

# General Exam in the History of Political Thought

Fall 2006

Please respond to one question from part one, and to either (a) or (b) for each of the questions in part two. Be sure to allow yourself adequate time to think through your answers, plan what you will write, and read over what you have written. Quality is more important than quantity.

## PART ONE

- (1) Aquinas and Hobbes agree in saying that natural laws are principles of behavior that can be known by unaided reason. Compare and contrast their views on this question.
- (2) The institution of private property plays an important role in the thought of Locke and Marx. Compare and contrast their views on this question.
- (3) Tocqueville and Mill are each concerned to combat the mediocrity and conformity that they find in modern democracies. Compare and contrast their views on this question.

## PART TWO

- (1) (a) Socrates argues in the *Apology* that it is better to die in disobedience to the city than to do an injustice. In the *Crito*, he argues that one must “either persuade” the city “or else do whatever it commands.” Does he contradict himself?  
  
(b) Aristotle argues in book 1, chapter 2 of the *Politics* that “man is by nature a political animal,” but argues in book 7, chapter 3 that the best life does not necessarily involve relations to others. Does he contradict himself?
- (2) (a) Hobbes argues in *Leviathan* that the sovereign can never do injustice to a subject, but also argues that the sovereign should make good laws and see to the well-being of the commonwealth. Does he contradict himself?  
  
(b) Rousseau says that the citizen who enters the social contract “obey[s] only himself and remains as free as before,” but also says that “whoever refuses to obey the general will...shall be forced to be free.” Does he contradict himself?
- (3) (a) Kant argues in “What is Enlightenment?” that enlightenment requires only the “freedom to make public use of one’s reason in all matters,” but also argues that while “a high degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people’s intellectual freedom, yet it also sets up insuperable barriers to it.” Does he contradict himself?  
  
(b) Mill argues in chapter 2 of *On Liberty* that “the well-being of mankind may almost be measured by the number and gravity of the truths which have reached the point of being uncontested,” and in chapter 3 that “it is not by not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual...but by cultivating it and calling it forth...that human beings become a noble and beautiful object of contemplation.” Does he contradict himself?