

Study Guide questions (partial) with answer outlines, to help with first papers

1. Explain why the scientific revolution occurred and how the science of the time differed from previously. What new view of the universe developed, and why is Isaac Newton so important in that development?
 - a. Occurred because:
 - i. greater interest in material world, in part because medieval world started it (e.g., Albert the Great) and in part because after the Protestant Revolt and the disunity that resulted, many people gave up on being able to find clear and certain truth in theology and philosophy.
 1. Note, the medievals used observation and inductive reasoning (i.e., basics of the scientific method).
 - ii. new ideas opened major doors (e.g., heliocentrism)
 - iii. greater sharing of information, so they could build knowledge much faster
 - b. New view of universe:
 - i. Heliocentric
 - ii. Outer space vs. “the heavens” = the stuff outside the earth is just the same as the stuff on earth – mere matter – moon made of dirt, too – ellipses, not perfect circles – huge, and we’re just a little speck
 - iii. Mechanical view – the earth and universe are like big machines
 - c. Newton is important because he explains the laws that bring it all together – the universe functions in all the same way (gravity, motion) and we can measure and predict it all with math (*Principia Mathematica*)
2. Discuss and critique the ideas of Hobbes and Rousseau, explaining the anthropology (idea of man) underlying their political (and educational) philosophies.
 - a. Hobbes’ new political philosophy (social contract theory) in his book *Leviathan*:
 - i. Humans are naturally self-seeking, period.
 - ii. There is no natural moral law (or we all just ignore it anyway, so who cares), everyone is naturally “free” to do whatever he/she wants
 - iii. In the state of nature (no king or laws), we’ll all fight endlessly as we seek our own advantage (“war of all against all”)
 1. Therefore, the state of nature is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”
 - iv. To make things better, humans band together and agree to give up their freedom in exchange for peace and security by establishing a king with absolute power (absolute monarchy) = the social contract.
 - v. The absolute monarch must always be obeyed, or we revert to the horrible state of nature. We have to obey, because we agreed to do so by accepting the social contract.
 - vi. Critique:
 1. Hobbes is very *individualistic*, whereas humans are naturally communal, not just isolated individuals fending for themselves. We’re born into families, need other people, naturally desire to love and be loved, naturally tend to trust others and form relationships with honesty and justice and love.
 2. Misunderstands freedom and authority, pitting them against each other. Thinks that we are all naturally “free” to do whatever we

want, and denies that anyone has natural authority (from God), such as parents or existing rulers.

3. Very unrealistic. There is no real state of nature as Hobbes imagines; it's never existed. Humans are fallen and wicked, but also still fundamentally good and tend to love their children and friends and look out for each other.
 - a. Also, no social contract that anyone ever wrote or signed.
4. Anti-religious. God is not fundamentally a part of the picture and the whole system is designed to exclude God and natural authority, putting an artificially-constructed, individual-chosen authority in its place. Hobbes has scrapped the traditional view in order to replace it with a non-Christian view that marginalizes Christianity and doesn't need the faith as unifying/justifying the nation.
5. Justifies tyranny – no higher authority by which to judge the king, no limit to the king's power.
6. If there's no higher authority, why should I obey the king? Why should I not still behave as I would in the state of nature, cheating, stealing, killing to get ahead, as long as I can get away with it? Leads to "might makes right."

b. *Locke – Note:

- i. Locke insists on natural law and natural rights. Thus, constitutional monarchy, with limits to the power of the king
- ii. And he strongly advocates for religious tolerance because all religion is opinion. And thus faith should be private – keep it to yourself, not part of public discussion, organization, or law

c. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*:

- i. State of nature is blissful and serene; everyone is naturally good, free, equal and respectful of everyone else ("noble savage").
 1. Therefore, raising children should be as hands-off as possible. Just let them explore and educate themselves, don't punish, let them be "free", and they will turn out good.
- ii. Civilization ruins the state of nature, because now we have some people having/taking more for themselves (inequality) and trying to control others (loss of freedom).
- iii. The solution is to get back to being free and equal while still having the advantages of civilization. How? By founding society on the equal and free choice of every citizen, called the general will, so that all laws are really my own laws and thus I'm still free and equal with everyone else
 1. Could mean democracy – everyone gets an equal vote about everything
 2. Or could mean paternalism or even tyranny, since whatever the law says is an expression of the general will, which includes my own will/choice (even if I don't know it), so the law is always right and it's always my own law, so I'm always free and freely choose the law (deep down) even if I explicitly say that I reject it.
- iv. Critique:
 1. Like Hobbes, very individualistic

- a. The logical conclusion is that not even families are natural social units, and that children should be able to “divorce” their parents to get new ones if they want
 2. Like Hobbes, based on a misunderstanding of freedom
 3. Like Hobbes, marginalizes religion and puts law in its place
 4. Like Hobbes, justifies tyranny
 5. Like Hobbes, very naïve
 - a. Though in different way from Hobbes. Totally naïve about human goodness, ignoring that we’re all corrupt and tend to selfishness. Hobbes goes with total depravity, Rousseau (and most liberals) completely forget about the Fall.
 - b. The truth is that we’re both naturally good and also fallen (messed up), and we need to remember both of those truths in order to have a correct vision of humanity
 6. Like Hobbes, elevates human law to the position of God. Law in the social contract nation can never be wrong.
 - a. Locke is better on this point. The American experiment is more indebted to Locke, the French Revolution more indebted to Rousseau.
 7. Unlike Hobbes, tries to hold on to equality, ignoring obvious distinctions and natural authority – justifies attacking the aristocracy and monarchs (French Rev.)
 8. Unlike Hobbes, thinks that we don’t have to give up any freedom in order to have civilization – *we are the law and there is none higher* – “All ways are *my* ways”
3. (partly overlapping with the previous question) Describe the tenets of liberalism and the Enlightenment (hint: freedom, individualism, authority and “equality”, philosophical skepticism, scientific emphasis, rationalism, religious “liberty”/tolerance, secularism, Deism).
 - a. Freedom means the ability to do whatever I want, though I may have to temper that to not intrude on someone else’s “unlimited freedom”
 - b. Individualism: The individual reigns supreme. We are by nature first individuals with no community or authority, and then we can *choose* to create communities. All community is artificial (not natural), created by individuals by choice.
 - c. Equality: There is no authority over me; we’re all equal and no one gets to tell anyone else what to do, except when we’ve agreed to give authority to someone. All authority is from individual choice.
 - d. Skepticism, rationalism, science: We really can’t be certain about much, except maybe scientific things, because everyone can see and agree about those, but we disagree about philosophy and theology, so those are unclear and mostly just opinion (there is no truth except science/math)
 - i. In order to avoid disagreements that lead to violence, emphasis on math, science and less disagreement-prone matters, to the point of rationalism, namely that I will only accept as true what can be “*proven*” scientifically
 - e. Religious liberty: Religion is a matter of private viewpoints or personal opinions, and thus we can’t debate it, and so we should just leave everyone “free” to believe and practice their own religion.

- f. Secularism: Thus, religion needs to be kept at the margins of society (private) and cannot be brought into public discussions or used as the basis of laws (secularism)
 - i. Except it seems clear that there is a God, so we can accept that as a truth in public, but not much else, so we can believe in a God who created the world, but doesn't get involved in its affairs after that (deism)
- g. Two versions of government
 - i. as a necessary evil (trading freedom for security/luxuries), that should be as small as possible and focus on protecting individual rights □ contemporary libertarianism
 - ii. as a source of remaking the world "rationally", and thus absolute monarchs are acceptable in order to crush the infamous thing, etc. □ contemporary welfare state
- a. Explain how a certain view of freedom was at the heart of the Enlightenment.
 - iii. See "b" immediately above. Almost all the tenets of the Enlightenment are about protecting "freedom"
 - 1. Individualism – because free choice is fundamentally about each person being able to do whatever they want. Community places demands and limits on me.
 - 2. No real (natural) authority – because that would limit freedom
 - 3. Religion and a God who is involved in the world would limit freedom and place demands on me
- 4. (partly overlapping with the previous question) Explain how the so-called Age of Enlightenment is the historical result of the principles of the Protestant Revolution and the disunity that resulted from it.
 - a. The Protestant Revolt is not the only contributor, by any means, but it is arguably the most significant, on two levels:
 - i. First, Protestant philosophy/theology is decidedly individualistic, encouraging the individualism of the Enlightenment
 - 1. Individual salvation [Jesus and me], no need for tradition [Bible alone], no need for church/community or saints [Jesus alone], no need for church authority [private interpretation of Scripture]
 - 2. Thus, everyone is "free" to interpret the Bible for themselves (and believe what they want)
 - 3. Thus, church is fundamentally an optional thing, a community that we join of our own free will *after* being saved – like the social contract
 - 4. Salvation is artificial – God just *declares* us righteous/saved, apart from us actually *being* righteous/good in ourselves or living a good life. God's word is supreme, regardless of reality deep down.
 - a. Paves the way for affirming the absolute authority of the state apart from natural rights
 - ii. Second, the Protestant Revolution led to a loss of faith in faith. Christianity is full of division and thus uncertainty, it seems to many, so they give up on the Church as a source of unity or truth, replacing it with reason – especially scientific reasoning