

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Self-Governance & Autonomy

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

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 position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Locke, J. (2008, March). [Chapters 4, 6]. In J. Bennet (Ed. & Trans.), *Second treatise of government* (pp. 9–10, 19–25). Early Modern Texts. <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf> (Original work from 1689)

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. Why is slavery generally wrong according to John Locke? Are there any circumstances under which Locke believes that slavery is permitted?
2. What does Locke's analysis of slavery reveal about his notion of liberty?
3. In the previous readings, Locke repeatedly claimed that all persons are equal. However, he now notes that children are *not* equal to adults, and so parents have natural paternal power over their children.
Why is that? In what relevant way(s) are children different from adults that makes them unequal? Is there any limit to the ways in which parents may legitimately wield power over their children?
4. What does Locke's analysis of the legitimate exercise of paternal power reveal about his notion of liberty?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

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 about these issues at our next class meeting.