

Political Foundations

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Overview

1. Purpose of government
2. Classical Liberalism
 - a. Rights v. Duties
 - b. Sovereignty
 - c. Limited Government
3. Liberalism and Democracy
4. The Declaration and Constitution

Purpose of Government

1. Question of the *origin* of government
2. “Ancient”
 - a. Aristotle and regimes
 - b. Rights?
3. Liberalism more radical than it seems

State of Nature

1. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke
2. Importance or: What it Gives Us
 - a. Should I stay or Should I go? If I go, on what conditions do I do so?
 - b. Equality? In what sense?
 - c. Rights
3. John Locke & Liberalism
 - a. Retention of natural rights in government
 - i. Limits and sets purpose of government
 - b. Consent/sovereignty
 - c. Rebellion

Liberalism

1. Liberalism and Democracy
 - a. Strange bedfellows?
 - b. Principles and structure
2. Tension: majoritarian authority v. individual rights
3. Clarity on “liberal” and “conservative” vis-à-vis Liberalism

Declaration of Independence

1. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with **certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That **to secure these rights, Governments are instituted** among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”
2. List of grievances!
3. Generally taken by Supreme Court to be the embodiment of the “spirit” or principles behind the positive rules of the Constitution
 - a. Interpretation: Thomas v. Breyer, *e.g.*

Constitution

1. Federalist Papers
 - a. *Political arguments* supporting adoption of Constitution
2. Legal document
 - a. Structures a *functional/practicable* Liberal government
3. Separation of powers (Articles I–III, especially)
 - a. Checks and balances
 - b. Federalism
4. Bill of Rights