

Health, Development, and Human Rights

Skepticism About Global Justice

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters XV, XVII, and XVIII.

Questions

1. Thomas Hobbes presents several laws of nature. What are they? What justifies these as “natural laws” as opposed to conventional (i.e., man-made) laws?
2. In a famous passage in Chapter XV, paragraph 5, Hobbes presents the “argument from the fool” arguing that it is okay to break one’s covenants and promises, provided that one can get away with it. What exactly are the three parts of this argument? How does Hobbes respond to each part in paragraphs 5 through 7? Is this a convincing response to the fool?
3. According to Hobbes, what is a commonwealth and why ought people come together and form one? What authority and powers over others does the sovereign ruler gain? Why does Hobbes believe this is acceptable? Do you agree that the state requires a strong sovereign to rule?