

**ADVANCE INFORMATION ON MIDTERM EXAM
FALL, 2007**

PHILOSOPHY 166

The midterm exam for this course will take place in our regular classroom (WLH 2207) on Friday, November 2, from 1:00-1:50 p.m. The exam will cover class materials (required readings, lectures, and handouts) up to and including the readings and lecture for Wednesday, Oct. 31.

No use of books or notes will be permitted at any time during this exam.

The exam will consist of essay questions drawn from the list below. On the actual exam three questions will be posed, and you will be asked to answer two of them. You will be asked to designate one of your answers your major response that will count for 60 per cent of your exam grade and the other as your minor response that counts for 40 per cent of your exam grade.

1. "Should it be said, that, by living under the dominion of a prince, which one might leave, every individual has given his *tacit* consent to his authority, and promised him obedience; it may be answered, that such an implied consent can only have a place, where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice. . . Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives, from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master, though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish the moment he leaves her." The quotation is from David Hume. It might be taken as a criticism of Locke's doctrines of consent and tacit consent to government. Summarize Locke's position on these points and defend or attack it. Your discussion should include a consideration of Hume's criticism.

2. State Locke's account of how the initial private appropriation of unowned land and the subsequent development of unequal possessions can be justified. Present an argument articulated by Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* that constitutes a significant criticism of Locke's justification of unequal private ownership. Either defend Locke against this line of criticism or defend Rousseau's critique of Locke on inequality.

3. According to Locke, a nondemocratic state could be morally legitimate, in the sense that it is morally justified in issuing coercive commands, which the members of society are morally obligated to obey. Rousseau disagrees. State Locke's position on this issue. Does Rousseau in *The Social Contract* develop what amount to sound arguments against Locke's position? If so, how so, and if not, why not?

4. Assume that the ideal of the social contract presented by Rousseau in *The Social Contract* is intended to the solution of the problem of the social evils analyzed by him in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Is Rousseau's account of the social contract, understood in this way, successful or unsuccessful? Why or why not? Explain the nature

of the problem posed by the *Discourse* and the nature of the solution proposed by *The Social Contract* (regarded in this way).

5. In Book I, chapter VII of *The Social Contract* Rousseau writes, “Thus, in order for the social compact to avoid being an empty formula, it tacitly entails the commitment—which alone can give force to the others—that whoever refuses to obey the general will will be forced to do so by the entire body. This means merely that he will be forced to be free.” Why according to Rousseau does being forced to obey the general will involve being forced to be free? What conceptions of the general will and of freedom does Rousseau presuppose in making this claim? Elucidate Rousseau’s position on this issue and defend or attack that position.

6. Rousseau has been interpreted as maintaining that political decisions are morally legitimate only if they are correct and that democratic procedures operating under the right conditions produce laws and policies that are correct and that therefore can be legitimate. (Morally legitimate decisions are those that generate moral obligations on the part of citizens to comply with their requirements.) Is Rousseau’s position so interpreted defensible? Does Rousseau really hold the position the interpretation attributes to him?

7. According to John Simmons’s essay “Tacit Consent and Political Obligation,” in what major ways are Locke’s doctrines of consent and tacit consent defective? If we correct the defects, to what conclusion or conclusions are we drawn according to Simmons? State and assess Simmons’s arguments.

8. “Thus, in marked contrast with the earlier tradition of contractarian thought, Rousseau makes the alienation of ‘powers, goods, and liberties’, that is the essence of the social contract, total and, in effect, irrevocable. The moral personality of the citizen as it emerges from the contract leaves no room for a right to private judgment in any sense that implies a claim to moral priority over the deliverances of the general will. Quite the opposite is, in fact, the case. Rousseau would appear to be demanding a deliberate suppression of any elements in the self that are in conflict with the expressed content of the general will.” --Do you agree or disagree? That is, does Rousseau advocate what readers should regard as excessive subordination of individual freedom to the general will?