

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam, January 2015

Answer three questions, one from each part
Your exam will be evaluated as a whole, so avoid repeating yourself

Part One

1. Liberalism is a political doctrine that has made liberty its core value. Discuss the role of liberty in three of Locke, Kant, Mill, or Berlin. Be sure to show how their understandings of liberty shaped their conceptions of liberalism.
2. Michael Sandel once said that utilitarianism gave the good a bad name. Evaluate this view with reference to any three of Plato, Aristotle, Bentham, and Rawls.
1. Locke's social contract theory is rooted in natural law, while Rawls's draws instead on the Kantian idea of universalizability. What motivated the reorientation? How successful was it?

Part Two

3. Can there be a theory of global justice? What is at stake between Rawlsians and cosmopolitans concerning this issue? Discuss with reference to at least three authors on the reading list.
4. Winston Churchill once said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others that have been tried. How would three of the following thinkers respond to this view: Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, and Rousseau.
5. Domination, and the possibility of escaping it, figures prominently in the arguments of Habermas, Foucault, Walzer, and Pettit. Who gives the best account? Why?

Part III

6. "Legitimacy is a central concept in evaluating modern political institutions. Yet the relationship between legitimacy and the justice of such institutions is obscure." Discuss with reference to any four of Rousseau, Kant, Weber, Habermas, and Rawls.
7. Does political theory presuppose a philosophy of history? Discuss with reference to any four of Rousseau; Machiavelli; Kant; Arendt; *or* Adorno *and* Horkheimer.
8. Tocqueville wrote: "A new political science is needed for a world altogether new." Every political philosopher is concerned with the proper method for the study of politics, that is, with questions like "What is political knowledge?" "How is such knowledge acquired?" and "What purpose is this knowledge intended to serve?" Compare and contrast three of the following on the question of the proper scope and method of political knowledge: Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Tocqueville.

End of Exam