

Second paper topics

Write a paper no longer than 1800 words, about 5-6 pages, on one of the topics below. Please turn your paper in to my box in 208 Pearsons by 10 am on Friday, March 12. Good luck!

1. Hobbes held that there are no property rights in the state of nature: “every man has a right to everything, even to one another’s body (*Leviathan*, ch. 14, par. 4). Locke held that there are property rights in the state of nature but that the “enjoyment” of these rights is “very unsafe, very insecure” (*Second Treatise of Government*, §123). Is there a significant difference between these positions? Discuss what you regard as the most important reasons for thinking that there is a significant difference and the most important reasons for thinking there is not.
2. Hobbes described a peaceful and a violent way of forming a state. He called the first a commonwealth by institution (*Leviathan*, ch. 18) and the second a commonwealth by acquisition (*Leviathan*, ch. 20). He claimed that there is no important difference between the two. Explain what he meant and why this is a surprising thing to say. Then assess his claim: is he right that there is no important difference between the two?
3. Locke thought we have much more extensive natural rights than Hobbes did. For instance, Locke’s natural rights impose obligations while Hobbes’s right of nature does not. Describe the most important advantages and disadvantages of each philosopher’s position. Which one do you think is closer to the truth?
4. Locke tried to show that individuals have property rights prior to any social arrangements. Explain Locke’s argument for this conclusion: what did he try to prove and how did he try to prove it? Did he succeed? Consider at least one compelling objection and Locke’s possible responses in giving your answer.

