

Name:
Miss Votovich
Honors Government
Date:

Summer Assignment: Political Thinking Portfolio

Welcome to Honors Government! I am so excited to spend the upcoming school year with you. Your summer assignment is divided into three parts. Please complete them in sequential order as they build upon the previous one. Look out for bonus opportunities on this assignment. On your second day of class, you will submit this entire packet for a grade to prepare for the first assessment of the semester.

Part I: Philosophical Origins of Government

Read and annotate the attached passages from three major thinkers of the Enlightenment: John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. After reading, you will complete the Philosophy Chart.

Philosopher	View of Human Nature	Purpose of Government	Rights of Citizens	Role of Citizens	When can government be challenged?
John Locke					
Thomas Hobbes					
Jean-Jacques Rousseau					

Part II: Modern Connection

The concepts you have just read about are not dead; they are constantly evolving and shaping our modern political arena. For this portion you will identify 3 current events or political issues in the news that may relate to one or more of the Enlightenment Thinkers. You may use information from the following places: news articles, political cartoons, editorials, campaign advertisements, social media posts, Supreme Court decisions, speeches, protests/movements, legislation, or local/state/national events. Please do your best to limit your findings to one social media post, and avoid celebrity gossip framed as politics, purely partisan ranting, unsupported opinion pieces, AI-generated summaries, or conspiracy content. For each of your topics, please complete the following prompts in complete sentences.

Some relevant topics to keep an eye out for as you scroll are privacy vs national security, voting laws, censorship/social media moderation, protests/civil disobedience, immigration policy, policing and public safety, gun policy, free speech controversies, Supreme Court decisions, executive power, government surveillance, public health mandates, student protests on college campuses, federal vs state power, or campaign finance.

Topic 1: _____

In no more than 4 sentences, answer the following questions:

- a. Who is the source/publisher? When did this take place?
- b. What happened?
- c. Who is involved?

- d. Which philosopher would most strongly support or criticize this issue/event and why?

Topic 2: _____

In no more than 4 sentences, answer the following questions:

- e. Who is the source/publisher? When did this take place?

- f. What happened?

- g. Who is involved?

- h. Which philosopher would most strongly support or criticize this issue/event and why?

Topic 3: _____

In no more than 4 sentences, answer the following questions:

- i. Who is the source/publisher? When did this take place?
- j. What happened?
- k. Who is involved?
- l. Which philosopher would most strongly support or criticize this issue/event and why?

Part III: Final Reflection

In a response of at least 10 sentences, please respond to the following question using the information you have learned and topics you identified in the media. You may begin your response below the question.

Which philosopher's ideas are most relevant to the United States today?

Selected Passages of the Enlightenment Thinkers
Be sure to ANNOTATE these readings as part of your portfolio!

John Locke

...To properly understand political power and trace its origins, we must consider the state that all people are in naturally. That is a state of perfect freedom of acting and disposing of their own possessions and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature. People in this state do not have to ask permission to act or depend on the will of others to arrange matters on their behalf. The natural state is also one of equality in which all power and jurisdiction is reciprocal and no one has more than another. It is evident that all human beings—as creatures belonging to the same species and rank and born indiscriminately with all the same natural advantages and faculties—are equal amongst themselves. They have no relationship of subordination or subjection unless God (the lord and master of them all) had clearly set one person above another and conferred on him an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty...

...whenever the Legislators endeavor to take away, and destroy the Property of the People, or to reduce them to Slavery under Arbitrary Power, they put themselves into a state of War with the People, who are thereupon absolved from any farther Obedience, and are left to the common Refuge, which God hath provided for all Men, against Force and Violence. Whensoever therefore the Legislative shall transgress this fundamental Rule of Society; and either by Ambition, Fear, Folly or Corruption, endeavor to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other an Absolute Power over the Lives, Liberties, and Estates of the People; By this breach of Trust they forfeit the Power, the People had put into their hands, for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the People, who have a Right to resume their original Liberty...

Thomas Hobbes

The final cause, end, or design of men (who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in Commonwealths, is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war which is necessarily consequent, as hath been shown, to the natural passions of men when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants...

...In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth, no navigation nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

...Now, because the sovereign is made out of nothing but its constituent individuals, it doesn't and can't have any interest contrary to theirs; so there's no need for it to provide its subjects with guarantee of treating them well, because the body can't possibly wish to hurt all its members, and—as we'll see later on— it can't hurt any individual one of them either. The sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it ought to be. But the situation is different with respect to the relation of the subjects to the sovereign: despite their common interest, the sovereign would have no security that the subjects would behave as they have committed themselves to behaving unless it found some way to be assured of their fidelity. The fact is that each individual as a man can have a particular will that doesn't fit, and even conflicts with, the general will that he has as a citizen. His individual self-interest may speak to him quite differently from how the common interest does.

To renounce your liberty is to renounce your status as a man, your rights as a human being, and even your duties as a human being. There can't be any way of compensating someone who gives up everything. Such a renunciation is incompatible with man's nature; to remove all freedom from his will is to remove all morality from his actions... Let us take it that men have reached the point at which the obstacles to their survival in the state of nature overpower each individual's resources for maintaining himself in that state. So this primitive condition can't go on; the human race will perish unless it changes its manner of existence.

To protect the social compact from being a mere empty formula, therefore, it silently includes the undertaking that anyone who refuses to obey the general will is to be compelled to do so by the whole body. This single item in the compact can give power to all the other items. It means nothing less than that each individual will be forced to be free. It's obvious how forcing comes into this, but. . . to be free? Yes, because this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence, i.e. secures him against being taken by anyone or anything else. This is the key to the working of the political machine; it alone legitimises civil commitments which would otherwise be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to frightful abuses.

Bonus: Political Cartoon

Select one of the topics/issues/events discussed in Part II of this assignment and create an original political cartoon that illustrates what is happening and who is involved and its significance. Your design must be hand drawn, school appropriate, take up at least half of the page, no stick figures, no tracing, and use at least 5 colors. You may use the rest of this paper to draw it, or attach a new sheet!