This is a closed book exam. You have six hours to complete the exam. Please send your answers to Sue Collins and Geoff Layman within six hours of beginning the exam. Choose one question from each section to answer in the time allotted.

Ancient

1. In the second book of his *Politics*, Aristotle criticizes several aspects of the “city in speech” of the *Republic*, but he never mentions the most radical “wave” introduced by Socrates: philosopher-kings. After outlining the main points of Aristotle’s critique of the *Republic* in *Politics* 2.1-5, consider the significance of his silence regarding philosopher-kings: Why does he omit to speak of this important development in the dialogue? What might his silence indicate regarding his own best regime as compared to Socrates’ city-in-speech? Feel free to formulate and address your own questions concerning the matter.

2. What is a “polity,” according to Aristotle? Why is it the best regime generally possible? How does it differ from the “regime to be prayed for”? How does it differ from a modern liberal democracy? For better or for worse?

Early Modern

1. It has been said, mimicking Voltaire on the Holy Roman Empire, that early modern natural law is neither natural nor law. What can this claim mean? Do you agree with it?

2. Compare and contrast (A) the portrayal of “the state of nature” in the political philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu and (B) what role “the state of nature” plays in their respective political philosophies.

American

1. Using Aristotle’s classification of regime types, (A) analyze the American Constitution as defended in *The Federalist* and (B) discuss to what extent the American constitutional order has changed regimes types since the founding.

2. According to Louis Hartz, in his 1955 book *The Liberal Tradition in America*, there is only one philosophical tradition in America - liberalism. Was he correct? If not, is/are there (an) identifiable and significant "non-liberal" tradition or traditions in American thought? If he is correct, then are the main debates in the American tradition essentially debates within the liberal horizon? Discuss with reference to select thinkers in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Protestant Political Thought (American emphasis)
1. Prepare an essay on the topic “Stability and Change in Protestant Political Thought,” looking at three moments of the Protestant tradition: one of the major founders (Luther or Calvin), founding era thought, and 20th century thought.

2. It has been argued by some that the two dominant public philosophies of America consist in the "natural rights" tradition that is often traced to the thought of John Locke and developed in the thought of the American founders, and "Progressive" political philosophy inaugurated by such thinkers as John Dewey and Herbert Croly. It could also be argued that both of these strains of political philosophy are reflections of fundamentally Protestant theological currents. Examine these two American philosophical traditions in light of their Protestant theological roots and influences.
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.

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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?

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**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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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 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 or 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

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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.

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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?

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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