

# POLITICAL & SOCIAL THOUGHT

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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 premises, assumptions, reasons, evidence, and other important considerations 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 and justify accepting the author's conclusions as opposed to other ones.

### Reading

Locke, J. (2008, March). *Second Treatise of Government* (J. Bennett, Trans.). Early Modern Texts. Retrieved December 17, 2018, from <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>. (Original work from 1689.)  
(Excerpts are from Chapters 1–4, and 6.)

### Questions

1. In what ways is John Locke's understanding of the state of nature 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 Locke's natural laws and natural rights different from what Hobbes claims? How is Locke's understanding of the *relationship and connection* between natural laws and natural rights different from Hobbes'?

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 (unless you miss or are late to class, and must then submit a written reading question review).

You do need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting. You may, during the following class, be randomly selected to present answers to these if selected to do so for a verbal reading question review.