

PSCI 3320 - Introduction to Modern Political Philosophy
Midterm Exam Questions

Select ONE from EACH of the following sections to answer. You should answer in as much detail as possible *without getting lost in the detail*. I do NOT expect direct quotations from the text, but you should refer to it in your answer. The goal is to indicate that you have processed, retained, and understood the text and its arguments.

New Atlantis

1. Name each of the three characters that the narrator encounters in the process of the story. Describe the content of each of the speeches given by each of these characters. What does each character contribute to the story? What is the topic on which each is authoritative. In your answer, indicate who you believe to be the ruling authority in Bensalem and what about their speech suggests this to you. For the last part of this, you may also find it helpful to refer to the other speeches – what they lack that is necessary to rule that is present in the speech you select.
2. What three questions are asked of Joabin by the narrator? Which does he answer and which does he NOT answer? Based on the speech that he *does* give, how might we suspect he would have had to answer the omitted question truthfully? What about his speech suggests that he would have had to answer in the way you claim?
3. What are the TWO aspects of the "end" of the foundation of Salomon's House? In what way(s) are these twinned ends related? Describe at least two of the "instruments and preparations" (including experimental "houses") that Solomon's House has and how they contribute to the goal(s)/ends of the foundation. Be sure to explain this relationship clearly. Are the ends/goals of Solomon's House ultimately achievable, or do they make for a project of *perpetual* but unending progress? Justify your conclusion on this last part with evidence from the text.

New Organon and The Great Instauration

1. What are the FOUR Idols of the Mind that Bacon articulates in *New Organon*? Select two of these and explain what they are, and what their particular difficulties are for the human understanding. You should be explicit in your explanation. What is the origin of each? Are they able to be eradicated? If so, how? If not, how might we combat them so as to mitigate against the detrimental effects that they may have if left unchecked?
2. In the *Great Instauration*, Bacon says that "there may be a great variety of potties in civil government but only one in the sciences, which is the popular." however various are the forms of civil polities, there is but one form of polity in the sciences; and that always has been and always will be popular" (10). Does Bacon intend his scientific project to be popular in the sense that participatory democracy is popular? To what extent is the scientific project popular? What problems does popular opinion pose for scientific pursuit of truth? Does the discovery of truth generally agree with or cause trouble for (by raising questions about) popular opinion?
3. Bacon attacks Aristotle and Aristotelian logic vehemently thought nearly all of his scientific work. Aristotle's logic is consistently rejected as a path to true knowledge of nature. Yet, Bacon admits that this same logic may have at least one place in the world he envisions! What is wrong with dialectic and syllogistic reasoning according to Bacon? How does it prevent us from attaining true knowledge of nature? What *is* the place that it might serve? How does its defect in pursuit of true knowledge of nature become a strength in the role Bacon sees for it?

Leviathan

1. Hobbes indicates that he knows others may find fault in or take offense with *Leviathan*, particularly with his use of scripture (DL). Indicate at least two instances in which Hobbes uses scripture to support his argument that are controversial for true believers in his audience. What is controversial about Hobbes' use of them? What purpose do they serve for Hobbes' argument?
2. How does sense perception work, according to Hobbes? Describe the process. What does his theory of sense perception have to say about the "things" outside of us? What implication does this have for government and Political life? What is the connection between political life, for Hobbes, and what we learn of nature from his theory of sense perception?
3. Describe the state of nature depicted by Hobbes. What is life like there? How does this theory of nature justify Hobbes philosophy for government? What are the grounds for "legitimate government" according to Hobbes? On what basis does he advocate for a SINGLE authority, given his argument for government from the state of nature he describes? What are *at least* one advantage *and* disadvantage of the authoritarianism advocated by Hobbes?
4. What are the THREE MAIN things that human beings are to learn by reason in the state of nature – the three FIRST "laws of nature"? How do these things manifest themselves in the rest of Hobbes' theory of government? Give *at least* THREE other "virtues" we learn from the laws of nature and explain them. Are the three you list in accordance with, or derived from, the three main – first three – things we learn by reason from the state of nature?