

Please answer one question from each section.

I. Approaches to Political Theory

1. Political theory is a historically embedded practice: scholars are historically located and theories under scrutiny are historically located. Given this, how can scholars situate themselves to evaluate the merits of and to engage a political theory? Discuss critically, drawing on at least three thinkers.
2. John Keane accuses Quentin Skinner of endorsing uncritical encounters with history, complaining that Skinner's method is "at least consonant with" liberal or conservative politics as opposed to (radical) democratic politics, the latter of which, for Keane, requires a different interpretative strategy. Discuss critically, drawing on at least three thinkers.
3. What is "critical theory," and in what sense could it be called a "method"? Are there reasons to think that the method of critical theory is more closely attuned to "the political" than other methods? In your answer, engage as at least three thinkers who count as critical theorists.
4. Through attention to speech acts and historical context, Cambridge School scholars such as Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock have elaborated how to grasp the meaning of a historical text. Those with hermeneutical sensibilities and those with genealogical sensibilities depart from this Cambridge School understanding of the purpose of reading historical texts, and the method for such reading. Reflecting on the purpose of and method for reading historical texts, explain the core differences among the Cambridge School, hermeneutical and genealogical perspectives, and critically explore the political implications of these differences. Draw on at least three thinkers.

II. Hobbes

1. Thomas Hobbes is an absolutist; his leviathan-sovereign has authority over the meaning of justice and all other political terms. In what way then might Hobbes be said to set a stage for a value-plural liberal society? What does Hobbes's work posit as mechanisms that may permit value pluralism, that is, human political difference that is relatively free of violence? Draw on Hobbes and at least two other thinkers.
2. Does Thomas Hobbes work to purge politics (as irrational?) to win security from violence? Or does Hobbes secure politics through the use of violence? Given that Hobbes is a proto-liberal, what does your answer suggest about the liberal state? Draw on Hobbes and at least two other thinkers.
3. To what extent is Hobbes's political theory of the state, including proto-liberal dimensions, very much a product of its seventeenth century English context? And to what extent – and in what ways – does it transcend its original context? Draw on Hobbes and at least two other thinkers.

III. Tocqueville

1. Alexis de Tocqueville charts the faces of (the founding of) US democracy and emergent-French democracy, tracing processes of historical change and seeing violence in both. Clarify what role he sees violence playing in these two distinct democratizing contexts. Discuss whether he sees such violence as intrinsic to modern mass nation-state democratization or only to these specific historical contexts / experiences with democratization. Draw on Tocqueville and at least two other thinkers.
2. How does Alexis de Tocqueville both lament Euro-American colonial violence against Indigenous Americans, on one hand, and on the other hand, prescribe partial colonization and total domination by the French in Algeria? What is his normative attitude toward political violence as conquest and how does that sit with the rest of his political values? Draw on Tocqueville and at least two other thinkers.
3. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville points to (US) democracy's mild manners and mores; he also describes relations among "Anglo-Americans", "Indians" and "Negroes" as central to the "American" experiment but not "democratic". Do Tocqueville's accounts of the US, France and Algeria reveal violent drives intrinsic to modern democratization? Is this in fact part of his thesis about democracy? Or does he unwittingly reveal modern democratization as intrinsically violent? Or do his analyses show that modern democratization is not necessarily violent but that violence is context dependent? Draw on Tocqueville and at least two other thinkers.

IV. Democracy and violence

1. In the liberal tradition, we encounter narratives that frame liberalism / liberal democracy as a reaction against violence and a solution to it. Survey at least two alternative accounts of the relationship between liberalism / liberal democracy and violence, and compare and assess these. Draw on at least three thinkers.
2. Hannah Arendt draws a strong conceptual and practical distinction between power and violence. She makes several interesting and provocative claims: (1) Violence, she says, always destroys power; (2) the goal of politics should be power; and (3) those kinds of regimes that protect and cultivate "the political" are also the most powerful. Explain and assess Arendt's concepts of power and violence, and compare her approach to power and violence to at least two other thinkers.
3. What is the relationship between politics and violence? How one imagines this relationship hinges on how one defines these concepts – "politics" and "violence". Survey at least two different ways of conceptualizing "politics" and explore whether or how each implicitly or explicitly conveys a companion

meaning for “violence”. Compare and assess these different conceptual approaches. Draw on at least three thinkers.

4. Does liberal democracy signify a delegitimation of political violence or a sanctioning of political violence? Or both simultaneously? Draw on at least three thinkers.