

Fall 2010
PhD Comprehensive Examination in Political Theory
Morning Session

Choose one of the following questions and make sure to include the question number and text at the start of your answer.

1. The political theorists listed below are representative of the great political thinkers in Ancient, Medieval and Modern Western European political thought and in American Political Thought. From each of a, b, c, and d, select ONE theorist. Describe the basic components and structure of the political theory of each. Compare and contrast these FOUR selections, identifying the similarities and differences in their theories.

- a) Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas
- b) Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume
- c) Burke, Bentham, J. S. Mill, Marx, Nietzsche
- d) Madison, John Adams, T. Jefferson, John Calhoun, H. D. Thoreau

2. Nozick argues that the use of an original position procedure for assigning grades would predictably fail to assign grades to the persons meriting those grades. This example, Nozick claims, illustrates the fallibility of an approach to justice that fails to ground its account of just distribution in historical entitlements. Evaluate Nozick's claim. How does Rawls justify the claim that the original position is a fair procedure for choosing principles of justice? Would this argument justify employing an original position procedure to assign grades? What would a Rawlsian response to Nozick reveal about the structure of justification in Rawls' theory?