

## **MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince***

1. What is the difference between a hereditary principality and a mixed principality, and why, according to Machiavelli, are mixed principalities more difficult for a ruler to “hold”? (chs. I-III)
2. What is Machiavelli’s advice to those who rule over foreign principalities (ch. III-IV), and particularly over those (“republics”) who are accustomed to living under their own laws? (ch. V)
3. “...anyone who enables another to become powerful, brings about his own ruin.” (ch. V, p. 14) Discuss.
4. According to Machiavelli (in chs. VII-IX), there are four “ways” that one can become a ruler. Discuss each, and explain why Machiavelli had the most respect for a ruler who acquired his principality through his own ability. (*virtù*)
5. How, according to Machiavelli, should the “strength” of a principality be measured? (ch. X)
6. Why are native troops better than mercenary or auxiliary troops? (chs. XII-XIII) Relatedly, why must rulers think only of war, especially during peace-time? (ch. XIV)

7. What is the significance of Machiavelli's distinction in chapter XV between "what really happens" in politics and "theories or speculations?"

8. Why, according to Machiavelli (in chs. XVI-XIX) is it sometimes preferable for a ruler to be "mean" than generous; to be cruel than merciful; to be deceptive than trustworthy? What is Machiavelli's reasoning here; and how does he square this logic with his claim that a ruler must never allow himself to be hated or despised by his subjects?

9. Why does Machiavelli advocate risk-taking? (ch. XXI) What, for example, is wrong with maintaining neutrality when two nearby powers come to blows?

10. What is a flatterer? What must rulers avoid such people? (ch. XXIII)

11. What does Machiavelli mean: "fortune is a woman"? (ch. XXV, p. 87) How does this analogy strike you?

## **HOBBS, *Leviathan***

1. What is the source of “good” and “evil” for Hobbes? (Ch.6)
2. What are a *finis ultimus* and a *summum bonum*? Why did Hobbes think neither of these existed? (Ch. 11)
3. What, for Hobbes, is “warre”? Why is there no "injustice" in "warre"? (ch. 13; see also ch. 15 (p. 202).
4. What is the difference between “The Right of Nature” and the “Laws of Nature”? (ch. 14)
5. For Hobbes, natural law is necessary to, but insufficient for, peace. Discuss.
6. What for Hobbes is a covenant? (ch. 14) Why is the performance of a covenant the “Foundation and Originall of Justice” for Hobbes? (ch. 15)

7. What for Hobbes is a “Common-wealth”? Discuss with regard to the following claim: “Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.” (ch. 17, p. 223)

8. What are some of the “rights” of the sovereign? (Ch. 18) Do you think that the Hobbesian sovereign has too many rights?

9. What for Hobbes is "liberty"? And what is the "liberty of subjects"? (ch. 21) Do you think the Hobbesian subject has enough liberty?

10. In what cases are subjects released from their obedience to the sovereign? (ch. 21)

11. Compare Hobbes’ account of the “dissolution” of the commonwealth (in ch. 29) with Machiavelli’s discussion of why rulers lose their principalities.

**LOCKE, *The Second Treatise of Government***

1. Distinguish Hobbes' and Locke's notions of "equality" in the State of Nature. (ch. 2; see also ch. 5, parag. 54)
2. Why is Locke's "State of Liberty" not a "State of License"? (ch. 2) See also Locke's distinction in Chapter 3 between the "State of Nature" and the "State of War."
3. What does Locke mean when he says that everyone in the "State of Nature" has the "executive power of the Law of Nature"? (chs. 2-3) What problems does this create for peace?
4. What for Locke is a "State of War"? (ch. 3)
5. How does something in nature, and thus in common, become my property, according to Locke? (ch. 5)

6. Does Locke specify limits to the right to accumulate property? How does the invention of money complicate these limits? (ch. 5)

7. What is "Political (or Civil) Society"? (ch. 7) Why don't Absolute Monarchies (like Hobbes' *Leviathan*) qualify, according to Locke? In your answer, be sure to address Locke's distinction between "Lions" and "Pole-Cats"/"Foxes" on the bottom of p. 328.

8. Why is "consent" central in Locke's theory of the "Beginning of Political Societies"? (ch. 8) What is the difference between express and tacit consent?

9. Why, according to Locke, is the Legislative Power is the "supream" power of the Common-wealth? Has the Legislative Power any limits? What is "trust"? (ch. 11)

10. When may the commands of a Prince be opposed? (ch. 18)

11. Locke distinguishes the dissolution of "Society" from the dissolution of "Government." What does this mean? Contrast with Hobbes. (ch. 19)

## **ROUSSEAU, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men***

### **Part I.**

1. Why has no philosopher yet "reached" the "state of nature" according to Rousseau? Discuss with reference to the following claim: "All of them, finally, speaking continually of need, avarice, oppression, desires, and pride, have carried over to the state of nature ideas they had acquired in society: they spoke about savage man and they described civil man." (p. 38)

2. Describe man in his "natural state," according to Rousseau. (pp. 40-4)

3. What does Rousseau mean by "perfectibility"? (p. 45 *ff.*)

4. What does Rousseau mean by "pity"? How does Rousseau's emphasis on "pity" in the state of nature distinguish him from Hobbes? From Locke? (pp. 53-55)

5. Even if certain natural inequalities are inevitable in nature, why, according to Rousseau, do they have little value in nature? (p. 58-9) Be sure to consider Rousseau's comments about natural strength and the absence in nature of "oppression" and of "servitude".

## Part II

6. Which stage in the development of civil society is, for Rousseau, the "happiest and most endurable epoch"? Why? (p. 65; see pp. 62-6).

7. "...barbarous man does not bow his head for the yoke that civilized man wears without a murmur, and he prefers the most stormy liberty to tranquil subjection." (p. 72) Describe this "tranquil subjection" under which civilized man lives, according to Rousseau.

8. Does Rousseau's description of modern civilization have relevance today, or is it merely a relic of the eighteenth-century?