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CS 203: Final Exam

INSTRUCTIONS: CHOOSE THREE FROM PART A, OR ONE FROM PART A AND ONE FROM PART B. ALSO CHOOSE ONE FROM PART C.

Part A. Short Essays: one paragraph each (10 points each/50 points).

1. "By a good law, I mean not a just law: for no law can be unjust. The law made by the sovereign power, and all that is done by such power, is warranted [i.e. justified] by every one of the people..."

Explain why Hobbes considers every human law to be just. How do you think he would define "justice" and a "just law"? What is his definition of a "good law"? According to Hobbes, do citizens have the right to resist if the laws passed by the sovereign are not good? Explain.

2. "Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person... The labor of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his."

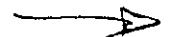
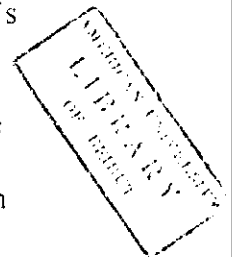
Explain how Locke uses these claims to justify the moral legitimacy of private property, including ownership of land. What qualifications or provisos does he add to this argument? Does this mean that there is private property in the state of nature? Briefly compare Locke's view with Hobbes' view on this issue.

3. "The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects are perhaps always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding. He... generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become... His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues."

Explain the process which Smith is describing here and briefly outline how it helps to increase economic efficiency. Then explain its role in making humans stupid and ignorant. How does Smith think these negative aspects should be counteracted? How do you think Marx would react to this proposal?

4. "Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence [system of laws] is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class."

What do Marx and Engels mean by saying that jurisprudence is just an outgrowth of bourgeois production (explain with reference to the base-superstructure theory)? Give another example of a feature of human life which they also claim is dependent on economic conditions, and show how it is influenced by these conditions. Based on this, do you think that Marx and Engels believe in absolute morality? Does this lead to problems for their theory?



Part B. Essay on the later texts (20 points/50 points).

1. Explain the difference between Hobbes' and Locke's conceptions of the state of nature. How does each author use this hypothetical device to explain the true function of government? How does a state of nature differ from a state of civil society? Show how the differing conceptions they have of the state of nature result in differing conceptions of government, the limits of political authority, and the right of resistance.

2. Explain the difference, according to Smith, between wages and profit. Why can't we consider profit to be wages paid for the effort of inspecting and directing a business? How does Marx use this distinction between wages and profit to conclude that profit is exploitation of the workers?

How do you think Kant and Mill would respond to Marx's claim that profit is illegitimate? Based on the above, do you think it is correct to say that profit is immoral? Justify your answer.

Part C. Essay on the whole course (20 points/50 points).

(Questions on: Descartes, Hume, Kant (Prolegomena), Kant (Morals), Mill, Goethe, Hobbes, Locke, Smith, Malthus, Marx & Engels. In your answers, please refer to at least two of the earlier texts.)

1. This semester we have read texts which represent Enlightenment thought at its purest, but we have also discussed critiques of Enlightenment philosophy.

Discuss one or two themes which dominate the philosophy of the Enlightenment with reference to two or more texts we have read (primacy of reason, perfectibility and progress of human beings, organization of society along rational lines, conquest of nature through science, etc.). Then discuss one or two criticisms of these themes, as they are represented in two or more texts which are critical of the Enlightenment. Which position do you think is more convincing?

2. What are some of the differing conceptions of human nature found in these texts? Are human beings naturally moral, or do we have to be trained or forced to be moral? Are human beings born with some basic knowledge, or do we have to acquire it through the senses? Can human beings progress or are we doomed to stagnate or to degenerate? Which conception do you think is most plausible?