

Answer ONE question in each section. You have FOUR hours for the exam, not included break time. Please inform Josephine in the Dept Office of when you are going on your break, how long of a break you will be taking (1/2 hr or 1 hr), and when you return from your break so that she can adjust your writing time accordingly.

I. Approaches to Political Theory

1. "The classic texts," Quentin Skinner writes in 'Meaning and Understanding', "cannot be concerned with our questions and answers, but only with their own ... There is in consequence simply no hope of seeking the point of studying the history of ideas in the attempt to learn directly from the classic authors by focusing on their attempted answers to supposedly timeless questions." Does Skinner's methodology represent a liberating insight, an antiquarian straightjacket, or something else? Contrast Skinner's approach to the history of political thought to the approach of either Sheldon Wolin or James Tully.
2. "[S]ince the history of political philosophy," Wolin writes, "is ... an intellectual development wherein successive thinkers have added new dimensions to the analysis and understanding of politics, an inquiry into that development is not so much a venture into antiquarianism as a form of political education." In Wolin's account, what kind of political education does the history of political thought teach or fail to teach? Contrast Wolin's view of political education to that implied in the work of either Skinner or Tully.
3. Drawing on the work of at least two of the following thinkers (Hannah Arendt, Michael Walzer, Charles Lamore, Ruth Grant), discuss what the study of political judgment by political theorists offers to the study of politics more generally (e.g., with respect to issues of social justice or global justice or debates about just war).
4. How persuasive is Alasdair MacIntyre's case for "The Indispensability of Political Theory"?

II. Michel Foucault and the Politics of Identity

1. Some notable theorists of social identity, such as Charles Taylor, have called for certain forms of public recognition of social identities (such as that of the Québécois in Canada) as a necessary way to affirm the equal dignity of all persons by affirming publicly what is centrally important to them. How would Foucault tend to engage this approach to the politics of identities? How, for example, would he regard or question the assumptions embedded in Taylor's approach to identity? Would Foucault necessarily reject the moral claims entailed by Taylor's view, and/or the view of social and cultural identities that is implied in Canada's multiculturalism policy?

2. Summarize the gist of Foucault's account of sexuality and Judith Butler's critique of Foucault's account of sexuality, along with the significance of these views for understanding the politics of sexuality and sexualities. What, for instance, do these approaches imply for legal politics, or legislating sexuality, and for politics beyond the domain of legislation?
3. Summarizing a central thread of his understanding of modern power, Foucault said that to study power, "We need to cut off the King's head" and "eschew the model of Leviathan." Explain the more novel aspects of Foucault's understanding of power and what it offers for the study of the politics of identity. What difficulties, if any, are we left with if we adopt Foucault's approach to identity politics in its entirety? You may want to ground your analysis of Foucault in a couple of his case studies, such as his discussion of "the dangerous individual," the history of madness, or the case of Herculeine Barbin.

III. Theme: Law and Morality

A. Definition of Law

1. One of the metaphors that Dworkin discusses in 'Law's Ambitions for Itself' is: "There is a higher law, within and yet beyond positive law, towards which positive law grows." Legal positivists ridicule such metaphors, but Dworkin believes that they help to reveal "that volumes of philosophy speak in the fall of every judge's gavel," and suggest ideas about law that are "even a little thrilling." How compelling is Dworkin's critique of legal positivism and his view of how judges decide difficult cases?
2. "Where there is not even an attempt at justice," Radbruch wrote, "where equality ... is deliberately betrayed in the issuance of positive law, then the statute is not merely 'flawed law,' it lacks completely the very nature of law ... Measured by this standard, whole portions of National Socialist law never attained the dignity of valid law." Hart severely criticized Radbruch in "Positivism and the Separation of Law and Morals." Did he have good grounds for doing so?

B. Enforcement of Morals

1. "The suppression of vice," Lord Devlin writes in the 'Morals and the Criminal Law,' "is as much the law's business as the suppression of subversive activities; it is no more possible to define a sphere of private morality than it is to define one of private subversive activity." Should the criminal law enforce morality and punish vice, in the way and for the reasons that Lord Devlin appears to contend?
2. In Only Words, Catherine MacKinnon dissects sexist pornography, criticizes Ronald Dworkin, and notes a shift in the operative definition of censorship "from government silencing what powerless people say, to powerful people violating powerless people into silence and hiding behind state power to do it." Dworkin, in turn, replies to MacKinnon in 'Two Concepts of Liberty.' What happens to law, morality and freedom in the debate between MacKinnon and Dworkin on sexist pornography?

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam
Jonathan Tomm

Nov. 16, 2009

Answer ONE question in each section. You have FIVE hours for the exam, not included break time. Please inform Josephine in the Dept Office of when you are going on your break, how long of a break you will be taking (1/2 hr or 1 hr), and when you return from your break so that she can adjust your writing time accordingly.

I. Approaches to Political Theory

1. Explain why and how understanding the nature and role of language within political life is also central to understanding the activity of political theory.
2. In what sense should the activity of political theory be "critical"? Discuss and evaluate at least two thinkers' understandings of political theory as a critical activity
3. Drawing on at least two of the following theorists (Wittgenstein, Gadamer, and Taylor), explain the chief distinguishing features of a hermeneutical approach to the study of politics. Is a hermeneutical approach critical or uncritical? For instance, does it steer the study of politics clear of ethnocentrism, or is hermeneutics intrinsically conservative and ethnocentric?
4. What is at stake in the debate over methodological individualism from conceptual, ethical, and methodological perspectives? Your answer should distinguish versions methodological individualism as appropriate, and contrast to at least one alternative.

II. Theorist 1: Kant

1. What is the relationship between Kant's moral theory and his political theory? Discuss, with reference to Hannah Arendt's argument that, notwithstanding his own view, Kant's proper political theory is to be found in his *Critique of Judgment*.
2. What is at stake with respect to moral and political judgment in Kant's critique of Hobbes and Hume?
3. With reference to at least two of the following three commentators (Arendt, Baynes, Taylor, and Baier) discuss the continuing relevance of Kant's work for contemporary political theory.

III. Theorist 2: Habermas

1. The distinction between strategic and communicative action is central to Habermas's theory of communicative action. To what extent does Habermas's political theory require this distinction?

2. "Kant is typically credited with establishing the autonomy of normative judgment with respect to the empirically determined world. Although Habermas, like all critical theorists, seeks to avoid utopian detachment, he nonetheless replicates and reinterprets Kant's key critical distinctions." Discuss.
3. Why does Habermas make the use of language into the central feature of his political theory?
4. Habermas developed his theory of communicative action, in part, in the wake of his critical engagement with Gadamer's hermeneutics. Does Habermas leave hermeneutics behind when he begins to focus – drawing on systems theory – on media-steered subsystems of action, or does he reincorporate hermeneutics into his mature political theory, beginning with his distinction between "system and life-world"? Additionally, how do these considerations inform Habermas's subsequent thinking (e.g., his discourse ethics; his theory of deliberative democracy)?

IV. Theme: The Power of Talk – Bringing Together Strategic and Communicative Conceptions of Politics

1. Can rational choice theory be reconciled with the theory of communicative action? Discuss the most convincing attempts to do so.
2. Insofar as they assume the possibility of consensus, theories of deliberative democracy are sometimes accused of being naive about the motivations that induce political conflict. Are the critics of deliberative democracy correct? Are there ways of constructing the theory that are not subject to this criticism? What should be the role of self-interest in deliberative democratic theory?
3. Rational choice interpretations of democracy often seem so thin as to miss the phenomenon altogether. Yet they continue to have currency. Is there any conceptual, empirical, or ethical merit to be found in rational theory theories of democracy that might explain their resilience?

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Nov. 16, 2009

Charles Breton

Answer ONE question in each section. You have FOUR hours for the exam, not included break time. Please inform Josephine in the Dept Office of when you are going on your break, how long of a break you will be taking (1/2 hr or 1 hr), and when you return from your break so that she can adjust your writing time accordingly.

I. Approaches to political theory

1. How should political theory relate to political science? Discuss, with reference to at least three political theorists.
2. Is political theory indispensable? Discuss this with reference to at least three thinkers.
3. In what sense should the activity of political theory be "critical"? Discuss and evaluate at least two thinkers' understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
4. What are the purposes and goals of political theory? Explain and assess the approaches of at least three thinkers.

II. Thinker: Hannah Arendt

1. What is distinctive and important about Hannah Arendt's conception of political judgment? Discuss, explaining Arendt's approach, its implications, and its limitations. Engage at least one of Arendt's critics.
2. Arendt is credited by Habermas with having developed a communicative conception of power. In what ways is Arendt's conception of power distinctive? How does it relate to her concept of politics? Are there limitations to her approach?
3. Is it possible to build a conception of political rights out of Hannah's Arendt's conception of "the political"? If not, why? If so, in what ways would such a conception be distinctive? Discuss with reference to at least one of Arendt's interpreters.

III. Theme: Citizenship, Political Membership and Immigration

1. Does citizenship imply universality in either values or membership? Discuss with specific reference to the implications for new immigrants.

2. To what extent does a democratic approach as articulated by Habermas and Benhabib address differentiated citizenship in comparison to either liberal or more agonistic approaches?
3. "Multiculturalism as a formal policy and practice sits at odds with the requirements of democratic citizenship, which prioritize collective action and communication within a context of some minimal shared values." Discuss this claim in relation to three to four of the texts on the reading list.
4. What kinds of obligations can host societies legitimately ask of immigrants, and what kinds of recognition and/or toleration can immigrants legitimately ask of host countries? Discuss and assess the responses three or more thinkers who address these questions.

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Tim Came

PART A: Approaches

1. Compare and contrast at least three accounts of the relationship between political theory and political science. Frame and defend your own position in relation to these accounts.
2. If one aims to situate a text in its “historical context”, what does one examine? Discuss critically, drawing on Quentin Skinner’s views (as portrayed by Tully, if necessary) and at least one other thinker.
3. In *The Company of Critics* Michael Walzer makes a case for what he calls “connected criticism.” Explain what Walzer means by this notion and discuss how well it stands up against at least two other approaches to political theory. (Note: Your chosen alternative approaches need not be completely unrelated to Walzer’s.)

PART B: Tocqueville

1. Explain how Tocqueville conceptualizes the benefits and potential dangers of democracy, relying both on Tocqueville’s texts and those of at least two of his interpreters. Include in your essay an account of what Tocqueville means by “democracy.”
2. Are the de Tocqueville of *Democracy in America* and of *The Ancien Regime and the Coming of the French Revolution* one and the same political thinker?
3. In his review of the second volume of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, J. S. Mill remarked: “It is necessary to observe that by Democracy M. de Tocqueville does not, in general, mean any particular form of government. He can conceive a Democracy under an absolute monarch. ... By Democracy, M. de Tocqueville understands equality of condition, the absence of all aristocracy, whether constituted by political privileges or by superiority in individual importance and social power.” It is toward Democracy in this sense, toward equality between man and man, that he conceives society to be irresistibly tending. Toward Democracy in the other and more common sense, it may or may not be traveling.” **Is this a fair assessment of Tocqueville’s view of the development of modern democratic politics? Assuming that Mill’s view has some validity (which you, of course, may contest), what does Tocqueville teach us about the relationship between democratic government and a “democratic” state of society?**
4. “Theorists of participatory or developmental democracy suffer from an excessive faith in the interest of ordinary citizens in political affairs.” Discuss this claim in light of Tocqueville’s work.

PART C: Bureaucracy and Democracy

1. In Max Weber's view, democracy and bureaucracy are antithetical, both in principle and practice. At the same time, modern democracies have increasingly pushed more "political" work into the domain of executive branch bureaucracies, raising issues of democratic representation and accountability. Can bureaucracies be democratized? Should they be democratized? Discuss at least three contemporary approaches to these questions.
2. Is bureaucracy an *inherent* threat to representative government? Discuss, with reference to at least three thinkers.
3. Franz Kafka once wrote that the chains of the world are made of office paper. Is this a fitting description of bureaucratic man and woman? What does this insight tell us about the challenges that modern bureaucracy poses to modern democracies? Discuss these questions with reference to at least three thinkers.

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Anastasiya Salnykova

Section 1: Approaches

1. Compare and contrast Skinner's and Gadamer's approaches to understanding historical texts. How do they understand and locate the meanings of texts? How to they understand and locate themselves as interpreters?
2. Although Skinner and Gadamer focus to a large extent on interpreting texts, their ideas along with Charles Taylor's are instructive for thinking about agency (or agency and structure) in the study of politics. Explain.
3. What are the purposes and goals of political theory? Explain and assess the approaches of at least three thinkers.
4. Critical Theorists have wrestled with questions of reason, particularity (or contextual specificity), and universality in developing the idea of a "critical" political theory. Discuss and evaluate at least two thinkers' understandings of these issues for the idea of critical theory and of what makes it "critical." political theory as a critical activity.

Section 2: Deliberative Democracy

1. Explain the key features of Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy. Are there significant differences between Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy and others who identify with the concept, such as Dryzek or Gutmann and Thompson? Does anything important depend upon these differences?
2. It is relatively easy to imagine a deliberative democracy under ideal conditions, when participants are relatively equal in power and seek, in good faith, to influence one another through argument. Such ideal conditions, however, rarely accompany real political problems. Must ideal conditions exist for the theory of deliberative democracy to have relevance to politics? Discuss, with reference to at least two theorists of deliberative democracy.
3. Discussing at least two different theorists of deliberative democracy explain and evaluate the debates over procedural versus substantive aspects of the idea of deliberative democracy.

Section 3: Multiculturalism

1. How “liberal” is Kymlicka’s approach to multiculturalism? And what are the alternatives? Compare Kymlicka’s approach to at least one other theorist of multiculturalism.
2. “Multiculturalism as a formal policy and practice sits at odds with the requirements of democratic citizenship, which prioritize collective action and communication within a context of some minimal shared values.” Discuss this claim in relation to three to four of the texts on the reading list.
3. Can formal recognitions of (and policies that respond to) cultural claims be consistent with the norms of free and equal citizenship? Under what conditions are they consistent, and under what conditions do they conflict? Making use of at least two theorists of multiculturalism, discuss this question in relation to one or more examples of multicultural policy.
4. In different ways, theorists such as Benhabib and Connolly have sought to develop distinctly *critical* theories of multiculturalism and identity politics. With reference to at least two theorists explain and assess the idea of an avowedly critical theory multiculturalism and identity politics.

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Michael MacKenzie

PART A: Approaches

1. A number of contemporary political theorists conceive their approaches as “problem-driven” political theory. What are the key characteristic of “problem-driven political theory”? Should it count as a distinctive approach? Or does this term simply repackage established approaches? Discuss these questions with reference to at least three political theorists.
2. How should political theory relate to political science? Discuss, with reference to at least three political theorists.
3. What can work in political theory, such as Connolly’s work on the character of key political concepts, teach us about the claims for a *science* of politics, or the way in which the study of politics can be scientific? Discuss, with reference to at least three political theorists.
4. “Problem-driven approaches to political theory sacrifice the distinctive contribution of political theory to the study of politics, that is, illuminating great and enduring political goals and challenges.” Assess this claim with reference to at least three political theorists.

PART B: John Stuart Mill

1. What is the case for and against referring to Mill as a “deliberative democrat?” Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
2. To what extent, if any, does Mill’s call for plural voting (extra votes for more educated members of society) undercut the usual idea that he was a democrat? Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
3. C. B. Macpherson has called Mill an exemplary “developmental democrat, or proponent of a developmental conception of democracy. This characterization arguably characterizes several aspects of Mill’s political theory, including his defense of British colonialism. Challenge or defend these claims with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
4. To what extent does Mill’s thought suggest that there is no necessary incompatibility between liberalism and democracy, and to what extent does it indicate tensions between liberalism and democracy. Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.

PART C: Representation

1. In what ways is democratic representation enabled and limited by electoral democracy? Are there forms of representation that promise to enhance democracy outside of, or beyond, electoral democracy? If so, what would be their functions and justifications?
2. Explain why, within political theory, the concepts of representation and democracy have had an uneasy relationship. Do the conceptual tensions reflect tensions in political institutions and practices? Your answer should reference as least three accounts of representation.
3. Is representation an inherent part of deliberative democracy? Or is it simply a compromise necessary to accommodate large-scale, mass democracies? Your answer should reference as least three accounts of representation.

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Devon Loughheed

PART A: Approaches – What are we/should we, as theorists, be *doing*?

1. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least two thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
2. What are the key differences between a post-modern conceptualization of ‘history’ (like that of Wendy Brown) and a Skinnerian conceptualization of ‘history’? How do these differences impact political theory?
3. Is good pedagogy different for a critical political theorist than a more conventional political scientist? If so, how? Make use of these ideas of at least two theorists and consider the idea of democratic education.
4. Is political theory indispensable as Alasdair MacIntyre suggests? Use at least three theorists to answer this question.

PART B: Hannah Arendt

1. What is distinctive and important about Hannah Arendt’s conception of political judgment? Discuss, explaining Arendt’s approach, its implications, and its limitations. Engage at least one of Arendt’s critics.
2. Arendt is credited by Habermas with having developed a communicative conception of power. In what ways is Arendt’s conception of power distinctive? How does it relate to her concept of politics? Are there limitations to her approach?
3. Identify and explain at least two Arendtian ideas that have continuing salience for political theorists and actors. Draw on at least one of Arendt’s critics in addition to Arendt’s texts.
4. Is Hannah Arendt’s political theory (e.g., her notions of action and judgment) elitist? Draw on at least one of Arendt’s critics

PART C: Jurgen Habermas

1. What potentials of social life is Habermas’s theory of communication designed to explain and problematize? In what ways is the “force of reason” immanent to communication? Discuss, including reference to at least one of Habermas’s critics.

2. Explain the key features of Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy. Are there significant differences between Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy and others who identify with the concept? Does anything important depend upon these differences?
3. *In Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas argues that "if one views modern law as a mechanism that, without revoking the principle of unhindered communication, removes tasks of social integration from actors who are already overburdened in their efforts at reaching understanding, then the two sides of the law become comprehensible: its positivity and its claim to rational acceptability." In light of this claim, what is the relationship between democratic adjudication of law and Habermas's concept of discourse? What is the relationship between Habermasian discourse and positive law? Explain in which ways modern democracy incorporates discourse in its adjudicative functions and in which ways it precludes it.
4. Compare and contrast Habermas's conception of the 'other' in his political thought with that of Bhikhu Parekh and Seyla Benhabib.
5. What if anything is (still) *critical* about Habermas's critical theory? Discuss at least two aspects of Habermas's political theory (e.g., technology and science; deliberative democracy; religion and culture; system and lifeworld) and include reference to at least one of Habermas's critics.

PART D: Critical Theory and Capitalism

1. What, precisely, are "capitalism" and "culture"? Define and discuss these concepts and the practices to which they refer. How, according to at least three thinkers, do the social relations and structures that comprise capitalism relate to those comprising culture?
2. "You must be joking!" Comedy, as a mode of artist and cultural production, has recently become of subject of analysis among critical theorists. Choose at least three theorists and explain and assess what they offer for theorizing the place of comedy – e.g., stand-up comedy, Hollywood movie comedies, or TV satire (The Daily Show, The Colbert Report) – in the cultural-political negotiations within late capitalism.
3. Is it possible for 'art' to still be a critical political activity in the age of mass media and late capitalism?

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Daniel Drugge

PART A: Approaches

1. Where does Quentin Skinner locate the “meaning” of a historical text and how does he understand the role of the interpreter? Critically compare Skinner’s understanding of the meaning of a text and the role of the interpreter with those of two of his critics.
2. In “Does Political Theory Still Exist?” Isaiah Berlin writes: “For political thinkers, ... the primary question is not that of genesis and conditions of growth, but that of validity and truth.” Yet in the same article Berlin also insists that “what is characteristic of specifically philosophical questions is that they do not ... satisfy conditions required by an independent science, the principal among which is that the path to their solution must be implicit in their very formulation.” **What, then, are the special or distinctive truths that political theorists must strive to discover and formulate? And to what extent, if at all, has Berlin succeeded in illuminating the methodological insights that are required if political theory continue to exist and if it is to avoid becoming merely a branch of ideology? Discuss these questions drawing on at least two theorists.**
3. **What is political theory?** Discuss this question with reference to the answers given by at least three of the following theorists: Skinner, Wolin, Taylor, Grant, and Berlin (focusing here on Berlin’s specific answer to this question).
4. Understanding the native’s point of view, Clifford Geertz writes, “is more like grasping a proverb, catching an illusion, seeing a joke – or ... reading a poem – than it is like achieving communion.” Accepting, for the moment, the truth of this statement, what do you take to be the most important substantive and methodological implications of Geertz’s insight for the study and practice of political theory? Discuss this question with reference to the ideas of two political theorists.

PART B: Berlin

1. What kind of political philosophy emerges from Berlin’s writings? Contrast Berlin’s political philosophy with that of at least one other contemporary liberal thinker, emphasising Berlin’s distinctiveness.
2. In “The Pursuit of the Ideal, Isaiah Berlin writes: “‘I prefer coffee, you prefer champagne. We have different tastes. There is no more to be said.’ That is relativism.” In the same article, as in many other articles, Berlin also discusses pluralism to which he himself attaches considerable importance and which he distinguishes from relativism. Is Berlin’s pluralism merely a disguised relativism?

Or is there more to it, so much more in fact that it can easily support the great weight that Berlin puts on it?

3. What is the connection, if any, between Berlin's famous reflections on the "Two Concepts of Liberty," his well known pluralism, and his interest in counter-Enlightenment thinkers?

PART C: Marx

1. In "On the Jewish Question," Marx quotes with approval a passage from Rousseau (Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, 1972, p. 44): "Whoever dares undertake to establish a people's institutions must feel himself capable of **changing**, as it were, **human nature** itself, of **transforming** each individual who, in isolation, is complete but solitary whole, into a **part** of something greater than himself, from which in a sense, he derives his life and his being." To what extent, did Marx deepen our understanding and even provide a solution to the problem identified by Rousseau?

2. In what ways do Marx's (a) methodology and (b) conception of the human condition remain of value for contemporary political theory? In what ways are these elements limiting and/or obsolete?

3. Explain the rise of reform-oriented Marxism in the pre-WWI era? What were the issues? What was at stake? What are the lessons, if any, for contemporary political theory?

4. "Marx is a theorist of freedom with respect to both his materialist conception of history and substantive political project." Discuss this claim with reference to at least two commentators on Marx's political thought.

PART D: Violence

1. Explain the roles and justifications (if any) of violence in the reproducing social order. To what extent is violence necessary? Is violence ever desirable? Your answer should discuss at least two thinkers.

2. Why does Hannah Arendt distinguish violence from power, and does her distinction provide any conceptual and/or critical benefits? Compare Arendt's approach to at least two other theories of violence.

3. In the second last paragraph of the first volume of The Open Society and Its Enemies, Karl Popper writes: "Our dream of heaven cannot be realized on earth ... There is no return to a harmonious state of nature. If we turn back, then we must go the whole way – we must return to the beasts." He then goes on to say: "But if we wish to remain human, then there is only one way, the way into the open society." Must someone who wishes to remain human reject violence?

4. How should we understand the relationship between violence and the political? Discuss with reference to at least three thinkers.

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Sean Gray

Part 1: Approaches to Political Theory: Immanent Critique

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. In various ways, debates about “objectivism” and “contextualism” have long figured centrally in debates about the proper study of politics. Explain how this dichotomy has figured (explicitly or implicitly) in the work of at least three of the following thinkers: Maeve Cooke, Michel Foucault, Charles Taylor, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jürgen Habermas, James Tully, and Albrecht Wellmer.
- b. Given that a key objective of political philosophy is to judge what is by reference to what ought to be, how is immanent critique possible? Discuss at least three thinkers who have contributed importantly to the approach of immanent critique.
- c. John Rawls writes: “the idea is that in a constitutional democracy the public conception of justice should be, so far as possible independent of controversial philosophical doctrines. Thus, to formulate such a conception, we apply the principle of toleration to philosophy itself: the public conception of justice is to be political, not metaphysical.” How effective is Rawls in securing ideals about the political world against epistemological scepticism and the fallibility of human knowledge?

Part 2: Classical Thinker: Aristotle

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. What is living and what is dead in Aristotle’s ethics and political theory?
- b. In the *Politics* (Book 2, chapter 5 [1264 a I]; Jowett/Barnes translation; Cambridge UP] Aristotle has an extensive discussion of Plato and Socrates and writes in part: “For there comes a point at which a state may attain such a degree of unity as to be no longer a state, or at which, without actually ceasing to exist, it will become an inferior state, like harmony passing into unison, or rhythm which has been reduced to a single foot.” Is it the case that Plato and Socrates failed to understand citizenship and diversity, whereas Aristotle did?
- c. Drawing on at least three of the following commentators explain the character and significance or promise of Aristotle’s understanding of the citizen: Bickford, Develin, Johnson, Miller, and C. W. Taylor.

- d. Some schools of contemporary deliberative democratic theory trace their origins to Aristotle. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this particular origin for contemporary deliberative democratic theory?

Part 3: Modern Thinker: Dewey

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Dewey's democratic theory has proved to be an amazingly robust reference for contemporary radical and participatory theories of democracy. What, precisely, makes Dewey's approach to democracy so attractive to contemporary radical democratic theorists? And in what does the "radicalness" of Dewey consist?
- b. Map out some of the main lines of interpretation of the character and significance of Dewey's democratic theory with reference to three of these four theorists: Richard Bernstein, Axel Honneth, Alan Ryan, and Robert Westbrook. In addition, explain which view or which combination of views is "truest" in your view to the spirit of Dewey's democratic theory.
- c. What is the relationship between Dewey's pragmatism and his political theory? Discuss with reference to at least three of the following commentators, discuss the relationship between Dewey's: Axel Honneth, Richard Bernstein, James Bohman, Alan Ryan, and Robert Westbrook.

Part 4: Issue: Republicanism

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. In the Social Contract (Book 1, chapter 7; GDH Cole translation), Rousseau writes: "whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence." As a republican theorist, what insights does Rousseau have when it comes to the issues of (1) popular sovereignty and non-domination, and (2) difference, structural inequality, and marginalization?
- b. Drawing on at least three of the following thinkers, discuss the various ways that the notion of popular sovereignty has figured (explicitly or implicitly) in the republican tradition: Rousseau, Philip Pettit, Hannah Arendt, James Bohman, Carole Pateman, and Iris Marion Young.

- c. Why is the concept of “non-domination” central to contemporary republican political theory, and what promise does the concept hold for contemporary democratic theory?

Comprehensive Exam, Chris Tenove

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. In *Politics as a Vocation*, Max Weber asks, "Now, then, what relations do ethics and politics actually have?" How is this question anticipated and answered in the methodologies of contemporary political theory?
- b. Given that a key objective of political philosophy is to judge what is by reference to what ought to be, how is immanent critique possible? Discuss at least three thinkers who have contributed importantly to the approach of immanent critique.
- c. Is it possible and/or necessary to have universal moral standards for political judgments from the standpoint of post-metaphysical approaches to political theory? Compare and contrast Foucault, Dewey, and one other political thinker on this question.

2. Thinker: Kant

- a. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant writes: "It can be shown that the idea of *federalism*, extending gradually to encompass all states and thus leading to perpetual peace, is practical and has objective reality." Discuss Kant's understanding of federalism and its implications for perpetual peace.
- b. What is good and what is bad in Kantian universalism, particularly in light of emerging global human rights discourse? Discuss with reference to Kant and at least two of his interpreters.
- c. In what ways does Kant's philosophy continue to exert influence on contemporary political thinkers? Discuss Kant's impact on at least two of the following: Arendt, Foucault, Rawls, and Habermas.

3. Thinker: Foucault

- a. "The King is dead. Long live the King." Yet, in "Truth and Power," Foucault writes: "We need to cut off the king's head: in political theory that has still to be done." What important and indispensable things does Foucault have to tell political theorists about lingering forms of political monism?
- b. According to Foucault, the central issue for political thought has to do with the question of the possibilities and dangers inherent in the use of reason: "How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is

unfortunately criss-crossed by intrinsic dangers?" Explain and assess Foucault's understanding of the ambiguous relationship between reason and power.

- c. In what way is Foucault's method essential to his politics? Discuss this question with reference to at least two of Foucault's interpreters.

4. Theme: Global Justice and Governance

- a. Assuming global justice is possible as a political project, what are its possible ethical and/or moral bases? In what ways can or should these bases transcend ethical communities? Discuss at least three thinkers who have addressed this question.
- b. Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and related writings from his late period spawned numerous approaches to global justice. Discuss and assess three of these approaches, identifying their common Kantian roots as well as their distinctiveness.
- c. To what extent is cultural diversity/difference the central issue amongst critics of cosmopolitan justice (including Kymlicka, Young and Fraser). How persuasive are their critiques in relation to a cosmopolitanism rooted in human rights?

Comprehensive Exam Catherine Ellyson

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. In "Science as a Vocation," Max Weber writes: "Science today is a 'vocation' organized in special disciplines in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated factions. It is not the gift of grace of seers and prophets dispensing sacred values and revelations, nor does it partake of the contemplation of sages and philosophers about the meaning of the university." What then happens to political theory in this scheme of knowledge? Does political theory still exist?
- b. Is political theory, as the title of Alasdair MacIntyre's essay suggests, indispensable? Discuss in relation to at least three other thinkers.
- c. How does the introduction of 'gender' into the study of political theory change our understanding of politics? Discuss in relation to Brown, Zerilli, Spivak and Saxonhouse's theories.

2. Thinker: Hannah Arendt

- a. Virtually all great political thinkers have a distinctive voice. What is Hannah Arendt's voice and why is it important?
- b. In contrast to many of her contemporaries, Hannah Arendt viewed totalitarianism not as exemplifying an excessive political organization of society, but rather as the limiting case of the destruction of "the political". Explain Arendt's reasoning. In your answer, reference at least two of Arendt's interpreters.
- c. For Hannah Arendt, political judgment is different than moral judgment, both as a kind of activity, and in its demands on political organization. Explain Arendt's reasoning. Reference at least two of Arendt's interpreters in your answer.

3. Thinker: Montesquieu

- a. One of the achievements of Montesquieu was that he provided a new classification of governments into republics, monarchies and the despotic state. With this new clarification, what important things was Montesquieu able to say about government that cannot be said without it?
- b. What is Montesquieu's legacy? Discuss in relation to at least three of Montesquieu's interpreters.

- c. What is Montesquieu's theory of citizenship? What are its strengths and drawbacks? Use at least three of Montesquieu's interpreters in your answer.

4. Theme: Citizenship (and Cities)

- a. What does it mean to be an urban citizen? Is there a fundamental difference from rural citizens? Discuss with reference to at least two of the thinkers listed.
- b. To what extent does the state remain important to the meaning of citizenship? What are the dangers and benefits of seeing citizenship as more closely aligned either with lower levels of government (like municipalities) or with cosmopolitan notions of transnational citizenship?
- c. The recently elected mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, suggested after his election that municipal politics in some sense are above partisan politics and the left/right divide and his being Muslim was not relevant? Is there something unique about city politics that distinguishes it from provincial or federal politics with respect to political or cultural differences?

Comprehensive Exam Questions for Serbulent Turan

Answer 1 question in each section.

1. Approaches

- a. Given that a key objective of political philosophy is to judge what is by reference to what ought to be, how is immanent critique possible? Discuss at least three thinkers who have contributed importantly to the approach of immanent critique.
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. In *The Idea of a Social Science*, Peter Winch writes: “I will call the conception of philosophy which I want to criticize the ‘underlabourer conception,’ in honour of one its presiding geniuses, John Locke.” With respect to political theory and kindred disciplines, what can be said in favour of the underlabourer conception? What can be said against it?
- d. Does Michel Foucault’s method of genealogy present a radical departure to how other political theorists have understood the practice or vocation of political theory, or is it really more continuous with other leading approaches to political Theory? Discuss and evaluate this question with reference to the work of at least two thinkers in addition to Foucault.

2. Thinker: Kant

- a. Enlightenment, Kant famously wrote, “is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not a lack of understanding, but a lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore ... Have the courage to use your own understanding!” Explain how Kant’s critical concept of reason (his critical metaphysics) supports his understanding of the nature and process of enlightenment.
- b. Kant’s political philosophy as developed in *The Metaphysics of Morals* builds on his Second Critique, *The Critique of Practical Reason*. Explain the logic. How much of this logic is retained in contemporary political thinkers who trace at least feature of their approaches to Kant? You need only reference one contemporary thinker—for example, Arendt, Rawls, or Habermas.

- c. What is good and what is bad in Kantian universalism? Discuss with reference to Kant and at least two of his interpreters.
- d. What is morality? And how does one reason about morality? When it comes to morality and reasoning about morality what are the most important truths that Kant announces in *The Metaphysics of Morals*?
- e. Thomas McCarthy and others (e.g., Charles Mills, Robert Bernasconi) recently have highlighted tensions between Kant's universalism and his views of the so-called "races of mankind." What does this imply for how we might assess what is living and dead in Kant's political theory today (e.g., his universalism and understanding of human progress)? Discuss this with reference to Kant and at least two of his interpreters.

3. Thinker: Nietzsche

- a. Was Nietzsche a friend or an enemy of the modern enlightenment project? Discuss with reference to at least three of Nietzsche's interpreters.
- b. How credible is the common charge that Nietzsche undermines all possible bases for ethically or morally-attentive political judgments? Discuss with reference to at least three of Nietzsche's interpreters.
- c. In the last paragraph of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche writes "Except for the ascetic ideal: man, the *animal* had no meaning up to now. His existence on earth had no purpose, 'What is man for, actually?' – was a question without an answer." Is Nietzsche primarily a critic of the ascetic ideal? What does he have to say about morality that makes him a moral philosopher of enduring importance?
- d. What is the gist of Nietzsche's contribution of political theory? Discuss with reference to at least three of Nietzsche's interpreters.

4. Theme: Enlightenment

- a. In what does the "legitimacy of the modern age" (Blumenberg) consist? Discuss with reference to at least three theorists of modernity.
- b. According to Foucault, the central issue for political thought has to do with the question of the possibilities and dangers inherent in the use of reason: "How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately criss-crossed by intrinsic dangers?" Discuss Foucault's view in light

of at least one other theorist of Enlightenment, paying particular attention to ambiguous relationship between reason and power.

- c. One of the chapters in Arendt's book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is entitled "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man. She writes: "The paradox involved in the loss of human rights is that such loss coincides with the instant a person becomes a human being in general – without a profession, without a citizenship, without an opinion, without a deed by which to identify and specify himself – *and* different in general, representing nothing but his own absolutely unique individuality which deprived of expression within and action upon a common world loses all significance." What important things does Arendt have to tell theorists of human rights and the rights of man?
- d. What are the chief ways in which the debate over the Enlightenment has continuing salience for current political theory and practice? Discuss this with reference to at least three theorists.

Comprehensive Minor Exam in Political Theory: Jan Boesten

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. In “What is Enlightenment?” Kant writes: “Saper aude! ‘Have courage to use your own reason!’ – that is the motto of enlightenment.” What important insights does this motto reveal about Kant as a political theorist and about his contribution to the field of political theory?
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. It is fair to say that very few, if any, political theorists self-identify as “positivists”. What does “positivism” mean within the context of political science? What are its strengths and/or limitations in the study of politics? And what are the alternatives? Discuss at least three political thinkers who have addressed this issue.

2. Thinker: Hannah Arendt

- a. In contrast to many of her contemporaries, Hannah Arendt viewed totalitarianism not as exemplifying an excessive political organization of society, but rather as the limiting case of the destruction of “the political”. Explain Arendt’s reasoning. In your answer, reference at least two of Arendt’s interpreters.
- b. For Hannah Arendt, political judgment is different than moral judgment, both as a kind of activity, and in its demands on political organization. Explain Arendt’s reasoning. Reference at least two of Arendt’s interpreters in your answer.
- c. Hannah Arendt’s book Eichmann in Jerusalem has the subtitle, “a report on the banality of evil.” What important things does Arendt have to say about evil, and what do her views on evil tell us about her stature as a political thinker?

3. Theme: Law and the Rule of Law

- a. Explain the concept of “the rule of law”. Why do political thinkers typically believe that a good polity institutionalizes a rule of law? In your answer, discuss at least three thinkers who have dealt with this question.
- b. Habermas situates law “between facts and norms”. Why does he use this formulation? What are its advantages or disadvantages in understanding what law is and how it functions? In your answer, reference at least one other thinker.

3. What does Max Weber has to say about law and the rule of law that make his views important ninety years after his death? Are his insights just as important for the political theorist as they are for the sociologist?

Comprehensive Exam Afoun Afsahi

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. What are the appropriate roles and contributions of political theory within a context that is marked by, on the one hand, increasingly robust empirical political science, and, on the other hand, a linguistic turn in political philosophy? To what extent do the systems of thought and methodological tools in the writings of Skinner, Habermas and Foucault allow us to engage with empirical political science in post-positivist terms?
- b. Foucault, Spivak and Mohanty all attempt to bring marginalized voices in various ways into political theory? What are the benefits and drawbacks of their more radically critical analysis and which of the three provides the best theoretical framework from which to examine such questions in political thought?
- c. In "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," Quentin Skinner reflects on, among other things, the use and abuse of the great political thinkers by students of political thought. After Skinner, what can and should be said about the indispensability of political theory and the great political theorists?

2. Thinker: Simone de Beauvoir

- a. Virtually all great political thinkers reflect profoundly on human nature and thereby also reflect on the moral and political possibilities of human existence. What does Simone de Beauvoir have to say about human nature that makes her an important thinker?
- b. What is the role of the 'other' in deBeauvoir's theory and how has it been used by other feminists to interpret the political world around them? Are there dangers in this idea and if so what are they?
- c. What is deBeauvoir's understanding of freedom and how does this relate to the existentialist tradition with which she is most commonly associated?

3. Thinker: Kant

- a. In "On a Supposed Right to Lie," Kant writes: "To be truthful (honest) in all declarations is, therefore, a sacred and unconditionally commanding law of reason that admits of no expediency whatsoever." What does this statement reveal about the foundations of Kant's moral philosophy and its implications for practical ethics and political life?

- b. What role does reason play in Kant's theory of the public sphere? Discuss in relation to Kant's works as well as at least two of the interpreters of Kant.
- c. What does autonomy mean for Kant and what are the benefits and drawbacks of his definition?

4. Theme: Freedom

- a. John Stuart Mill described *On Liberty* as "a philosophical text-book of a single truth." What is the single truth defended in *On Liberty* and how important is it?
- b. Does Isaiah Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' provide the most useful starting point to distinguish between different types of freedom. Are there other definitions of freedom that do not fit neatly into one of these two categories?
- c. What is freedom – is it the same as autonomy? Discuss in relation to at least four of the thinkers on your list.

Comprehensive Exam Agustin Goenaga

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. James Tully (1989) sees an affinity between Quentin Skinner's and Michel Foucault's intellectual approaches of a kind that yields comparable commentaries on early modern European power and its implication in the historical movement into modernity. Assess Tully's perspective on Skinner and Foucault, also in light of Tully's later, 2002 account of "Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity".
- b. What are the appropriate roles and contributions of political theory within a context that is marked by, on the one hand, increasingly robust empirical political science, and, on the other hand, a linguistic turn in political philosophy? To what extent do the systems of thought and methodological tools in the writings of Skinner, Habermas and Foucault allow us to engage with empirical political science in post-positivist terms?
- c. On what basis should one choose to follow one of three approaches to political theory: (a) Skinner's linguistically-attentive historical method of interpretation; Habermas's critical theory; or (c) Foucault's genealogical method?

2. Thinker: Marx

- a. "Marxism the ideology may be dead for a variety of reasons, but Karl Marx's analyses of capitalism, his methodology, and his understanding of praxis remain pertinent today as ever." Discuss critically with an eye to theoretical resources and/or limitations of Marx's thought.
- b. In the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx writes: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." Give an account of how Sartre, Lukacs, or another key interpreter of Marx's thought attempts to reconcile the relationship between structure and human agency identified in the above quotation.
- c. A longstanding criticism of Marx's historical materialism is that it renders obsolete human agency; not necessarily the agency of the proletariat but the agency of those situated outside of the factory floors of the industrial West: non-western societies, peasants, indigenous peoples, women, and so on. Evaluate the

fairness of this claim through an engagement with Marx's writings.

3. Thinker: Nietzsche

- a. Was Nietzsche a friend or an enemy of the modern enlightenment project? Discuss with reference to at least three of Nietzsche's interpreters.
- b. How credible is the common charge that Nietzsche undermines all possible bases for ethically or morally-attentive political judgments? Discuss with reference to at least three of Nietzsche's interpreters.
- c. "Friedrich Nietzsche exposes us and disrupts us, but guide us politically he does not, a fact that renders his provocations politically dangerous." Discuss critically.

4. Theme: Modernity versus Postmodernity

- a. "Bruno Latour says we have never been modern; in fact, despite diverse intellectual commentary to the contrary, we have never been postmodern." Elucidate the lived historical condition of being modern, and the question of whether anyone is being postmodern.
- b. In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri write: "Modernity is always two. Before we cast it in terms of reason, Enlightenment, the break with tradition, secularism, and so forth, modernity must be understood as a power relation." How does this conceptualization of modernity challenge the notion of modernity as an "unfinished project"? What, if any, are the implications of this challenge, theoretically and practically?
- c. What most fundamentality distinguishes modernity from postmodernity, and is the distinction important for situating contemporary political thought? Discuss with reference to at least three theorists of modernity/postmodernity.

Comprehensive Minor Exam in Political Theory: Daniel Voth

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. One of the most prominent criticisms of postcolonial approaches to the study of politics involves its tendency to displace material questions of land dispossession and political domination by focussing too narrowly on questions of cultural representation and knowledge production. Discuss the fairness of this claim with reference to three authors.
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. What does the emphasis placed on questions of “land” and “place” by Indigenous scholars/theorists offer political theory and the study of politics in settler-colonial contexts? Discuss with reference to at least three authors.

2. Thinker: John Locke

- a. What distinguishes Macpherson’s economistic reading of Locke’s theory of property from the “colonial” readings offered by James Tully and Barbara Arneil? Why has the latter interpretation of Locke had more staying power than the former?
- b. What does the deeply historical and archival readings of Hsueh and Armitage bring to our understanding of Locke’s political theory?
- c. Are Locke’s *Two Treatises* a revolutionary treatise as Ashcraft argues, a theological treatise as Waldron argues, a defense of early capitalism as MacPherson argues or all three and what does the fact that there are such varied interpretations of Locke’s theory tell us about this work?

3. Theme: Indigenous Identity and Self-Determination

- a. In *This Is Not a Peace Pipe*, Dale Turner makes the claim that if Indigenous peoples want the relationship between themselves and the Canadian state to be informed by their distinct world views, then “they will have to engage the state’s legal and political discourses in more effective ways.” For Turner, then, it would appear that self-determination requires that Indigenous peoples find more effective ways of actively participating in the Canadian legal and political practices that shape the scope and content of their rights. Discuss whether you think Turner’s approach to self-determination is reconcilable with the approach

advocated by Taiaiake Alfred in *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*.

- b. In what ways has the project of settler-colonial dispossession in Canada been a gendered phenomenon? What implication does this have for Indigenous peoples in their struggles for self-determination? Discuss in relation to at least three texts.
- c. To what extent can indigenous politics be thought of as an example of identity or multicultural politics as Kymlicka and/or Young articulate them? What are the benefits and drawbacks of framing indigenous politics in these terms?

Comprehensive Minor Exam in Political Theory: Jason Tockman

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. Briefly compare and contrast Hannah Arendt's distinctive conception of politics or the political, with the views of politics developed by two (three?) of the following thinkers: Young, Negri, Mouffe, Foucault, Giddens, and Beverley, et. al.
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be "critical"? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers' understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. Compare and contrast the different understandings (either implicit or explicit) to the relationship between **truth and power** advanced by three of the following thinkers: Foucault, Arendt, Bourdieu, Mouffe, Negri, and Young.

2. Thinker: Pierre Bourdieu

- a. What is Bourdieu's theory of social capital and how does it relate to how he theorizes other forms of capital? How does it, in Lisa Weeden's words, help political scientists to 'conceptualize culture'?
- b. In both his methods and his political commitments, Bourdieu was arguably a deeply democratic thinker. For instance, even in such a methodological text as his chapter on "Understanding" in *The Weight of the World* we find evidence of his democratic inclinations. Here he speaks of a "sort of democratization of the hermeneutic stance" by extending to "ordinary accounts of ordinary adventures" of ordinary persons the kind of "sustained, receptive attention ... [that] is usually reserved for great philosophical and literary texts." Discuss three contributions that Bourdieu's work offers (directly or indirectly) for the study of democratic theory and practice.
- c. What are the key elements of Bourdieu's "reflexive sociology" and how are they useful to political theorists?

3. Theme: Hegemony

- a. Drawing on at least three of the thinkers on your list, discuss what is living and what is perhaps obsolete in Gramsci's conception of hegemony.
- b. Drawing on at least three of the following thinkers, discuss whether it is now time to speak of "posthegemony" or "power after hegemony": Gramsci, Laclau and

Mouffe (as one thinker), Guha, Althusser, Scott, Mitchell, Hall, Ardit, Lash, Hall, Beasley-Murray.

- c. Gramsci developed his notion of hegemony with reference to a Marxist account of class domination. Is the notion of hegemony equally useful for addressing critically non-class-based forms of power and domination? Discuss this with reference to at least three of the thinkers on your list.

Comprehensive Minor Exam in Political Theory: Bryan Peeler

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. For students of political theory as it has been practiced by the great political thinkers, who is the better methodological guide, Quentin Skinner in "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" or Leo Strauss in "Political Philosophy and History"?
- b. In "Paradigms and Political Theory," Sheldon Wolin discusses at length the importance of Thomas Kuhn's influential ideas about the role of paradigms in the natural sciences. Are paradigms just as important and do they perform the same role in political theory as they do in the natural sciences?
- c. Does a naturalist view of the social sciences provide a sufficient basis for human agency? If not, where might this be found?

2. Thinker: Machiavelli

- a. No one doubts the importance of Machiavelli for the history of political thought and, more specifically, for the emergence of modern political theory. Nevertheless, Machiavelli is described in many different ways; for example, as a teacher of the autonomy of politics, as a great proponent of the civic republican ideal, and even as an astute student of the pluralism of values. In what does the importance and originality of Machiavelli consist?
- b. In chapter 15 of The Prince, Machiavelli writes famously: "how men live is so different from how they should live that ... a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary." In this passage, was Machiavelli announcing something important new truth about the logic of political power and the dynamics of statecraft?
- c. Can the republican Machiavelli favoured by theorists like Pocock or Skinner be reconciled with the advisor to princes favoured by exponents of neorealism?

3. Theme: International Justice

- a. In "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," Peter Singer quotes with approval and in support of his own argument the follow passage from Thomas Aquinas: "Equally, whatever a man has in superabundance is owed, of natural right, to the poor for their sustenance." How compelling is the famine relief argument and how best is it justified.

- b. Are human rights a necessary component of virtually any justifiable law of peoples or are they merely a reflection of Western liberalism and its individualistic assumptions? Does John Rawls's *The Law of Peoples* settle once and for all the issue of human rights?
- c. Most of the writing on international justice has been Western-based. Is this a fatal flaw in your opinion?

Comprehensive Exam Questions: Katrina Chapelas

Answer 1 question in each section.

1. Approaches

- a. Explain the relationship between the concept of “the political” as an object of study and judgment, and the methodologies of political theory, referencing at least three political theorists.
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. Political theorists are, by definition, a species of intellectuals. Explain the gist of Gramsci’s ideas about “The Formation of The Intellectuals” as an approach to political theory, and then discuss how at least two other thinkers (Tully, Foucault, Wolin, Arendt, Brown, Butler, Mouffe, and Warren) effectively revise or counter Gramsci’s approach to the role of intellectuals in political theory.

2. Thinker: Freud

- a. Does Freud theorize the universal structure of the human psyche that figures the inevitable discontents of civilization? Or is Freud’s specific object of (critical interpretative) study the (heteronormative, gendered, familial) historical specificities of European modernity?
- b. In what ways, if any, is Freud’s thinking important for contemporary feminist political thought? Reference at least three of Freud’s feminist interpreters in your answer.
- c. Freud is, at best, a political theorist only indirectly. What parts of Freud’s thinking are relevant for the study of politics and why? Reference at least three of Freud’s interpreters in your answer.
- d. Freud writes that “the requirement, demonstrated in these prohibitions, that there be a single kind of sexual life for everyone, disregards the dissimilarities, whether innate or acquired, in the sexual constitution of human beings; it cuts off a fair number of them from sexual enjoyment, and so becomes the source of serious injustice. . . . heterosexual genital love, which has remained exempt from outlawry, is itself restricted by further limitations” (CD). Does Freud’s work reinforce heteronormativity and binary gender, or does it illuminate the social/psychological forces that produce them? Does Freud’s work simply underscore the inevitability of repression in civilization, or does it illuminate the capacity for social life to accommodate sexual and other identity pluralism?

- e. Sigmund Freud: political conservative or radical? successful or failed?

3. Thinker: Marx

- a. Many interpreters of Marx find that he under-theorized human subjects and subjectivity, which in turned enabled an abstract concept of class consciousness in general, and an under appreciation of the power of religion in particular. Compare Marx's and Freud's views of religion, including their assessments of the impact of religion on human agency. In your answer, discuss at least two of Marx's interpreters.
- b. In his early essay, "On the Jewish Question" (1843), Marx criticized the limitations of what he called "political emancipation" and offered instead the ideal of "human emancipation." Explain (a) how this distinction figures implicitly or explicitly in his subsequent thinking and (b), drawing on at least two of his interpreters, discuss the legacy of Marx's early distinction – its usefulness and limitations – for current political theorizing.
- c. What, if anything, is of continuing value in Marx's ideas about political and economic alienation and commodity fetishism? In your answer, discuss at least two of Marx's interpreters.
- d. Marx is sometimes thought to be a crudely universalizing theorist due to his understanding of class struggle and his notion of the proletariat as the class in "radical chains" whose praxis might redeem humanity. In ways might his work contribute usefully to contemporary debates about "difference"? In your answer, discuss at least two of Marx's interpreters.

4. Theme: Urbanism

- a. It is fair to say that spatial concepts have not played a prominent role in political theory generally, and democratic theory in particular. How and to what extent does the urbanist literature address this deficit? Discuss at least three thinkers in your answer.
- b. What is the relationship between the city, urban culture, and democracy? Discuss at least three thinkers in your answer.
- c. Much of the most insightful writing on urbanism has been by social and cultural theorists like Edward Soja, Jane Jacobs, Henri Lefevre, and Manuel Castells. Drawing on at least three thinkers – from among these and others on your list – discuss what you take to be the two or three main implications of the urbanism literature for political theory and how we might (re)conceptualize "the political."

Comprehensive Minor Exam in Political Theory: Jan Luedert

Please choose one question from each section and answer in essay form.

1. Approaches

- a. While a historically-situated view of political theory has its merits, does it risk entrapping us in the chains of the past?
- b. In what sense should the activity of political theory be “critical”? Discuss and evaluate at least three thinkers’ understandings of political theory as a critical activity.
- c. What are the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing a genealogical approach as defended by Foucault and Nietzsche for addressing the questions raised by the politics of diversity in contemporary politics?

2. Thinker: Karl Marx

- a. What aspect(s) of Marx’s thought still have relevance at the beginning of the 21st century?
- b. Discuss the continued relevance of Marx’s concept of alienated labour.
- c. Kevin Anderson suggests that Marx’s work prior to the 1850s tended to adhere to a unilinear conception of historical development which rendered obsolete the agency of non-western “Others.” Discuss the substance of Anderson’s claim with reference to Marx and Engel’s *The German Ideology*. Are there any theoretical resources in Marx’s early work which one can draw off to defend Marx against this claim?

3. Theme: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition

- a. Can the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state be reconciled through a “politics of recognition?” Discuss in relation to at least three authors.
- b. Can tacit recognition of aboriginal/indigenous identities compensate for the historical reality of conquest and extermination?
- c. Nancy Fraser challenges contemporary recognition politics on two grounds: first, she suggests that recognition politics have functioned (or is functioning) to displace questions of distributive justice; second, she claims that recognition politics often essentialize group identities in ways that threaten to sanction intra-group oppression and marginalization. Discuss whether these challenges are

applicable to indigenous peoples struggles for recognition with reference to at least three texts (not including Fraser's).

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Aubin Calvert

Part 1: Approaches to Political Theory:

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Discuss how at least three of the following writers would address, explicitly or implicitly, Ian Shapiro's question: What's wrong with political science and what to do about it?: Tully, Brown, Shapiro, Fung, Grant, Wolin, Connolly.
- b. Several recent political theorists, including Skinner, Connolly, and MacIntyre have contributed to something of a linguistic turn in the study of politics. Using the work of these (and possibly other thinkers, such as Brown, Tully, and Wolin) assess the strengths and limits (if any) of this linguistic turn in political inquiry.
- c. Explicitly or implicitly, many contemporary political theorists and political scientists – but particularly those with strong (small “d”) democratic political commitments have explored the relationship that Archon Fung highlights between democratic theory and political science. Discuss this relationship with reference to the work of at least three of the following theorists: Fung, Wolin, Tully, Brown, MacIntyre, Shapiro, Grant, and Connolly. Consider, in particular, whether there is *some sense* in which political science *requires* democratic theory (and/or democratic practice) or whether, alternatively, there is only a contingent or conditional relationship between them (e.g., something evident mainly in so-called democratic societies).

Part 2: Classical Political Thinker: Hobbes

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Hobbes has sometimes been interpreted as a forerunner of scientific approaches to the study of politics. With respect to the latter, some commentators have suggested that Hobbes aimed to establish a deductive science of politics modeled on geometry. Drawing on at least three of the following commentators, discuss Hobbes's views of language and reason in relation to this claim: Sheldon Wolin, George Kateb, Terence Ball, Quentin Skinner, Philip Pettit, and David Gauthier.
- b. Hobbes is famous for his claim that human life in a state of nature is “nasty, brutish, and short”—a claim which frames his view of human nature, human interaction, and the possibilities of politics. Drawing on at least three of the following commentators, discuss the significance of this famous Hobbesian remark for his theory of politics, conflict, and cooperation: Wolin, Kateb, Ball, Skinner, Pettit, Gauthier.

- c. Drawing on at least three of the following commentators, Wolin, Kateb, Ball, Skinner, Pettit, Gauthier, respond to the following claim: "The works of Thomas Hobbes continue to hold considerable value for contemporary students of politics, not merely for understanding the historical development of modern political theory, but also for understanding central, ongoing dynamics of politics."

Part 3: Modern Political Thinker: Habermas

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Explain and assess the promise and the novelty of Habermas's communicative conception of freedom. You may find it useful to draw on the work of two or three commentators, including Simone Chambers, Alex Honneth, Georgia Warnke, Joe Heath, or Thomas McCarthy.
- b. Does Habermas's early conception of an "ideal speech situation" still have an important place within his political theory? If not, why not? If so, how does it function? If relevant, draw on the work of two or three of the following commentators: Simone Chambers, Alex Honneth, Georgia Warnke, Joe Heath, or Thomas McCarthy.
- c. From his earliest book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, to his more recent work, particularly *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas has long been concerned to advance democratic theory with the ultimate aim of improving democratic practice, particularly by making it more reciprocal, inclusive, and deliberative. To what extent has he succeeded? To what extent has he addressed adequately in his work subtle and not-so-subtle inequalities of power that might undermine his ideal of an inclusive, egalitarian democracy? Where relevant, draw on the work of at least two or three of the following commentators: Simone Chambers, Alex Honneth, Georgia Warnke, Joe Heath, or Thomas McCarthy.
- d. Explain Habermas's conception of communicative rationality. How does it differ from other concepts of rationality? And why are these differences important for democratic theory? Reference the interpretations of at least two of Habermas's interpreters in your answer.

Part 4: Theme: Pragmatics in Philosophy of Language

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Drawing on Brandon and Habermas, explain why understanding the pragmatics of language use is important for deliberative democratic theory specifically, and understanding political interactions more generally.

- b. Brandom is adamant that all speech can be understood in terms of the social processes of making assertions. Habermas is equally adamant that rightness claims are a distinct category from truth claims, and the former ought to be primary in governing interpersonal relations. What is at stake in this debate, and how might it be resolved?
- c. Why is it important for democratic theory that the dialogic positions of speaker, addressee and interpreter matter differently for Brandom and Habermas?

Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Aubin Calvert

Part 1: Approaches to Political Theory:

Choose one question and answer in essay form.

- a. Discuss how at least three of the following writers would address, explicitly or implicitly, Ian Shapiro's question: What's wrong with political science and what to do about it?: Tully, Brown, Shapiro, Fung, Grant, Wolin, Connolly.
- b. Several recent political theorists, including Skinner, Connolly, and MacIntyre have contributed to something of a linguistic turn in the study of politics. Using the work of these (and possibly other thinkers, such as Brown, Tully, and Wolin) assess the strengths and limits (if any) of this linguistic turn in political inquiry.
- c. Explicitly or implicitly, many contemporary political theorists and political scientists – but particularly those with strong (small “d”) democratic political commitments have explored the relationship that Archon Fung highlights between democratic theory and political science. Discuss this relationship with reference to the work of at least three of the following theorists: Fung, Wolin, Tully, Brown, MacIntyre, Shapiro, Grant, and Connolly. Consider, in particular, whether there is *some sense* in which political science *requires* democratic theory (and/or democratic practice) or whether, alternatively, there is only a contingent or conditional relationship between them (e.g., something evident mainly in so-called democratic societies).

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Political Theory Comprehensive Exam

Michael MacKenzie

PART A: Approaches

1. A number of contemporary political theorists conceive their approaches as “problem-driven” political theory. What are the key characteristic of “problem-driven political theory”? Should it count as a distinctive approach? Or does this term simply repackage established approaches? Discuss these questions with reference to at least three political theorists.
2. How should political theory relate to political science? Discuss, with reference to at least three political theorists.
3. What can work in political theory, such as Connolly’s work on the character of key political concepts, teach us about the claims for a *science* of politics, or the way in which the study of politics can be scientific? Discuss, with reference to at least three political theorists.
4. “Problem-driven approaches to political theory sacrifice the distinctive contribution of political theory to the study of politics, that is, illuminating great and enduring political goals and challenges.” Assess this claim with reference to at least three political theorists.

PART B: John Stuart Mill

1. What is the case for and against referring to Mill as a “deliberative democrat?” Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
2. To what extent, if any, does Mill’s call for plural voting (extra votes for more educated members of society) undercut the usual idea that he was a democrat? Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
3. C. B. Macpherson has called Mill and exemplary “developmental democrat, or proponent of a developmental conception of democracy. This characterization arguably characterizes several aspects of Mill’s political theory, including his defense of British colonialism. Challenge or defend these claims with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.
4. To what extent does Mill’s thought suggest that there is no necessary incompatibility between liberalism and democracy, and to what extent does it indicate tensions between liberalism and democracy. Discuss, with reference to at least two of Mill’s interpreters.

PART C: Representation

1. In what ways is democratic representation enabled and limited by electoral democracy? Are there forms of representation that promise to enhance democracy outside of, or beyond, electoral democracy? If so, what would be their functions and justifications?
2. Explain why, within political theory, the concepts of representation and democracy have had an uneasy relationship. Do the conceptual tensions reflect tensions in political institutions and practices? Your answer should reference as least three accounts of representation.
3. Is representation an inherent part of deliberative democracy? Or is it simply a compromise necessary to accommodate large-scale, mass democracies? Your answer should reference as least three accounts of representation.