

This assignment is due on Monday, June 5, in class.

Construct an essay of about five to seven pages on one of the topics listed below. (Your essays will be graded according to the clarity of your prose, the soundness of the understanding of course materials you display, and the cogency of your arguments.)

1. Marx writes, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." But he predicts an end to class struggle with the arrival of classless post-capitalist society. In another terminology, he writes, "The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production," so their passing brings "the prehistory of human society to a close." Explain what Marx means by these claims. What are his reasons for supposing that the rise of capitalism makes possible a transition to fully cooperative social relations on a footing of equality? Assess these reasons.

2. In chapter 3 of *On Liberty* Mill characterizes what he calls "individuality" and appeals to the value of individuality to support his liberty principle. What is his argument from individuality to the liberty principle? Is the argument sound? Why or why not? What exactly is the "liberty principle"? By affirming his liberty principle does Mill then disagree with Rousseau's claim that it is morally acceptable coercively to require individuals to conform to democratically enacted legislation that advances the common good (alternatively stated: legislation that embodies the general will)? Why or why not? If you see disagreement here between Mill and Rousseau, whose position is the more defensible and why? If you don't see disagreement between Mill and Rousseau here, explain how this is so, and either criticize or defend the Rousseau-Mill position as you understand it.

3. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* Marx argues that it would be desirable entirely to eliminate private property and that to this end the abolition of market exchange is needed. Explain what Marx means by these claims and state his main arguments for them. In a recommended reading, Michael Walzer urges that Marx's arguments properly evaluated support regulation not abolition of private property and market exchange. (A third position urges that Marx's arguments properly evaluated support neither abolition nor regulation of private property and market exchange.) Defend Marx's view on this topic against Walzer's, or Walzer's against Marx's, or attack both Marx's and Walzer's views.

4. In chapter 5 of the *Second Treatise on Government* Locke argues that an individual can legitimately acquire full permanent transferable private ownership rights over land and other material things. According to Locke, a morally legitimate government must respect and protect these (along with other) individual moral rights. Suppose that a government proposes to expropriate capitalist private property and those threatened with expropriation appeal to Locke to show that such a policy must be morally wrong. A government official appeals to Marx's writings (specifically our Marx course readings) to rebut Locke's argument against expropriation. Construct the best rebuttal argument or arguments the official following this strategy will be able to produce against Locke, and assess the argument(s) you have constructed.

5. Some critics claim that Mill affirms a bold-sounding liberty principle in chapter 1 of *On Liberty* and qualifies it to death or near-death when he introduces hedges and qualifications in chapters 4 and 5. Interpret Mill's liberty principle in the light of chapters 4 and 5. Has the principle become trivialized as the critic claims? Consider this example: does the liberty principle rightly interpreted protect an individual private property owner against egalitarian redistribution of property coercively imposed by government or society? Taking into account its chapters 4 and 5 qualifications, defend or attack the liberty principle that Mill espouses in *On Liberty*.