

Phil 144: First Midterm Assignment

Winter, 2019

Instructions

Due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas, by 11:55pm Monday, February 4 (in PDF or any format easily converted to PDF, e.g. MSWord, OpenOffice, L^AT_EX, RTF, plain text).

Answer any *one* of the questions listed below in 2–3 pages (double spaced).

Each question is about some issue raised most centrally in a certain part of the reading. However, you can and should use material from anywhere in the text where it’s relevant to the answer.

Because this is an exam rather than a paper, I will give priority to accuracy over originality in grading. However, all the questions do require some thought; they can’t simply be read out of the texts. Moreover, in many (if not all) cases the “correct” answer is unavoidably a matter of interpretation: in such cases it would be safest to reproduce what I said in class, but it will also be acceptable if you’re clearly following some other reasonable interpretation. And, of course, as usual, your answer must be “original” in the sense that it is your own work. (If you use any outside source — which I *don’t* recommend — you must cite it.)¹

You can cite *Leviathan* by chapter and paragraph number (e.g. XIV.3) and/or page number in the Hackett edition. If you cite an outside source, you may use any citation format you want, just so long as you provide enough information for me to figure out what you are citing.

You can find answers to some commonly asked questions about my assignments and grading in my FAQ (<https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses/faq.html>).

¹If you have any questions about policies on plagiarism and related issues, please see https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct.

Questions

1. Discuss Hobbes's claim (Introduction.1) that a commonwealth is an "artificial man," that is, an artificial rational animal. Explain briefly what a *natural* animal is, according to Hobbes. What is its soul? What are its sensations and what are its passions? In what way, according to Hobbes, is a commonwealth like a (natural) animal (never mind whether this is a literal resemblance, an analogy, or a metaphor)? Explain why Hobbes says (again, Introduction.1) that the sovereignty is the artificial soul and that reward and punishment are artificial nerves. How, on the other hand, does this serve to emphasize the *difference* between a commonwealth and a natural animal, or even an automaton like a clock? (Hint: see XXI.5.)
2. Explain what Hobbes means by saying that the fundamental "law of nature" is: *seek peace*. Take into account the definition of "law of nature" at XIV.1, but also the statement at XV.36 that the laws of nature do not (always) bind *in foro externo* and, at XV.41, that the laws of nature are not, strictly speaking, laws. What kind of mistake do I make if I "disobey" the first law *in foro interno*, that is, if I do not *desire* that the first law should be obeyed (by everyone)? Why, according to Hobbes, is that *always* (eternally and immutably) a mistake?
3. The covenant that forms a commonwealth by institution is an agreement, among a multitude of individuals (or families), "to appoint one man or assembly of men to *bear their person*, and every one to own and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety" (XVII.13). What does "bear their person" mean? How is this a *covenant*? That is: what goods are the various parties promising to deliver to each other in the future? Why do the words "in those things which concern the common peace and safety" represent an apparent limitation on the right (authority) of the appointed person, but not any real limitation?
4. Explain why it is *not* true, according to Hobbes, that a father naturally (i.e., in a state of mere nature) has dominion over his children, simply by virtue of having generated them (brought them into being). How, according to Hobbes, could he gain dominion over them in a state of nature? Assuming that, in a certain commonwealth, fathers automatically gain a certain relative dominion over their children at birth, why does it follow that this must be

due to the civil laws? (Such a commonwealth might, in at least one sense of the term, be called a *patriarchy*.) What, according to Hobbes, might explain why such civil laws exist (what must have happened at the time the commonwealth was formed)?

5. Consider a civil law L such that the following are all true. (1) The sovereign had the right to command obedience to L . (2) No citizen has the right to violate L . (3) The sovereign has the right to punish violators of L with death or imprisonment. How can it be, according to Hobbes, that a citizen who has violated L , and has been justly sentenced, nevertheless has the right to flee or defend themselves against the sentence? Explain by taking careful account of what Hobbes means by “right,” and of the sense in which civil laws can limit the rights of subjects, also of the source he assigns to the right of punishment. (See especially XXI.5 and XXVIII.2.)

6. More choices will be added soon.