

Political Theory

Past Comprehensive Exam Questions

(Note: you may see duplicate questions)

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.

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 politics, 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?

Sept 2008

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.

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Philosophy of Law

1. To what extent and in what ways is John Finnis's natural law theory, as developed in his book Natural Law and Natural Rights, a response to H. L. A. Hart's positivist legal theory as developed in his book The Concept of Law?

To what extent does Finnis borrow from or coincide with Aquinas's natural law theory in responding to Hart? How successful is Finnis in arguing that Hart's contemporary positivist theory (including Hart's theory of a "minimum [true]

content of Natural Law") is insufficient to fulfill its own stated goal of explaining "the concept of law"?

2. Richard Posner attempts to cut through all the major debates about law that have roiled the intellectual waters since the beginnings of reflections on law in Greece with his pragmatic theory of law. How successful is he at this task? Are there important issues from past thinking that he fails to deal with or deal with adequately?
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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.

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?

January 2010

I. Ancient:

1. What conception of moral and political knowledge does Socrates advance in the *Apology*? Plato in the *Republic*? Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*? How do these diverse conceptions translate into different ideas of moral (or virtuous) political membership for each thinker?

2. Does Cicero as a political theorist develop or set back the tradition of classical political theory of his Greek predecessors? Write an essay in which you defend a position, and indicate in what specific respects he develops or sets back the tradition. Utilize the appropriate texts of Cicero and his predecessors as you make your argument.

II. Medieval:

1. Please explain in detail and then briefly critically assess Augustine's presentation of the virtue of the ancient Romans in *The City of God*. What are the implications, if any, of Augustine's understanding and critique of Roman virtue for political theory and practice today?

2. The relationship between religion and political life was an important concern of most medieval political theorists. In particular the question arises as to whether the end of man is wholly determined by revealed religion, or whether there is a political teaching that is independent of revealed religion. For at least two of the following authors, address critically the question of what the role of political life is for that author and what the relationship is of the end of politics and the end of revealed religion: Augustine, Aquinas, Maimondes, Alfarabi, Marsilius of Padua.

III. Early Modern:

1. According to Hannah Arendt and J. G. A. Pocock, Machiavelli was the last of the ancient republican theorists who appreciated the centrality of politics in human life. According to Sheldon Wolin, Leo Strauss, and Quentin Skinner, Machiavelli is one of the founders of modern political science, even though these commentators disagree about what he was trying to do and how. On the basis of your own reading of the *Prince* and *Discourses*, what was Machiavelli trying to do, why, and how?
2. The rise of human rights discourse is a highlight of the Enlightenment. Show how Locke, Rousseau, and Kant or Wollstonecraft contributed to the development of this trend, each in a distinct way from the other. Which of the three theorists you selected is the most significant for modern human rights discourse, and why?

III. Late Modern:

1. What are Marx's primary critical points *vis a vis* Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*? In what ways do Marx's criticisms represent an advance over Hegelian political philosophy? In what ways do they represent a regress? Explain and defend your answer on each count.
 2. How helpful is it to think of late modern political theory as trying to come to terms with the death of God? Focus your answer on Marx, Mill and Nietzsche.
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IV. Contemporary:

1. The critique of technology and/or technical rationality plays a central role in the thought of Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer, Habermas, Arendt and Strauss. Choosing *two* figures from this list (with Adorno and Horkheimer counting as *one* joint author), write an essay in which you explain their central critical points about technology/technical reason. Why do they see technology/technical reason as the defining characteristic of the modern age (as opposed, for example, to the rise of human rights and equality)? What reasons do they give for thinking that *liberalism* fits all too well with a “technological” outlook? Are these good reasons? Why or why not?

2. Has liberalism established hegemony in contemporary political thought? Focus your answer on Rawls and his critics.

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IV. American:

1. In the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Lincoln argues that the Founders--in both the Declaration and the Constitution--intended to put slavery on the road to ultimate extinction. Douglas argues that the Founders did not think the Declaration applied to blacks, and that they intended for slavery to be always and everywhere decided by the states, under the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and that this doctrine should be applied to the territories.

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?

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2. How helpful is it to think of late modern political theory as trying to come to terms with the death of God? Focus your answer on Marx, Mill and Nietzsche.

IV. Contemporary:

1. The critique of technology and/or technical rationality plays a central role in the thought of Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer, Habermas, Arendt and Strauss. Choosing *two* figures from this list (with Adorno and Horkheimer counting as *one* joint author), write an essay in which you explain their central critical points about technology/technical reason. Why do they see technology/technical reason as the defining characteristic of the modern age (as opposed, for example, to the rise of human rights and equality)? What reasons do they give for thinking that *liberalism* fits all too well with a “technological” outlook? Are these good reasons? Why or why not?
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2. Has liberalism established hegemony in contemporary political thought? Focus your answer on Rawls and his critics.

Part 1 May, 2010

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.

Part 2 May, 2010

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?

May 2010

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?

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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?

January 2011

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*?
-

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D. American

1. Discuss the relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution.
 2. Niebuhr classifies the American founders as Children of Light. Does this accurately capture the character of their thought? How useful or not are Niebuhr's categories of Children of Light and Children of Dark?
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January 2012

Ancient

1. The education of citizens is arguably the most important function of a political regime, according to Plato and Aristotle. How is such an education best accomplished, according to Plato? According to Aristotle? Are there significant differences between the two philosophers in this respect?
2. Discuss Cicero's relation to Plato and Plato's political writings. In what sense could he be considered a disciple of Plato, in what sense not?

Medieval

1. The phrase "politics is natural" can be understood in at least two ways. Politics is natural because it is a necessary for a higher natural end to be achieved. Or, politics is natural because it is a natural good in and of itself. Compare and contrast at least two of the following authors in the question of whether they think politics is natural, and if so, what they mean by that: Augustine, Alfarabi, Maimonides, Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, William of Occam.
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?

Early Modern

1. What is the place of the family in the early modern social contract tradition?
2. The leading ideas of early modern political philosophy are natural rights and social contract. In later thinking both ideas came under attack of various sorts. Is there any value to these two ideas for understanding politics or should we consider them of merely historical interest?

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. What are the strengths, and what are the weaknesses, of Strauss's critique of Max Weber and "social science positivism" more generally?
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January 2012

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Late Modern

1. Of the various criticisms of politics mounted by late modern thinkers, whose do you find most effective? Whose do you find least effective? Explain your choices.
 2. Critically assess the similarities and differences between Rousseau's notion of the general will and Hegel's conception of the "substantial will" of the political community.
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May 2012

Ancient

1. How is practical reason (phronesis) related to speculative reason (sophia and episteme) in Aristotle's NICOMACHEAN ETHICS and POLITICS? Would the rule of the one best man that Aristotle describes at the end of Book 3 of the POLITICS be the equivalent of the philosopher-king in Plato's REPUBLIC? Why or why not?
2. Some have thought that Cicero represents a distinctive voice in the tradition of classical political philosophy as defined by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Write a commentary on that claim, affirming or denying it in whole or part. In developing your essay, cite the topics or issues and relevant texts that support your position.

Early Modern

1. "Montesquieu is a critic of Locke." "Montesquieu is a follower of Locke." Both views have been put forward by readers of both. Where lies the truth? How so?
2. Are there any valid foundations for rights claims in early modern political thought? If so, what are they and why are they valid?

Late Modern

1. Of the various criticisms of politics mounted by late modern thinkers, whose do you find most effective? Whose do you find least effective? Explain your choices.
2. What are the central concerns of late modern political thought? Defend your answer by discussing three authors from the reading list.

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. 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.
-

January 2013

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 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?
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January, 2013

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.

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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.

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January 2014

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?

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.
-

January 2014**Ancient:**

3. 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?
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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?

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Contemporary:

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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.
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January 2014

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January 2015

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.

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.

May 2015

Ancient:

1. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle argues that prudence is an intellectual virtue, but that it presupposes and constitutes a summation of all the moral virtues. In order for members of a household to acquire those moral virtues, Aristotle concludes in Book 10, the authority of the father in the household needs to be

supported and supplemented by laws. And in Book 3 of the *Politics* he then observes that only those citizens who have an opportunity to rule develop their capacity for prudence. Does this mean that individual ethics are, according to Aristotle, subordinate to politics? And if so, what follows from the priority of politics to ethics?

2. "In contrast to modern political theory, which is aimed at offering something 'useful' for politics, the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is aimed mainly at revealing the limits of politics and the paramount necessity instead of focusing on the 'art of living.' " Discuss this claim, including whether you agree and disagree, and why, in reference to two works by either Plato or Aristotle.

Medieval:

1. It is often said that William Ockham broke fundamentally and radically with the Thomistic doctrine of natural law. To what extent and in what way is this judgment correct?

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. Two views about Locke's doctrine of property prevail in the literature. According to some, he is *the* philosopher of capitalism, providing the moral and philosophical foundation for that system of political economy. According to others, his doctrine is strongly anti-capitalist. What in Locke's texts produce such wildly opposing readings? Which, if either, is the correct view of Locke's position? Explain.

2. Machiavelli and Hobbes both suggest that human beings are naturally competitive and hence in conflict with one another. Yet the political prescriptions these two early modern political philosophers make on the basis of a similar, if not identical view of human nature seem to be importantly different. What is responsible for the differences? Which philosopher's response seems better to you?

Late Modern:

1. Late modern political theorists explore the implications of the death of God for politics. Discuss.

2. How would Nietzsche respond to Hegel's master/slave dialectic and the normative ideal of mutual recognition? How might Hegel respond to the implicit critique in "On the Genealogy of Morals"? Who has the stronger argument?

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. Compare and contrast the approaches to justice of three contemporary political philosophers.

American:

1. In *The Promise of American Life*, Herbert Croly calls for a "critical reconstruction" of American political ideals. Explain both why Croly contends American ideals need such a "reconstruction" and in what his

“reconstruction” consists. To what extent does Croly adopt and/or depart from the political philosophy articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the constitutionalism set forth in *The Federalist Papers*?

2. Is America simply the practical outworking of various expressions in European political philosophy? Is there anything unique or distinctive in the American political tradition that cannot simply trace its origins to figures like Locke, Montesquieu, Kant, Hegel, etc.? Discuss in reference to at least two American thinkers from two different centuries.

January 2016

ANCIENT

1. Several commentators have noted the difference between the practice of philosophy Plato depicts in Socrates and the prescriptions--education, knowledge, and political responsibilities of philosophers--Plato has Socrates specify in his famous description of a just regime in the *Republic*. How should we account for these discrepancies? What do they tell us about Plato's view of the proper role of the philosopher in politics?

2. In both Plato's *Republic* and Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, the question of justice is fundamental to understanding the nature of political life. But why is this question so fundamental in each thinker's case, and how do they differ in their understanding of the place and significance of justice in the theory and practice of politics? Having laid out your answer, then consider the following question: even given their differences, would Plato and Thucydides form a common front against, say, Machiavelli's understanding of justice, or a more “realist” understanding of the relation between justice and power? If so, why so? If not, why not?

EARLY MODERN

1. A debate has arisen over whether early modern political philosophy is grounded in religion, specifically Christianity, or whether it is in its depths atheistic. Which, **if either**, of these views is correct? Explain why

2. How does Kant appropriate elements of the social contract tradition to develop a theory of human rights?

LATE MODERN

1. Discuss the role that history plays in the work of at least three late modern political thinkers.

2. How does Nietzsche's genealogical approach to moral values depart from more traditional philosophical approaches (e.g., Kantian, Utilitarian, and Aristotelian)? What, if any, are the political implications of this departure?

CRITICAL THEORY:

1. Does Habermas's critique of Horkheimer and Adorno's "Dialectic of Enlightenment" as overly Nietzschean hold up? Why or why not?

2. Is human emancipation possible through reason? Why or why not? In answering this question, pick at least two critical theorists and make sure to explain their respective understandings of reason and emancipation.

May 2016

1. Ancient

- a. In Book II of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates contrasts a "healthy" city to the "feverish" city induced by Glaucon's accusation that a merely healthy city is a "city of pigs." What makes the first city "healthy" and why is Socrates so quick to abandon it? Are there aspects of the "healthy" city that nevertheless continue to inspire efforts to cure the pathologies of the "feverish" city, and if so, how are they manifest in the remainder of the *Republic*?
- b. The first word of the first speech in Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* is "justice" (*dikaion*), and the first word of the second speech is "necessity" (*anankaion*). This fact is a small sign of the centrality of the theme of justice and necessity in Thucydides' treatment of war, politics, and human action. Use at least three of the major speeches of the work to discuss key Athenian arguments regarding the role of necessity (or compulsion) in the establishment and growth of their empire and in human action generally. Discuss also how these arguments bear on the Athenian understanding of justice and nobility in their rule over others, including important differences of opinion about these questions among the Athenians themselves.

2. Medieval

- a. 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?
- b. Marsilius of Padua is sometimes seen as a forerunner of modern democratic and contractarian theories of politics. What basis is there in Marsilius' work to justify such claims? Are these claims on the whole justified?

3. Early modern

- a. Compare and contrast the role of nature in the political thought in at least three of the following thinkers: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.
- b. Compare and contrast the role of religion in the political thought of three of the following thinkers: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

4. Late modern

- a. In what ways does the death of God manifest itself in later modern political theory?
- b. Nietzsche and Heidegger are both famous for their anti-Platonism. How does this negative view of Plato make itself felt in their respective philosophies? Whose anti-Platonism is more persuasive? Why?

5. Contemporary

- a. To what extent have contemporary political theorists replaced the old quest for justice with an attempt to secure liberty? Choose three authors from the list to discuss.
- b. In the shadow of the Holocaust and twentieth century totalitarianism, some scholars have argued that the Enlightenment promise of human freedom through reason is no longer tenable. Others, however, contend that reason remains the foundation of freedom. Pick two to three contemporary thinkers and describe their understanding of reason, its connection to human freedom, and explain which thinker – if any of them – you find persuasive and why.

January 2017

Ancient

1. In his *Clouds* Aristophanes accuses a philosopher named Socrates of undermining not only the laws of the city but also the authority of the fathers in their families with his atheistic teachings. To what extent and how effectively can Plato's dialogues be seen as a response to Aristophanes' charges?
2. One of the most famous statements of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the claim by the Athenians at Melos that "when it comes to human reasoning, the just things are judged from the standpoint of equal compulsion, and the strong do what they can and the weak yield" (5.89). Or as it is more colloquially put, justice exists only between those of equal power, and the strong do what they wish while the weak do what they must. After laying out precisely what the Athenians mean by this claim in the context of the Melian dialogue, discuss whether Thucydides himself holds this same view.

Early Modern

1. What is Mary Wollstonecraft's conception of a happy marriage? Why does it represent a philosophical milestone with respect to early modern theories of marriage, such as by Locke and Rousseau? Despite these advances, does Wollstonecraft's conception of marriage have moral limitations or pose political problems? If so, what are they--and if not, why?
2. An issue that remains controversial in the study of early modern political philosophy is the relation between the theories of Hobbes and Locke. Can you settle the question once and for all by presenting an in depth account of their positions on natural right and natural law, bringing out what is alike and different about them? While you are at it can you settle which (if either) is sound or sounder? We are counting on you.

American

1. In *The Promise of American Life*, Herbert Croly calls for a "critical reconstruction" of American political ideals. Explain both why Croly contends American ideals need such a "reconstruction" and in what his "reconstruction" consists. To what extent does Croly adopt and/or depart from the political philosophy articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the constitutionalism set forth in *The Federalist Papers*?
2. While some draw a stark contrast between the political philosophies of the Founding fathers and thinkers of the Progressive era, both are also nevertheless widely regarded as expressions of liberalism. Discuss what differentiates their respective positions using the thought of at least one founder and one Progressive thinker (e.g., John Dewey or Herbert Croly), as well as what constitutes their continuities as liberal thinkers.

Contemporary

1. Freedom is an important theme running through the texts assigned for the contemporary political theory section. Compare and contrast the ways in which freedom can be conceptualized in the works of any three of these thinkers.
2. Contemporary political theory scholars have attempted to rethink the nature of political violence. Drawing on at least three thinkers, answer the following questions: Are violence and politics fundamentally intertwined, or can they be separated from one another? Can violence be used for legitimate political ends, and if so, under what conditions? Which (if any) thinker do you find persuasive, and why?

Ancient

1. In his *Clouds* Aristophanes accuses a philosopher named Socrates of undermining not only the laws of the city but also the authority of the fathers in their families with his atheistic teachings. To what extent and how effectively can Plato's dialogues be seen as a response to Aristophanes' charges?
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Medieval

1. Hobbes defines natural laws as "dictates of reason" that are "conclusions or theorems" that human beings draw "concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves." How does this definition and conception of natural law compare to the understanding(s) of natural law embodied in medieval philosophy? In

your answer, make sure to focus on medieval views.

2. Write an essay that could serve as the basis for an introductory lecture on the political thought of Augustine, as expressed in his *City of God*, using as your starting point ONE of these two passages:

"Most glorious is the city of God, whether in this passing age, where she dwells by faith as a pilgrim..., or in the security of that eternal home which she now patiently awaits until 'righteousness shall return unto judgment' (Psalm 94:15), but which she will then possess perfectly in final victory and perfect peace... I know, however, what efforts are needed to persuade the proud how great is that virtue of humility which...raises us above all the earthly pinnacles which sway in this inconstant age" (*City of God* I.Preface).

"Two cities, then, have been created by two loves: that is, the earthly by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly by love of God extending to contempt of self. The one...glories in itself, the other in the Lord... In the earthly city, princes are as much mastered by the lust for mastery as the nations which they subdue are by them; in the heavenly, all serve one another in charity, rulers by their counsel, and subjects by their obedience" (*City of God* XIV.28)

Early Modern

1. What is Mary Wollstonecraft's conception of a happy marriage? Why does it represent a philosophical milestone with respect to early modern theories of marriage, such as by Locke and Rousseau? Despite these advances, does Wollstonecraft's conception of marriage have moral limitations or pose political problems? If so, what are they--and if not, why?
2. An issue that remains controversial in the study of early modern political philosophy is the relation between the theories of Hobbes and Locke. Can you settle the question once and for all by presenting an in depth account of their positions on natural right and natural law, bringing out what is alike and different about them? While you are at it can you settle which (if either) is sound or sounder? We are counting on you.

American

1. In *The Promise of American Life*, Herbert Croly calls for a "critical reconstruction" of American political ideals. Explain both why Croly contends American ideals need such a "reconstruction" and in what his "reconstruction" consists. To what extent does Croly adopt and/or depart from the political philosophy articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the constitutionalism set forth in *The Federalist Papers*?

2. In writing of America's political origins, Alexis de Tocqueville credits the Puritan settlers, and not the Founding Fathers, with having laid the deepest foundation of America's political tradition. In what ways does Tocqueville believe this earlier "founding" is manifest in American belief and practice he witnesses in the 19th-century? In what ways do you see this tradition manifested and developed in the thought of two to three significant American figures, such as Lincoln, Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Henry Adams, John Dewey, "the Social Gospel" movement (e.g., Rauschenbusch), Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Luther King, John Courtney Murray, etc.? In what ways is this tradition distinct from, and consonant with, the political philosophy of the Founding?

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which they subdue are by them; in the heavenly, all serve one another in charity, rulers by their counsel, and subjects by their obedience" (*City of God* XIV.28)

Early Modern

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American

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May 2017

Comprehensive Doctoral Political Theory Exam

May 2017

Student #1

Please answer one question from each of the four sections below.

ANCIENT

1. Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Politics together form his political philosophy. But it is clear even by his own account in NE 10.9 that his Politics focuses on the foundational principle of political order: politeia or "regime." Write an essay that addresses the question of what the "regime" is, according to Aristotle, and what its relationship is to the "city" or polis. Your answer should focus on his seminal treatment of the regime in books 3 and 4, but you should also examine at least one other element of his political science to illustrate his understanding of what the regime is: his treatment of the household and household management, for example, or his critique of Plato's Republic and Laws, his critique of Phaleas or Hippodamus, his view of Sparta, Crete or Carthage, his treatment of faction, to name just a few possibilities.
2. Compare and contrast the picture of Athenian democracy in Thucydides's history with that Plato presents in Book 8 of the Republic. How do you explain the differences? Which picture do you trust more and why?

MEDIEVAL

1. Marsilius claims to follow Aristotle, but he differs from the Stagyrte in so many ways that it is not easy to see how that claim can be true. Discuss some of the most important differences and either support or refute Marsilius' claims regarding his relation to Aristotle.
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?

CONTEMPORARY

1. How do Strauss and Arendt view the place of opinion (doxa) in politics and the public realm? Is Strauss simply a Platonist on this score? Is Arendt simply an anti-Platonist? Explain the additional complexities (assuming there are any).
2. In the shadow of the Holocaust and twentieth century totalitarianism, some scholars have argued that the Enlightenment promise of human freedom through reason is no longer tenable. Others, however, contend that reason remains the foundation of freedom. Pick two to three contemporary thinkers and describe their understanding of reason, its connection to human freedom, and explain which thinker – if any of them – you find persuasive and why.

AMERICAN

1. Using Aristotle's classification of regimes, classify, examine, and discuss the American Constitution as championed by The Federalist.
2. Cecilia Kenyon argued that the Antifederalists were "men of little faith." Without necessarily having read her article, what do you surmise was the basis of this claim regarding their political thinking? Are there ways that one might counter the claim, arguing instead that they were "men of great faith"? If so, and by contrast, in what respects might the authors of the Federalist be considered men of "little faith"?

Comprehensive Doctoral Political Theory Exam

Student #2

May 2017

Please answer one question from each of the four sections below.

ANCIENT

1. Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Politics together form his political philosophy. But it is clear even by his own account in NE 10.9 that his Politics focuses on the foundational principle of political order: politeia or "regime." Write an essay that addresses the question of what the "regime" is, according to Aristotle, and what its relationship is to the "city" or polis. Your answer should focus on his seminal treatment of the regime in books 3 and 4, but you should also examine at least one other element of his political science to illustrate his understanding of what the regime is: his treatment of the household and household management, for example, or his critique of Plato's Republic and Laws, his critique of Phaleas or Hippodamus, his view of Sparta, Crete or Carthage, his treatment of faction, to name just a few possibilities.

2. Compare and contrast the picture of Athenian democracy in Thucydides's history with that Plato presents in Book 8 of the Republic. How do you explain the differences? Which picture do you trust more and why?

MEDIEVAL

1. Marsilius claims to follow Aristotle, but he differs from the Stagyrice in so many ways that it is not easy to see how that claim can be true. Discuss some of the most important differences and either support or refute Marsilius' claims regarding his relation to Aristotle.

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?

EARLY MODERN

1. Although thinkers such as Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft strongly emphasized the importance of early education, they did not always agree on the content or purpose of such education for children. Referring to at least two of these thinkers, provide an argument as to why children's education comes to the fore of Western political theory in the 18th century. What are some key moral and political limitations of this 18th-century philosophical fascination with the education of the child?

2. What is the point of state of nature theories when they are so clearly unhistorical? Is the point the same in the classic state of nature theorists, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau?

LATE MODERN

1. Critically assess the role that religion plays in the political theory of three of the late modern thinkers from the reading list.

2. Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger all present essentially historically understandings of human existence. Which of these accounts of the essential historicity of human existence do you find best? Why?

September 16, 2017

Instructions: Answer *one* of the questions from each of the four sections below.

I. Ancient

1. In Bk. 2 of the *Politics*, Aristotle offers an extended critique of Plato's *Republic*. Discuss the nature of that critique and the outline of what you might see as a Platonic response. What does this exchange suggest about the differences, if any, between Platonic and Aristotelian political philosophy generally?

(revised) 2. *Eros* is a central theme of ancient political philosophy. Why? Explicate Thucydides' view of *eros* in political affairs by looking at the role of *eros* in Pericles' funeral oration, the Sicilian expedition, the Athenian legend of the lovers Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and Diodotus's speech in the Mytilenian debate. In your answer, feel free to compare and contrast Thucydides' presentation of *eros* with that of other ancient thinkers, such as Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle.

II. Medieval

1. It is often said that Al Farabi fulfilled a function within Islam like that of Thomas Aquinas within Christianity, namely, that of reconciling the claims of his religion with philosophy. Is this an accurate

assessment of Farabi's aims and achievement? Compare his treatment of the relation between philosophy and revealed religion with that of Thomas.

2. How and why does Augustine criticize ancient or "pagan" virtues in *The City of God*? In particular, what does he have to say about the civic virtues and value upheld by the ancients? Does his critique rob the political life—the *bios politikos*—of all independent value? If so, what value, if any, is left to the political realm? If not, what aspects of the political life as conceived by the ancients does Augustine attempt to preserve, and what are his reasons for doing so?

III. Early Modern

1. If you and your crew were stranded on a desert island with an extant indigenous population and limited resources for survival, how could the early modern social contract tradition give you any conceptual resources for solving any resulting problems of distributive justice? If so, what? If not, why not? Answer with reference to 3 of the following: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant.

2. How does Montesquieu's account of the British regime fit into his scheme of three main types of government? Be sure to explain clearly his theory of governmental types in terms of their nature and their principle. And be sure to do the same, so far as possible, for his treatment of Britain. Why is Britain especially important to Montesquieu's thought?

IV. Late Modern

1. For thinkers of the late modern period, *conflict* was often seen as either essential to liberty and a vibrant polity, or as a threat to law and order. Discuss the significance of conflict for the political thought of *two* thinkers from this period. Make sure to elucidate the meaning of "conflict" in their thought.

2. In "Science as a Vocation" Max Weber attacks professors who set themselves (or their disciplines) up as authorities when it comes to providing answers to the questions of how to live and what to do. From Weber's point of view, the idea that something called "reason" or "science" (*Wissenschaft*) is capable of authoritatively ranking values and ways of life is one that has been exposed as bogus by secularization and the modern "disenchantment of the world."

How much of Weber's attack on the authority of reason/science in the practical realm do you think derives from Nietzsche? How indebted is Weber to Nietzsche's critique of "dogmatists" and dogmatic philosophy in part I of *Beyond Good and Evil*? Does Weber's critique of the bogus claim to authority of reason and/or science add anything to Nietzsche's attack on "dogmatic" philosophers? If so, what? If not, why do you think he feels the need to re-state this attack in the terms he uses in "Science as a Vocation"?

January 2018

Instructions: This is a closed book exam (no notes or texts permitted). You must answer four questions total. Answer only one question per section. You may not choose to answer questions from both V and VI sections.

I. Ancient

1. Contemporary critics often claim that Plato and Aristotle are the progenitors of the "tutorial state." Both are seen as setting forth conceptions of the ideal polity that are irreducibly hierarchical and paternalist in nature. The idea that the polity should be centrally concerned with an "education in virtue," it is claimed, reduces most citizens to the status of students in dire need of the authoritative moral guidance provided by the state, or--worse--to the status of merely economic agents who supply the material conditions needed for such moral-political education (aimed at elites) to take place.

In what ways are the ideal polities set out in the *Republic* and the *Politics* open to such a critique? What might be said in the defense of Plato and/or Aristotle? Can state instruction in virtue and the good life ever be separated from (a) severe restrictions on individual freedom and (b) a lack of respect for the moral and rational capacities of individual citizens?

2. For the ancient authors, the constituting principle of the political community is the *politeia* (“constitution” or “regime”). The centrality of this principle in ancient political philosophy is indicated most simply by the fact that it is the title of Plato’s seminal work, typically translated as *Republic*. At the end of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle suggests that the next part of his philosophy of human affairs is a study of regimes, and the theme of his *Politics* might be said to be the *politeia* and the best *politeia*. In Thucydides, a key difference between Sparta and Athens is that they represent different regime types.

Choose one of these thinkers to explicate the role of the *politeia* in ancient political philosophy. Among the questions to consider: How is the *politeia* defined? Why do the ancient authors consider the *politeia* as foundational, especially as compared with modern notions of contract? How is this constituting principle related to disputes over rule and equality? How does this foundational principle bear on questions of justice and the common good? How is it reflected in different regime types? What is its relation to force, on the one hand, and consent or agreement, on the other? How does it shape the way of life and end or aim of the political community? What does a consideration of this principle tell us about the naturalness of the political community?

II. Medieval

1. Compare and critically assess any **two** of these thinkers on the question of the relationship between nature and politics: Augustine, Alfarabi, Thomas Aquinas.
2. Choose one book of Augustine's *City of God* that you consider especially important. Place it in the context of the work as a whole, summarize and critically assess its argument, and explain its significance.

III. Early Modern

1. Who in the early modern era comes closest to articulating the idea of universal human rights and why? Answer with reference to at least three thinkers on the early modern list.
2. 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 justify and place limits on state legitimacy? Whom do you find persuasive, and why?

IV. American

1. On the one hand, Tocqueville argues that democracy's fundamental commitment is equality, and even liberty will be sacrificed in its pursuit. On the other hand, in II.ii.20, he suggests that a new aristocracy may arise from the heart of democracy, in the form of a new economic oligarchy that, he states, will in certain respects be worse than the aristocracy of old. Can these claims be reconciled?
2. Compose an essay that discusses how Publius might respond to political and constitutional thought of at least one individual selection from Group A and one individual in Group B:

Group A: John C. Calhoun, Abraham Lincoln, Fredrick Douglas

Group B: Herbert Croly, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson

V. Liberalism, Morality, and Religion

1. Some thinkers hold that liberalism is indifferent to religion, so long as religious belief and practice does not negatively impact public peace or present an inadmissible "comprehensive doctrine" to the public sphere. Others hold that liberalism is not simply neutral toward religion, but actively seeks to modify or even moderate and diminish religious belief. Discuss three thinkers who address this debate.
2. Several prominent contemporary theorists have argued that modern political liberalism only became possible once Christianity ceased to be relevant for politics. That is to say, prominent features of liberalism like separation of church and state, religious freedom, and basic civil liberties could only emerge once Christianity was sidelined from the integral role that it played in the medieval political order. Describe the thought of at least two thinkers – contemporary or historical – who have thought this way. Then, answer: Is this view persuasive? Why or why not?

VI. Modern Legal Theory

1. Ronald Dworkin is famous for arguing that there is always a right answer to a legal dispute. Sketch his main argument(s) to support this claim. Sketch the chief opposing positions. Explain where the truth lies — with Dworkin or not?
2. Is there a place for appeal to natural law or natural rights in legal decision making? Be sure to bring into your answer the leading legal philosophic positions on this enduring issue.

May 2018

Instructions: This is a closed book exam (no notes or texts permitted). You must answer four questions total. Answer only one question per section.

I. Ancient

- a. Aristotle famously said: "The human being is by nature a political animal." What might he mean by that saying? What difference does it make to the way we understand or practice political life? Is this a way of understanding the political generally characteristic of the classics? Compare Aristotle on the naturalness of politics with the thought of another major ancient thinker--e.g. Plato, Xenophon, Thucydides, or Cicero.

- b. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* together constitute the core of his political philosophy, the first part of which is an inquiry into the human good and the second an inquiry into the political community or *polis*, the various kinds of political regimes, and the best regime. Write an essay that explores how these two works stand in relation to one another, using as your thematic focus a few of their key questions: for example, the human good or happiness, moral and intellectual virtue, the naturalness of the political community, the political regime. In your answer, you should consider not only the substance of Aristotle's inquiry but also the manner in which he undertakes it.

II. Medieval

- a. 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*? What in Augustine's critique would you criticize or contest? Why?
- b. Marsilius of Padua is sometimes seen as a forerunner of modern democratic and contractarian theories of politics. What basis is there in Marsilius' work to justify such claims? Are these claims on the whole justified?

III. Early Modern

- a. What is Rousseau's most innovative contribution to the early modern social contract tradition and why? Answer by using references to Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.
- b. Compare and contrast the state of nature, laws of nature, and natural rights in the political philosophy of Hobbes and Locke. To what extent is Locke a Hobbesian?

IV. Late Modern

- a. It has recently been argued that what Hegel called civil society has in late modern times swallowed up what he called the family and the state. What does this claim mean? Do you or would Hegel consider this claim to be correct? to be a good development?
- b. Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt each turn to ancient Greek thought as a touchstone for their respective critiques of modernity. Discuss their respective uses of Greek thought and practice and the way it informs their critique of, and their suggested corrective to, modernity. Finally, discuss their points of agreement and disagreement in their use of the ancients.

V. Contemporary

- a. Compare and contrast the approaches to freedom of three contemporary political philosophers.
- b. Contemporary theory scholars have attempted to rethink the nature of political violence. Drawing on at least three thinkers, answer the following questions: Are violence and politics fundamentally intertwined, or can they be separated from one another? Can violence

be used for legitimate political ends, and if so, under what conditions? Which (if any) thinker do you find persuasive, and why?

January 2019

Directions: This is a closed book exam (no notes or texts permitted). You must answer four questions total. Answer only one question per section.

I. Ancient

1. In *The 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 Aristotle's critique fair to Plato's dialogue and its political-philosophic teaching? What role does this critique of the *Republic* play in Aristotle's development of his own political science in *The Politics*?
2. How is the account of political conflict found in Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians* and the Athenians like or unlike Aristotle's analysis of the foundations and factors that shape political regimes in his *Politics*?

II. Early Modern

1. In what ways does Rousseau's theory of the state of nature in the "Second Discourse" shape and influence his views about a legitimate social contract and the resulting political order in *The Social Contract*?
2. What is the substance of Locke's critique of Hobbes's view of sovereignty? How does Locke's critique shape later political thought in the early modern period?

III. Late Modern

1. Mill and Nietzsche are both critical of the threats posed by mass democracy to human distinctiveness, yet both offer differing assessments of the nature of that threat and how best to forestall its potential destructiveness. Discuss each thinker's understanding of that threat and their respective political remedies. Do you think that the two thinkers are altogether different in their views on this issue (and if so, why?), or do you discern unexpected similarities?

2. Hegel's philosophy of history is frequently described (by Lowith and others) as a secularized version of Christian eschatology, namely, as a necessary movement from the extreme alienation of our original condition (natural or "fallen") towards a final reconciliation with Geist or God.

While it is true that Hegel links his philosophy of history to a theodicy, it is nevertheless clear that the evolution of political institutions plays a far more central role in the story than it possibly could in an orthodox Christian account. Does the importance of political institutions and the entire realm of "objective spirit" rule out the frequently encountered claim that Hegel's philosophy is essentially Christian at its core?

IV. Contemporary

1. Contemporary theory scholars have attempted to rethink the nature of political violence. Drawing on at least three thinkers, answer the following questions: Are violence and politics fundamentally intertwined, or can they be separated from one another? Can violence be used for legitimate political ends, and if so, under what conditions? Which (if any) thinker do you find persuasive, and why?
 2. In "Political Liberalism" John Rawls insists that the revised version of his theory of justice is "political, not metaphysical." That is to say, Rawls thinks he has successfully eliminated those aspects of his earlier theory that might have promoted the cultivation of a particular (liberal and somewhat secular) type of character. Is he right to believe this? Or does "Political Liberalism" fall prey to some of the same type of objections leveled at "A Theory of Justice"?
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September 2019

Instructions: This is a closed book exam (no notes or texts permitted). You must answer four questions total. Answer only one question per section.

I. Ancient

1. For the ancient political philosophers, the constituting principle of the political community is the *politeia* ("constitution" or "regime"). The centrality of the *politeia* in the classical tradition is indicated most simply by the fact that it is the title of Plato's seminal work, typically translated as *Republic*. At the end of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle remarks that the next part of his philosophy of human affairs, his *Politics*, involves the study of regimes.

Using either Plato or Aristotle, explicate the role of the *politeia* in ancient political philosophy. What is it? Why is it foundational? What is its relation to disputes over rule, justice, and the common good? What is its connection to education and a common way of life? Feel free to contrast it with relevant aspects of the modern contractarian tradition.

2. What is the nature of the most just or best regime, according to Socrates in Plato's *Republic*? Is the regime of Kallipolis intended to be a blueprint for actual politics, or is it pedagogical role in the dialogue something else?

II. Medieval

1. It is often said that Al Farabi fulfilled a function within Islam like that of Thomas Aquinas within Christianity, namely, that of reconciling the claims of his religion with philosophy. Is this an accurate assessment of Farabi's aims and achievement? Compare his treatment of the relation between philosophy and revealed religion with that of Thomas.
2. What are the main elements of Augustine's critical assessment of ancient Rome in *The City of God*? What role does this critique play in the overall argument of *The City of God*? Is there anything in Augustine's critique that you would criticize or contest?

III. Early Modern

1. Compare and contrast the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

2. Rousseau claims that “one always wants one’s good, but one does not always see it” (SC II, chapter 2).

Employing both the *Social Contract* and the *Second Discourse*, a) provide an account of what Rousseau wants us to see; and b) discuss how this ‘vision’ interacts with *one* of the following: Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, or Kant.

IV. Late Modern

1. Making reference to at least two thinkers, discuss whether history subsumes the individual in late modern political thought.
2. For the past few decades, Nietzsche has been read as a fundamentally anti-Hegelian and anti-dialectical thinker. Focusing on their respective stories about the origins and nature of Western culture/politics (in the *Genealogy* and *Philosophy of History*, respectively) assess the truth and limitations of this claim.

V. Contemporary

1. John Rawls is widely considered the most important political theorist in the English speaking world in the past fifty years. Choose two theorists (from the reading list) whose thought is sharply critical of Rawls (either explicitly or indirectly) and assess their challenge to his thought. In what respects does their thought challenge Rawls? How does (or would) Rawls respond? Be sure to note any respect in which the Rawls of *Theory of Justice* would respond differently from the Rawls of *Political Liberalism*. Offer some reflections on who you consider most persuasive, Rawls or his critics.
2. Compare and contrast Hannah Arendt’s criticisms of the modern age in *The Human Condition* with Foucault’s critical genealogy of modernity in *Discipline and Punish* and other writings. Please make reference to their differing views of the public realm and of power in constructing your answer.

VI. American

1. Compose an essay that explores to what extent the American Founding is and is not animated by Hobbesian and/or Lockean political thought. You need not discuss both Hobbesian and Lockean political thought, but you may.
2. What role does natural law play in American political thought? By natural law is meant a moral order, consisting of virtues and norms that can be known through reason. A concept that arguably reaches a climax in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, though with roots in Greek and Roman thinkers. What theorists in the American tradition come closest to endorsing natural law? Which theorists are most distant from it? Then, state and defend an overarching thesis about the role of natural law in American political thought. Does the American tradition add up to a break with the classical tradition on this issue? Or does it express continuity with it? Or is the record mixed and, if so, how?

VII. Critical Theory

1. 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.
2. Horkheimer and Adorno's 1947 work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is often viewed as: a) a classic expression of the basic Frankfurt School theoretical position; and b) a practical-political dead-end. How does Habermas's work guide the Frankfurt School out of the cul-de-sac Horkheimer and Adorno drove it into?

VIII. Bioethics and Literature

1. The ethics of bioengineering human forms has drawn a lot of attention from political theorists and philosophers, such as Fukuyama, Habermas, and Sandel, and from authors of political science fiction, such as Ishiguro, Okorafor, and LaValee, since the turn of the 21st century.

Using at least 2 of these political theorists and 1 political science fiction text (drawn from our class), write an essay on the ethics and politics of genetic engineering in the 21st century. Is genetic engineering of humans or human-like creates justifiable? To what extent should the state regulate it or prohibit it, and why?

2. What, if anything, does Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology" contribute to our understanding of bio-ethical issues (such as cloning, genetic engineering, or human-machine hybrids) in our time? If you think it contributes little, say why and explicate how an alternative thinker's approach is more fruitful or seminal. If you think it potentially contributes a great deal, say how.

IX. Comparative Political Theory

1. In large measure, political science considers itself to be an empirical science where the "facts" speak for themselves. For some practitioners, even political theory - including "comparative political theory" (CPT) - subscribes to the same methodology. However, here a dispute has arisen. According to many colleagues, CPT is crucially distinguished by being focused not on universal "facts" but on semantic meanings which require careful interpretation. Typically, the phenomena treated by CPT are expressed or articulated in different languages, and these languages are imbedded in different, not immediately transparent, cultures or traditions.

During the past two decades, discord has been raging regarding the most appropriate approach or methodology of CPT. Discuss some highlights of this controversy, focusing especially on the contributions of Gadamer, Panikkar, and Charles Taylor. What additional points have been raised by such practitioners as Leigh Jenco, Andrew March, and Roxanne Euben (feel free to substitute other practitioners of your choice)? In your view, what does CPT contribute to political understanding and knowledge as a whole?

2. A prominent theme in CPT during the past two decades has been the relation of between Western political philosophy and Confucianism. For instance, several scholars have focused on the similarity or compatibility between Aristotle and Confucius. However, dispute rages over what is meant by Confucianism and what features of Western thought are considered to be compatible with the former. Is Confucianism particularly compatible with or resistant to the Western "liberal" tradition? Discuss salient arguments pro and con this argument. What is meant by

Confucian “perfectionism” and what is its (chiefly agonal) relation to Western thought? Likewise, what is meant by “Boston Confucianism” and why might it be attractive to modern Western readers? Give your own interpretation of classical Confucian thought and its relevance to modern democracy. Indicate how a comparison of this type demonstrates the relevance of CPT against its critics in the profession.

X. Democratic Theory

1. Does democracy require rational and reasonable agents? Why or why not? In answering this question, discuss the work of John Rawls OR Jurgen Habermas, AND at least one other thinker, and make sure to explain their understandings of rationality, public reason, and democratic legitimacy.
2. Many democratic theorists are concerned with maintaining social cohesion in the face of normative pluralism. How should we balance the recognition of such pluralism with the need for social unity? In answering your question, discuss the works of at least two contemporary democratic theorists (i.e., 20th and 21st centuries), and make sure to explain their respective understandings of democratic sovereignty, normative pluralism, and unity.

June 2020

Instructions:

This is an open book exam (June 2020 only). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. In light of COVID-19, 2 additional hours will be given for the June 2020 comp for a total time of 8 hours for native English speakers and 9.5 hours for ESL students.

*You must answer four questions total. Answer **one** question in each of the following sections.*

I. Ancient

1. Discuss the problem of education for citizenship and human happiness or goodness, in either Plato (*Apology* and/or *Republic*) or Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* and/or *Politics*). What are some major obstacles or challenges to these aspects of education, and to what extent can political philosophy and political institutions help in this task?
2. In “writing down the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians,” Thucydides claims to have composed a work that is a “possession for all time” (1.22.4). Explicate the precise meaning of this claim, focusing on the manner in which he proposes to treat the deeds (*erga*) and the speeches (*logoi*) (1.22.1-3). Then evaluate the claim by considering the problems of justice and necessity at the center of his account of the war.

II. Medieval

1. In book 19 of *The City of God*, Augustine recaps the debate among philosophers as to the *summum bonum* or ultimate end of human beings. What are some of the candidates for the *summum bonum* that Augustine considers, and how in the end does he define the last end or highest good of humans? What relation does Augustine see, if any, between the *summum bonum*

and political life in this world? Develop your answer with reference to any passages you choose from *The City of God*.

2. It is often said that Al Farabi fulfilled a function within Islam like that of Thomas Aquinas within Christianity, namely, that of reconciling the claims of his religion with philosophy. Is this an accurate assessment of Farabi's aims and achievement? Compare his treatment of the relation between philosophy and revealed religion with that of Thomas.

III. Early Modern

1. The most significant early modern political philosophers—Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Rousseau, and Kant—constructed their ideas about political order upon a rejection of a classical understanding of political order, found most prominently in the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas.

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Insofar as early modern thinkers share common commitments, did their thought entail an advance in political philosophy in the normative sense? In your answer, please touch upon the place of God, human nature, natural law, natural rights, and the purpose and basis of political authority. Engage the ideas of at least two of the early modern thinkers and at least two of the classical thinkers listed above.

2. Rousseau read *Robinson Crusoe* and devised a version of the state of nature remarkably akin to its plot: a wilderness consisting of largely isolated individuals who somehow manage, despite conflict, to come together in community. What do you think of Rousseau's version of the state of nature? How does it compare as a narrative of human and social development when you consider it against the background of other early modern political thinkers, such as Hobbes and Locke, who shared his obsession with the tensions between human solitude and human solidarity?

IV. Late Modern

1. For thinkers of the late modern period, conflict was seen as either essential to liberty and a vibrant polity, or as a threat to law and order. Discuss the significance of conflict for the political thought of two thinkers from this period. Make sure to elucidate the meaning of "conflict" in their thought.
2. Write an essay in which you discuss the nature of, and primary threats to, freedom in the thought of Mill, Nietzsche, and Weber.

V. 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. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the conceptions of the public sphere found in Arendt, Habermas, and Foucault. What are the most important theoretical differences? What are the most important continuities? If you had to rank their respective conceptions in terms of critical insight and theoretical importance, what would your ranking be and why?

VI. Posthumanism and Transhumanism

1. In the twenty-first century debate over the relationship of humanity with technology, posthumanism is often confused with transhumanism. Explain the different meanings of these terms with respect to leading figures in the debate such as Francis Fukuyama, Donna Haraway, and Nick Bostrom. Take a side or set out your own position in the debate.
2. Compare and contrast Heidegger and Arendt's respective critiques of modern science and technology. What motivates their respective critiques? What assumptions, if any, do they share? What do you consider their foremost strengths and their foremost weaknesses? Finally, in your view, is one superior to the other? Why?

VII. Islamic Classical Political Thought

1. Ibn Khaldun is viewed as a historian-cum-political theorist by some and died at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Discuss the relevant elements of his political theory, especially the formation of dynastic political entities (dawla/duwal). Did Ibn Khaldun's political theory have limited application following the argument of Aziz el-Azmeh? Or do you think Ibn Khaldun's political theory on governance and power could be grist for the mill of theoretical constructivists like Muhsin Mahdi? Demonstrate your knowledge of the primary sources as well as the readings of Ibn Khaldun in the secondary literature.
2. Abu Nasr al-Farabi and Abu Ali Ibn Sina were two towering theoreticians and philosophers in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Farabi wrote an entire treatise elucidating a theory of the Virtuous City. He appropriated substantial portions of Greek political philosophy. Do you think Farabi and other political theorists were successful in their reformulations of political philosophy in an Islamic setting? Substantiate your answers by drawing on the writings of such theorists as those mentioned. Explain both the overlap and tension of political philosophy with traditional political theology in the *siyāsa shar'iya* genre as construed by the 'ulama.

September 2020

Instructions:

This is an open book exam (September 2020 only). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. You must answer four questions total.

*Answer **one** question in each of the following sections.*

Ancient

1. One of the most famous statements of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the claim by the Athenians at Melos that "when it comes to human reasoning, the just things are judged from the standpoint of equal compulsion, and the strong do what they can and the weak yield" (5.89). Or as it is more colloquially put, justice exists only between those of equal power, and the strong do what they wish while the weak do what they must. After laying out precisely what the Athenians mean by this claim in the context of the Melian dialogue, discuss whether Thucydides himself holds this same view.
2. In *The 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 Aristotle's critique fair to Plato's dialogue and its political-philosophic teaching? What role does this critique of *The Republic* play in Aristotle's development of his own political science in *The Politics*?

Early Modern

1. What are the major philosophical revisions to the concept of rights in modern political thought from Hobbes to Kant?
2. Contemporary observers often locate early modern European thought as a pivotal period for the secularization of the West, both in celebration and in lamentation. Did early modern thinkers indeed seek to remove religion from politics? Or is this picture distorted or overdrawn? It might be argued, for instance, that they did not seek to expunge religion from social and political affairs but rather that they had a different way of thinking about religion's role in these affairs than their forebears. Develop your own thesis about the role of religion in early modern political thought and defend it with reference to at least three of the following thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, James Madison, Immanuel Kant, and Thomas Jefferson.

American

1. Compose an essay that explores to what extent the American Founding is and is not animated by Hobbesian and/or Lockean political thought. You need not discuss both Hobbesian and Lockean political thought, but you may.

2. To what extent is the Founders' Constitution based on self-interest? To what extent does it rely on virtue? How have subsequent consequential political actors (e.g. Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Martin Luther King) and/or constitutional reforms increased and/or decreased reliance on self-interest and/or virtue?

Late Modern

1. Compare Nietzsche and Mill on the sources of social conformity and the social/political role of the creative individual.
2. Compare Marx and Mill's respective assessments of the conditions required for the realization of genuine individuality. Are their ideas of genuine individuality complementary or fundamentally at odds?

January 2021

Instructions:

This is an open book exam (January 2021 only). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. You must answer four questions total.

*Answer **one** question in each of the following sections.*

Ancient

1. *Eros* is a central theme of ancient political philosophy. Why? Explicate Thucydides' view of *eros* in political affairs by discussing the role of *eros* in Pericles' Funeral Oration, Diodotus's speech in the Mytilenian debate, the Sicilian expedition, and the Athenian legend of the lovers Harmodius and Aristogeiton. In your answer, feel free to compare and contrast Thucydides' presentation of *eros* with that of other ancient thinkers, such as Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle.
2. What is the nature of the most just or best regime, according to Socrates in Plato's *Republic*? Is the regime of Kallipolis intended to be a blueprint for actual politics, or is its pedagogical role in the dialogue something else? How well does Aristotle critique the best regime of the *Republic* in Book II of his *Politics*?

Early Modern

1. What are inalienable rights? Compose an essay discussing the concept with regard to at least two early modern thinkers.
2. The idea of the state of nature takes the form of a narrative in the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Break down the plot points and analyze the central conflict in each version. Then explain the philosophical point of the state of nature story in the wider political theories of each thinker.

Late Modern

1. How do Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche appropriate and/or "refute" Hegel's master/slave dialectic?
2. Must a just society be a liberal society? Why or why not? Pick two to three thinkers from late nineteenth or early twentieth century Europe and make sure to elucidate the meaning of liberalism and a just society in their thought.

Contemporary

1. Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt were both fugitives from fascist totalitarianism, eventually teaching and residing in the United States. What is each thinker's respective diagnosis of the origins and attractions of fascism, and their views of the prospects for, limitations of, and even threats to, liberal democracy? In what ways do these appraisals reflect either/both implicit as well as explicit differences and even criticisms of the other's views?
2. John Rawls, arguably the most prominent political philosopher of the past half century, featured the "priority of the right over the good" in his thought. What did he mean by this idea? What reasons might be offered in its defense? Who in contemporary political thought dissents from this idea? On what grounds? What view of the issue do you find most persuasive?

Saturday, January 22, 2022

Instructions

This is an open book exam (during COVID). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. You must answer four questions total.

Answer one question in each of the following sections.

ANCIENT

1. One of the most famous statements of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the claim by the Athenians at Melos that "when it comes to human reasoning, the just things are judged from the standpoint of equal compulsion, and the strong do what they can and the weak yield" (5.89). Or as it is more colloquially put, justice exists only between those of equal power, and the strong do what they wish while the weak do what they must.

After laying out precisely what the Athenians mean by this claim in the context of the Melian dialogue, discuss whether Thucydides himself holds this same view.

2. For the ancient political philosophers, the constituting principle of the political community is the *politeia* ("constitution" or "regime"). The centrality of the *politeia* in the classical tradition is indicated most simply by the fact that it is the title of Plato's seminal work, typically translated as *Republic*. At the end of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle remarks that the next part of his philosophy of human affairs, his *Politics*, focuses on the study of regimes.

Using either Plato or Aristotle, explicate the role of the *politeia* in ancient political philosophy. What is it? Why is it foundational? How does it constitute the political community? What is its relation to disputes over rule, justice, and the common good? What is its connection to education and a common way of life?

Feel free to contrast it with relevant aspects of the modern contractarian tradition.

MEDIEVAL

1. Choose one book of Augustine's *City of God* that you consider especially important. Place it in the context of the work as a whole; summarize and critically assess its argument; and explain its significance for *The City of God*, and more broadly for political theory and the history of political thought.
2. In political philosopher Mark Lilla's book, *The Stillborn God*, Lilla argues that modern liberal democracy, characterized by individual freedom, became possible only once "political theology" was left behind and religion became sidelined in political affairs. Choose two medieval political theorists and describe how these thinkers construed the relationship between God and the political order, identifying major features of that relationship. Then, make an argument about the compatibility of this relationship, as these theorists construed it, and modern constitutional liberal democracy, characterized by limited government, religious freedom, democratic elections, and

other civil liberties. Did the development of these regimes require sidelining God? Are they consistent with God? Or is there a sense in which they might even require God?

EARLY MODERN

1. The image of the monster is a defining trope of modern political thought from Hobbes and Rousseau to Burke and Wollstonecraft. Trace this image through the early modern tradition and make a case for why it is a prevailing or dominant symbol. Draw on the writings of at least three authors from the Early Modern list.
2. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau all rely upon the concept of the "Social Contract" to ground political legitimacy. What aspects of their respective theories of the social contract are similar, and what aspects set them apart? What are the resulting political implications of both their similarities and differences?

LATE MODERN

1. John Stuart Mill and other writers in the late modern tradition of political thought are concerned with the issue of freedom of thought, speech, and action. Using Mill's harm principle as a starting point, while addressing its strengths and flaws, make your own case for why and how freedom of thought, speech, and action are (or are not) essential features of modern constitutional democracy. Draw on the writings of at least three authors from the Late Modern list.
2. How do Hegel and Weber, respectively, understand the modern 'rational' state? Why does Hegel think the modern rational state concretely embodies freedom, while Weber sees political freedom as limited to the charismatic leader who bends party and bureaucracy to his will?

CONTEMPORARY

1. Compare Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault on the public sphere understood as a 'space of appearances.'
2. Contemporary theory scholars have attempted to rethink the nature of political violence. Drawing on at least three thinkers, answer the following questions: Are violence and politics fundamentally intertwined, or can they be separated from one another? Can violence be used for legitimate political ends, and if so, under what conditions? Which (if any) thinker do you find persuasive, and why?

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 regime types since the founding.
2. A strenuous debate is currently taking place whether the constitutional theory of the *Federalist* reflects more ancient and classical political philosophy, or rather represents more radical break with the classical tradition. Provide evidence for each position, and evaluate which of the positions - or neither - makes the better case.

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Instructions

This is an open book exam (during COVID). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. You must answer four questions total.

Answer one question in each of the following sections.

Ancient:

1. A major theme of Thucydides' account of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians is Athenian imperialism. This imperialism is praised or defended by a variety of Athenian speakers, first and foremost by the leader for whom the period of Athens's greatness is named, Pericles. Write an essay that explicates the various ways in which the different Athenian speakers describe and defend the imperial expansion and rule of their city. In the course of your essay, consider also the relation between Athenian democracy and imperialism and whether any of these speakers, most especially Pericles, speaks for Thucydides himself.
2. For the ancient political philosophers, the constituting principle of the political community is the politeia ("constitution" or "regime"). The centrality of the politeia in the classical tradition is indicated most simply by the fact that it is the title of Plato's seminal work, typically translated as Republic. At the end of his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle remarks that the next part of his philosophy of human affairs, his Politics, focuses on the study of regimes. Using either Plato or Aristotle, explicate the role of the politeia in ancient political philosophy. What is it? Why is it foundational? How does it constitute the political community? What is its relation to disputes over rule, faction, justice, and the common good? What is its connection to education and a common way of life? Feel free to contrast it with relevant aspects of the modern contractarian tradition.

Medieval:

1. In the Middle Ages, major political thinkers understood the political order to be a reflection of and based upon a larger moral order that was founded by God. In modern political thought in the West, political thought posits a separation between politics and such a moral order. Write an essay on the validity of this comparison, exploring at least two major thinkers from the Middle Ages and referencing modern political thought as necessary to make your argument.
2. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas are considered seminal thinkers in the "just war" tradition. Summarize Augustine's and Aquinas's arguments on justice (and injustice) in declaring and waging war by political communities and their citizens. Does Aquinas merely echo Augustine on this topic, or does he add anything significant to the just war theory tradition, methodologically and/or substantively? Are their arguments mainly of historical import, or do they retain relevance today, in part or in whole?

Early Modern:

1. Hobbes argued that an absolute sovereign could, in theory, have a monarchical, aristocratic, or a democratic form of government, but that an absolute sovereign monarch was preferable because it would be the most stable and resistant to "intestine discord". How do Locke and Rousseau both critique and build upon this early modern political theory born of the English Civil Wars to develop their own distinctive accounts of modern "legitimate" forms of government? Discuss at least one element of Locke's and Rousseau's theories of legitimate government (or, in Rousseau's terms, the legitimate state or republic) that maps onto Hobbes's account of the most effective (absolute) form of sovereignty, and at least one element of each of their theories that stands in striking opposition to each other and Hobbes. Finally, why do these differing early modern accounts of sovereignty and legitimate government matter today for theories constitutional democracy?
2. Hobbes and Rousseau are often characterized as total 'conventionalists'—that is, as political theorists who fundamentally break with the natural law tradition. And yet the concepts of nature, natural rights, and natural man loom large in the thinking of both theorists. Write an essay in which you address the status of nature, natural rights, and 'laws of nature' in Hobbes and Rousseau. In your answer explain why the 'strict conventionalist' reading of both theorists is inadequate, even though their approach to nature and natural law is, in many respects, revolutionary.

American:

1. To what extent did the Founders' Constitution establish, to quote Lincoln, "government of the people, by the people, for the people"? Is the Founders' Constitution properly classified as a democracy? Why or why not?
2. A strenuous debate is currently taking place whether the constitutional theory of the *Federalist* reflects more ancient and classical political philosophy, or rather represents a more radical break with the classical tradition. Provide evidence for each position, and evaluate which of the positions - or neither - makes the better case.

September 24, 2022

Instructions

This is an open book exam (during COVID). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. You must answer four questions total.

Answer one question in each of the following sections.

Ancient

1. Arguably the most famous statement of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the claim by the Athenians at Melos that "when it comes to human reasoning, the just things are judged from the standpoint of equal compulsion, and the strong do what they can and the weak yield" (5.89). Or as it is more colloquially put, justice exists only between those of equal power, and the strong do what they wish while the weak do what they must.

After laying out precisely what the Athenians mean by this claim in the context of the Melian dialogue, discuss whether Thucydides himself holds this same view.

2. For the ancient political philosophers, the constituting principle of the political community is the *politeia* ("constitution" or "regime"). The centrality of the *politeia* in the classical tradition is indicated most simply by the fact that it is the title of Plato's seminal work, typically translated as *Republic*. At the end of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle remarks that the next part of his philosophy of human affairs, his *Politics*, focuses on the study of regimes.

Using either Plato or Aristotle, explicate the role of the *politeia* in ancient political philosophy. What is it? Why is it foundational? How does it constitute the political community? What is its relation to disputes over rule, faction, justice, and the common good? What is its connection to education and a common way of life? Feel free to contrast it with relevant aspects of the modern contractarian tradition.

Medieval

1. Thomas Aquinas has been called a Catholic Whig, a forerunner of a view of government's role and purpose as being limited and consistent with that of modern liberal democracy. Others view him as having a much more heavy-handed conception of government as a strong promoter of virtue, religion, and perhaps other ends from which modern democratic theorists have thought that a government ought to refrain from promoting. In your view, which portrait represents Aquinas's thought most accurately? In what ways does Aquinas's view of government's role and structure comport or not comport with those of modern liberal democracy? Then, compare Aquinas and Augustine. How do their views of the government's proper role compare?

2. Compare at least two of these thinkers on happiness and its relation to political life: Alfarabi, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas.

Early Modern

1. Why is the concept of covenant or contract essential to early modern political thought, across thinkers as diverse as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau?
2. What role, if any, does the 'law of nature' play in the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau?

American

1. To what extent did the Founders' Constitution establish, to quote Lincoln, "government of the people, by the people, for the people"? Is the Founders' Constitution properly classified as a democracy? Why or why not?
2. While some draw a stark contrast between the political philosophies of the founding fathers and thinkers of the Progressive era, both are also nevertheless widely regarded as expressions of liberalism. Discuss what differentiates their respective positions using the thought of at least one founder and one Progressive thinker (e.g., John Dewey or Herbert Croly), as well as what constitutes their continuities as liberal thinkers.

January 21, 2023

Instructions

This is an open book exam (during COVID). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. You must answer four questions total.

Answer one question in each of the following sections.

Ancient

1. Arguably the most famous statements of Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the claim by the Athenians at Melos that "when it comes to human reasoning, the just things are judged from the standpoint of equal compulsion, and the strong do what they can and the weak yield" (5.89). Or as it is more colloquially put, justice exists only between those of equal power, and the strong do what they wish while the weak do what they must.

After laying out precisely what the Athenians mean by this claim in the context of the Melian dialogue, discuss whether Thucydides himself holds this same view.

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Medieval

1. Summarize and critically assess what you consider to be the most important features of Aquinas's political thought, with special attention to **at least one** of these themes: virtue (you may focus on a specific virtue), law (including natural law), and constitutione/regime types.

2. Many contemporary political philosophers hold that constitutional liberal democracy became possible only once politics had jettisoned medieval thought: Aristotle, religion, classic natural law. A sharply contrary position rebuts that all of the major important features of constitutional liberal democracy were in place in medieval thought, still needing development perhaps but present in their essential form. Which perspective is right? Or something in between? Defend your thesis with evidence regarding specific features of constitutional liberal democracy.

Early Modern

1. How do varying images of the "state of nature" undergird the arguments of the social contract tradition from Hobbes through Kant?

2. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau are frequently characterized as "social contract theorists." Yet this is, in key respects, a misnomer, since none of them posits a contract between governors and governed. Write an essay in which you explain: a) the reasoning Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau use to account for the empowerment of legitimate political authority, and b) the limits, if any, built into such empowerment.

Late Modern

1. J.S. Mill and Nietzsche offer competing visions of individual freedom in late modernity. Who offers the best vision of freedom, relative to the other, and why?
2. The Mill of "On Liberty" has often been described as an elitist, while the Nietzsche of "On the Genealogy of Morals" and "Beyond Good and Evil" has often been described as upholding "radical aristocracy." What truth, if any, is there to these respective characterizations?

Contemporary

1. Drawing on two 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. How do Arendt and Habermas's respective characterizations of the public realm (or "public sphere") overlap? How are they different? Whose is more adequate?

American

1. James Madison and John Dewey are both regarded as foundational figures within the American liberal tradition. However, the two thinkers seem to hold many opposing positions about democracy, progress, property, and so forth. Discuss their various differences, but also explore in what ways their "liberalism" possibly reveals more fundamental consistencies.
2. Compose an essay that explores to what extent the American Founding is and is not animated by Hobbesian and/or Lockean political thought. You need not discuss both Hobbesian and Lockean political thought, but you may.

Critical Theory

1. 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.
2. In what ways does Marcuse's "One Dimensional Man" simply echo the argument of Horkheimer and Adorno's "Dialectic of Enlightenment"? In what ways does it depart from that argument? How significant, in your view, are the differences?

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

Instructions

This is an open book exam (during COVID). Native English speakers are allowed 6 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 7.5 hours. During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. You must answer four questions total.

Answer one question in each of the following sections.

Ancient

1. What is the relation of politics and economics in Aristotle's political science? How does Aristotle's understanding of this relation bear on his investigation of nature? What questions does his account raise for the modern separation of these human activities?
2. In both Aristotle's *Politics* and Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, the question of justice is fundamental to understanding the nature of political life. But why is this question so fundamental in each thinker's case, and how do they differ in their understanding of the place and significance of justice in the theory and practice of politics? Having laid out your answer, then consider the following question: even given their differences, would Aristotle and Thucydides form a common front against, say, Machiavelli's understanding of justice, or a more "realist" understanding of the relation between justice and power? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Early Modern

1. How was constitutional design modelled in the early modern tradition of European political thought? Do any of these models have relevance for constitutional design today? Why or why not? Answer with reference to at least three thinkers on the Early Modern list.
2. Critically compare and contrast Machiavelli and Rousseau's distinct versions of republicanism.

Late Modern

1. Freedom of speech has become a vital and contested subject in the public domain of late. Using three thinkers from the Late Modern list, make a case for their relevance for determining the ideal (normative) scope and limits of freedom of speech in democracies today.
2. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast Hegel and Marx on the nature of alienation and how it can be overcome.

American

1. Compose an essay that discusses to what extent the American Founders' constitutionalism is and is not compatible with Rousseau's political thought.

2. Discuss the rise of 19th-20th century progressivism (discussing a minimum of two thinkers in that tradition, e.g., Dewey, Croly, Lippmann, etc.) as a variant within the liberal tradition. In what ways is it discontinuous with the classical liberal tradition that preceded it? In what ways is it continuous? Are both correctly identifiable as “liberal,” or are they fundamentally distinct and therefore miscategorized?

Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory, September 2023

Ancient

1. The first word of the first speech in Thucydides' *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* is "justice" (*dikaion*), and the first word of the second speech is "necessity" (*anankaion*). This fact is a small sign of the centrality of the theme of justice and necessity in Thucydides' treatment of war, politics, and human action. Use three of the major speeches or debates of the work to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of key Athenian arguments regarding the role of necessity (or compulsion) in the establishment and growth of their empire and in human action generally. Then discuss whether Thucydides himself shares the Athenian view and note one way that Thucydides' treatment of the matter may have influenced classical political philosophy more broadly.
2. Does Plato satisfactorily answer the question posed to Socrates in the "Republic": is justice preferable to injustice? How is justice defined, and is this definition intended to shape and orient a political order? Does the "Republic" provide an adequate political vision for politics, and if so, what are its contours? If its teachings are not primarily intended as a political teaching, should this text be assigned in such an exam? Why or why not?

Medieval

1. Summarize the theory of law developed by Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, with reference to the essence of law and kinds of law. Discuss the relationship, in Aquinas's theory, either between law and good government, or among law, conscience, and good citizenship.
2. Compare any two of these thinkers, Augustine, Alfarabi, and Aquinas, on one of these three themes: (1) the nature and purposes of political society; the relationship between virtue and politics; or (3) the relationship between religion and politics.

Early Modern:

1. Compare and contrast the role of the state of nature in the political theory of either Hobbes or Locke with the role of the state of nature in the political theory of Montesquieu or Rousseau.
2. How are women conceptualized in relation to the state in the Enlightenment political thought from Hobbes to Wollstonecraft?

Late Modern:

1. Compare and contrast Mill and Nietzsche on the relationship between the pursuit of truth and the realization of freedom.
2. In "On the Jewish Question" Karl Marx criticizes what he sees as the fundamental deficiencies of the "political emancipation" achieved by the French and American revolutions, and argues instead for a fuller and more genuine "human emancipation." Write an essay in which you a) assess the strengths and weaknesses of Marx's criticism of what we would today call liberal constitutionalism; and b) outline, on the basis of your reading of the "Lectures on the Philosophy of History" and the "Philosophy of Right," how Hegel would have responded to Marx's analysis of the liberal constitutional state.

American Political Thought:

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 regime types since the founding.
2. To what extent did the Founders' Constitution establish, to quote Lincoln, "government of the people, by the people, for the people"? Is the Founders' Constitution properly classified as a democracy? Why or why not?

Contemporary

1. Contemporary political thought has been particularly focused on the role of technology in political life - whether as a promise or a threat. Discuss the work of three modern thinkers who have written on this subject since 1950, including Heidegger in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology" and relevant work by Hannah Arendt, in addition to one modern author of your choice.
2. Write an essay in which you outline the divergent conceptions of the public realm (or public sphere) in Arendt, Habermas, and Foucault. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Are these theorists writing about the same thing (albeit from different perspectives) or are they looking at fundamentally different political and social phenomena?