

# PHILOSOPHY 320

## Social & Political Philosophy

Fall 2024

Short Essay Assignment #3

Due Monday, December 2

All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font. Turn in by uploading to Laulima as either a Word file or pdf file.

Write a short reflection (4-5 pages) on one of the following topics.

### *Democracy and Its Difficulties*

What did James Madison mean by the “danger of faction” and what did Alexis de Tocqueville mean by the “tyranny of the majority”? Explain how the remedy for these difficulties, which the government of the United States adopted in its Constitution, is the notion of a Republic, defended by Madison in *The Federalist Papers*, the notion of political rights as defended by Locke and Rousseau, and also the notion of the separation of powers as suggested by Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws*. Why is it then so important that the President of the United States is not above the law? To what extent do you think these remedies are adequate in responding to the problems with democracy?

### *Liberty and Authority*

What did John Stuart Mill mean by the “one simple principle” in his essay *On Liberty*? How does Mill argue for the freedom of thought and expression, and that we thus have good reason to welcome even unpopular views? What did Mill mean when he suggested that individuals should have liberty in their tastes and pursuits? To what extent would you agree with Mill’s “Liberty Principle”?

### *Economic Justice*

According to John Locke, how much private property should one be able to acquire? Are there any limits on wealth for Locke? What did Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, mean by the “division of labor” and how does he think this would lead to increasing the wealth of nations? Why does Smith argue against any government interference in the market? What does he mean when he suggests that an “invisible hand” guides the market toward the greater good? What then are the only three duties the sovereign (the government) has in what he calls the “system of natural liberty”? What is Marx’s critique of the “division of labor” in the section “Estranged Labor” from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*?

## **Grading Rubric**

### **1) Writing 20%**

Grammar, spelling, composition, and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

### **2) Philosophical Content 50%**

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

### **3) Commentary 30%**

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.