

# POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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## Natural Law & Natural Rights

### 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 1–3]. In J. Bennet (Ed. & Trans.), *Second treatise of government* (pp. 2–9). 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. In what ways is John Locke's understanding of the state of nature and the state of war similar to, and yet significantly different, from that of Thomas Hobbes?
2. According to Locke, what is the law of nature (in sec. 6, p. 4) and what is the fundamental law of nature (in sec. 16, p. 7)? (These are not necessarily identical, though they are very similar.) What natural rights follow from these laws and why do those rights follow?
3. How are the natural laws and natural rights specified by Locke different from those Hobbes identifies?
4. How is Locke's understanding of the relationship and connection between natural laws and natural rights different from that of Hobbes? (You may only get a partial answer to this question right now, but the reading for our next class meeting will complete it.)

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.