Political Theory Comprehensive Examination   August 2013
Major Field Examination
Day 1

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer one question from each of the following three groups. Please identify clearly each question answered, and avoid repetition between answers. Answers are expected to respond directly to the specific questions asked. Write out and sign (by number) the pledge on the face of your exam. This is a closed-book exam. You are not to refer to any written material or discuss this examination with anyone. You have six hours for this exam, and six for day two.

If you do not type, please attempt to write legibly. Use blue or black ink, and please skip lines.

I

1. Does the concept of 'virtue' remain essentially the same in the writings of Ancient Greek, Hellenistic and Christian thinkers, or do these traditions understand the notion of 'virtue' differently? Discuss with reference to at least three writers.

2. St. Augustine is often portrayed as a political realist. Is that a fair characterization of his thought and to what extent is his stance representative of pre-modern Christian political ethics more generally? Discuss with reference to at least two of the following: the Bible, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, Luther, and Calvin

II
3. Histories of modern political theory generally pay great attention to the triumph of democratic thought. Yet not all modern thinkers support democracy. Discuss at least two significant thinkers who oppose democracy in their works, and critically examine their arguments.

4, Is Marx's critique of capitalism motivated by considerations of justice, or is his work a critique of justice itself?

III

5. Nietzsche, Freud and Foucault are all concerned in one way or another with the ways in which human agency is conditioned by forms of power and discipline. To what extent and in what ways are their theories committed to the assumption that the relevant kinds of power and discipline are threats to human freedom that should be resisted?

6. Critically assess the ability of liberal political theory to address multicultural issues and issues of gender inequality.