

## THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679)

### IPT, chapters 3 and 4, on Hobbes [69-83 and 103-110]

- The role of **historicity** in understanding the *Leviathan* (in this case: British **gradualism**)
- Basic outline of the *Leviathan* (75): the **state of nature**, the **laws of nature**, and **sovereign authority**
  - “Reason, Hobbes argues, is a vital part of human nature but it is harnessed to our desire for power and naturally outweighed by our passions...if passion does outweigh reason...then we have to find an artificial way...to bring the passions in line with reason. This is politics” (77)
  - Justifying the **Leviathan**: “we need...stable incentives to move beyond our natural right to everything” (79)
- Hobbes’ **resolutive-compositive method**: ‘take it all apart and put it back together’
- Elsewhere in the *Leviathan*, Hobbes makes a compelling case that “natural liberty and equality are just not compatible with ‘commodious’ and peaceful living.” (83) Do you agree? Who, historically, has disagreed? Agreed?
- Why does the Leviathan need absolute power, according to Hobbes? Is this a compelling argument? (106-8)

### Hobbes’ *Leviathan* [MPT, 43-64]

#### Chapter XVII: Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Commonwealth: “covenants, without swords, are but words”

- “the only way to erect...a common power [as would protect each individual from foreigners and mutual aggression] is to confer all their power and strength upon one man...that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will... and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgments, to his judgment.” [50]

#### Chapter XXVI: Of Civil Laws

- Distinguishing **common law** from **civil law**, **natural law** from **positive law**
- Is this definition of justice satisfying?...“performance of covenant and giving to every man his own” [53]
- The importance of **framing**: “the right of nature, that is, the natural liberty of man, may by the civil law be abridged, and restrained: nay, the end of making laws, is no other, but such restraint; without the which there cannot possibly be any peace.” How is this a conception of negative rather than positive freedom?
- “Where men build on false grounds, the more they build, the greater is the ruin”...any modern examples?
- See p. 56 for the argument defending the force of the social contract between generations: are you convinced?

## IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804)

Kant v. Machiavelli: “right ought never to be adapted to politics, but politics ought always be adapted to right”

“*sapere aude!*” (‘dare to know’): all social, cultural, and religious institutions should be subjected to rational scrutiny

Kant’s **deontological** moral philosophy: the **categorical imperative**: moral **maxims**, for Kant, must have the following features

1. Formula of Universal Law: actions must be universalizable
2. Formula of the End in itself, or the ‘principle of personality’: treat every moral agent as an end in itself (not as a means)

The influence of Kantian philosophy on subsequent political thought

- John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* and Jürgen Habermas’ “public sphere” both defend Kantian universalism
- “Perpetual Peace” foreshadowed the modern **democratic peace theory**

“**Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment**” “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.”

- “Dogmas and formulas, those mechanical instruments for rational use (or rather misuse), of [man’s] natural endowments are the ball and chains of his permanent immaturity.” Examples?

**Perpetual Peace**: “*fiat justitia, pereat mundus*” (‘let justice be done, though the world perish’)

- The doctrine of non-intervention (First Section -5)
- Acknowledging that a world republic is unattainable, why does Kant believe that an ever-growing federation of democratic states will avoid war?