

# Hobbes's *Leviathan*

## Schedule

### 1. 26 September QUESTIONS

[1] Overview: what is *Leviathan* about and how is it structured? [2] What is the relationship between rights, liberty, and law? [3] On what does Hobbes base his assertions about the right and law of nature? [4] Is there such a thing as justice or right and wrong in the state of nature?

*Leviathan* ch. 13-15. Read *Leviathan* Ch. 13-21, 26.

### 2. 3 October LIBERTY

[1] What is the relationship between the metaphysical, moral, and legal uses of “liberty”? [2] Liberty, according to Hobbes, is compatible with coercive threats and absolute government. What is the relationship between liberty, in his sense, and the liberty that we value? [3] Hobbes’s theory of rights. Officially, rights are liberties, meaning the entail the absence of obligations. But he has to have the notion of a power (the ability to change obligations) and immunity (the inability of others to change one’s obligations) as well.

*Note:* we will start with the Political Theory Workshop, 12-1:20, Pick Hall 506. The seminar will regroup after the workshop.

[1] *Leviathan* 6.49-53; 14.1-7; 21. [2] Green, “Liberty in *Leviathan*” [<http://ptw.uchicago.edu/Green02.pdf>].

### 3. 10 October OBLIGATION IN THE STATE OF NATURE

Are there such things as right and wrong prior to the commonwealth? Barry and Martinich agree that the answer is yes, but they disagree about why. According to Barry, it’s because there are valid contracts in the state of nature. According to Martinich, it’s because there are valid laws, issued by God, in the state of nature.

[1] Barry, Brian. “Warrender and His Critics.” *Philosophy* 43 (1968): 117-37. [2] Martinich, A. P. *The Two Gods of Leviathan*. Cambridge UP, 1992. Ch. 3.

## 4. 17 October JUSTICE

Revisiting the same basic question about the existence of right and wrong in the state of nature, but focusing on justice. There are multiple definitions of justice in play: understood one way, there is no such thing as justice in the state of nature, understood another way, there is.

Green, Michael J. "Justice and Law in Hobbes." *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* (2003).

## 5. 24 October THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

There appear to be two versions of the social contract. In one, subjects authorize the sovereign to act on their rights. In the other, they abandon or alienate their rights. Are these two versions of the social contract consistent with one another?

*Leviathan* 16-18. Selections from Gauthier, Martinich.

## 5. 24 October AUTHORIZATION

[1] Broad themes of Hobbes's conception of sovereignty: how the social contracts (there are two: the commonwealth by institution in chapter 18 and the commonwealth by acquisition in chapter 21.) work; what the sovereign's rights are; different kinds of states; and justice between sovereigns and subjects. [2] Skinner's interpretation of the theory of authority in ch. 16.

[1] *Leviathan* 16-21. [2] *De Homine* ch. 15 (*Man and Citizen*, pp. 83-5). [3] Skinner, "Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State," in *Visions of Politics*, v. 3, pp. 177-208, esp. pp. 182-7.

## 6. 31 October THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

There appear to be two versions of the social contract. In one, subjects authorize the sovereign to act on their rights. In the other, they abandon or alienate their rights. Are these two versions of the social contract consistent with one another? If subjects abandon their rights, how do sovereigns act on them?

[1] *Leviathan* 17-18. [2] Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan*, pp. 149-61. [3] Martinich, *Hobbes*, pp. 107-25.

7. 7 November      EPISTEMOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

How does the way our minds work bear on what we can know? Pay special attention to: [a] the distinction between human beings and other animals and [b] what language adds to our cognitive toolkit.

*Leviathan* ch. 1-5.

8. 14 November    PASSION, ACTION, COGNITION

[1] The passions' role in action. [2] The passions' role in cognitive, intellectual activity. [3] The relationship between passions and thoughts about 'good' and 'evil' (Darwall's paper).

[1] *Leviathan* ch. 6-9. [2] Stephen Darwall, "Normativity and Projection in Hobbes," *Philosophical Review* 109 (2000): 313-347.

9. 21 November    SOCIAL RELATIONS, ACTION, COGNITION

Social interactions cause both behavior and belief. I'm especially interested in the latter. It seems to me that there is a thematic change after ch. 9. My hypothesis is that it involves moving from causes of belief and action internal to an individual to social causes of belief and action.

*Leviathan* ch. 10-13, 44-47 (part 4).

10. 28 November   PRESENTATIONS

## Course Information

All readings will be available through the Regenstein Library's reserve system.

Announcements and comments on lectures will be posted on the web at this address: <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/mgreen/HobbesF05/>

My office is 210 Stuart; phone: 702-8503. Office hours are Thursdays 2-4.

A 15-20 page paper is required for credit. You will be asked to make a 5-10 minute presentation about your paper in the last session and (possibly) one additional session during reading week. Papers are due December 10.