

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam, August 2018

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

Part One

1. Compare and contrast the role played by ancient ideas or authors in the work of any three modern authors.
2. "Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia is sometimes interpreted to mean happiness, as is Bentham's notion of utility. Yet the two ideas are worlds apart." Discuss with reference to three authors on Part I of the reading list.
3. Rousseau wrote of designing political institutions "taking men as they are and laws as they might be." How, if at all, does this set his enterprise apart? Discuss with reference to three authors on Part I of the reading list.

Part Two

4. "At least since Locke's time political philosophers have had love-hate relationships with the proposition that people should be guaranteed ownership of the fruits of their labor." Discuss with reference to at least three authors on part II of the reading list.
5. Robert Dahl once noted that democracies cannot themselves be constituted democratically. Assuming he is right, how should this lead us to evaluate the accounts of boundaries and membership put forward by Arendt, Walzer, and Habermas?
6. How important is fear in thinking about the fundamentals of political association? Discuss with reference to Hobbes, Shklar, and Nozick.

Part III

7. Kant held that the challenge of setting up a state could be solved by a nation of devils, so long as they had understanding. How would any three authors on the list evaluate this claim?
8. "There is a curious tension at the heart of Enlightenment thinking: between the commitment to coming up with a deterministic science of politics, on the one hand, and to the view, on the other, that free choice and consent are the hallmarks of legitimate government. But if the determinist project could really be carried out, then there would be no room for choice and therefore no room for consent either." Discuss with reference to Hobbes, Marx, Rawls, and Habermas.
9. How, if at all, are debates about identity and difference connected to the concept of representation? Discuss with reference to any three of Pitkin, Song, Mansbridge and Phillips.

End of Exam