

PHILOSOPHY 320

Social & Political Philosophy

Fall 2024

Short Essay Assignment #2

Due Monday, October 7

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 (3-4 pages) on one of the following topics.

The State of Nature

What is meant by the “state of nature,” the idea first proposed by Hobbes and developed later by Locke and Rousseau? What are the differences between the conceptions of the “state of nature” proposed by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau? Who do you think is more right about the “state of nature”?

Hobbes vs Locke on the Social Contract

What are the differences between Hobbes’s conception of the Social Contract and the conception put forward by Locke? Why is the ruler in Hobbes’s conception of the Social Contract referred to as the *Leviathan*? How does Locke’s conception of the ruler involve a rejection of this conception of government? If you had to choose between living under a government based on Hobbes’s idea of the social contract and Locke’s conception, which would you choose and why would you take this position?

Locke vs Rousseau on the Social Contract

Explain the main differences between Locke’s conception of the Social Contract and the view put forth by Rousseau. What did Rousseau mean in the famous opening line of *The Social Contract*: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains”? Explain how this line sums up the whole project of Rousseau’s book, *The Social Contract*? What is Rousseau’s solution to this problem? How is the difference between Locke and Rousseau echoed in the main differences between political parties today? To what extent would you agree more with Locke or Rousseau on government and why would you take this position?

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.