory be radical political theory? Why or why not? In answering this question, you should explain what you mean by "radical" and discuss two or three key areas of debate among feminist theorists.
Directions: Answer one question from each of the following sections. The exam is closed book.

I. Ancient:

1. Thucydides and Aristotle both emphasize the importance of public deliberation in politics, and thus the ability to speak persuasively, especially to a large assembly. Plato, on the other hand, is very critical of the art of rhetoric and its practitioners. How do you explain these different evaluations of political rhetoric? Which author or authors do you think is/are correct? Why?

2. According to Hegel, Socrates introduces moral individualism and rational moral criticism into the “substantial” ethical world of the Greek polis, heralding its decay and dissolution. Hegel also thinks Plato’s Republic is, more or less, a theoretical attempt to re-capture the substantive (community-centered, pre-individualist) ethos of the polis, one that ultimately reflects a world well lost.

Write an essay in which you discuss the primary ways in which Plato’s Republic can be viewed (with Hegel) as an attempt to hold back the dissolvent effects of individual moral reflection, and the ways (against Hegel) that it can be viewed as a continuation of the Socratic project.

II. Medieval:

1. Both Ockham and Marsilius are critics of critics of Thomas Aquinas. Select one of the two and explain where and how they differ from Aquinas.

2. What are the major fault lines, or points of radical discontinuity, between Augustine and Aquinas on the nature and status of the political realm? To what sources in their respective philosophies can these fault line be traced? Are the standpoints of Augustine and Aquinas regarding the political realm open to reconciliation? Why or why not?

III. Early Modern:

1. In The Prince Machiavelli writes: “And truly it is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire, and always, when men do it who can, they will be praised or not blamed; but when they cannot, and wish to do it anyway, here lie the error and the blame.” Why is it that the political theorist who emphasized the “desire to acquire” and the fear of death that gives rise to this desire is known, in contrast to later “liberal” thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, as a republican? Doesn’t Machiavelli also care about liberty? How does his understanding of politics differ from that of his liberal successors?

2. In what ways are early modern social contract theories still philosophically compelling? In what ways do they fail to persuade?
IV. Contemporary:

1. Drawing on three contemporary theorists, answer the following questions: what is the relationship between democracy and liberty? Does democracy promote liberty, and if so, how? Do democracy and liberty ever conflict? If so, under what conditions? Make sure to clarify what is meant by “democracy” and “liberty” in each theorist’s work.

2. What, in your opinion, are the most important issues in debate in contemporary political theory? Which of these are new? Which of these are perennial?
Directions: Answer one question from each of the following sections. The exam is closed book.

I. Ancient:

1. Thucydides and Aristotle both emphasize the importance of public deliberation in politics, and thus the ability to speak persuasively, especially to a large assembly. Plato, on the other hand, is very critical of the art of rhetoric and its practitioners. How do you explain these different evaluations of political rhetoric? Which author or authors do you think is/are correct? Why?

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II. Early Modern:

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2. What, in your opinion, are the most important issues in debate in contemporary political theory?
Which of these are new? Which of these are perennial?

IV. Christian Political Thought:

1. Luther claims to recapture or even improve on Christian political doctrine as formulated imperfectly by Augustine and lost almost entirely in scholasticism. Is he correct to think he has given a more adequate version of Augustinian political thought than the Scholastics? In what way(s) do(es) Luther improve on or at least modify Augustinian political thought? Is Niebuhr’s version of Augustine “Lutheran”?

2. Christian political thought has often been accused of being either authoritarian or other-worldly (and, hence, not truly political). Discuss these criticisms as they apply—or fail to apply—to three of the theorists from the reading list.
Directions: Answer one of the following questions from each section below.

I. Ancient

1. Compare and contrast the different views of Athenian democracy presented by Thucydides and Plato. Do either or both have any contemporary relevance? Why or why not?

2. On a number of occasions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* Aristotle emphasizes the importance of habituation as a resource for the development of moral virtue (“by habituating citizens, lawgivers make them good; this is the wish of every lawgiver,” *NE* 2.1). However, near the end of the *Republic’s* myth of Er, Socrates reveals the hazards of “practicing virtue by habit without philosophy” (*Rep* 619 c-d). Does this apparently different assessment of the value of habituation point to a fundamental difference between the evaluative theoretical frameworks of Plato and Aristotle?

II. Early Modern

1. The thinkers of the early modern period sought to reconceptualize the relationship between natural rights and state legitimacy. Pick two early modern thinkers and answer the following questions: What are natural rights, and how are they related to human reason and liberty? How do natural rights both justify and limit the legitimacy of the state? Whom do you find more persuasive, and why?

2. Machiavelli and Hobbes are frequently characterized as amoral, if not immoral, theorists of political life, concerned only with power. Explain the reasons why such characterizations are wrong or, at least, seriously flawed and inadequate.

III. Contemporary

1. Many contemporary political theorists situate themselves in relationship to liberalism, be this as advocates or critics. Discuss the relationship to liberalism of three contemporary thinkers from the reading list. If they are advocates, what do they see as liberalism’s strengths? If critics, what do they identify as its weaknesses?

2. Compare and contrast Strauss and Arendt’s respective appropriations of ancient Greek political thought and/or practice.

IV. American

1. To what extent did the Founders’ Constitution establish, to quote Lincoln, “government of the people, by the people, for the people”?

2. The Federalists and the Anti-Federalists fought hard over ratification of the Constitution. What did they disagree about? How deep did their disagreements go? How valuable are either or both for understanding contemporary politics in America?
Directions: Answer one of the following questions from each section below.

I.  Ancient

1.  Compare and contrast the different views of Athenian democracy presented by Thucydides and Plato. Do either or both have any contemporary relevance? Why or why not?

2.  On a number of occasions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* Aristotle emphasizes the importance of habituation as a resource for the development of moral virtue (“by habituating citizens, lawgivers make them good; this is the wish of every lawgiver,” *NE* 2.1). However, near the end of the *Republic’s* myth of Er, Socrates reveals the hazards of “practicing virtue by habit without philosophy” (*Rep* 619 c-d). Does this apparently different assessment of the value of habituation point to a fundamental difference between the evaluative political theoretical frameworks of Plato and Aristotle?

II.  Late Modern

1.  To what extent does the idea of women’s rights shape theoretical conceptions of equality and liberty during the 19th and 20th centuries? Was this an important trend? Why or why not?

2.  What are the central concerns of late modern political thought? Defend your answer by discussing three authors from the reading list.

III.  Contemporary

1.  Many contemporary political theorists situate themselves in relationship to liberalism, be this as advocates or critics. Discuss the relationship to liberalism of three contemporary thinkers from the reading list. If they are advocates, what do they see as liberalism’s strengths? If critics, what do they identify as its weaknesses?

2.  Compare and contrast Strauss and Arendt’s respective appropriations of Greek political thought and/or practice.

IV.  Violence and Politics

1.  In the shadow of the Holocaust and twentieth century totalitarianism, political theorists have attempted to rethink the relation between violence and politics. Drawing on Hannah Arendt and one other contemporary theorist, answer the following questions: Are violence and politics fundamentally intertwined, or can they be separated? Can violence be used for legitimate political ends and, if so, under what conditions? Which thinker do you find more persuasive and why? In your answer, be sure to explain how each theorist conceives the nature of violence and that of politics.

2.  In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt describes totalitarian violence and terror as something distinct from the violence and domination of the past. What are the marks of this (according to Arendt) new kind of violence and terror? Why can’t it be grouped with the violence and terror that appear throughout history? If totalitarian terror is something unique, as Arendt claims, is contemporary Islamic radicalism a form of it, a new totalitarian threat? Explain and defend your answer.
Directions: Answer one of the following questions from each section below.

I. Medieval

1. William of Ockham is frequently given the credit (or the blame) for introducing the language of rights rather than duties or law into political philosophy. Does he deserve the credit (or blame)? How so or not? What is the difference between these languages of politics?

2. Marsilius of Padua has been said to inhabit a “different world” from Thomas Aquinas. Since they both appear to be Christian Aristotelians this seems an inflated claim. Are there significant differences between them, despite their shared reliance on Aristotle? Please explain.

II. Early Modern

1. The thinkers of the early modern period sought to reconceptualize the relation between natural rights and state legitimacy. Pick two early modern thinkers and answer the following questions: What are natural rights, and how are they related to human reason and liberty? How do natural rights both justify and limit the legitimacy of the state? Whom do you find more persuasive, and why?

2. Machiavelli and Hobbes are frequently characterized as amoral, if not immoral, theorists of political life, concerned only with power. Explain the reasons why such characterizations are wrong or, at least, seriously flawed and inadequate.

III. Late Modern

1. To what extent does the idea of women’s rights shape theoretical conceptions of equality and liberty during the 19th and 20th centuries? Was this an important trend? Why or why not?

2. What are the central concerns of late modern political thought? Defend your answer by discussing three authors from the reading list.

IV. Contemporary

1. Many contemporary political theorists situate themselves in relationship to liberalism, be this as advocates or critics. Discuss the relationship to liberalism of three contemporary thinkers from the reading list. If they are advocates, what do they see as liberalism’s strengths? If critics, what do they identify as its weaknesses?

2. Compare and contrast Strauss and Arendt’s respective appropriations of ancient Greek political thought and/or practice.
Political Theory Comprehensive Examination
January 2007
Mike Keane

Answer one question from each set of questions.

I. Ancient

1. At the beginning of his “Interpretive Essay,” Allan Bloom states: “The Republic is the true Apology of Socrates, for only in the Republic does he give an adequate treatment of the theme which was forced on him by Athens’ accusation against him. That theme is the relationship of the philosopher to the political community.” Is Bloom correct? Does the Republic give a fuller view of the relation between the philosopher and the political community than the Apology and the Crito? Or is the relation Socrates describes in the Republic significantly different from that shown in the case of Socrates at his trial and conviction?

2. Discuss the ways in which the political theory of Cicero appears to be indebted to Plato and Aristotle as well as the ways in which it seems distinctive.

II. Early Modern

1. Machiavelli and Hobbes have both been said to be the founders of modern political philosophy. What features distinguish their thought from that of the “ancients”? What difference does it make whether one thinks that Machiavelli or Hobbes is the beginning of modernity? That is, what are the important differences between these two thinkers?

2. “What are the major similarities and differences among Hobbes’s, Locke’s, and Rousseau’s conceptions of the state of nature and the social contract? Which of these three thinkers offers the most appealing social contract theory for modern politics and why?”

III. American

1. Daniel Boorstin, writing in the 1950s, comments on the United States as follows: “no nation has ever been less interested in political philosophy or produced less in the way of theory.” Do you agree? Develop your response with appropriate support from what you have read in the field of American theory as well as from other sources.

2. The Declaration of Independence has been called a statement of the “American creed,” by many students of American life. Considering some of the 20th century American authors you have studied, assess whether that judgment still holds up.

IV. Contemporary
1. The major contributions to 20th Century Political Thought can be understood as responses to the claim that ‘God is Dead’. Discuss.

2. Not long ago a big conference was held at Notre Dame University on the topic “Modernity.” As a result, even to those who had not been aware of it, it became clear that there is an intense debate concerning the meaning and future of modernity. The debate has also surfaced in contemporary political theory. Leo Strauss spoke of a “crisis of the modern age”; Adorno and Horkheimer wrote about a “dialectic of enlightenment” (which could also be rephrased as “dialectic of modernity”); and Jürgen Habermas has described modernity as an “unfinished project”. What sense do you make of this debate? How do you interpret the arguments of Strauss, Adorno-Horkheimer, and Habermas? What effects do these arguments have on politics and political theory? Which theoretical perspective on modernity do you favor?

3. Four political theorists of the twentieth century who critiqued and also partly embraced modernity are Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. Take any two and indicate how they thought about modernity and thus how each engaged the predominant thinking and practices of modern times.
Richard Maass
Theory Exam

Ancient
1. In his *Tusculan Disputations* Cicero says that Socrates was the first who called philosophy down from heaven and forced it to make inquiries about life and manners and good and bad things. So described, Socrates sounds like a moral, but not necessarily a political philosopher. What is a "political philosopher"? Was Socrates a, if not the first? Why? How does one explain Socrates' reputation as a political philosopher in light of his admission in Plato's *Apology of Socrates* (and Republic) that he never went into the assembly and argued on behalf of justice there?

2. Commenting, at the recent American Political Science meeting, on the relationship of Cicero's *De Re Publica* and *De Legibus* to Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, J.G.F. Powell observed that even in ancient sources Cicero is sometimes seen as a rival of Plato and sometimes as a friend or companion of Plato. Which is Cicero, in your view? Discuss his engagement of Platonic literary forms and political themes, utilizing the relevant texts.

Early Modern
1. How does the concept of justice evolve in the early modern social contract tradition? Answer this question with reference to at least 3 of the following theorists: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.

2. Post-Machiavellian early modern political philosophy has sometimes been described as "moralized Machiavellianism". Does Machiavelli need "moralizing"? Are the other early moderns at all Machiavellian--in what way? Do they "moralize" Machiavelli?

Late Modern
1. How does Hegel's political philosophy try to synthesize ancient and modern political thought?

2. Compare Marx's historical methodology to Nietzsche's. How does each theorist approach the problem of history? What are the primary "objects" they are concerned with? What are the implications--theoretical and political--of Marx's endorsement of the Hegelian idea of development, and Nietzsche's rejection of the same idea?

American
1. Herbert Croly presents his Progressive position as a synthesis of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian political thought. What are the Jeffersonian elements? Hamiltonian elements? Is he justified in presenting himself in this way?

2. Explore the function and interaction of the ideas of popular sovereignty, republican government, separation of powers and federalism in the critical years of the American founding -- from, in other words, the Revolution through the ratification of the Constitution.
Comprehensive Exam

Political Theory

Answer one question for each of the parts that is relevant for you.

Part I: Ancient

1. To what extent is Aristotle's moral and political philosophy dependent on a teleological conception of nature? In the age of modern (non-teleological) conceptions of nature, is Aristotelian political philosophy still viable?

2. In his POLITICS (1265a2-4) Aristotle observes, "Although [Plato] wishes to make [the city in speech in the LAWS] more attainable by cities [than the city he described in the REPUBLIC], he gradually brings it around again toward the other regime." How like or different are the proposed "cities in speech" in the LAWS and the REPUBLIC? Do the two cities tend to converge in the end? Why or why not?

Part II: Medieval

1. Some of the most pressing questions in medieval political philosophy concerned the relationship between Theology and Politics. One perennial theme was whether one valued theology for its own sake, or for its salutary influence on political life (a so called Civil Theology). Compare and contrast at least two of the following authors on the role of and their attitudes towards civil theology. Augustine, Alfarabi, Aquinas, Maimonides, Marsilius.

2. In a famous passage of Book 19 of THE CITY OF GOD, Augustine proposes peace as the highest goal of political society. In the questions on law (I-II 90-108) in his SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, Aquinas presents the common good as the highest end of a political community and its law.

Explicate Augustine's understanding of peace and Aquinas's of the common good, with special attention to the relationship of each (peace and the common good) to the other and also to justice. To what extent can the political end, defined as peace or as the common good, be achieved in this-worldly politics according to Augustine and Aquinas? Are their views on this last question divergent in any important respect(s)? Whose presentation of political life, political aims, and political possibilities do you find best overall, and why?

Part III: Early Modern

1. Rights play a crucial role in modern political thought. How does Rousseau build upon, yet substantially critique and move beyond, the modern rights theorists Hobbes and Locke. To
what extent is Rousseau's doctrine of rights productive and/or problematic for understanding and practically grappling with the distinct problems of modern political life?

2. Some commentators have seen Machiavelli as a "teacher of evil." Others have seen him as a classical republican political theorist. What is he, and why?

Part IV: American

1. Considering Alexis de Tocqueville, Reinhold Niebuhr and Yves Simon, take any two of these three analysts of modern democracy and, in a comparative way, indicate how their work illuminates the prospects and the problems of American democracy.

2. More and more frequently one hears it said that the Anti-Federalists had the better of the argument over ratification. What were the real issues between them and the Federalists? Do you agree that they (the Anti-Federalists) had the better argument?

Part V: Late Modern

1. Now that communism is more or less dead as a political reality in the world, the question naturally arises whether Marxism is equally dead as a political philosophy? Is it? Be sure to discuss both Marx's philosophy per se and so-called Marxism-Leninism.

2. "Nietzsche emerges as a philosopher in opposition to Hegel: What Hegel considers to the culmination of history, the rational state, Nietzsche considers to be a nearly unmitigated disaster." Is this an accurate assessment of the relation between Nietzsche and Hegel? How would you describe and explain the relation?
University of Notre Dame
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory
January 2004
(Cohen de Lara)

Answer one question from each of the four areas below.

Ancient

1. Plato's two longest dialogues---by far---are the Republic and the Laws. In both, the major philosophical spokesman sketches a "city in speech." Why? What is a "city in speech"? What is its function? How do you account for the differences between the two "Platonic" cities?

2. Cicero appears to write his De Re Publica in the light of Plato's Republic. Where does one find the common ground in these works and in what ways do they differ? What significance do you find in the differences?

3. Much of Aristotle's Politics is devoted to class analysis of regimes; and in accordance with his method he starts with a conventional class analysis: the distinction of regimes according to whether the many, the few, or one is supreme. But he thinks that, while not wholly useless, that conventional classificatory scheme is superficial and not very helpful theoretically. What classes does he substitute; and why does he substitute them for the conventional classification? State your reasons to think Aristotle right or wrong in thinking it theoretically preferable to use his classes rather than the conventional ones with which he started.

Medieval

1. Compare the political thought of Augustine and Aquinas, focusing especially on one of these issues: (1) The origins and proper aims of politics and government; (2) the nature of the best political regime; OR (3) the virtue(s) most necessary for the flourishing of political communities and their people. Then briefly assess the importance (or lack thereof) of Augustine's influence on Aquinas. Is Aquinas's political thought principally Aristotelian in inspiration, or did Augustine's work also leave its mark on Aquinas?

2. Compare and contrast at least two of the following authors (Aquinas, Alfarabi, Maimonides, Marsilius) on the role of the natural moral law. Indicate whether the author affirms the existence of a binding natural moral law. If they do, indicate its basic content. If they do not, what do they substitute?
Early Modern

1. Does the role of the legislator render Rousseau's ideal republic too utopian to realize? Use the Social Contract and any relevant scholarly literature to answer the question.

2. Given that a rational person enters a contractual relationship with a view to some benefit to be derived from it and that at least one of the benefits that a social contract setting up a polity is supposed to provide is physical security of one's person, what motive can you envisage within the framework of social contract theory that a citizen could reasonably be expected to have to risk his life defending fellow citizens against enemies? If possible, differentiate the responses that could be made by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.

Contemporary

1. Various leading twentieth-century political theorists propose paths toward possible political health in the light of their respective diagnoses of the political pathologies they perceive as regnant. Consider Michael Oakeshott, Yves Simon, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, and taking any two of these, compare and contrast their diagnoses and the positive directions they propose. Indicate in which respects you find one or another sounder and your reasons for such determinations.

2. Martin Heidegger's work has had a broad and highly diversified impact on contemporary philosophy, including political philosophy. To a considerable extent, the diversity of impact can be traced to the complexity of his thought. What are some prominent interpretations of Heidegger's work? To which extent is it possible to treat him as a "philosopher of praxis"? Gadamer and Arendt are two of his most well known students. To what extent does Gadamer's hermeneutics build upon the arguments of his teacher? How does Gadamer reconcile Heidegger with Aristotle and Hegel? Discuss some of the ways in which Arendt's The Human Condition can be read as a gloss on Heidegger's work? At what points does she seem to depart from her teacher?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory  
January 2004  
(Kundmueller)

Answer one question from each of the four areas below.

Ancient

1. Plato's two longest dialogues--by far--are the Republic and the Laws.  
   In both, the major philosophical spokesman sketches a "city in speech."  
   Why? What is a "city in speech"? What is its function? How do you  
   account for the differences between the two "Platonic" cities?

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   one find the common ground in these works and in what ways do they differ? What  
   significance do you find in the differences?

3. Much of Aristotle's Politics is devoted to class analysis of regimes; and in accordance  
   with his method he starts with a conventional class analysis: the distinction of regimes  
   according to whether the many, the few, or one is supreme. But he thinks that, while not  
   wholly useless, that conventional classificatory scheme is superficial and not very helpful  
   theoretically. What classes does he substitute; and why does he substitute them for the  
   conventional classification? State your reasons to think Aristotle right or wrong in  
   thinking it theoretically preferable to use his classes rather than the conventional ones  
   with which he started.

Medieval

1. Compare the political thought of Augustine and Aquinas, focusing especially  
   on one of these issues: (1) The origins and proper aims of politics and  
   government; (2) the nature of the best political regime; OR (3) the virtue(s)  
   most necessary for the flourishing of political communities and their people.  
   Then briefly assess the importance (or lack thereof) of Augustine's influence on  
   Aquinas. Is Aquinas's political thought principally Aristotelian in  
   inspiration, or did Augustine's work also leave its mark on Aquinas?

2. Compare and contrast at least two of the following authors (Aquinas, Alfarabi,  
   Maimonides, Marsilius) on the role of the natural moral law. Indicate whether the author  
   affirms the existence of a binding natural moral law. If they do, indicate its basic content.  
   If they do not, what do they substitute?
Early Modern

1. Does the role of the legislator render Rousseau's ideal republic too utopian to realize? Use the Social Contract and any relevant scholarly literature to answer the question.

2. Given that a rational person enters a contractual relationship with a view to some benefit to be derived from it and that at least one of the benefits that a social contract setting up a polity is supposed to provide is physical security of one's person, what motive can you envisage within the framework of social contract theory that a citizen could reasonably be expected to have to risk his life defending fellow citizens against enemies? If possible, differentiate the responses that could be made by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.

American

1. Explore the function and interaction of the ideas of popular sovereignty, republican government and federalism in the critical years of the American founding -- from, in other words, the Revolution through the ratification of the Constitution.

2. It has been said: "The Federalists won their debate against the Anti-Federalists in 1788, but we now see that the Anti-Federalists should have won." Assess this claim.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory (Cherry)  
January 2005

Answer one question from each of the four sections below.

Ancient

1. Aristotle says that "the polis is prior in nature [emphasis added] to the household and to each one [of us]. For the whole is necessarily prior to the part, the whole [body] being killed, there will be neither foot nor hand, except equivocally, as one might speak of a stone hand, for such a [hand] will be corrupted [a dead hand]. All things are defined by their function [their peculiar work, ergon] and power such that when they are no longer the same in these respects, they are ought not be said to be the same [things], but only [dissimilar] things with the same name. So it is clear that the polis is prior in nature to the individual [human being]. For if each one, when separated [from the polis], is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole [the polis] as other parts are to their whole. He who is neither able to associate with others nor needs to, because self-sufficient, is not part of a polis, like a beast or a god." (Politics 1253a 19-29) But this claim of Aristotle seems to be false: solitary humans whether by choice, as in the case of hermits, or by accident, as in Robinson Crusoe cases, are plainly human beings, human beings without a polis and without a family or other human community, but human beings nevertheless rather than beasts or gods. Lay out what answer(s) Aristotle could give to that objection; and then evaluate the answer(s).

2. Plato's Republic has been castigated for advocating "totalitarian" politics, by Karl Popper, for example, and yet has been said to constitute the greatest critique of political idealism ever written, by Leo Strauss. What do you think Plato is trying to teach his readers about politics in his most famous dialogue? How?

3. As a teacher of political philosophy, how does Cicero understand himself in relationship to Plato? How good a reader of Plato is he? Support your position in the texts of Plato and Cicero.

Medieval

1. According to Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologicae what role does human law properly play in educating citizens to virtue and helping them overcome vice? Explicate, and then briefly critically assess this aspect of Aquinas's political thought. In your essay, please include some discussion of (1) Aquinas's theories of natural law and divine law, insofar as they relate to or elucidate human law's nature, scope, and aims; and (2) the general relation between Aquinas's virtue theory and legal theory, as elements of his overall ethical and political theory.

2. Aquinas, Augustine, Alfarabi and Maimonides and Marsilius are medieval theorists who share much, and yet also present significant differences. Take at least three of these authors, and compare and contrast their views on two of the following:

A) The question of whether politics is natural  
B) The relationship between the moral virtues and the intellectual virtues in the end of politics  
C) The relationship between theology and politics. In particular, can their teaching be described as one of Civil Theology?
Contemporary

1. Democracy is a contested concept; it has many different meanings. Juergen Habermas at one point differentiates between three conceptions or models of democracy: "liberal" (Lockean); "republican" (communitarian); and "procedural" (deliberative). Other writers mention additional models: "formal democracy", "social democracy" and the like. First of all, explain what meanings you associate with these conceptions or models. Next, taking the three political thinkers John Rawls, Hannah Arendt, and Habermas, discuss which conception of democracy seems to fit most closely their theories. What in their theories prompts you to form this judgment? Finally, in your own view, which model of democracy is normatively superior and for what reasons?

2. Considering the contributions of Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin to the intellectual history of the twentieth century, some would say that their work represents nothing but a passing moment or objection in the development and ultimate triumph of modern political thought. Others hold that one or more of these four has articulated a basic posture or approach to political reality that represents a perspective of enduring importance. Take two of these thinkers and explore in a comparative way their work with an eye to the question whether they have pointed up a perspective on politics that is of enduring importance.

American

1. Compare and contrast the approaches to democracy evident in the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and Yves Simon.

2. The American Founding era is marked by the emergence of three discrete theories of republicanism— that of the anti-Federalists, that of the Federalists and that of Thomas Jefferson. Do you agree with this claim? If yes, give an account of the three theories. If not, tell us why not and what one ought to say about republicanism and the founding instead.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory (Houser)  
January 2005

Answer one question from each of the four sections below.

Ancient

1. Aristotle says that "the polis is prior in nature [emphasis added] to the household and to each one [of us]. For the whole is necessarily prior to the part; the whole [body] being killed, there will be neither foot nor hand, except equivocally, as one might speak of a stone hand, for such a [hand] will be corrupted [a dead hand]. All things are defined by their function [their peculiar work, ergon] and power such that when they are no longer the same in these respects, they are ought not be said to be the same [things], but only [dissimilar] things with the same name. So it is clear that the polis is prior in nature to the individual [human being]. For if each one, when separated [from the polis], is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole [the polis] as other parts are to their whole. He who is neither able to associate with others nor needs to, because self-sufficient, is no part of a polis, like a beast or a god." (Politics 1253a 19-29) But this claim of Aristotle seems to be false: solitary humans whether by choice, as in the case of hermits, or by accident, as in Robinson Crusoe cases, are plainly human beings, human beings without a polis and without a family or other human community, but human beings nevertheless rather than beasts or gods. Lay out what answer(s) Aristotle could give to that objection; and then evaluate the answer(s).

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3. As a teacher of political philosophy, how does Cicero understand himself in relationship to Plato? How good a reader of Plato is he? Support your position in the texts of Plato and Cicero.

Early Modern

1. Some scholars have noted the neglect, and even systematic marginalization, of women in early modern political thought, especially among the great "social contract" theorists, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. Taking one of these social contract theorists' views of the roles of women in society and politics as your starting point, explain why the perception of the marginalization of women in the social contract tradition is accurate or not.

2. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau are classed as Social Contract thinkers and as such all three have doctrines on the state of nature. This doctrine is often cited as a ground for thinking this sort of theory unrealistic and otherwise defective (e.g. overly abstract, rationalistic, or individualistic). What do you think of criticisms of this sort? Be sure to develop the differences among the different state of nature thinkers, not only the descriptive differences in the way they present it but the function it serves in their theories.
Contemporary

1. Democracy is a contested concept; it has many different meanings. Jürgen Habermas at one point differentiates between three conceptions or models of democracy: "liberal" (Lockean); "republican" (communitarian); and "procedural" (deliberative). Other writers mention additional models: "formal democracy", "social democracy" and the like. First of all, explain what meanings you associate with these conceptions or models. Next, taking the three political thinkers John Rawls, Hannah Arendt, and Habermas, discuss which conception of democracy seems to fit most closely their theories. What in their theories prompts you to form this judgment? Finally, in your own view, which model of democracy is normatively superior and for what reasons?

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University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory (Webster)  
January 2005

Answer one question from each of the four sections below.

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1. Aristotle says that "the polis is prior in nature [emphasis added] to the household and to each one [of us]. For the whole is necessarily prior to the part, the whole [body] being killed, there will be neither foot nor hand, except equivocally, as one might speak of a stone hand, for such a [hand] will be corrupted [a dead hand]. All things are defined by their function [their peculiar work, ergon] and power such that when they are no longer the same in these respects, they are ought not be said to be the same [things], but only [dissimilar] things with the same name. So it is clear that the polis is prior in nature to the individual [human being]. For if each one, when separated [from the polis], is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole [the polis] as other parts are to their whole. He who is neither able to associate with others nor needs to, because self-sufficient, is no part of a polis, like a beast or a god." (Politics1253a 19-29) But this claim of Aristotle seems to be false: solitary humans whether by choice, as in the case of hermits, or by accident, as in Robinson Crusoe cases, are plainly human beings, human beings without a polis and without a family or other human community, but human beings nevertheless rather than beasts or gods. Lay out what answer(s) Aristotle could give to that objection; and then evaluate the answer(s).

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Medieval

1. According to Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae what role does human law properly play in educating citizens to virtue and helping them overcome vice? Explicate, and then briefly critically assess this aspect of Aquinas's political thought. In your essay, please include some discussion of (1) Aquinas's theories of natural law and divine law, insofar as they relate to or elucidate human law's nature, scope, and aims; and (2) the general relation between Aquinas's virtue theory and legal theory, as elements of his overall ethical and political theory.

2. Aquinas, Augustine, Alfarabi and Maimonides and Marsilius are medieval theorists who share much, and yet also present significant differences. Take at least three of these authors, and compare and contrast their views on two of the following:

A) The question of whether politics is natural  
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Theory Comprehensive Exam I (Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, Late Modern)
January 22, 2011

For Ryan Anderson (old list), Kirstin Hasler (old list), and Veronica Roberts (new list)

Please choose and write one essay from each of the following sections. All questions below can be answered well based on the old or the new list, whichever you are using for your comp. The exam is six hours and closed book, closed note. Good luck!

A. Ancient

1. Both Plato and Aristotle suggest that political communities should be concerned, above all, to educate their citizens in virtue. The two ancient philosophers seem to differ somewhat, however, in their understandings of what virtue is and how it can be fostered. What are the differences? And what is the political significance of the differences?

2. Can Cicero as political theorist be seen to develop or to deflect and even to oppose the classical political theories of Plato and Aristotle? Write an essay in which you defend a position, in the essay indicate some specific respects in which Cicero develops or sets back the earlier tradition. Utilize the appropriate texts of Cicero and his predecessors as you make your argument.

B. Medieval

1. Medieval thinkers often disagreed on the status of the various kinds of ends to which one might be devoted. In particular, there was disagreement about the status of political life. Some saw it as a lower yet integral human good, others saw it as only an instrumental good, aiming wholly towards an end outside politics (for example philosophy or salvation). Compare and contrast at least two of the following thinkers, Aquinas, Augustine, Alfarabi, Maimonides, on the question of the purpose and end of political life.

2. What is Augustine’s critique of ancient Rome (republic and empire), and what are the role and significance of this critique in the overall argument of his City of God? Is there anything in Augustine’s critique that you would criticize or contest?

C. Early Modern

1. What is the place of women in early modern political thought?

2. There is a huge debate on the relation of Hobbes and Locke. Some say Locke rejects Hobbes; some say he follows Hobbes; and some say he pays no attention to Hobbes. What do you say? What in Locke's thought might support the other positions?

D. Late Modern

1. What, if anything, does Nietzsche teach us about the political? Explain your answer by comparing and contrasting Nietzsche on this issue with another thinker of your choice from the late modern reading list.

2. What are the basic points of Hegel's critique of Kant's moral philosophy? How does this critique help structure the political theory found in the Philosophy of Right?
Theory Comprehensive Exam I (Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, Late Modern)
January 22, 2011

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2. What are the basic points of Hegel's critique of Kant's moral philosophy? How does this critique help structure the political theory found in the Philosophy of Right?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory  
May 2004  
(Benavides)

Answer one question from each of the four areas below.

Ancient
1. Socrates is famous as a teacher. In Plato's APOLOGY OF SOCRATES, however, he denies that he taught anyone anything. On the basis of the dialogues you have read, how would you describe Socrates' peculiar mode of proceeding (i.e. Socratic method)? How and why is "the Socratic method" particularly relevant to or for politics?

2. Although Aristotle is a virtue (or excellence) theorist and so in the Politics considers various constitutional provisions designed to help place the most excellent men (the aristoi of aristocracy) in important offices in a polis, he gives the most extensive consideration to analysis of the arguments for and the consequences of various sets of constitutional provisions that advantage the rich or the poor in holding the most important political offices/powers. Why? What- in broad outline only - are his conclusions? How does that relate to what he says about economics in the first part of his political teaching, namely the Ethics?

American
1. It has been said: "The Federalists and Antifederalists did not so much disagree about what was a desirable kind of political society for America, but about how the political institutions established by the constitution would operate. That is, they disagreed as political scientists not political philosophers." Is this in whole or in part or not at all an accurate assessment? Did they in fact disagree as political scientists? If so, which set of thinkers was superior in their understanding of how political societies operate? If not what are the main principles of the political science on which they agreed?

2. Drawing on Tocqueville's Democracy In America and, as appropriate, other readings on the American Theory reading list, explore the meaning and role of the idea of equality in the American political tradition.

Benavides, Page 1 of 2
Contemporary

1. Political theory has undoubtedly experienced a revival in the second half of the twentieth century. Among the leading political thinkers who are seen as contributing to this revival are Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. Select two of these thinkers and discuss their work. In your view, what was the contribution each sought to make to contemporary political theory and how successful were they?

2. A dominant strand in contemporary (Western) political theory is political liberalism. Rawls, Habermas, and Arendt are sometimes grouped together under the label of liberalism. Discuss some of the main similarities and main differences between their perspectives. In particular, elaborate on the respective status of the "public sphere" in their works. To which extent can their perspectives be described as "individualistic" and as rooted in the modern "social contract" tradition? What is the role of ethics, law, and the common good in their theories?

DEMOCRATIC THEORY

1. One of the central issues in contemporary democratic theory is the relation of democracy and multiculturalism. In many ways, attitudes toward multiculturalism tend to depend on the adopted or preferred conception of democracy. Commentators often distinguish between more liberal-individualistic and more communitarian approaches to multiculturalism. Focusing on the writings of four theorists - Will Kymlicka, Joseph Carens, Charles Taylor, and Bhikhu Parekh - indicate which approach these theorists respectively favor and for what reasons. How do they square their preferences with democracy? In your own view, what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the respective positions and which approach would you on balance favor?

2. One contemporary legal theorist contrasts two concepts of democracy: Concept One is idealistic, deliberative, Deweyan, and Concept 2 is elite, pragmatic, Schumpeterian. "Concept 1," he says, "is, in short, utopian. Its essential utopianism is its conception of democracy as self-government, so that its implicit model is Athenian democracy, which is utterly unworkable under modern conditions. Concept 2 rejects the idea that democracy is self-government. Democracy is subject to electoral checks." Assess this claim. For example, do these remarks accurately characterize the views of deliberative democratic theorists? Is Schumpeterian minimalism an adequate theory of democracy?
Comprehensive Exam, Political Theory, May 2008

ANCIENT

In the very first paragraph of his *Politics*, Aristotle claims that they are mistaken “who think the statesman, the king, ruler of an estate, and the head of a household are the same... differing in the greater or lesser number ruled but not in kind.” What is at stake here? and why is it important enough to be one of the three issues raised at the very opening of *Politics*? It would also be nice if one were to speculate as to who “they” are who think what Aristotle denies.

Is it legitimate for Cicero to associate himself with Socrates and the Socratic tradition of political philosophy? Discuss fully the reasons for your response, drawing at the least on Cicero’s *De Re Publica, De Legibus*, and *De Officiis* as appropriate.

MEDIEVAL

A central characteristic of western Christian politics of the middle ages was tension between two public authorities: ecclesiastical and temporal. The first major and systematic statements of the principles concerning their relationship were formulated by Pope Gelasius I (AD 496) in letters to the Roman Emperor. The most important of them is often referred to as “Duo sunt” (Ep. xii. 2) in which Gelasius wrote: “Two there are, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the pontiffs [popes] and the royal power [emperors].” He had earlier written that before Christ, there were some, such as Melchizedek, who were rightly both kings and priests. But “Christ, mindful of human frailty,” divided the two offices so that emperors needed the pontiffs for matters of eternal life and the pontiffs needed the emperors to care for temporal matters. (Tractatus. ix. 11) Gelasian dualism in one form or another remains one standard for Western church-state relations. From the perspective of political theory write an essay laying out the theoretical and practical importance of that dualism.

In Book 19 of *THE CITY OF GOD*, Augustine proposes peace as the highest goal of political society. In the questions on law (I-II 90-108) in his *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE*, Aquinas presents the common good as the proper aim of a political community and its law. Write an essay in which you (a) explicate first Augustine’s understanding of peace, and then Aquinas’s understanding of the common good, with special attention to the relationship of each (peace and the common good) to the other and also to justice. Then (b) explain how and to what extent the political telos, defined as peace or as the common good, can be achieved in this-worldly polities, according to Augustine and Aquinas? Are their views on this last question divergent in any important respect? Finally, (c) briefly explain whose presentation of political life, and its aims and possibilities, you
find better overall, Augustine's or Aquinas's, and why.

**Early Modern**

What makes the social contract tradition "modern"? To what extent do these "modern" qualities of the social contract tradition render it suited for theorizing and understanding "modern" politics? Be sure to define "modern" early in your essay. Answer this question with reference to at least 3 of the following thinkers: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant.

Discuss the relationship between will and political legitimacy in Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

**LATE MODERN**

In what ways is Hannah Arendt's theory of political action Nietzschean in character? In what ways is it in tension with Nietzsche?

Has liberalism established hegemony in late modern political thought?

**American**

How does Alexis de Tocqueville's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of American democracy compare with the understanding of democracy and its prospect in America that shaped the constitutional construction defended in *The Federalist*?

Reconstruct the main issues in the debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. In the light of American history which side looks to have had the better of the argument?
Comprehensive Exam
Political Theory
University of Notre Dame
May, 2010

Directions: Answer one question from each of the following sections.

I. Ancient:

1. How is the account of political conflict found in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* like or unlike Aristotle’s analysis of the foundations and factors that shape political regimes in his *Politics*?

2. In Bk. II of *The Politics*, Aristotle offers critical analyses of several regimes (philosophical and actual) held to be excellent and perhaps even best, beginning with Socrates’ city founded in speech in Plato’s *Republic*.

Write an essay in which you summarize and critically assess Aristotle’s treatment of the Republic and its best regime in *Politics* II. In your answer you may wish to consider why Aristotle begins his analyses of purported best regimes from the best regime of the *Republic*, which features of Socrates’ regime Aristotle chooses to focus on or at least to mention, and which he passes over; the aim/s, constructive and/or critical, of this discussion of his teacher’s most famous dialogue; the fairness and completeness, or lack thereof, of Aristotle’s critique; and the role of this portion of Bk. II in preparing for Aristotle’s elaboration of his own political philosophy and the best regime in Bk. III of *The Politics* through to its conclusion.

II. Early Modern:

1. There is a great variety of views about the relation between Hobbes and Locke. One scholar think Locke is exclusively concerned with Filmer and may not even have read Hobbes. Others think Locke is writing primarily to refute Hobbes. Yet others claim that Locke is essentially a Hobbesian. Can you sort out the relation between Hobbes and Locke and along the way clarify why scholars have disagreed so much about that relation?

2. What are the uses and disadvantages of thinking about modern politics in terms of a social contract? Discuss with reference to at least one early modern social contract thinker and one early modern thinker who doesn’t employ the social contract device.

III. Late Modern:

1. Both G. W. F. Hegel and J. S. Mill can be understood to argue in favor of a liberal democratic political order. Compare and contrast their arguments in order to show which give the most satisfactory defense of such an order and why.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche’s essay “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” can be read as a serious critique of both Hegel and Marx’s more progressive views of history. What is
Nietzsche’s critique? How might Hegel and Marx respond?

IV. American:

1. One scholar has said: “Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were the best of friends and the closest of political allies and yet they disagreed almost entirely about politics.” What do you think of this claim? If it is true, what was the basis for their common political action? If not true, why might some one say such a thing?

2. For the past 50 years, there has been an increasingly strident debate about the relative weight of civic republican vs. liberal elements in the thought of the American founders. Write an essay in which you argue for the predominance of one or the other tradition in the political thought of the Founders.

   Briefly sketch Lincoln and Douglas’ respective arguments. Then, drawing upon the thought of the Founding period, assess who makes the better argument—Lincoln or Douglas—concerning the intent of the Founders. What does your answer tell us about how to understand the Founders as political actors?

2. One of the great debates between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists was over the issue of representation. What position did each take? Why did the Anti-Federalists in particular see this as such an important issue?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory (Jeff Church)  
September 2004

Answer one question from each of the four following sub-fields.

**Ancient**

1. Aristotle claims that democrats and oligarchs have different conceptions of justice, that each of those conceptions are defective, and that, though both are defective, an oligarchic regime is worse than a democratic one. Answer the following interrelated questions: 1) how does Aristotle define those two conceptions of justice? 2) what does he say is defective about each? 3) why does he say a regime following the (defective) oligarchic conception is worse than one following the (defective) democratic one? 4) briefly, why do you think his argument about 3) is correct or incorrect?

2. In his three most obviously political dialogues, the Republic, Statesman, and Laws, Plato uses three different philosophical spokesmen: Socrates, the Eleatic Stranger and the Athenian Stranger. Why? What does Plato gain from using different spokesmen? How do they differ? Can their different presentations of political knowledge be put together into a coherent doctrine or view?

**Late Modern**

1. How does Vico combine insight into the historicity of human nature with an avoidance of the pitfalls of historicism?

2. In his Philosophy of Right Hegel developed a notion of "civil society" which he believed was missing in ancient political philosophy. What is his conception of civil society and how does this conception fit into his overall political philosophy? What were some of his precursors in this field? Hegel's successors have appropriated and reformulated the conception for their own purposes. What features were particularly attractive to Marx and how did he utilize these features for his own revolutionary program? How did this appropriation differ from the use made of civil society by "liberal" thinkers like James and John Stuart Mill? What is your own assessment of these appropriations?

**Early Modern**

1. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau are all understood as "social contract" theorists. Hume, Burke and other thinkers have criticized their approach to political theory as ahistorical and ungrounded on a satisfactory understanding of human nature and the cultural, historical and affective origins of political communities. Define the "social contract" approach to theorizing the origins of political systems, paying attention to the similarities and differences between Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, and then defend or critique what they share in common. Provide plenty of textual evidence from Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau to support your case. You may also align your argument with secondary literatures where appropriate.

2. Rousseau's chief political works present a powerful critique of the doctrines of his early modern predecessors. Outline that critique and assess its validity.

**Contemporary**

1. In terms of ethical and political theory, Martin Heidegger is often placed into two equally problematic rubrics: he is treated either as an entirely a-political (and un-ethical) thinker or else as a thinker with disastrous political and ethical leanings. To counter these construals some interpreters have tried to retrieve the "praxis" dimension of his work. In your view, what are some of the dimensions of his writings permitting or encouraging this interpretation? What kind of political and ethical implications can be developed on the basis of such an interpretation? How plausible do you find these approaches? (If you wish you may critically discuss the secondary literature on these interpretations.)

2. The Habermas of Legitimation Crisis and the Rawls of Political Liberalism offer quite different accounts of legitimate political authority and of political stability and instability. How do these accounts differ?
University of Notre Dame
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory
September 2005

Answer **one** question from each part below:

**Part I: Ancient**

1. Socrates has often been praised or imitated as a teacher. What do we learn about his peculiar mode of teaching and its success (or lack of success) in Plato’s dialogues? How is Socrates’ teaching activity related to politics—at his own time and later?

2. In what points does Aristotle share the basic tenets of the practical philosophy of his teacher Plato? What are his criticisms of Plato’s political philosophy? Are they always justified?

**Part II: Medieval**

1. A recurring question raised by political theorists is whether politics is “natural.”

   Choose two of the following theorists: Augustine, Alfarabi, Aquinas. For each address the following questions:

   A) In their theories is politics natural?
   B) If yes, what is the content of this naturalness?
   C) If no, what is the status and purpose of politics?
   D) Which of the two authors you choose is most compelling on this issue?

2. Explicate Augustine’s treatment in the *City of God* of justice, res publica, and the ends of political life and action. In this context, be sure to comment on his analysis and assessment of Rome. Finally, compare Augustine’s views on the nature and possibility of justice and happiness in the political community with the views held by any ONE of the following thinkers: Aquinas, Maimonides, Alfarabi, or Marsilius.
Part III: Early Modern

1. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau all offer theories of the “social contract.” What, according to each theorist, is the “social contract”? What are the ramifications of using this concept of the social contract for their respective understandings of political freedom? Finally, which thinker offers the most compelling understanding of modern political liberty through his employment of the concept of the social contract?

2. In a recent book Thomas Pangle has asserted that the main goal of the early modern philosophers was to tame, or even to conquer religion. Taking any two of the following early modern philosophers assess his claim: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke.

Part IV: American

1. Select three aspects or specific provisions of the proposed Constitution on which the Federalists and Antifederalists differed during the ratification debates in 1787-88. Sketch the argument on each side of each issue, and indicate which side had the better argument and why you believe so.

2. One recent study of the Reconstruction Amendments made the following claim: “These amendments are the finest flourishing of the natural rights doctrine in American politics and law, embodying the rights commitments to a far higher degree than the original constitution did.” Is this an accurate claim? Explain why or why not?
Comprehensive Exam
Saturday, September 29, 2007

Ancient

Aristotle went to Athens to study with Plato at the Academy for many years. That fact did not prevent Aristotle from disagreeing with Plato in several important respects. What are the criticisms Aristotle makes of his mentor in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. How valid do you think these criticisms are?

In the opening paragraphs of Cicero's *De Officiis* he claims that his philosophical teaching is not very different from that of the Peripatetics. He clearly has in mind specifically his own moral and political philosophy and Aristotle as not only the head but also the chief representative of the Peripatetic School. In what senses and to what degree is Cicero's claim true?

Medieval

Medieval thinkers often disagreed on the status of the various kinds of ends one to which one might be devoted. In particular, there was disagreement about the status of political life. Some saw it as a natural integral human good, others saw it as only an instrumental good, aiming wholly towards an end outside politics (for example philosophy or salvation). Compare and contrast at least two of the following thinkers on this question: Aquinas, Augustine, Alfarabi, Maimonides, Marsilius of Padua.

Compare and critically assess Augustine and Aquinas on the nature and possibility of human virtue, especially (but not exclusively) the virtue of justice, and on the nature and possibility of the just polity.

Early Modern

Why, in your view, did early modern political philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant use the metaphor of a 'contract' to explain human social and political behavior and/or legitimate certain political orders? What makes such a metaphor useful for understanding politics in early modernity and in other times? What are some of its philosophical limitations, both for understanding early modern politics and for understanding politics in general.

Early modern political thought—including Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant—was shaped by the rise of modern science and post-Reformation Protestantism. Write an essay in which you discuss the relative strength of these two influences on the thought of three of the theorists named.

American
Sketch the political theory of Publius (*The Federalist*), and bring it into conversation with the critiques of twentieth-century democracy by Reinhold Niebuhr and Yves Simon.

It has been said that Tocqueville is a synthesis of the Federalist and the Anti federalists, combining the best of both. Is this a fair assessment? What elements of each does his political philosophy contain?
Political Theory Examination

Spring 2007

Part I: Please answer one of the following:

1. Ancient political philosophy is often said to be dominantly concerned with the education of virtuous citizens. And of the virtues, justice is said to be the most political. Do Plato and Aristotle have the same understanding of justice? Of the way just citizens can and should be educated?

2. Where does Cicero stand with respect to the great political theory of ancient Greece? In other words, explain Cicero’s philosophical allegiance and his philosophical method, if he can be said to have one. By exploring at least two specific issues in political and moral philosophy, indicate his relationship (including similarities and differences) to the relevant writings and ideas of Plato and/or Aristotle.

Part II: Please answer one of the following:

1. “Why does the notion of the state of nature have such philosophical and political salience during the era of the Enlightenment? Answer the question with reference to the life and work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.”

2. In early modern philosophy the question of the legitimate, as opposed to the good (or best) political order arises. What accounts for this shift in concern?

Part III: Please answer one of the following:

1. Both Marx and Nietzsche can be called “materialists,” and they both emphasize the historical nature of the structures they analyze. That said, there is an enormous difference between them when it comes to their respective visions of history. Write an essay in which you address the respective relations between history, theory, and possible political change in Marx and Nietzsche.

2. Hegel makes the surprising claim that philosophical history is not only a legitimate form of history, but is the only form of history that can solve the problem of historical knowledge. What is the problem of historical knowledge? What is “philosophical history” and how does Hegel think it solves that problem? Is he correct in so thinking?
Part IV: Please answer one of the following:

1. Of the major figures in contemporary political theory, whose work do you think will endure and why? Your answer should focus on the strengths of the thinker(s) selected, and proceed by way of contrast and comparison with other contemporary thinkers whose work has, in your opinion, less staying power.

2. A subject of some debate within political philosophy circles concerns the relation between the “early Rawls” of *Theory of Justice* and the “later Rawls” of *Political Liberalism*. Some say the two Rawls’ are very alike in character, others that there is a complete shift in Rawls’ thinking. What do you think? Why?
Comprehensive Examination
Political Philosophy
Winter 2006

Answer one question from each area you are testing on. Be sure to read the question carefully and answer it. Spewing forth of canned material on the thinkers is frowned upon. It is very much worthwhile to take time to organize and even outline your answer before you start writing.

I. Ancient

1. Leo Strauss has written that "the guiding question" for classical political philosophy was "the question of the best political order." Strauss sets Cicero as well as Aristotle and Plato in the tradition of classical political philosophy. Explain how this question appears and is handled in the texts of Cicero. Do the same for either Aristotle or Plato. In the course of these explanations or after, compare the function of the question and the response offered to it in your chosen Greek with what can be found in the texts of Cicero. Citing the relevant texts and indicating whether and how the question serves as the guiding question are important aspects of a good response.

2. The trial and death of Socrates is the event lying behind, if not directly dramatized in, all the Platonic dialogues. According to Plato, what does Athens' condemnation and killing of Socrates signify for politics? For philosophy?

II. Medieval

1. Some contemporary political theorists (John Rawls for example) dismiss many classical and medieval thinkers because they are "dominant end" theorists. By this Rawls means a theorist for whom one end (such as salvation or contemplation) is completely dominant and to which all other ends and goods are simply instrumental. Take any two of the following theorists (Augustine, Marsilius, Alfarabi, Maimonides). For each answer the following:

A) What is the highest end for this theorist? How does he justify this ranking?
B) Are all other goods subordinate to this end? If so why, if not, why not?

2. In a famous passage of Book 19 of THE CITY OF GOD, Augustine proposes peace as the highest goal of political society. In the questions on law (I-II 90-108) in his SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, Aquinas presents the common good as the highest telos of a political community and its law.

Explicate Augustine's understanding of peace and Aquinas's of the common good, with special attention to the relationship of each (peace and the common good) to the other and also to justice. To what extent can the political telos, defined as peace or as
the common good, be achieved in this-worldly politics according to Augustine and Aquinas? Are their views on this last question divergent in any important respect(s)? Whose presentation of political life, political aims, and political possibilities do you find best overall, and why?

III. Early Modern

1. It has been suggested that the classical early modern philosophers (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau) represent the attempt to "moralize Machiavelli." Does Machiavelli require "moralizing"? (i.e., is his theory deficient morally?) Are his early modern successors rightly seen as attempts to moralize Machiavelli? Do they succeed?

2. What is Mary Wollstonecraft's most distinctive contribution to early modern political thought? How does this contribution improve upon and/or move beyond Locke, Rousseau, or Burke? (Please pick one of these thinkers to compare and contrast with Wollstonecraft.)

IV. Late Modern

1. Outline the ways in which freedom has been conceptualized by some of the key figures in late modern political thought. Identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of each thinker's position.

2. Hegel's Philosophy of Right seeks to reconcile ancient virtue with modern freedom. In what ways does Hegel try to accomplish this goal? Be sure to specify some of the concrete institutional arrangements Hegel commends. Not all of his successors were persuaded that Hegel had succeeded in his effort. Explain briefly the response of either Marx or Nietzsche to Hegel's political philosophy. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with this response.

V. Contemporary

1. Throughout the centuries Western political philosophy has relied on a theory (or theories) of "human nature." In both BEING AND TIME and the LETTER ON HUMANISM, Heidegger formulates a novel conception of what it means to be human. Focusing on BEING AND TIME, what are some of the constitutive features of human Dasein and how are they inter-connected? What is the relation of "Being" and "time" or temporality in this text? (Remember the last sentence in BEING AND TIME which reads: "Does time reveal itself then as the horizon of Being?") How does the LETTER ON HUMANISM build upon, clarify and/or modify the argument of BEING AND TIME? How does Heidegger's novel view of being human differ from more traditional conceptions of "human nature"? Are there political implications to Heidegger's novel presentation of human Dasein?
2. When it comes to contemporary political thought, is liberalism 'the only game in town'? Does it face any serious criticisms? Can it answer those criticisms? Be sure to include at least one of the following thinkers in your answer: Oakeshott, Strauss, Taylor, and Voegelin. Do not feel limited, however, by this list.

VI. American

1. Writing more than forty years after the Constitutional Convention and the debate over ratification, Alexis de Tocqueville assessed the fledgling American republic. Compare his analysis of and concerns for American Democracy with those in evidence in The Federalist (Papers).

2. Writing in the post-WWII environment, Reinhold Niebuhr accuses the main thinkers in the American tradition of being "children of light." What does this accusation mean? Is it accurate? Are Niebuhr's categories "children of light" and "children of darkness" of any use for political philosophy?

VII. Politics and Literature

1. What can students of politics learn from literary works dealing with people and events in the past that they cannot learn from historical texts describing the same people and events? Give specific examples.

2. One enemy of the field of Politics and Literature has said: "This should not be a recognized field in political philosophy because literary writers systematically misrepresent and distort the phenomena of politics by their tendency to focus on the erotic." Using two or three specific texts from the Politics and Literature list, write an essay responding to this critic. Feel free to agree or disagree with her in whole or in part.
Theory Exam January 2009

Ancient

1. Leo Strauss has written that "the guiding question" for classical political philosophy was "the question of the best political order." Illustrate in the major political writings of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero whether and how this is the case. Compare these writings with respect to how the question functions in each of them.

2. In Plato’s Republic Socrates famously states that evils in cities will not cease until philosophers become kings. Why not? What do or can philosophers do in politics that no one else can? Did Socrates or Plato make such a contribution? What follows from Socrates’ own admission that philosophers will rarely, if ever rule?

Medieval

1. Compare and critically assess any TWO of the following three thinkers on the nature and possibility of a just and virtuous political society: Augustine, Alfarabi, Aquinas.

2. Respond to the following. “The key to understanding medieval thinkers is to penetrate to and clarify the end or purpose of political life, especially the question of a supernatural versus natural end.” Discuss at least two of the following authors; Augustine, Aquinas, Alfarabi, Maimonides. For each explain what the end or purpose of politics is in their thought, and how religion fits into it. What differences and similarities are there?

Early Modern

1. In what ways does Rousseau make substantial revisions to the idea of a social contract as compared to his predecessors Hobbes and Locke? Are they good changes? Why or why not?

2. A recurring problem in the study of Machiavelli is the relation between his two main works--the Prince and the Discourses. To many readers they seem very different and raise the puzzle of how Machiavelli could have written both and which he "really" means. How would you account for the relation between them? Are they "really" different? Could the same man have written both at the same time? Do they bespeak a change of mind? If so, from what to what?

Late Modern

1. Explain how Vico explains the enormous differences between legal systems and types of regimes that we find in human history.

2. In what ways are Nietzsche and Mill’s doctrines of individualism and perspectivism similar? In what ways are they different? Is there a "Nietzsche for liberals?" If so, would he look like Mill?
**Contemporary**

1. In what ways does Heidegger's critique of technology and the "will to will" parallel Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of instrumental reason? Where do the critiques diverge? Which critique is more persuasive? Why?

2. Political theory has experienced a revival in the second half of the twentieth century. Among the leading political thinkers who are seen as contributing to this revival are Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. Select two of these thinkers and discuss their work. In your view, what was the contribution each sought to make to contemporary political theory and how successful were they?

**American**

1. Do *The Federalist Papers* present a complete and coherent political philosophy? Discuss your response to this question in an essay in which you utilize the relevant concepts and key passages from the text of Publius.

2. Perhaps the two greatest works on the American political order are "The Federalist" and Tocqueville's " Democracy in America." As much as Tocqueville seems to respect the American founders many readers discern substantial disagreements between the two texts. What do you think about this? Are there real disagreements? If so, is this the result of a critique by Tocqueville of the Federalist's political science? If not, what are the elements of Tocqueville's book that might lead to the suspicion of disagreement and why do you think that disagreement more apparent than real.
Political Theory Comprehensive Exam May 2009

Ancient
1. In the Republic, Laws, and Statesman, Plato has three different philosophers give three somewhat different accounts of the knowledge a king, legislator, and/or statesman needs. What is this knowledge, according to Socrates, the Athenian Stranger, and the Eleatic Stranger? Can the three accounts be reconciled? If not, how do you explain the differences?

2. Compare Cicero's political theory with that of either Plato or Aristotle. As much as possible cite, even if in a general way, the bases for your comparison in the texts studied for this examination.

Early Modern
1. It has been said that modern political philosophy since Machiavelli is well understood as a series of efforts to "moralize" Machiavelli". Taking Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau as your field of relevant thinkers, assess this claim. Do Machiavelli and Machiavellian themes figure enough in these thinkers to consider them as part of a "Machiavellian Tradition"? Do they "moralize" his position?

2. How do women fit or not fit into the modern social contract tradition?

Contemporary
1. What does Rawls mean by an overlapping consensus, and why is it important to his conception of political liberalism?

2. The Walgreen Lecture Series at the University of Chicago gave rise to important mid-twentieth century books by Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. The Series was concerned with the moral foundations of modern democracy. Take any two of these thinkers and explore in a comparative way how they define the crisis of modern democracy and in what direction they point as a
way to restore democratic foundations.

**Comparative Political Theory**

1. There is a controversy among those who study Chinese thought: do the various Chinese intellectual traditions address questions treated in mainstream western traditions (the kind of thing that figures on the rest of this test), but in a different way? Or do Chinese traditions address an entirely different set of questions that do not figure among the issues that have engaged western thinkers? Try to approach this problem by discussing how some western political concepts--specifically: law, authority, legitimacy, justice--might figure in the Confucian tradition. In your answer bring in whenever proper perspectives from non-Confucian Chinese traditions.

2. What is the basic point of comparative political theory (CPT)? What kind of methodology (or methodologies) is most appropriate for the enterprise of CPT?

There are mainly two general objections to CPT. First, it is argued that CPT is unnecessary because human beings are all alike and that hence politics is the same everywhere. Secondly, it is argued that CPT is impossible because theoretical understanding is necessarily conditioned by, or confined to, a given culture or language game, a fact militating against cross-cultural comparison.

How do you evaluate these claims? In the view of some, CPT makes no room for the critique of cultural practices because genuine understanding equals approval. Do you agree? If not, why not?

Finally, in your opinion, what are some of the valuable lessons that practitioners of CPT can derive from the study of Asian traditions of thought, especially Confucianism?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Theory (Covington)  
May 2003

Answer one question from each of the four sub-fields

**Medieval**
1. Most medieval theorists would agree that politics and human law should be based upon “nature”. And yet, what they mean by nature, and what nature provides as the purpose of politics, varies quite a bit. Take at least two of the following thinkers and critically compare them on their views of the “natural” ends of political life: Augustine, Alfarabi, Maimonides, and Aquinas.

2. Critics have sometimes argued that Augustine's emphasis on peace and his teaching on the "two cities" divert attention from the quest for justice and the best regime that were at the heart of classical political philosophy. Similar concerns have been raised about Aquinas's ethics and political thought: by emphasizing charity and natural and divine law, he devalues justice, civic virtue, and the question of regimes.

Choose either Augustine or Aquinas, and explicate his political thought with special attention to the nature and import of justice, social and civic virtue, and the question of the best regime. Are critics right in seeing in his writings a devaluation of politics and its ethical dimension on the one hand, and on the other hand an overemphasis on the transpolitical?

**Early Modern**
1. Lay out the advantages and disadvantages of trying to construct a theory of politics starting from a state of nature in which man is not "a political animal" and, having done so, make your case for the wisdom or folly of that way of proceeding. Be sure to illustrate you answer with appropriate evidence from at least two political theorists who start from an a-political state of nature.

2. Locke and Rousseau both discuss the place of women, children and the family within their theories of the state of nature. How do their respective accounts of pre-political family life shape their conceptions of the proper relationship between the family and the state? Which theorist—if either—offers the more normatively and politically appealing model of the relationship between the family and the state? Use references to the texts of Locke and Rousseau as well as the secondary literature on the subject.

3. It has recently been argued (by e.g. Tom West and Jeremy Waldron) that Locke’s political philosophy should been seen as a form of Christian (Protestant) political theology. Assess this claim, being sure to bring out the best evidence on both sides of that question.

**American Political Thought**
1. Daniel Boorstin (in *The Genius of American Politics*) raises what is, in effect, a challenge to giving American political theory a place in a political theory exam such as this. He claims that Americans lack interest in political theory and that “we have nothing in the line of a theory that can be exported to other peoples of the world.” He observes that the United States has never produced a political philosopher of the stature of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, nor a "systematic theoretical work" to rank with those of such thinkers.

However, is *The Federalist* a work of political philosophy? If not, how does it stand with respect to political philosophy? Explain and defend your answer fully, citing as appropriate specific parts and lines of argument in the Papers.

Theory (Covington) 5/03 Comp Exam  
Page 1 of 2
2. One well known collection of essays on the founding period has argued that the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists was a battle over how best to “save the revolution.” Is this an accurate way to describe the debate? If so, how was the fate of the revolution implicated in the debate? If not, what are the best terms in which to grasp the debate?

**Christian Political Thought**

1. Critically compare and contrast at least two of the following Christian political thinkers on the question of what they see as the end and purpose of political life: Luther, Calvin, Kuyper, Richard Niebuhr, John Yoder. Which do you find most persuasive? Why?

2. Christian Political Thought has tended to be dualistic (e.g. the two cities, the two swords) since its inception, in both its Catholic and Protestant variants. Does Protestantism make any difference to the character of the dualism affirmed? Discuss in terms of a representative sampling of Catholic and Protestant doctrines.
ANCIENT

1. Plato thought the education of citizens and rulers was the core of politics. Both his longest works contain detailed descriptions of proposed educational reforms. Describe and then contrast the educational proposals in the Republic and the Laws with regard to their purpose(s), rationales or justifications, institutions and contents. To what extent are the proposals essentially the same? To what extent are they different? Why?
What do we learn from these proposals about the requirements and problems of political education?

2. In Politics III Aristotle claims that the principle to be used in distinguishing oligarchy from democracy is not number (government by the few versus government by the many) but wealth (government by the rich versus government by the poor). In that context answer all of the following questions:
   a) what is his argument for using wealth rather than number?
   b) how do the rich and the poor justify their respective claims to rule according to Aristotle?
   c) what is his evaluation of their claims?
   d) what is your assessment of Aristotle’s argument here?

MEDIEVAL

1. In recent debates in the literature some have applauded Thomas Aquinas for having a teaching of natural law in which the following of exceptionless rules is held out as the moral ideal. At the same time, some have criticized Aquinas for holding a teaching of exceptionless rules. Still others have argued that he does not have a teaching of exceptionless rules.

   a) what is at stake in the argument over exceptionless rules? I.e. what are the strengths and weaknesses of a moral teaching based on exceptionless rules?
   b) drawing upon the text of Aquinas, argue whether you think his natural law teaching is one of exceptionless rules.
   c) if you argue that his is not a teaching of exceptionless rules, how can he still call it natural law?
   d) if you argue that his is a teaching of exceptionless rules, how does he respond to those, such as Aristotle, who point out the shortcomings of exceptionless rules.

2. Augustine draws a dramatic contrast between the City of God and the City of Man.
a) critically elaborate the difference between the two cities. What determines membership in one or the other?
b) what is the relationship between the "earthly city" and any particular temporal political regime? I.e. is every citizen, or ruler, of a temporal particular regime, necessarily a member of the City of Man?
c) why, for Augustine, would a member of the City of God, care about the goods possible for a temporal political regime?

**EARLY MODERN**

1. Choose TWO (2) of the following social contract thinkers: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Rawls. Answer all of the following questions comparing the teachings of the two theorists you have chosen:
   
a) how, if at all, does the social contract differ from an ordinary contract (that one might make with an automobile insurance company for example)?
b) who are the parties to the social contract?
c) how does the social contract bind the parties?
d) what is your assessment of the adequacy of the chosen social contract teachings to explain the phenomena of social/political life?

2. One participant in Fox TV's "Temptation Island" stated one day in defense of her participation on the shows: "I mean, you know, the whole point of early modern political philosophy was to enfranchise the 'autonomous' or 'unencumbered' self." A rival network, attempting to tout its own "reality-TV" show, "Return to Salem," has asked you, a known expert in early modern political philosophy, for a scholarly commentary on the claim raised by this "Temptation Island" participant.

**AMERICAN**

1. In a book entitled American Federalism, Richard Leach claims that the Constitutional "Convention did not actually debate federalism at all . . . ." One wonders if this is really so or in what sense it is so. In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville speaks of American government as "no longer a federal government" but a "novel thing" for which a "new word is necessary." With these statements in mind discuss fully the emergence of "American federalism" through the Founding period and into the early years of the republic.

2. Herbert Storing has said, "The reason the Federalists beat the Anti-Federalists in the debate over the constitution is that they had the better argument." Did they?
Government & International Studies
THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (Dunn)
January 2001

ANCIENT

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of the republic.

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Anti-Federalists in the debate over the constitution is that they had the
better argument." Did they?
ANCIENT

1. Plato thought the education of citizens and rulers was the core of politics. Both his longest works contain detailed descriptions of proposed educational reforms. Describe and then contrast the educational proposals in the Republic and the Laws with regard to their purpose(s), rationales or justifications, institutions and contents. To what extent are the proposals essentially the same? To what extent are they different? Why? What do we learn from these proposals about the requirements and problems of political education?

2. In Politics III Aristotle claims that the principle to be used in distinguishing oligarchy from democracy is not number (government by the few versus government by the many) but wealth (government by the rich versus government by the poor). In that context answer all of the following questions:
   a) what is his argument for using wealth rather than number?
   b) how do the rich and the poor justify their respective claims to rule according to Aristotle?
   c) what is his evaluation of their claims?
   d) what is your assessment of Aristotle's argument here?

EARLY MODERN

1. Choose TWO (2) of the following social contract thinkers: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Rawls. Answer all of the following questions comparing the teachings of the two theorists you have chosen:

   a) how, if at all, does the social contract differ from an ordinary contract (that one might make with an automobile insurance company for example)?
   b) who are the parties to the social contract?
   c) how does the social contract bind the parties?
   d) what is your assessment of the adequacy of the chosen social contract teachings to explain the phenomena of social/political life?

2. One participant in Fox TV's "Temptation Island" stated one day in defense of her participation on the shows: "I mean, you know, the whole point of early modern political philosophy was to enfranchise the 'autonomous' or 'unencumbered' self." A rival network, attempting to tout its own "reality-TV" show, "Return to Salem," has asked you, a known expert in early modern political philosophy, for a scholarly commentary on the claim raised by this "Temptation Island" participant.
AMERICAN

1. In a book entitled American Federalism, Richard Leach claims that the Constitutional "Convention did not actually debate federalism at all...." One wonders if this is really so or in what sense it is so. In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville speaks of American government as "no longer a federal government" but a "novel thing" for which a "new word is necessary." With these statements in mind discuss fully the emergence of "American federalism" through the Founding period and into the early years of the republic.

2. Herbert Storing has said, "The reason the Federalists beat the Anti-Federalists in the debate over the constitution is that they had the better argument." Did they?

CONTEMPORARY

1. There is a sense among some 20th-century thinkers that Western modernity is in crisis or has reached a dead end, and that consequently a serious social and political reorientation is needed. As a corollary, the same thinkers also urge a reorientation of political philosophy by calling on intellectual resources which today tend to be neglected. Choose TWO among the following thinkers: Strauss, Voegelin, Oakeshott, George Grant. Discuss their assessment of the condition of Western modernity. In their view, what are the most serious troubles besetting the modern world? Likewise discuss some of their proposed remedies and the philosophical traditions invoked to provide relief. Do you agree or disagree with their views, and why?

2. For most thinkers favorable to modernity the key merit of liberal democracy resides in the emphasis on individual freedom, a freedom which is not incompatible with a degree of social equality and solidarity. Choose TWO of the following thinkers: Rawls, Habermas, Arendt. What is the conception of political democracy advocated by these writers? What role does individual freedom play in their thought, and how do they view its relation to equality and solidarity? What place do moral or ethical obligations hold in their writings? In their view, what are the main defects of contemporary democracy, and how can they be remedied? Do you agree or disagree with their views, and for what reasons?
Government & International Studies
THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (Schotten)
January 2001

ANCIENT

1. Plato thought the education of citizens and rulers was the core of politics. Both his longest works contain detailed descriptions of proposed educational reforms. Describe and then contrast the educational proposals in the Republic and the Laws with regard to their purpose(s), rationales or justifications, institutions and contents. To what extent are the proposals essentially the same? To what extent are they different? Why? What do we learn from these proposals about the requirements and problems of political education?

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LATE MODERN

1. Charles Taylor argues that one of the deficiencies of liberalism is an atomistic theory of the individual, concerned purely with his individual choices to the neglect of the social context which enables or disables individual capacities. Hegel's response to liberal subjectivity takes the shape of what he terms "ethical life". Comment on the nature of freedom as located in ethical life.

2. The question of god for Hegel means a lasting reconciliation of the human and the divine, while for Nietzsche it signifies a division within the human which the overman struggles to overcome. Yet Nietzsche describes himself, in the last essay of his last work, in words evocative of Hegel's dialectic of history: "I am not a man, I am dynamite...I contradict as has never been contradicted and am nonetheless the opposite of a negative spirit." Comment on the significance of negativity in Nietzsche's thought, and in what ways he breaks (or doesn't) with the role Hegel assigns negativity.

FEMINIST POLITICAL THEORY

1. Drawing heavily on the work of Foucault, some feminists working within a poststructuralist paradigm have refused the reduction of gender to a biological binarism. Others, arguing for the importance of the body, have championed it. Describe some of these efforts, as well as their respective weaknesses and strengths, and their prospects for effective feminist resistance.

2. Should feminism be the primary theoretical model for understanding sexuality? Does critical attention to what Rubin calls "sexual minorities" (who are not always women, and who constitute a class of sexual actors whose behavior is categorized and regulated by the state in invasive and pathologizing ways) spell the end of feminist theory? Discuss how different theorists answer, or might answer, this question.
Government & International Studies  
Political Theory Comprehensive Examination (Jarrett Carty)  
January 2002

Write an essay in response to ONE of the questions in each of the four categories:

I. ANCIENT

1. Leo Strauss has written that "the guiding question" for classical political philosophy was "the question of the best political order." Strauss sets Cicero as well as Aristotle and Plato in the tradition of classical political philosophy. Explain how this question appears and is handled in the texts of Cicero. Do the same for either Aristotle or Plato. In the course of these explanations or after, compare the function of the question and the response offered to it in your chosen Greek with what can be found in the texts of Cicero. Citing the relevant texts and indicating whether and how the question serves as the guiding question are important aspects of a good response.

2. In Book II of his Politics Aristotle presents a stringent critique of the regimes Plato proposes in both his Republic and Laws. What are Aristotle's criticisms? On the basis of your own reading of the dialogues, how do you think that Plato would have responded? Was Aristotle correct?

3. Aristotle argues that one cannot consistently do perfectly good, virtuous acts without the virtue of prudence and that prudence deals with the relevant particular features of concrete acts. Yet he also makes a very strong case for the rule of law (rather than of men). He makes that case for the rule of law in spite of the fact that the law (as he himself points out) cannot by its very nature as a general rule deal with all the possible and relevant particulars of cases. Explain the matter as he sees it and then critically evaluate his teaching.

II. MEDIEVAL

1. What role does the question of the “best regime” play in Augustine’s political thought? Elaborate and critically assess his treatment of this issue in the City of God.

2. One question that recurs in medieval political thought is the question of nature and politics. Compare and contrast the thought of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine on the following two dimensions of that relationship:

   A) Is politics an accident, that is on account of sin, or is it natural?

   B) If it is natural, what is the end of political life. If not natural, what is the end of politics?

III. EARLY MODERN

1. There are acts which may be required under a social contract and which also involve major costs (including foregone profits or what the economists call "opportunity costs") to the one performing them. That category of acts includes things such as risking one's life in defense of the polity set up by the contract, paying heavy taxes when required by the sovereign in some emergency, conducting one's business affairs according to the law in cases where a) doing so illegally would be vastly more profitable, b) the penalties for violating the law are less than the profits to be had by doing so,
and/or the probability of one's illegal conduct being detected is very, very low. Imagine two individuals, full members of a social-contract-based polity. Imagine that each of the two is a faithful disciple of the political philosophy of a different theorist from among the following: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant.

For each of your two (2) individuals Lay out and compare the major considerations that would shape the choice of a course of action in such cases.

Having laid out their respective deontological considerations, critically evaluate them.

2. For almost half a century now there has been a large debate over Locke's relationship to Hobbes. We can discern at least three positions in the literature:
A) The traditional view--Locke is a thoroughgoing anti-Hobbesean.
B) The Strauss view--Locke is a more or less orthodox but concealed Hobbesean.
C) the Laslett view--Hobbes is more or less irrelevant to Locke. Locke may not have ever read Hobbes and the real point of reference for Locke is Filmer. Explain briefly each of these positions and the chief reasons to be given for them. Which, if any, is most correct. Defend your position.

IV. CONTEMPORARY
1. Juergen Habermas is sometimes described today as a “liberal” political theorist--which has come as a surprise to some of his readers. Why would the label be surprising to some readers? Do you agree with the label? Referring to some of Habermas’s writings, indicate which aspects might justify the label “liberal” and which aspects render it dubious. What are some of the similarities between Habermas and the theory of John Rawls? What are some outstanding differences? What kind of relationship do you detect between Habermas and Hannah Arendt? In which respects is their notion of the “public sphere” similar and difference? Wherever possible, document your argument by reference to texts familiar to you.

2. Compare the treatment of history in the respective approaches to political philosophy by Eric Voegelin and Leo Strauss. Bring out your assessment of the adequacy of their approaches.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Theory Comprehensive Exam (James Thompson)  
January 2003

Answer one of the questions in each of the four categories

Ancient

1. A claim essentially like the following has been around for some time: "Cicero is more the thinker for the modern world than either of the Greek thinkers (Plato and Aristotle) whom he so admired. Cicero's thinking is specifically cosmopolitan and international in a way that polis-centered political thought is not" Defend or oppose this claim on behalf of Cicero by an appropriate comparison of Cicero's thought with that of Plato or Aristotle.

2. The Laws has often been said to contain Plato's more sober and mature "practical" political proposals--in contrast to the more radical innovations "Socrates" puts forward in the Republic. Is the "city in speech" the Athenian describes more possible or desirable than Socrates' Kallipolis? Where, how, and why (or why not)?

3. In Book I of Ethics Aristotle dismisses the view that the good life is the life of pleasure with the curt remark that such a life is utterly slavish, a life for cattle. But by Book VII where he starts the investigation of ethics afresh he turns again to pleasure. There he remarks: "that all animals and all human beings pursue pleasure is some indication that it is in a sense the supreme [or best] good." Has the life of cattle suddenly become the norm for humans? Explain what his view on pleasure is in Bk. VII and how it relates to the view in Bk. I.

Early Modern

1. According to Locke in section 4 of the Second Treatise the "state all men are naturally in is a state of perfect freedom... within the bounds of the law of nature." (a)Just what are these bounds and how does Locke know of them? (b)How does his notion of the law of nature compare to that of his near contemporary, Hobbes? (c) How philosophically adequate is Locke's theory of the law of nature?

2. Although Aristotle, in the Politics, explicitly envisages a time when humans did not yet live in political societies and says that whoever first invented the city was a great benefactor, he does not envisage that pre-political state as a state of nature. But social contract theorists do call such a state of affairs a state of nature. Why? What is at stake?

Contemporary

1. A strong commitment to human rights and to democracy as a way of promoting and instantiating these rights is a hallmark of much of contemporary political discourse. These commitments seem to be important orienting points for foreign policies of many nations and for the actions of regional and international organizations. Drawing on two of the following mid-20th century thinkers, Simon, Strauss and Voegelin, indicate how their political thinking could be seen to relate to such commitments.
2. Rawls, Habermas, and Arendt are sometimes described as "liberals" or "liberal democrats" - the first two as "procedural" liberals and the last as "civic republican" liberal. What are some of the main similarities between the three thinkers (justifying the common label "liberal")? What are some of the main differences in terms of their conceptions of liberal democracy? What are the main sources of their theoretical inspiration? What is the status of "modernity" in their work? How does Rawls differentiate his outlook from pre-modern thinkers? What does Habermas mean when he characterizes modernity as an "unfinished project"? For Arendt, what impact have key features of modernity had on the "human condition"?

International Relations and Political Theory

1. Thucydides and Machiavelli have often been characterized as "classical realists." How and why are their understandings of the relations both within and among nations "realistic"? Where do they disagree with each other? With "neo-realists" like Kenneth Waltz? Why? Evaluate these "realist" theories either by stating which of these theorists has the best, most accurate understanding of international relations and why—or by showing the limitations of the approach as a whole and in each of the three authors.

2. What is the role of economic interest(s) in shaping, if not determining the relations among nations? Compare and contrast Grotius, Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu with Keohane and Nye.
Government & International Studies
Theory Comprehensive Exam (Catherine Borck)
May 2001

1. ANCIENT

1. In the Republic Socrates banishes the poets from his city. In the Laws the Athenian seeks to persuade his Dorian interlocutors of the utility of poetry in educating citizens and persuading them to obey the laws. Are the teachings of Plato’s two longest dialogues simply contradictory? Or, can one construct a consistent Platonic teaching about the political use(s) and dangers of poetry from a survey of the three dialogues most explicitly devoted to politics: Republic, Laws, and Statesman?

2. Aristotle begins the Politics by pointing to those who confuse the rule of master over slave with kingly rule and political rule.

A) Why does Aristotle begin with this problem, How does it shape the way in which he proceeds in the rest of the book.

B) In particular, how is this concern continued in the discussion in book three of the relative merits of the rule of the one best person versus ruling and being ruled in turn?

2. MEDIEVAL

1. What is the nature and what are the limits of St. Augustine’s criticism of the pagan Romans for their love of glory?

2. Thomas Aquinas lists four parts to his definition of law: an ordinance of reason, for the common good, promulgated, by him who has the care of the community. What does Aquinas mean when he posits "the common good" as law’s chief end or purpose? In what way(s) is the common good always and everywhere the same? In what way(s) does it vary? How can one know its requirements? (Be sure to incorporate natural law, human law, and prudence in your answer.)

3. EARLY MODERN

1. Rousseau argues that a republic ought to have an institutional arrangement permitting the temporary suspension of the laws and, thus, of the legislative authority in a grave crisis--leaving the direction of public affairs wholly in the hands of a dictator. After having laid out Rousseau’s the main lines of his argument for this radical departure from the sovereignty of the legislative power, write a critical theoretical reflection on Rousseau’s social contract republicanism as a solution to the problem of justice.
2. Peter Laslett is famous for having argued that Locke's Two Treatises (both of them) were directed against Filmer and not at all against Hobbes, as was previously thought. Assess the place of Filmer and Hobbes in Locke's two treatises. Is Laslett correct?

4. AMERICAN

1. Robert Bork has argued that the central conception in the political theory of the American founders is popular sovereignty and not natural law or natural rights. Discuss the meaning and role of the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the thought of the founders with special attention to its relation to the doctrines of natural law and natural right. Be sure to include an overall assessment of Bork's thesis.

2. Summarize Alexis de Tocqueville's view of American "mores" and/or the condition of the three races in America. Then describe briefly the way(s) in which American works of fiction (a selection, probably not more than three) either confirm or raise questions about the accuracy of Tocqueville's analysis.
GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
POLITICAL THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (Carty)
MAY 2002

ANCIENT

1. In Book II of his Politics Aristotle criticizes “Socrates”’ proposals in the LAWS; in fact, Aristotle suggests that in the end the regime Socrates proposes in the LAWS is fundamentally the same as that he put forward in the REPUBLIC, which Aristotle also criticized. Later scholars have, nevertheless, thought they found many similarities between the proposals and analysis of Greek politics to be found in Plato’s LAWS and Aristotle’s POLITICS. What similarities do you see? Are there real differences between Aristotle’s best regime and Plato’s most practical political proposal?

2. The political problems posed by the relations between the rich and the poor are a major concern of Aristotle’s POLITICS. What are those problems and what measures does he propose for dealing with them? Evaluate his theory in this matter.

3. Ernest Fortin has written that Cicero "may be the legitimate father of the natural law theory." He adds that if this is so Cicero is involved in "a substantial deviation from the teaching of his Greek masters." Discuss the claim that Cicero is the first natural law thinker, indicating the basis for this in his texts. Using either the political writings of Plato or Aristotle, his self-acknowledged Greek masters, explore whether Cicero's use of natural law entails a break and, if so, the kind of break it entails from the Greek exemplar chosen.

MEDIEVAL

1. In Book 19 of the CITY OF GOD Augustine returns to a question raised earlier, that is, whether there was ever a Roman Republic according to Scipio's definition of Republic in DE REPUBLICA. There, Scipio defines a people as an assemblage associated by a "common acknowledgment of right." By that definition Augustine concludes that there was never a Roman Republic. Comment critically on Augustine's treatment of Rome in CITY OF GOD. How does the treatment of Rome help us understand Augustine's own view of political life?

2. When political and legal theorists discuss Aquinas's so-called "Treatise on Law," they frequently refer only to SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II 90-97 (the questions dealing with the essence of law, the various kinds of law, eternal law, natural law, and human law). The Gateway English edition of Aquinas's TREATISE ON LAW, making Aquinas's legal thought available to budget-conscious students in a slim and handy paperback, likewise includes only questions 90-97. These commentators and editors all pass over more than half of the treatment of law in SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II: that contained in questions 98-108, which deal with divine law, both old (the Mosaic law) and new (the law of the Gospel).

What do you think of this decision? Do questions 90-97 in fact provide all of Aquinas's arguments about law that are important for students of political theory to consider? Did the professors who put together the reading list for your comprehensive examination in political theory err in including questions 98-108 together with 90-97, or should the Gateway edition rather be revised to contain the questions on divine law (either entire or in part)? Explain your judgment, supporting it with some discussion of relevant texts from the SUMMA.
EARLY MODERN

1. Both Hobbes and Rousseau think that religion poses a major problem for politics; and yet they think that, rightly controlled, religion can solve a major problem inherent in their respective social contract theories. What problem does religion pose for each of them? What problem in social contract theory can religion be made to solve or ameliorate? Compare and evaluate their proposals for controlling religion so as to avoid its dangers and to solve or ameliorate a problem inherent in social contract theory.

2. For centuries people have been debating the question whether Machiavelli’s PRINCE and DISCOURSES are consistent with each other. Are they?

CONTEMPORARY

1. Twentieth-century philosophy and political theory offer a rich fabric of ideas, especially in the context of Continental thought. Two of the most prominent strands in Continental thought are phenomenology/existentialism (Husserl-Heidegger-Gadamer-Merleau-Ponty) and “critical theory” (Frankfurt School). In your view, what are some of the main differences between these schools? Habermas has launched a vehement attack against Heidegger and his heirs. What were some of his basic motives (beyond the obvious reasons of the 1930's)? Habermas also has engaged in a long debate with Gadamer and his hermeneutics. Are you familiar with some of the issues involved in this debate? On the other hand, Habermas is sometimes compared or linked with Rawls. What are the main affinities and differences?

2. With respect to modernity or modern rationalism, explicate and compare the political theories of two of the following thinkers: Oakeshott, Strauss and Voegelin. Highlight their respective understandings of the nature of modern rationalism, their views of its political consequences and what alternative(s), if any, they hold out to this way of modernity. Indicate your judgment of their analyses and prospective alternatives.
GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
POLITICAL THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (Dale)
MAY 2002

ANCIENT

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LATE MODERN

1. Hegel is sometimes considered the last great systematic philosopher. His work aimed to encompass and synthesize all dimensions of human thought and experience; his political theory, above all, found the synthesis of all tensions or contradictions in the modern "state." Hegel's successors in the 19th century, it is said, took up fragments of his work and made them their central focus. Do you agree or disagree? In which sense, in your view, was Hegel's theory of the "state" a synthesis of conflicting elements? How did Marx and Nietzsche transform or challenge the Hegelian system?

2. Nietzsche addresses the problem of freedom from the standpoint of the individual, explicitly demanding the critique of moral values in ON THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS. The value of values must not be taken as given: Nietzsche’s good man will see the danger posed by morality. Comment on Nietzsche’s rejection of morality. Can we read Nietzsche’s good man, the creator of values, as a corrective to Hegel’s ethical life, or not?

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POSTMODERN

1. In your view, what is the meaning of “postmodernism” in the areas of philosophy and political theory? Has postmodernism perhaps moved through a number of phases or stages? Frequently it is asserted that postmodernism basically means a focus on anti-essentialism, fragmentation, and contingency. Do you agree or disagree with this assertion? Taking three of the following thinkers—Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Butler, and Rorty—discuss how their work supports or disconfirms (even partially) the thesis of postmodern fragmentation and/or relativism. In what way have their writings made a contribution to political theory?

2. In THE OTHER HEADING, Jacques Derrida suggests that the progressive historical theories of philosophers like Hegel and Husserl have had oppressive political implications and results. Why? More generally, why do Derrida and other “postmodern” theorists think previous Western philosophy has had detrimental effects on politics? How do these “postmodern” theorists suggest that we can avoid or overcome this oppression?
GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
POLITICAL THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (John)
MAY 2002

ANCIENT

1. In Book II of his Politics Aristotle criticizes “Socrates” proposals in the LAWS; in fact, Aristotle suggests that in the end the regime Socrates proposes in the LAWS is fundamentally the same as that he put forward in the REPUBLIC, which Aristotle also criticized. Later scholars have, nevertheless, thought they found many similarities between the proposals and analysis of Greek politics to be found in Plato’s LAWS and Aristotle’s POLITICS. What similarities do you see? Are there real differences between Aristotle’s best regime and Plato’s most practical political proposal?

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MEDIEVAL

1. One question that recurs in medieval political thought is the question of nature and politics. Pick three of the following authors: Augustine, Aquinas, Alfarabi, Marsilius of Padua, Maimonides. Critically compare and contrast their thought on the following two dimensions of that relationship:
   a) Is politics an accident, that is on account of sin, or is it natural?
   b) If it is natural, what is the end of political life. If not natural, what is the end of politics?

2. When political and legal theorists discuss Aquinas's so-called "Treatise on Law," they frequently refer only to SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II 90-97 (the questions dealing with the essence of law, the various kinds of law, eternal law, natural law, and human law). The Gateway English edition of Aquinas's TREATISE ON LAW, making Aquinas's legal thought available to budget-conscious students in a slim and handy paperback, likewise includes only questions 90-97. These commentators and editors all pass over more than half of the treatment of law in SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II: that contained in questions 98-108, which deal with divine law, both old (the Mosaic law) and new (the law of the Gospel).

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CONTEMPORARY

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GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
POLITICAL THEORY COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (Quesada)
MAY 2002

ANCIENT

1. In Book II of his Politics Aristotle criticizes "Socrates" proposals in the LAWS; in fact, Aristotle suggests that in the end the regime Socrates proposes in the LAWS is fundamentally the same as that he put forward in the REPUBLIC, which Aristotle also criticized. Later scholars have, nevertheless, thought they found many similarities between the proposals and analysis of Greek polities to be found in Plato's LAWS and Aristotle's POLITICS. What similarities do you see? Are there real differences between Aristotle's best regime and Plato's most practical political proposal?

2. The political problems posed by the relations between the rich and the poor are a major concern of Aristotle's POLITICS. What are those problems and what measures does he propose for dealing with them? Evaluate his theory in this matter.

3. Ernest Fortin has written that Cicero "may be the legitimate father of the natural law theory." He adds that if this is so Cicero is involved in "a substantial deviation from the teaching of his Greek masters." Discuss the claim that Cicero is the first natural law thinker, indicating the basis for this in his texts. Using either the political writings of Plato or Aristotle, his self-acknowledged Greek masters, explore whether Cicero's use of natural law entails a break and, if so, the kind of break it entails from the Greek exemplar chosen.

MEDIEVAL

1. In Book 19 of the CITY OF GOD Augustine returns to a question raised earlier, that is, whether there was ever a Roman Republic according to Scipio's definition of Republic in DE REPUBLICA. There, Scipio defines a people as an assemblage associated by a "common acknowledgment of right." By that definition Augustine concludes that there was never a Roman Republic. Comment critically on Augustine's treatment of Rome in CITY OF GOD. How does the treatment of Rome help us understand Augustine's own view of political life?

2. When political and legal theorists discuss Aquinas's so-called "Treatise on Law," they frequently refer only to SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II 90-97 (the questions dealing with the essence of law, the various kinds of law, eternal law, natural law, and human law). The Gateway English edition of Aquinas's TREATISE ON LAW, making Aquinas's legal thought available to budget-conscious students in a slim and handy paperback, likewise includes only questions 90-97. These commentators and editors all pass over more than half of the treatment of law in SUMMA THEOLOGICA I-II: that contained in questions 98-108, which deal with divine law, both old (the Mosaic law) and new (the law of the Gospel).

What do you think of this decision? Do questions 90-97 in fact provide all of Aquinas's arguments about law that are important for students of political theory to consider? Did the professors who put together the reading list for your comprehensive examination in political theory err in including questions 98-108 together with 90-97, or should the Gateway edition rather be revised to contain the
questions on divine law (either entire or in part)? Explain your judgment, supporting it with some discussion of relevant texts from the SUMMA.

EARLY MODERN

1. Both Hobbes and Rousseau think that religion poses a major problem for politics; and yet they think that, rightly controlled, religion can solve a major problem inherent in their respective social contract theories. What problem does religion pose for each of them? What problem in social contract theory can religion be made to solve or ameliorate? Compare and evaluate their proposals for controlling religion so as to avoid its dangers and to solve or ameliorate a problem inherent in social contract theory.

2. For centuries people have been debating the question whether Machiavelli’s PRINCE and DISCOURSES are consistent with each other. Are they?

AMERICAN

1. Explain the political theory of THE FEDERALIST PAPERS. One approach to this would be to show in what sense and how the proposed Constitution provides, in the words of Publius, "a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government." Another approach might explore how the proposed Constitution deals with "the great difficulty" of framing human government: enabling the government to control the governed and at the same time obliging it to control itself. You are free to use either of these approaches or another. After explication of the details of the political theory of Publius, discuss its completeness and adequacy as a political theory.

2. A recent scholar has said: “Tocqueville praises the framers of the Constitution, but a close reading of his book indicates he is quite critical of the political science of these framers, as expressed in places like THE FEDERALIST and the DEBATES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.” Do you agree with this judgement? Explain, being sure to bring in specific themes and evidence from the various sources.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory for David Thunder
September 2002

ANCIENT

1. Some have credited Cicero with articulating for the first time an understanding of the mixed form of government ("mixed constitution" or "mixed regime"). Other scholars point back to Aristotle's Politics for an initial, significant treatment of the topic in the Western tradition. Compare Cicero and Aristotle on mixed government. Include in your consideration how the topic arises for them in their major political writings.

2. Plato does not have a teaching concerning natural law. Why not? How do or can human beings know or do what is just or right, according to Plato.

3. Aristotle admits that "oligarchy" literally means the rule of the few; but he says that it is only an accident that the oligarchs are few in number and that it is possible that oligarchs be the majority. What essentially differentiates oligarchy from democracy, he says, is the oligarchs' conception of justice, namely their claim that what makes the rule of the oligarchs over the poor just is their possession of wealth by contrast with the poor's lack of it. Evaluate Aristotle's dismissing the fewness of the oligarchs as "accidental" and taking the oligarchs' conception of justice as essential and relate his doing so to his kind of ethico-political theorizing.

MEDIEVAL

1. According to Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae, what role does human law properly play in educating citizens in virtue and helping them overcome vice? Explicate and then, briefly, critically evaluate this aspect of his political theory.

2. Though the term "grace" occurs often in Augustine, so too does the term "Nature." Great controversies arise about the role of nature in Augustine's City of God. Critically assess the meaning and role of "nature" for Augustine in one of the following areas:

   A) natural theology and civil theology
   B) the naturalness of politics
   C) the natural goods of this life such as concord
   D) the service due to God which is called "latr'ia"
EARLY MODERN

1. There are important differences among the following three theories: the theory of Kant about an "original contract" to establish peace and end the natural state of war, the theory of Hobbes about a "covenant" to establish a commonwealth in place of the natural state of war, and the theory of Rousseau on the "social contract" to establish a republic and take men out of the state of nature. Nevertheless all three agree in this major respect: the words of such foundational, original "covenants" or "contracts" do not bind one. Nor does the expressed or tacit consent and agreement of the contracting individuals to the words of the contract or covenant bind them to conform their actions to what the contract or covenant requires. Only the existence of an effective power enforcing obedience to the contract's or covenant's terms binds the contracting or covenanting parties to those terms. How does a conception of politics shaped by such a view differ from a conception of politics shaped by the view that politics is natural (a view expressly denied by the social contract theorists named above)? And how important is that difference?

2. One scholar of early modern political philosophy has made the following claim about Hobbes: he builds a model of human beings as self-moving and self-directing appetitive machines and then concludes that human life is a constant universal striving for power, culminating in a war of all against all, which conclusions (the scholar says) do not follow from his model of human nature. Does that scholar’s model accurately describe Hobbes, political philosophy? Is the scholar correct in claiming that Hobbes does not in fact demonstrate or make intelligible human power-seeking or the so-called war of all against all?

AMERICAN

1. American Government textbooks often state or imply that the democratic theory of the Founding generation was deficient in its failure to appreciate the critical role political parties must and do play in modern democracy. Examine this claim in the light of The Federalist and any other sources from the period.

2. Robert Dahl has argued that the more one examines the Madisonian theory of separation of powers (as expressed in The Federalist), the more it has a Cheshire cat-like quality disappearing before one’s very eyes. Explain Dahl’s point and his broader understanding of separation of powers and then assess whether a) he understand the theory properly and b) whether he has a valid criticism here.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory  
(Nicholls)

Answer one question from each of the four sections below

Ancient

1. In Socrates, the Athenian Stranger and the Eleatic Stranger, Plato presents three different embodiments of and approaches to political philosophy. Describe and evaluate the different teachings and effects of the three different approaches. Why do you think Plato presents such a plurality?

2. Though recognizing that it was customary in his time to speak of democracy as the rule of the many and of oligarchy as the rule of the few, Aristotle argues that number is not an essential part of the definitions of those two regimes. He says that one ought rather to define oligarchy as the rule of the rich and democracy as the rule of all the men of free birth. What is his argument? Is it persuasive?

Early Modern

1. There is a raging debate over whether early modern political philosophy has and (perhaps) requires theistic roots or whether it is (at bottom) atheistic (with many possibilities in between). Discuss the relation between revealed religion, natural religion and non-religious thinking in any two of the early moderns.

2. Can the social criticism of Rousseau's Discourse on the Arts and Sciences and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality be reconciled with the political argument of the Social Contract?

3. Social contract thinkers consider the polity to be a human construct or artifact rather than something natural. They imagine a natural condition or state of nature in which human beings have no political relationships. To belong to or to live in a polity is to belong to or to live in something that it is NOT natural to belong to or to live in, but something artificial or constructed. What are the theoretical consequences of that view (by contrast with views that hold that political life is natural to human beings)? Illustrate you answer by reference to at least two social contract thinkers.

Late Modern

1. In which sense of the term "liberal" can Hegel's political philosophy be regarded as a liberal theory? What distinguishes it radically from earlier liberal theories?
2. Karl Marx started out as a member of the Young Hegelian (or Left Hegelian) movement, which included figures like Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer and others. How did Young Hegelians interpret Hegel and what in Hegel's texts encouraged them in their interpretation? Why did Marx break with the Young Hegelians and how did he himself view his relation to Hegel? What is the core meaning of Marx's "historical materialism" (or how has this phrase commonly been interpreted)? In brief strokes trace the story of the development from Marx to orthodox Marxism and neo-Marxism. Discuss how one or two of the following figures have interpreted Marx's legacy: Karl Kautsky, Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Herbert Marcuse.

**Democratic Theory:**

1. A key slogan dominating the present world is "democratization". However, contemporary democratic theory is sharply divided between several schools of thought disagreeing over the key meaning of democracy. While some theorists emphasize the role of legal rules and procedures, others insist on a more solid notion of democratic community; still others extol the merits of conflict and antagonism. What are some of these schools of thought and who are some of the leading protagonists? Seen from the vantage of these different perspectives, what is the respective role of citizenship, civil society, human rights, legitimacy, and public ethics? How do the different conceptions of democracy impact on the status and meaning of multiculturalism? What are some of the main perspectives on multicultural politics? Wherever possible, illustrate your arguments by reference to specific authors and/or concrete contexts.

2. Who is the citizen, and what does it mean to be a citizen are ancient questions. And yet some feel that these questions are crucial to many central debates in contemporary democratic theory. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze at least two differing views on the concept of citizenship in contemporary democratic theory. Choose one view and argue for its superiority.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory  
(Webb)

Answer one question from each of the four sections below

Medieval

1. According to Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae, what role does human law properly play in educating citizens to virtue and helping them overcome vice? Explicate and then, briefly, critically evaluate this aspect of his political theory. In your response please include some discussion of Aquinas's natural law and divine law theories, insofar as they bear on the nature, scope, and aims of human law in political society.

2. Medieval thinkers often disagreed on the status of political life. Some saw it as an integral human good, other saw it as only an instrumental good, aiming wholly towards an end outside politics (for example philosophy or salvation). Compare and contrast at least two of the following thinkers on this question: Aquinas, Augustine, Alfarabi, Maimonides.

Early Modern

1. There is a raging debate over whether early modern political philosophy has and (perhaps) requires theistic roots or whether it is (at bottom) atheistic (with many possibilities in between). Discuss the relation between revealed religion, natural religion and non-religious thinking in any two of the early moderns.

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American

1. According to Reinhold Niebuhr, the American founders (as representatives of the Enlightenment) are “children of light” and thus less wise guides to politics than the “children of dark.” What is the strongest case that can be made for Niebuhr’s claims? On balance, do they hold up?
2. In the last generation there has been a heightened concern with the roles of virtue and of religion in American liberal democracy. What roles do virtue and religion have in the constitutional understandings of the Founding generation, as exemplified in the writings of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists? Explore the common ground and differences respecting these topics in the debate over the ratification of the Constitution. In your view, which side had a more adequate understanding of the place and importance of these concerns in the constitutional democracy they were seeking to found?

Contemporary
1. Explore fully how Strauss and Voegelin handle the bearing of history and historical studies on political philosophy. Which, in your view, does a better job?

2. "Liberalism" is a dominant political theory today. In your view, what accounts for this predominance and what is the central meaning (or what are the basic meanings) of the term? Rawls, Habermas, and Arendt are sometimes described as modern "liberal" thinkers. To which extent is this assessment correct and to which extent flawed? What sense do you make of Rawls' movement from A THEORY OF JUSTICE to POLITICAL LIBERALISM? What are some of the main theoretical differences between Rawls and Habermas? Which one of these two thinkers do you favor and for what reason? What are some of the similarities and differences between Habermas and Arendt? Regarding their respective conceptions of the "public sphere", which account do you find more plausible or persuasive?
Comprehensive Exam, Political Theory, January 2008

Ancient

What is the significance of Socrates’ conviction of a capital crime by the city of Athens and his decision to stand trial and accept his punishment rather than to escape? In answering this question you should probably explain why Socrates was accused and convicted of not believing in the gods of the city and of corrupting the young. Why didn’t he simply go to another city? Was the problem Socrates? Or Athens? Or is there a more general and enduring conflict between philosophy and politics? If so, how did Socrates’ student Plato address it?

Cicero appears to write his De Re Publica in the light of Plato’s Republic. Where does one find the common ground in these works and in what ways do they differ? What significance do you find in the differences?

Medieval

Medieval political theorists treated extensively the concept of nature. However, there were significant differences in their treatments of nature. Choose at least two authors from the following four: Aquinas, Alfarabi, Maimonides, Marsilius. Compare and contrast their views on at least three aspects of the relationship of nature to political life. In particular, include what each thought nature dictated as the proper end of political life.

Explicate and critically assess Augustine’s critique of the virtue of the ancient Romans in his City of God. Then compare and contrast Augustine’s arguments on the nature and possibility of human virtue (especially the virtue of justice) and of the best regime with the views of either Alfarabi or Aquinas. Do you see Augustine or Augustinianism as having a significant influence on either of these medieval thinkers? Why or why not?

Early Modern

What are the most important points of convergence and divergence between Machiavelli’s civic republicanism and that of Rousseau?

How does Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) challenge the assumptions of the social contract tradition, particularly the arguments of Locke and Rousseau? How effective is the challenge?

American

Select three aspects or specific provisions of the proposed Constitution of 1787 on which the Federalists and Anti-Federalists differed during the ratification debates. Sketch the argument on each side of each issue, and indicate which side had the better argument and why you believe so.
You are Publius and you have been asked by the editors of the *American Political Science Review* to write a critical review essay of Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, with special attention to what Niebuhr has to say about the character of the political thought of American founding, a subject on which you are presumed to know a great deal.