**Political Science 110C/ Spring 2011 Mr. Strong; Mr. Cotkin; Mr. Lucas**

**Sample Answers MIDTERM**

**NOTE: these are examples of answers that would have received an “A” grade. There are other possible answers, especially in Part II, that would have received an “A” grade but all such answers show evidence of knowledge of the texts, of reflection, of an argument and of thought.**

**Part One**

**Question One: *Kant*. *What is Enlightenment?***

Kant suggests that a harmful immaturity dominates the lives of most men. It is exactly this immaturity that prevent humankind from realizing their rational “autonomy.” In being “immature,” man inevitably falls in blind submissions to the will and judgment of others. He is, in essence, reduced to a machine that merely follows orders. But it is not “a lack of understanding” that placed him into a position of blind submission, but rather a “lack of resolve and courage” to realize his innate rational autonomy. The immaturity is “self-incurred.” Only by being autonomous, Kant argues, man can be free to actualize the goal of Enlightenment, which is the complete internalization of reason. We are not autonomous when we take out opoinions or let our actions be guided by an other (a preacher, a book, a doctor). In addition, Kant argues for a polity that would allow greater freedom of the press and respect the circulation of ideas. By suppressing the press, a government despotically suppresses the minds of its citizens, which only furthers the “immaturity” that Kant wants to destroy. Therefore, Kant ends his essay by praising Frederick the Great, who we calls an Enlightened Monarch, for allowing his citizens to circulate ideas freely, and thereby allows them to develop their rational autonomy.

**Question Two: *Rousseau*. *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality***

In this citation, Rousseau speaks of humans in the state of nature and how reproduction occurred in the state of nature. Beings in the state of nature, according to Rousseau, were solitary, independent, and free from social interdependence. In this citation, Rousseau marks how these being internalized the demands of nature, which called for both individual preservation and the preservation of the human race through reproduction. However, the family was not an existing unit during the early stages of the state of nature, and hence feelings of “adoration and love” were not essential for reproduction or human contact. Thus any “woman suits” the purpose of reproduction. Rousseau here resists a long tradition that held that society grows out of the family unit. Rather for Rousseau, the family unit is already social. As the state of nature progressed, Rousseau argues that human beings became more socially dependent by their want for more. He also notes that women essentially invented “love” in order to make the men stick around to better ensure the preservation of herself and the seed. Overall, Rousseau demonstrates that over time, human beings became socially interconnected and inter-dependent by their want for greater security and luxury, and also through the establishment of private property, which was the trigger cause for the development of civil society.

**Question Three: *Burke. Reflections on the Revolution in France***

Burke is concerned to show that society is healthy when it develops organically on its own pace, as it were (this is in opposition to the French who want to build society rationally, from their heads, as it were). He is aware that the idea of a contract had played an important role in English political thought (Hobbes, Locke) and even that this idea had been used to justify both the execution of one king and the selection of another (Glorious Revolution). He is also aware that Rousseau was writing about social contracts and that his writings were important to the French Revolutionaries. Hence, as he typically does, he takes over the idea of a contract but instead of conceiving of it horizontally and occurring in a kind of absolute moment in time (as do the others), he conceives of it vertically, between generations. Hence we stand not only as defined by the inheritance we have from our forefathers but we have obligations to the future. Hence we cannot or should not break the flow of organic time as the French Revolutionaries are doing. That is not only political disaster: it is immoral.

**Question Four: *Burke*. *Reflections on the Revolution in France***

He is basically defending the monarchy in France and England and existing power structures as essentially noble institutions (albeit in need of minor reforms), and critiquing the notion that the monarchies trampled the rights of men. He mistrusts the French Revolution, and though he does see a number of fundamental rights that people have, he believes that the claims of the revolutionaries in France are overstated. The institutions under attack are no more unjust than any competing system would be. The real rights of men are those which have developed over time in a particular historical situation. They are not abstract but are concrete. One might see an example of this in English common law which is a compendium of the practices of the English. Rationalistically derived rights, such as the French are going, have no relation to life as a given people has lived it.

**Question Five: *Rousseau*. *The Social Contract***

For Rousseau, man in the state of nature was free because he was free from social interdependence. It was not until the epoch of civil society that man lost his natural freedom, which was characterized by his autonomy and independence. Inter-dependence in this quotation equates t o slavery. In civil society, all men are slaves, especially the masters. The masters are slaves because their status, and even their sense of self-worth, depends on the subjugation of their slaves. The slaves hold the true power, because they can withhold, possibly in collectivity, service to their masters. Essentially, the reduction of master to a slave is only valid if one views dependence as slavery, which is what Rousseau argued. To remedy this problem of slavery, Rousseau argues humankind must establish a civil society that reconciles the natural need for autonomy and independence, that is freedom, with the reality of social interdependence. He lays out this prescription through the social contract, which is legitimated by the governing power of the General Will. He does not want to cast off the chains but to make the legitimate.

**Question Six: *Hegel*. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*.**

For Hegel, the “slaughter-bench” of history, complete with centuries of wars, violence, terror, and chaos, is not atrocious by accident. Rather, Hegel incorporates the slaughter-bench into the positive progressive nature of history—the realization of the freedom of Spirit. Thus, all historical occurrences, even if they are horrific, are part of the realization of Sprit’s freedom, which is the end goal of history. Thus, in the “Philosophy of History,” Hegel presents history as having a teleological nature. All hitherto existing epochs (Asian, Greek, Roman, and German) were part of the process of Spirit realizing itself as Spirit, and through the final realization can Spirit become freedom by the end of its self-alienation. Hegel looked toward the State as the manifestation of Spirit’s freedom.

**Part Two**

**Question One**

Rousseau would agree full-heartedly with Burke’s claim that the role of government, especially the ideal government, is instrumental.

Rousseau’s ideal polity has the instrumentality of embodying the General Will, where the citizens can remain free and autonomous, yet socially interdependent. The reason for enacting a government of the General Will stems from a fundamental problem with civil society—the conflict between autonomy and interdependence. IN addition, Rousseau’s government is instrumental because it serves a direct purpose, which includes that the General Will does not subordinate itself to the Will of All. For Rousseau, a government that is ruled by the will of all, is ruled by private interests and does not look towards the common good. Overall, Rousseau suggests an instrumental government could serve as a tool to construct the freedom of its citizens, on the condition that the government derives from the General Will.

With the fall from the state of nature and the transformation of the state of nature into civil society, a fundamental problem now prevents the realization of freedom. This problem includes the loss of autonomy, beloved by the noble savage, due to the emergence of inter-dependent relationships. Dependency has forced men to rely on others, not merely for their well-being, but also for the formation of their own independent judgments. In the “Social Contract,” Rousseau equates dependence and the inability to make one’s own judgments to the alienation of freedom.

To reconcile this conflict, Rousseau suggests an instrumental government that conforms to the General Will. The General Will is legitimate because it exists as a common good that allows people to attain greater autonomy, while still living with the reality of their inter-dependence. Thus the General Will exists in the instrumental interests of all. Those who oppose the General Will must be “forced to be free,” because the General Will is in their interest, even if they do not realize it.

One must discern the General Will from the “Will of All.” The Will of All looks towards the private interests of individuals or groups. Where the Will of All is pluralistic, the General Will is unitary and singular. Unlike the Will of All, the General Will can enable legitimate coordinated action that exists for the well-being and interest of all. But in order to enact a society on the basis of the General Will, citizens must give up some of their freedom. But, Rousseau argues, greater freedom will be attained in the end.

There are, however, many problems with Rousseau’s instrumental government. He assumes that freedom will necessarily exists within the General Will. But this assumption may not always be true. The General Will can develop a totalitarian character by coercing citizens into freedom, especially if the General Will becomes tied t o some arbitrary moral imperative, such a persecuting unpopular and supposedly immoral minorities. Thus, the General Will offers little protection for these minority groups. Overall, the General Will remains a good ideal, but its rhetoric can be manipulated and work against freedom.

**Question Two**

Kant’s use of the terms public and private initially seem to be reversed from the normal use of those world. His private roles speak to multitudes, while his public actors may be buried in a library. This apparent contradiction stems from Kant’s definitions. He does not use these terms in a social context, but in the context of the autonomy of the will.

For Kant, one who acts as a minister speaking to a congregation does so as a private actor. That is, he speaks not from his own ideas but as a conduit for the ideas of others. He speaks, for example, for the Catholic Church. In so doing, he keeps his own will private. This example illustrates that it is by allowing heteronomy, by speaking and deciding not as oneself, but as an agent for others, one remains private to the world. On is not autonomous when one takes up that role.

Public for Kant, denotes one who gives law to himself. IN using his own reason, and acting in accordance within, he naturally bridges the gap between I and We. He rises above merely playing a role, for something greater, which is to become an end in himself. He joins the Kingdom of Ends when he speaks publically.

This publicity is the Enlightenment. The connection between autonomy and public existence can be made more clear through Kant’s concept of the Categorical Imperative: One should act such that one would will the maxim of one’s action to be universal law. The categorical nature of this law exists through the fact that all reasoning begins will reach that same conclusion. Thus by autonomous reason, one gives a law to oneself that is, at the same time, one’s own and truly public.

The private will does not make this reach. It submits itself to outside laws and so does not exist publically. It does not thrust itself into the universality of humanity through its own reason. Instead, it allows itself to be a tool for others.

To sum up Kant’s terms: Private is heteronomous is immature; public is autonomous is mature. There are more complexities, of course, in the meaning of each term, but these are the essential elements of the two groups.

**Question Three**

Burke would most likely strongly agree with the notion that the outcome of history is different than the intention of the historical agents. He is not interested in what people believe to be rational, but is more inclined to deal with history and events as they were and are. These sentiments are reflected in his critique of the aims of the French Revolution, how he extols the English system, and finally what he sees as the actual outcome in France.

Burke criticizes the French for their attempts to start anew. He argues that while there may have been some problems with the French system, they had a strong and rich history to draw experience from, instead of getting rid of the good aspects of their society. For example, the privilege extended to nobility and the benefits which proceeded from Church land were good. There was no need to get rid of them. This argument demonstrates his belief that even though the institutions of nobility and the church may not have been rational, or what the current people would have chosen, there was nevertheless a benefit to the existence of these institutions. The French, therefore, should accept things as they are, instead of looking to implement their “rational” intentions.

Furthermore, Burke’s analysis of the English system rests on the idea that history and its end goal are different than the intentions of the historical actors. He describes, through the various revolutions and problems that England had to face, that they are a very adaptable nation. He cites the new laws created to mitigate the problems that arose from having a Catholic King and Queen in a Protestant nation, and how their line of succession was changed to compensate. He believes the adaptability to small changes as the circumstances arose is one of England’s greatest strengths, and allowed for the stability of the nation. This demonstrates his willingness to accept that although the path that England had taken may not have been what was historically intended, its actual outcome was perfectly acceptable.

Finally, Burke looks at what the French Revolution intended to do and what I actually accomplished. He sees that the outcomes are very different than the ideals of the insurrection. On this point, he agrees with Hegel. One of the main reasons Burke believes that the French Revolution was fought and a new government created was to raise revenue for the country. In a time of desperate economic circumstances, in which food had become a luxury, the people called for the noble and aristocratic class to pay taxes., redistributing wealth. What actually happened, was that revenue in the country fell and what little money there was went to support the military in their attempts to defend the Revolution.