

Kim Knutson  
Wilbur Wright College  
kknutson@ccc.edu

## **English 102: Political Philosophy and the Individual and the Community**

This course is a continuation of a college freshman writing course, English 101. This 102 course introduces students to methods of research and writing of investigative papers and culminates in an original, ten-page research paper on a subject selected by the students. The course takes as its theme political philosophy and “the nature of community.”

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### **Texts**

Students read excerpts from the following political philosophers, all of whom are considered Great Books authors. Students are able to print out these materials from the websites listed beneath each work.

Plato, *Crito*  
[www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (chapters 13–15, 18, 21, 28)  
www.bartleby.com

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (chapters 2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 19)  
www.constitution.org

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*  
www.bartleby.com

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Critique of the Gotha Program*  
www.indepthinfo.com

The text used to guide students' individual papers and research skills is Paul Collins, *Community Writing: Researching Social Issues through Composition* (2001). Students use Cheryl Glenn et al., *The Writer's Harbrace Handbook: Brief Edition* (2005), as an independent resource for help on grammar, punctuation, and other writing elements.

## Theme

I chose to use political philosophers in this course primarily because I believe their ideas and arguments are fundamental to students' ability to think critically about our contemporary society. The historical conversation that can be traced by reading these philosophers informs many of the most urgent questions facing our students, and with some careful guidance, students are quick to see the relevance of these thinkers to their own lives and issues. Students have rarely had the opportunity to consider such philosophical questions for themselves; they initially consign such political discussion to the dustbin of "political science," which few of them enjoyed in their secondary education. However, once they discover that their own intuitions and critical reasoning are fair play in this class, students become quite engaged.

Although it is eminently clear how essential these thinkers are to developing a cogent perspective on our own age, it is necessary to elicit interest among the students by making sure they can connect such apparently musty ideas (in students' initial view) with their own young lives. To that end, I chose the *Community Writing* text. This book expressly responds to the view that pragmatist philosophy ought "to deal with conflicts generated within one's daily life" (Collins). Therefore, in the course, students are asked to identify a community to which they belong, and then identify a problem or conflict facing that community. This approach accomplishes two objectives: first, students are far more likely to retain interest in a topic that is so personally connected to their lives; and second, because of their connection, they automatically have an experiential authority that is evident to the reader. (By contrast, selecting a typical research paper topic from the usual laundry list of choices often results in a bland authorial voice with no authority.)

Thus, the political philosophy readings expose the students to abstract ideas such as power, authority, laws, freedom, human nature, money, and the self, while the *Community Writing* text offers students a more pragmatic source for developing a topic and the actual research skills that their papers require.

## Overview of the Course

The beginning of the class is devoted to the exploration of possible research paper topics. Students spend much time considering the various communities to which they belong. “Community” here is rather loosely defined and might include any group of persons that share a commonality with the student. Professional interests, ethnic groups, socioeconomic status, family status, and many other possibilities are explored. Problems or issues within that community are then discussed, and the student produces three separate papers throughout the semester: (1) the community and the issue are fully described and established; (2) perspectives on and proposed solutions to this problem are reviewed; and (3) an argument is put forth as to what the student believes ought to be the course of action to address this issue. These three separate papers are then revised into a single, coherent paper, which constitutes the final research paper.

Concurrently, the class reads the political philosophy texts, and these are undertaken in chronological order. It is explained to students that the philosophy readings will both inform their thinking about their own particular social or political issue, *and* will serve as models of argument. Thus students are expected to both apply some of the philosophical ideas to their own argument (some examples of which are listed below in the section “Examples of Paper Topics”), and to read the philosophy texts closely for specific, sentence-level strategies. The latter includes methods to introduce a counter-argument, lead-ins to signal a response to said counter-argument, various ways to qualify claims, and even examples of logical fallacies committed by the philosophers themselves. (For example, students are gleeful in their ability to recognize a straw man that John Stuart Mill sets up for himself.)

These constitute the ways in which the philosophy readings directly impact the students’ own research papers. But I would argue that their exposure to this material does a great deal more besides: in considering these philosophical arguments for themselves, students are encouraged to *think* for themselves. The reading of philosophy cannot be a passive process: it requires the reader to consider the claims made and to accept or reject them. Students by and large discover that they *are* so capable of considering these arguments (at least in part), and their confidence and engagement in doing so increases. (One of my favorite anecdotes of this course involves a student who worked full-time as a nurse’s aide. She worked the night shift along with her coworkers at the nursing home. Apparently, during the slow hours, she would read and then explain that week’s political philosophy to her colleagues, and they would proceed to debate among themselves—was Thomas Hobbes right? In the state of nature, would we be so heinous to one another? Would our lives truly be nasty, brutish, and short? Of course, I was excited to hear this.)

It is truly rewarding to witness students’ growing confidence in comprehending and discussing these authors. Earl Shorris, who received his education in the classics from the University of Chicago, believes strongly in offering more than mere “training” in the less privileged classrooms. Shorris argues that “education in the humanities—philosophy, art, history, literature, and logic”—is essential, and that “the distinction is between doing and thinking, between following and beginning.” Shorris has had great success in offering his Clemente Course in the Humanities, a college-level course in the humanities for people living in poverty. In my judgment, professors who incorporate such readings into their classrooms will see similar accomplishment among their own students.

## Challenges and Pitfalls

In the following sections, I try to address some of the questions and concerns that teachers might have in considering this model.

*Will these texts be too difficult for my students?*

Students *are* able to succeed with these texts. What I have discovered throughout the evolution of this course, however, is that students do require careful guidance and support as they wrestle with these original readings.

*How can I make sure students will read the material and think for themselves?*

I do not wish to offer a teacher-fronted lecture class on political philosophy; this would keep the students distanced from the material, and they would not be encouraged to think for themselves. I therefore require all students to present on one of the philosophers read in the course. Groups of three or four students are each assigned one philosophical reading, and they are responsible for presenting the arguments to the class and leading a discussion. The student groups are provided with handouts that have clear and specific questions for each philosopher. (For a full discussion of this presentation format, and the sample questions provided to the students, see the section “Sample Questions for Presentation and Discussion” later in this module.)

*How can we encourage students who are not presenting on that particular philosopher to read and the material beforehand?*

In order to ensure that students who are *not* presenting have also done the readings, I assign a “class audience” list of questions for these students to complete. This is quite effective: students come to class with a grasp on the argument, and are ready to participate more fully in the discussion.

*What if the student presenters flounder or misrepresent the arguments?*

I contribute to the presentation when I feel it is necessary—usually by asking specific questions of the presenters if they are glossing too quickly over an important point. In the beginning, I had worried that these presentations would be hasty and superficial; to my surprise and my pleasure, I had not allotted *enough* time initially. Presentations by the students (and the ensuing discussion with the rest of the class) always extend to the very end of the eighty-minute class period. Papers from the presenters and the answers from the class audience are collected the day of that philosopher’s presentation.

*What are some ways to interest students in these thinkers beyond the excerpts themselves?*

While initially I offered only brief, thumbnail sketches of the philosopher the students were about to read, I found that they were more engaged with the original text if they were offered a bit more biographical gossip, historical context, and enough of a preview of the argument to offer a kind of “scaffolding” for students to hold on to as they approached the original work themselves.

Finally, I began to offer more careful guidance to help students see the developing historical conversation, rather than waiting for students to discover it on their own. To this end, before continuing on to the next philosopher, students formulate their own objections or issues with the previous philosopher. With only a small degree of pointed questioning from me, students almost invariably raise the major objections that the subsequent philosopher states. For example, upon hearing Hobbes call for an all-powerful sovereign, students object that there would be no way to control the controller—and indeed, they are rightly satisfied to discover this is precisely Locke’s contention.

## **Course Guidelines and Requirements**

### ***Prerequisites***

Entering students should exhibit the following:

- The ability to frame and support a thesis in a clearly written and logically organized essay
- The ability to employ rhetorical techniques (e.g. definition, comparison/contrast, description, classification, cause and effect) in writing
- The ability to compose an essay without major or frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- The ability to read critically and interpret sources

### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

By the end of this course, the students will have shown the ability to write:

- A minimum of five writing assignments, most of which employ argumentation or persuasion, each assignment being a minimum of 350 words in length.
- A research paper with 8–10 pages of typed, double-spaced text plus a separate formal outline and an MLA-style “works cited” page of eight entries or more. This paper should display mastery of the principles of logic, organization, and documentation, and be done in the MLA parenthetical citation format.

*Assessment of students’ progress toward these learning outcomes will include students’ ability to:*

1. Formulate a thesis statement.
2. Undertake research, which involves the use of research tools and library resources such as card catalogs, computerized databases, indexes, periodicals, reference works, microfilm, non-print media, etc.
3. Read critically and interpret and evaluate the sources.
4. Compose accurate, annotated reference (source) notes for sampling sources and for creating a list of works cited.
5. Correctly incorporate source material through paraphrase, summary, and quotation (and avoid plagiarism) on notes and in the text.

6. Create a formal outline of the paper.
7. Compile accurately MLA-formatted “works cited” and MLA-style “works cited” entries for electronic sources.
8. Incorporate source material smoothly into the text in the MLA parenthetical citation format.
9. Identify plagiarism and avoid its use.
10. Possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of a word-processing program on the college computer network.

*Students’ successful attainment of these outcomes will further the following general education abilities:*

- Think and read critically so that students can solve problems using appropriate information resources and reasoning processes.
- Read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and private sectors are met.
- Demonstrate quantitative and technological literacy, especially computer literacy, for interpreting data, reasoning, and problem-solving.
- Understand and appreciate diversity in gender, race, age, class, and culture, as well as differences in physical abilities in a global society.
- Understand and develop ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills that will prepare them for lifelong learning, employability, and effective citizenship.

### ***Required Writing***

Students will complete five writing assignments. Three of these will be 3- to 4-page essays with a required first draft *and* a final draft due. The final essay will be an 8- to 10-page paper that is based on these previous three essays. One additional assignment will be written responses to questions on the political philosophy excerpt on which you present. English Department policy requires that all papers be computer-printed or typed. *Plagiarism will be grounds for immediate failure in the course.*

### ***Expectations***

*Attendance.* Regular attendance is required if you expect to pass and do well in the class. Frequent absences interfere with your ability to learn and will adversely affect your grade.

*Be on time.* It is disruptive to be late to class. Make an effort and be on time.

*Preparation.* Be prepared for class. Take responsibility for your learning, do the reading, and bring all assignments to class on time.

*Participation.* Come to class ready to participate—to discuss the readings and your essays, to share ideas and express opinions, to ask questions, and to challenge our thinking. Learning takes place when you are actively involved.

*Respect.* The success of our class depends both on our hard work and on our ability to work well together. This means respecting your fellow classmates by actively listening and responding to them. We are here to learn with and from one another. Turn off all cell phones before class begins and please do not leave class once it begins.

### ***Evaluation***

English 102 is an advanced composition course. As such, the successful completion of writing assignments—especially the research paper—is the primary basis for evaluating students’ performance. *Therefore, no student may pass the course without writing a research paper that receives a grade of C or better.* However, the successful completion of your research paper, even a paper that receives an A, does not in and of itself guarantee a passing grade.

Papers one through three	15 percent
Final research paper	35 percent
Homework assignments	20 percent
Philosophy presentation (including responses)	20 percent
Participation	10 percent

*Policy on absent drafts and late papers.* No late papers will be accepted for credit. I will offer you comments, but you will receive a score of zero for that paper. Also, if you do not have a first draft in class the day it is due, your final score will be dropped one full letter grade (a B will drop to a C).

*Policy on all other assignments.* These are due in class on the dates noted below, or in the case of the philosophy presentation, on the date agreed upon. No credit will be given for any late assignments.

## **Sample Documents Distributed in Class**

1. Before the class reads any of the political philosophers, I distribute a document called “Questions for Political Philosophy.” (See the section with this title later in the module.) This document contains some very broad questions to elicit students’ thinking about some of the central issues that come up again and again throughout the semester: these include the balance of freedom and security; the “true” nature of human beings; and the distribution of goods. Students discuss these questions in groups, and take notes on their answers. At the end of the semester, I return their answers to the groups. Students are quite interested to see their initial responses, and are able to see their new ability to support and defend their original intuitions using some of the philosophers’ arguments they have read. Occasionally, students even change their minds based on what they have read.

2. Sample handouts for philosophy presentations (for both presenters and class audience).

- a. Thomas Hobbes
- b. John Locke
- c. John Stuart Mill

d. Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels

(See the section on “Sample Questions for Presentation and Discussion” later in this module.)

3. A pass/fail final exam, called “Political Philosophy Review.” These questions afford the students a chance to “put it all together” for themselves at the end of the semester. The students know I read these exams with interest, but they are not graded. (Students receive “credit” for completing the questions satisfactorily, and “no credit” if the responses are careless or if students are absent.) Since the focus of this class is the final research paper, I do not feel a graded final exam is appropriate.

4. Syllabus and course outline.

## Syllabus

Note: *The Writer’s Harbrace Handbook* is meant to be used primarily as an independent resource for you. Be sure to familiarize yourself with its contents. You will find extensive help on grammar, punctuation, and other writing elements. If necessary, I will direct you individually to certain sections depending on your needs. The two chapters we will cover explicitly in class are chapters 6 and 7, which review finding and evaluating sources and citing those sources. These chapters will be extremely useful to you in writing your papers.

February	1	Introduction to class Brainstorm communities
	3	Due: List of student’s communities Practice identifying communities <i>Community Writing</i> , xvi–xviii, 1–5 Free writing: Problems or issues in your communities
	8	<i>Community Writing</i> , 6–10 <i>Harbrace Handbook</i> , chap. 6 Introduction to research Using details in writing Avoiding plagiarism
	10	Library tour: Introduction to library materials and databases
	15	Due: Tentative community and issue; five key words to search Computer Lab: Research and finalize topic; print two articles
	17	Due: Chap. 1, Assignments 1 and 2 <i>Community Writing</i> , 11–22 <i>Harbrace Handbook</i> , chap. 7 MLA format Finding and citing sources Final approval of topic Interviewing a community member

		How to summarize
	22	Due: Chap. 1, Assignment 3: Summarize two research articles relevant to your community and issue; bring copies of the full articles to class <i>Harbrace Handbook</i> , chap. 7 (cont.) Quoting and paraphrasing Introduction to note cards Works Cited page format
	24	<i>Community Writing</i> , 23–30 Writing an introduction Writing a first draft Introduction to political philosophy Sign-up list for group presentations
March	1	Due: Chap. 1, Assignment 4: Summary of your interview The writing process: Holistic revision; editing and proofreading Evaluation rubric Quoting and paraphrasing practice Parenthetical citation practice
	3	Due: Chap. 1, FIRST DRAFT <i>Community Writing</i> , 31–37 <i>Harbrace Handbook</i> , chap. 3 Peer review Holistic revision (cont.)
	8	Introduction to Plato, <i>Crito</i> Writing conclusions Editing and proofreading
	10	Due: Chap. 1, FINAL DRAFT <i>Community Writing</i> , 38–41, 45–48, 52–55 Identifying bias in the media Alternative media Online representation of an issue: Online sources and website analysis
	15	Group presentation on Plato: “What Do We Owe to Our Country?” <i>Harbrace Handbook</i> , 58–61 Transitions
	17	<i>Community Writing</i> , 80–97 Government sources of information Finding organizations Understanding statistics

Finding scholarly articles  
Introduction to Hobbes, *Leviathan*

SPRING BREAK: March 21–26

- 29 Computer lab  
Due: Chap. 3, Assignments 1 and 2 (“2” may be ongoing)  
*Community Writing*, 98–101  
Begin research for Chap. 3, Assignment 3, in class: Researching articles that propose solutions or approaches to resolving your issue or problem
- 31 Due: Chap. 3, Assignment 3  
Group presentation on Hobbes: “Authority and Security”  
*Community Writing*, 102–107  
Spin control  
Interviewing an official (Chap. 3, Assignment 4, is encouraged but optional; this may be undertaken anytime during the rest of the semester)
- April 5 Due: Chap. 3, FIRST DRAFT  
Peer review  
*Community Writing*, 108–118  
Evaluating conflicting claims  
Introduction to Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*
- 7 Community Writing, 119–121  
Introduction to inductive and deductive logic  
Review: Holistic revision; editing and proofreading; quoting and paraphrasing; parenthetical citation
- 12 Due: Chap. 3, FINAL DRAFT  
*Community Writing*, 122–127  
*Harbrace Handbook*, 99–103  
Group presentation on Locke: “Limited Government as Defender of Property”
- 14 Due: Chap. 4, Assignment 1  
*Community Writing*, 128–132  
Logical fallacies  
Introduction to Mill, *On Liberty*
- 19 Due: Chap. 4, Assignment 2  
*Community Writing*, 133–138, and “Sample Response,” 140–143  
Writing a counter-argument
- 21 Group presentation on Mill: *On Liberty*

- Due: Chap. 4, Assignments 3 and 4  
*Community Writing*, 144, 146–151  
 Providing enough evidence
- 26 Due: Chap. 4, FIRST DRAFT  
 Peer review  
 Responses to counter-arguments  
*Community Writing*, 152–153  
 Revising for bias
- 28 Due: Chap. 4, FINAL DRAFT  
*Community Writing*, 154–157  
 Considering the other side  
 Creating a formal outline (see *Harbrace Handbook*, 38–40)  
 Combining your work: The final paper  
 Review of final paper requirements, including sources
- May 3 Introduction to Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 5 Computer lab  
 Due: Outline for final paper and thesis statement  
*Community Writing*, 158–164, 168–173  
 Revising for appearance  
 Begin “works cited” list (see *Harbrace Handbook*, 159–178, 201–203)
- 10 DUE: FIRST DRAFT OF COMPLETE RESEARCH PAPER
- 12 Group presentation on Marx and Engels, “Communism”
- 17 First drafts of final papers returned and discussed
- 19 DUE: FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER
- 24 Political philosophy today
- 26 Final research papers returned. Results discussed.

## Questions for Political Philosophy

Discuss these questions in your groups. Take a few notes about your group’s answers.

1. What is your view of human nature? What motivates people (us) to do the things we do? Are humans by nature selfish? If you think we are selfish, is this a “wrong” or “bad” way to be?
2. Do you agree that there should be some form of government (some laws and their enforcement)?

3. If so, what are some reasons to have a government; i.e., what are some of the things you want a government to do?
4. Under our current laws and regulations, why can't you kill me (philosophically speaking!)? Why can't you smoke in this classroom?
5. What are some things we must have to live (to exist)? List them below.
6. The things you listed in question no. 5 can be referred to as "goods." Do you think the government should be involved in the distribution of any of these "goods"? Why or why not?

## Examples of Paper Topics

I require students to incorporate at least one of the philosophers read in the course as a source for their final research paper. A few examples of student papers and the philosopher the paper incorporated are given below.

1. A Nigerian-American student wrote on Nigeria's "brain drain." She discussed Plato's *Crito*, and noted Socrates' arguments as to what citizens owe their country of origin. She ultimately argued that those who emigrate from Nigeria should either return to foster Nigeria's development or contribute in other ways.
2. A single mother had found little help in procuring the child support owed her from the father. She wrote about how little the government helps ensure this support is received, but private agencies (who take a hefty fee) are able to procure this money. She discussed John Locke, who stressed that it is government's ability to protect our property that underlies our contract to trade freedom for security; she argued that the government was *not* doing enough to reinstate her property (the money owed her), and was thus breaking the contract.
3. One student happened to be a Jehovah's Witness. She wrote about the controversy surrounding the refusal of blood transfusions. While the courts have upheld adults who choose to refuse such transfusions, Jehovah's Witnesses' right to refuse transfusions for their children is still an issue. This student incorporated John Stuart Mill's ideas about the self—that no laws should be passed to prevent me from harming myself—and discussed whether children ought to be viewed as an extension of this self or not.
4. A student was particularly interested in the USA PATRIOT Act. He discussed Thomas Hobbes in light of the entire question of balancing freedom and security: how much freedom are we now willing to trade for what is perceived as greater security?
5. One young African-American student discussed Chicago police harassment of African-Americans. She concluded that some kind of surveillance cameras recording the movements of police officers on high-activity street corners or within police

departments were necessary as proof that harassment took place. She argued that only with proof could we ensure proper punishment of police harassment, and she used Thomas Hobbes' argument that people will only follow the law (behave "rightly") if there is a real threat of punishment for the failure to do so.

6. One young man had recently been laid off from his job at United Airlines. He discussed management's treatment of labor in light of the ideas of Marx and Engels.

## Sample Questions for Presentation and Discussion

As stated previously, I require all students to give a presentation on one of the philosophers read in the course. Groups of three or four students are each assigned one philosophical reading, and they are responsible for presenting the arguments to the class and leading a discussion. In my original course design, each student also submitted a typed, 2- to 3-page paper explaining the philosopher's argument and responding to it. While I offered some instruction for how to divide up the presentation's responsibilities and how to approach this paper, I found this was much too open-ended for most students. Over the semesters, I gradually adopted a much more guided approach. This allowed students to achieve greater confidence in handling the materials, but still encouraged them to consider the arguments for themselves.

I therefore created handouts with clear and specific questions for each philosopher, and I divided them into three or four parts of roughly equal length. The students in a particular group divide the parts up among themselves. The paper the students submit comprises the answers to their questions; in this sense, it has turned out to be less of a paper and more of a take-home exam.

Students are aware of the date of their presentation, and are encouraged to meet with me beforehand. Students in the group responsible for a given philosopher sit at the front of the class, and I take a seat somewhere near the back. In this way, it is hoped that the students will be confident enough to lead the class independently during their presentation. Student presenters are instructed to try to elicit answers from the rest of the class and to avoid merely reading their papers. This usually works quite well. Presenters are also encouraged to take the class through close textual readings—lines are read and analyzed, and attempts are made together to sort out the meaning. This too works well: students are quite willing to turn to the appropriate passages and pore over them. I often feel that their intimidation with the material decreases every time we read an original passage, and the presenters facilitate the other students' understanding of it.

The questions given to the student groups for their presentations are provided below.

### Questions for Student Presentation No. 1 on Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Hobbes). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

Decide among yourselves (in your group) who will take which part.

*Introduction:* Hobbes is offering an argument for the kind of government we should have, largely based on his view of human nature.

### ***Questions: Part 1***

1. In terms of physical strength and mental ability, how do people compare, according to Hobbes?
2. What can we probably expect others to do to us?
3. “Again, men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all.” What do you think Hobbes means by this?
4. What are the three principal causes of quarrel? Explain these in your own words. Do you agree with Hobbes? Can you think of a contemporary, urban example to support Hobbes’ account?
5. Without a “common power to keep [all men] in awe,” what condition are we all living in? Explain what this condition amounts to, according to Hobbes.
6. What is the world like under this condition?
7. How does he describe the life of man in this condition?
8. What example does Hobbes ask the reader to consider in order to persuade the reader that Hobbes’ depiction of the true nature of man is right?

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 2 on Hobbes, *Leviathan***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Hobbes). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

Decide among yourselves (in your group) who will take which part.

*Introduction:* Hobbes is offering an argument for the kind of government we should have, largely based on his view of human nature.

### ***Questions: Part 2***

1. “The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them: which till laws be made they cannot know.” What does this mean? (Hint: Is the lion that kills and eats a gazelle acting sinfully?)
2. Hobbes acknowledges that this condition of war is not meant to be a true historical stage of the world; nevertheless, he offers two examples that suggest this condition. What are they?
3. What condition are the kings and sovereigns of various different nations in (e.g., the king of England, the king of Germany, the king of Spain, etc.)? Why does this condition not create the same misery as that which occurs when all the individual subjects within a nation are in this condition?
4. Explain Hobbes’ position on the nature of justice and injustice. How and when do these concepts come into existence? (Same hint again: If a grizzly bear kills and eats a bunny rabbit in Yellowstone, is the bear acting unjustly?)
5. What are the reasons a human being is inclined toward peace?

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 3 on Hobbes, *Leviathan***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Hobbes). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

Decide among yourselves (in your group) who will take which part.

*Introduction:* Hobbes is offering an argument for the kind of government we should have, largely based on his view of human nature.

### ***Questions: Part 3***

1. What is the “right of nature”? How is this connected with freedom?
2. What is the “law of nature”? How is this connected with obligation?
3. Explain what Hobbes is saying when he offers his “general rule of reason” and then when he offers what he refers to as “this second law.”
4. What is the reason for any voluntary act, according to Hobbes? Do you agree? Why or why not?

5. What kind of rights can a person not agree (covenant) to give up to the sovereign? Give some examples.

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 4 on Hobbes, *Leviathan***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Hobbes). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

Decide among yourselves (in your group) who will take which part.

*Introduction:* Hobbes is offering an argument for the kind of government we should have, largely based on his view of human nature.

#### ***Questions: Part 4***

1. “A covenant not to defend myself from force, by force, is always void.” Consider this sentence and the rest of the paragraph. Explain how this compares with Socrates’ first principle in *Crito*. What would Hobbes accordingly have said that Socrates should or could do? Why?
2. How does Hobbes explain or define what an unjust action is exactly? How does this compare to Socrates’ second principle (about agreements) in *Crito*?
3. For people to reasonably expect other people to fulfill their agreements, and thus before we can even have the concepts of justice or injustice, what do we need to have?
4. Why or how would this make people comply with their agreements (obey the laws)?
5. How powerful is the sovereign? Remembering the definition of an unjust action, can the sovereign ever act unjustly? Why or why not?
6. Hobbes writes: “What are the things, which though commanded by the sovereign, he may nevertheless, without injustice, refuse to do?” In other words, what rights are you simply unable to logically give up even if the sovereign tells you to? Why?
7. What would Hobbes say about Crito trying to persuade Socrates to escape? Is it okay for Crito to do that? Why or why not?
8. Explain when it is permissible for all people to stop obeying the sovereign completely.

## Study Questions for Class Audience: Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Write answers to the questions below in preparation for the presentation and discussion on Plato. You need only refer to the excerpt distributed in class. Answers may be handwritten, but be sure they are legible.

*Introduction:* Hobbes is offering an argument for the kind of government we should have, largely based on his view of human nature.

1. If we were in a “state of nature” (without government or laws), what does Hobbes say we can probably expect others to do to us?
2. How does Hobbes describe the world and the life of man in this condition of war (the state of nature)?
3. Explain Hobbes’ position on the nature of justice and injustice. How and when do these concepts come into existence? (Hint: If a grizzly bear kills and eats a cute little bunny rabbit in Yellowstone, is the bear acting unjustly?)
4. What is the reason for any voluntary act, according to Hobbes?
5. According to Hobbes, what is needed in order to make sure that people *would* comply with their agreements (obey the laws)? What are people afraid of?
6. Explain when it is permissible for all people to stop obeying the sovereign completely.

## Questions for Student Presentation No. 1 on Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Locke). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

### **Questions: Part 1**

1. What are human beings’ true nature—our “state of nature”—according to Locke?
2. According to Locke, “The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it.” What is this “law of nature?”
3. What does this “law of nature” teach “all mankind”?
4. How does this differ from Hobbes’ conception of our “state of nature”?

5. In section 13, Locke writes that while every man in the state of nature has the authority (the “executive power”) to punish every other for any transgression, an objection will be made. What is this objection?
6. Given this, what does Locke agree we need in order to “remedy . . . the inconveniences of the state of nature”?
7. Also in section 13, Locke seems to be responding to Hobbes (who argued for an absolute monarch). What is Locke’s response to Hobbes?

## **Questions for Student Presentation No. 2 on Locke, *Second Treatise on Government***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Locke). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

### ***Questions: Part 2***

1. Section 26: What “property” does each man own? How does man acquire further property, according to Locke?
2. Explain Locke’s example of the acorns in section 27.
3. Locke then says that some might object that this would mean, “anyone may engross as much as he will”—in other words, it is unclear what would stop some people from taking it all (whether acorns or any other goods). How does Locke answer this objection (section 30)? What do you think of Locke’s answer to this objection? Is it satisfactory?
4. How much land can a man own, according to Locke (sections 31–32)?
5. Locke writes (section 32): “Nor was this appropriation of any parcel of land, by improving it, any prejudice to any other man, since there was still enough and as good left, and more than the yet unprovoked could use.” What does this mean?
6. What answer does Locke give to his question: “What in [all useful things] is purely owing to nature and what to labor?”
7. What do you think Locke means by “labor” exactly? In your opinion, how should we compare different types of labor? What kind of “labor” should be worth more than others, in your view?
8. What is true of the “greatest part of things really useful to the life of man”?

## Questions for Student Presentation No. 3 on Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Locke). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

### **Questions: Part 3**

1. Again, Locke returns to an earlier point and writes that people in general would not gather more than they could use—that it would be “foolish” and “dishonest” to do so. But if a person chose to gather more berries (for example) than he could eat and traded them to someone for a “sparkling pebble or a diamond” before the surplus berries spoiled, then it was okay for him to do this. Thus Locke writes: “The exceeding of the bounds of his just property [does not lie] in the largeness of his possession, but the perishing of anything uselessly in it.” Can you explain what this means in your own words?
2. Locke’s argument about the berries and what counts as “exceeding the bounds of justice” in owning property leads to the notion of money (section 47). How does Locke see the function of money in section 47?
3. In section 48, Locke argues that the invention of money encouraged people to be more industrious—to work harder. Try to explain his argument. If you can, also try to explain his example about the island.
4. Locke, like Hobbes before him, believes in the “social contract” theory of government: that the authority of the government comes from a rational decision by people to consent to such a government. Why would men agree to “unite into a community” (section 95)? According to Locke, can some people choose not to unite into this community? Does this make sense to you?
5. Once such a group of people has united into a community, how are decisions made (sections 95–96)?
6. Section 119: What does Locke say “shall be understood to be a sufficient declaration of a man’s consent to make him subject to the laws of any government”?
7. Does this sound like any other philosopher we have read?
8. However, merely subjecting oneself (and agreeing to subject oneself) to the laws of a country are not enough to be a member of the political community (the commonwealth). This requires something more. What does Locke say this requires (section 122)? Is this similar to our laws today for immigrants?

## Questions for Student Presentation No. 4 on Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Locke). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

### **Questions: Part 4**

1. Section 123: Here Locke describes the problem with living in the state of nature and why people would consent to being governed. Compare this with section 6. Does one of these sections' descriptions of the state of nature sound less safe than the other?
2. What does Locke include under “the general name—property” (section 123)?
3. Section 124: What is the primary reason people agree to be governed, according to Locke?
4. Sections 124–126: Locke describes three things which are missing in a state of nature and which government can give us. In your own words, describe these three things. Do these three correspond to anything we see in our United States government today? Explain.
5. In sections 128–30, Locke describes the two freedoms or powers people have in a state of nature that people do not have once they agree to a government of laws. Explain these.
6. Section 135: Locke writes that the power of the law (the government) has limits—that since we enter an agreement to be governed by certain laws only because we wish our property to be protected (and property includes our lives and freedoms as well, according to Locke), laws can't harm or take away people's property (people's liberty or lives). Earlier, however, Locke wrote that the “majority rules.” Thus, imagine we decide to vote on whether all people who are exactly 5 feet 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches tall and who have green eyes and are left-handed (surely a small minority of people in this country) should henceforth be slaves for the benefit of everybody else. Suppose a majority of the people vote “yes”—such people should be slaves of the rest of us. How would Locke respond?

### **Study Questions for Class Audience: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government***

Write answers to the questions below in preparation for the presentation and discussion on Locke. You need only refer to the excerpt distributed in class. Answers may be handwritten but be sure they are legible.

1. What is human beings' true nature—our “state of nature”—according to Locke?
2. According to Locke, “The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it.” What is this “law of nature”?
3. Section 26: What “property” does each man own? How does man acquire further property, according to Locke?
4. How much land can a man own, according to Locke (sections 31–32)?
5. In section 48, Locke argues that the invention of money gives people the opportunity to do what?
6. What does Locke include under “the general name—property” (section 123)?
7. Sections 124–126: Locke describes three things which are missing in a state of nature and which government can give us. In your own words, describe these three things.

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 1 on Mill, *On Liberty***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Mill). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

#### ***Questions: Part 1***

1. What is the “sole end for which mankind are warranted . . . in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number”?
2. Mill writes: “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” Explain this in your own words.
3. What two groups of people are excepted from this (whom does this not apply to)?
4. According to Mill, liberty “has no application” in a society until that society is capable of what?
5. What does Mill say about “abstract right” and “utility”? What does he mean?
6. Can someone be accountable (punished) for inactions (failing to act, for example, to save a person’s life)? Why or why not?
7. What three things comprise “the appropriate region of human liberty”?

8. What is the “peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion”? In your own words, explain Mill’s two points about this.

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 2 on Mill, *On Liberty***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Mill). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

#### ***Questions: Part 2***

1. Explain the argument for Mill’s first hypothesis of why no opinion should be silenced.
2. What phrase does Mill use to introduce the counter-argument to this first hypothesis? What is the counter-argument as Mill puts it?
3. How does Mill begin his response to the counter-argument? What is Mill’s response?
4. What is “the source of everything respectable in man,” according to Mill?
5. Mill states that reliance can only be placed on human judgment when what?
6. Explain the argument for the second hypothesis (“the second division of the argument”).
7. What does “the cultivation of the understanding” consist of?
8. Mill introduces an important counter-argument in this section. What is it? How does he introduce it?
9. Mill begins his response to the counter-argument with the word “Undoubtedly.” What is his response?
10. Mill writes “What Cicero practiced . . .” and concludes several lines later “. . . he has no ground for preferring either opinion.” Explain what Mill is saying here.

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 3 on Mill, *On Liberty***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Mill). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

### ***Questions: Part 3***

1. Mill summarizes his four points on why no opinion should ever be silenced. Explain them briefly.
2. Actions are not as free as opinions, and even opinions sometimes “lose their immunity.” When is an opinion not allowed to be expressed? What are some of Mill’s examples?
3. Mill asserts that the same reasons opinions should be free also apply to actions, as long as others are not “molested.” Therefore, diversity of actions (of lifestyles and experiments of living) are desired and should not be thwarted by laws—as long as man is imperfect, such diversity will help us figure out the “right” way to live. Mill then writes: “It is desirable, in short. . .” and ends “. . . the chief ingredient of individual and social progress.” This passage contains the problem for Mill we discussed in class about the individual versus the community (“traditions or customs of other people”). Can you explain this problem?
4. Do you have any ideas how to resolve this problem for Mill?
5. Mill writes that the reason a diversity of lifestyles needs to be encouraged and permitted is because people are not like sheep—“different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development.” Can you explain what he’s trying to say on this page in your own words?
6. Mill anticipates the problem of “the individual” and “community”—how to say there is such a clear separation between them. He introduces the counter-argument that we discussed in class. He then begins his response to the counter-argument with “I fully admit. . .” What is his response? (Hint: The first part ends with the sentence “Whenever, in short, there is a definite damage. . .” Read this whole sentence. What does Mill mean by “definite”? Do you think this is a problem of definition for Mill’s argument?)
7. The second part of his response—“the strongest of all the arguments against the interference of the public with purely personal conduct”—is what? Use your own words.

### **Study Questions for Class Audience: Mill, *On Liberty***

Write answers to the questions below in preparation for the presentation and discussion on Mill. You need only refer to the excerpt distributed in class. Answers may be handwritten but be sure they are legible.

1. What is the “sole end for which mankind are warranted . . . in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number”?
2. What does Mill say about “abstract right” and “utility”? What does he mean?
3. What three things comprise “the appropriate region of human liberty”?

4. What is the “peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion”? State Mill’s two points about this.
5. Briefly explain the argument for the first hypothesis of why no opinion should be silenced.
6. Briefly explain the argument for the second hypothesis (“the second division of the argument”).
7. Actions are not as free as opinions, and even opinions sometimes “lose their immunity.” When is an opinion not allowed to be expressed? What are some of Mill’s examples?
8. When is an action or a case “taken out of the province of liberty, and placed in that of morality or law”?

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 1 on Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Critique of the Gotha Program***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Marx and Engels). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

#### ***Questions: Part 1***

1. According to Marx and Engels, all of the history of society is basically the history of what? Give some examples of these from previous eras.
2. Today’s society is split into “two great hostile camps”—what are these two camps or classes?
3. Marx and Engels write that capitalist industries “no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones,” and that “in place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants.” What do they mean by this? Does this seem true today? Think of some examples.
4. Marx and Engels refer to “the epidemic of over-production.” What do they mean by this? How does the bourgeoisie handle this problem? Can you think of examples of this in today’s society? (Hint: Think about the market for cigarettes and how it is changing.)
5. “The proletariat, the modern working class, developed” as the bourgeoisie developed and needed the labor of the working class. Marx and Engels call these laborers a commodity “who must sell themselves piecemeal.” Explain what they mean by this.

6. How do Marx and Engels describe the work of the proletarians? What is this due to? Can you think of examples of this in today's society?
7. Who are the "lower strata of the middle class"? What gradually happens to them? Can you think of a contemporary example? (Hint: Consider what happens when Wal-Mart builds in a small city.)
8. Marx and Engels argue that the proletariat inevitably sink deeper and deeper into poverty, and that therefore the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) is actually incompetent to rule since it ends up having to feed the proletariat (the working class)—it creates a system that it can't actually maintain. Does this make sense to you? Do you agree or disagree?

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 2 on Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Critique of the Gotha Program***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Marx and Engels). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

#### ***Questions: Part 2***

1. What is the essential condition for the bourgeois class? What is the essential condition for capital?
2. Wage-labor "rests exclusively" on what?
3. The "advance of industry . . . replaces the isolation of the labourers . . . by their revolutionary combination, due to association." In this way, "the bourgeoisie . . . produces . . . its own gravediggers." How does the coming together of large groups of laborers ("association") help undermine the bourgeoisie? Can you explain using some modern examples? (Hint: Consider Wal-Mart employees.)
4. In your own words, explain the two ways that the Communists are "distinguished from the other working-class parties."
5. Marx and Engels write: "The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property." They then state a counter-argument and respond to it. In your own words, explain the counter-argument and response.
6. What do Marx and Engels say about the minimum wage?

7. Marx and Engels offer an important counter-argument that involves what we have been referring to in class as the “profit motive.” Explain this counter-argument, and then explain their response to it. Do you feel it is an effective or adequate response? Why or why not?
8. How do Marx and Engels respond to those who argue against the “abolition of the family”? What do you think of this response?
9. Marx and Engels write: “The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.” How do they respond to this counter-argument? What do you think of this response?

### **Questions for Student Presentation No. 3 on Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Critique of the Gotha Program***

Consider the questions below carefully. You should refer only to the excerpt distributed in class, and use only your own words in your answers (except, of course, when you choose to quote Marx and Engels). Answer each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and submit it to me—typed, double-spaced—on the date of your presentation.

You will be responsible for leading the class in discussion of your questions. Plan to conduct this discussion for about 10–15 minutes.

Your evaluation (worth 20 percent of your final grade) will be based on your written responses as well as your presentation to the class.

#### ***Questions: Part 3***

1. Do Marx and Engels think man’s consciousness causes the material (or economic) conditions (“existence”) or the other way around? Does this make sense to you?
2. What is the “first step in the revolution by the working class”?
3. Consider point no. 6: why would this be so important? Try to connect this with Mill’s ideas about every opinion having the right to be expressed, and why.
4. Finally, Marx and Engels argue that when “class distinctions have disappeared . . . the public power will lose its political character. Political power . . . is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another.” Do you think this is what would happen once the proletariat become the ruling class? Why or why not?
5. Marx writes: “But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time. . .” and finishes with the words “. . .natural privileges.” Consider this passage. What is Marx acknowledging here?
6. Recall John Locke on the source of private property: Locke said as soon as a person mixed his own labor with something of the world it became his. What would Marx say about Locke’s claim?

8. Finally, in “a higher phase of communist society,” society will follow the general edict: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” Can you explain what this means? Do you think this is a possible general rule? Why or why not?

### **Study Questions for Class Audience: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Critique of the Gotha Program***

Write answers to the questions below in preparation for the presentation and discussion on Marx and Engels. You need only refer to the excerpt distributed in class. Answers may be handwritten but be sure they are legible.

1. According to Marx and Engels, all of the history of society is basically the history of what? Give some examples of these from previous eras.
2. Today’s society is split into “two great hostile camps”—what are these two camps or classes?
3. “The proletariat, the modern working class, developed” as the bourgeoisie developed and needed the labor of the working class. Marx and Engels call these laborers a commodity “who must sell themselves piecemeal.” Explain what they mean by this.
4. How do Marx and Engels describe the work of the proletarians? What is this due to?
5. What is the essential condition for the bourgeois class? What is the essential condition for capital?
6. Wage-labor “rests exclusively” on what?
7. What do Marx and Engels say about the minimum wage?
8. What is the “first step in the revolution by the working class”?

### **Pass/Fail Final Exam: Political Philosophy Review**

Please respond as thoughtfully as you can to the questions below.

1. We have discussed all semester about the possible *sources* of the law and the type of government a country might have. For a long time, kings were the rulers and they were considered to have “divine right”—that is, God gave them the right and power to be the ruler. Other countries in the past, and some even today, have taken their laws from a religious source—for example, the Koran.

#### *Questions:*

- a. What did Plato, Hobbes, and the rest of our philosophers think was the best source to decide on our laws and the kind of government we want?
- b. Why did they think that was best?

c. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. Most of the philosophers we have discussed subscribe to the “social contract” theory of government. The social contract theory justifies the power we give a government to rule over us by saying it only is justified if we have agreed to it (thus this agreement is like a contract). If we have all agreed to it, then that is why it is just for the government to have power over us.

*Questions:*

a. What are some reasons why we would agree to obey the law? What is “in it for us”?

b. Do you feel like this agreement is really possible? Do you or anybody else have a real choice to agree or disagree?

c. Plato and others explained how even if you didn’t make an explicit agreement to have this type of government and obey the law, you made an *implicit* one. What did he mean? In other words, why did Socrates feel compelled to obey the laws of Athens and not escape?

3. Each philosopher’s view of what human nature really is like influences his political philosophy. Most of the philosophers agree that human beings are basically self-interested. Connected with this, then, is the idea of the “profit motive.”

*Questions:*

a. What is the “profit motive”?

b. According to most of the philosophers, what happens if you take away the profit motive? How is this connected with John Locke’s view of the invention of money?

c. Marx and Engels did not seem to think the profit motive was necessary for people to work. Do *you* think the profit motive is necessary? Why or why not?

4. The philosopher John Rawls tried to discuss how we could come up with a just society. Included in this is how we should distribute goods—who should get how much, etc.

*Questions:*

a. How are goods (houses, food, money, health care, etc.) distributed now? In other words, what are the reasons some people in the United States have more goods than others?

b. What did Rawls say about this current distribution? Is it fair or not? Why?

c. What do you think is the best way to distribute the goods we all want?