

Modern History

St. Augustine's Enrichment Tutorial Upper School I -- **Midterm Exam** Study Guide

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 reasoning from what we can see (i.e., basics of induction and 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
 - 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 = 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 has 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 – though Hobbes wants there to be one, i.e., a constitution.
 4. Anti-religious. God is not fundamentally a part of the picture and the whole system is designed to exclude God and natural authority from nations, 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 it to be a unifying/justifying factor in the nation.
 5. Justifies tyranny – no higher authority by which to judge the king, no limit to the king’s power.
 - a. 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. 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, cause now we have some people having/taking more for themselves (inequality) and trying to control others.
 - 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, interestingly, 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
 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: there are natural rights and law has limits. 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: individualism, freedom, authority and “equality”, philosophical skepticism, scientific emphasis, rationalism, religious “liberty”/tolerance, secularism, Deism).
 - a. The individual reigns supreme. We’re naturally first individuals with no community or authority, and then we can *choose* to create communities
 - b. 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”
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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 more just opinion (there is no truth)
 - 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. Religion is a matter of private view or personal opinion, and thus we can’t debate it, and so we should just leave everyone “free” to believe and practice their own religion.

- f. 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)
 - a. Explain how a certain view of freedom was at the heart of the Enlightenment.
 - ii. See "b" immediately above
- 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 – 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
- 5. Explain when the most absolute of monarchies developed and why, and to what they led.
 - a. Developed only in the Enlightenment (1700s), not in the medieval era, because the Christian Middle Ages believed that authority was natural and ultimately came from God, and thus had limits and was designed to serve the common good, and authority was also best distributed and kept as local as possible.
 - i. However, the Enlightenment tends to elevate individual freedom to a position of absolute authority which can only be kept in check by very powerful monarchs (Hobbes), and it tends to deify the state instead of God as the new, rational source of human fulfillment and happiness so that the more organized and strong the state is, the better for its people.
 - ii. Absolute monarchies developed at the time also because kings/queens were seeking power, a very old story, and now the main check on their power, the church, had been much weakened (due to the Protestant Revolt and rising secularism). Church and state belong together, and if the Church is weakens, then the state will grow and dominate.
 - b. This led to the final destruction of feudalism, and, ironically, to the destruction of absolute monarchies, too, because the absolute monarchs are promoting an Enlightenment philosophy of "freedom" and "equality" which undermines strong authority, and eventually leads to people replacing monarchy with democracy/republicanism.

6. Describe and evaluate the goals and accomplishments of the so-called Enlightened Despots, including their attitudes towards Christianity and religion.
 - a. Goals/accomplishments:
 - i. Centralization of power/control under the monarch – mostly bad – too much power at top level and crushing of local authority
 - ii. Standardization (contra feudalism) – practical and helpful (good) but also led to loss of local uniqueness (bad)
 - iii. Huge bureaucracies – mostly bad
 - iv. Major building projects – lots of beautiful and useful creations (buildings, art, roads, canals, etc.)
 - v. Tax reform (more equal payment among nobility) – good
 - vi. Penal system reform – good, insofar as helped make things more humane and just
 - vii. Religious liberty – good, insofar as it curbed religious persecution and allowed space for people to seek and live the truth as they knew it; bad, insofar as the justification for it was that religion is just opinion and doesn't matter (religious indifferentism) and led to marginalizing/privatizing religion
 - viii. Standing armies funded by the state – very expensive (bad), but leads to less mercenaries and pillaging (good), but also leads to massive international warfare such as the Seven Years War (bad)
 - ix. Ending some feudal practices that didn't make sense any more (e.g., corvée) – good
 - x. Improved conditions of serfs (in Prussia and Austria) – good
 - xi. Catholic Church attacked and marginalized – contemplative religious orders closed, some Church property taken, Jesuits attacked, pushing Church out of the public sphere into the merely private
 - a. What was happening to the Church and within the Church during this time (1700s)?
 - i. Lots of good things done by the Church, rise of religious orders, service to the world, reforming of problems, great saints, etc. Most priests and bishops were good and faithful.
 - ii. Also, problems of
 1. Corruption (e.g., pluralism = having more than one diocese for the money/power)
 2. Some bishops/priests infected with Enlightenment ideas (even a few atheist bishops!)
 3. Heresy (Gallicanism, Jansenism)
 4. Loss of the Jesuits
7. Explain the role (both ideal and factual) that the elite in any culture have (including our own) and what a “maker of culture” is.
 - a. Most people in the 1700s don't actually accept most of the Enlightenment ideas, but the elite (wealthy, educated, specially skilled) do, and they slowly spread those ideas to everyone else over the course of decades and actually centuries. It's still going on.

- i. Voltaire learns to appeal to the masses through his plays and works of fiction. People are powerfully influenced through “popular culture”, a lesson that the liberal elites of our own world have learned very well.
 - b. The elite, the leaders of society, should use their position to help improve the ideas and lives of people and the whole community. They have a position of moral authority (and sometimes also juridical authority) given to them by God to be used for the good, to lead people through a life of service to truth and goodness.
- 8. Describe three key characteristics of Baroque painting. What is the purpose of art in the Catholic Baroque revival. Describe neo-classical painting, including its common purpose, and compare it to Baroque.
- 9. Explain the reasons for the French Revolution; why did it happen?
- 10. List the five different governments that France had from 1789 to 1792.