

**17.03. Introduction to Political Thought**  
**Lecture Outline: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 14-19**

I. Liberty

- A. Replaces Machiavellian republican liberty with liberty as security
- B. Liberty is the absence of physical impediments
- C. Equal liberty of all men because men are by nature equal (against Aristotle, 107)

II. From natural right to natural law

- A. Right of nature: right of every man to everything necessary for self-preservation
  - 1. No security as long as right of nature is unrestricted
  - 2. Agreements in state of nature risky because no “coercive Power to compel men equally to perform their Covenants” (100-101)
  - 3. No justice or injustice without government
- B. Law of nature: a rule of Reason
  - 1. Natural laws are laws we impose upon ourselves; all obligations self-imposed
    - a. We agree to give up some of our natural liberties
    - b. Contracts entered into by fear are obligatory
    - c. Injustice to violate your contracts
  - 2. First and second laws of nature
    - a. First: To seek peace
    - b. Second: To be willing to enter a contract limiting natural liberties

III. Origin and purpose of government

- A. Government originates when people cooperate for their own preservation
- B. Purpose of govt is security, not pursuit of virtue or common good as in Aristotle

IV. How does Hobbes justify political obligation?

- A. Consequentialist justification
  - 1. Government extinguishes prisoners’ dilemmas and thereby facilitates cooperation
  - 2. Government is superior to state of nature in maximizing utility
- B. Contractarian justification
  - 1. Signs of contract are either express or tacit
  - 2. Contracts entered into by fear are obligatory (97)
  - 3. Excludes “Children, Fooles, and Mad-men that have no use of Reason”
- C. Authorization
  - 1. Every subject is “Author of all the Sovereign doth” (124)
  - 2. Therefore, it is absurd for subjects to disobey the sovereign’s law

V. Rights of the sovereign

- A. Right to make (legislative), execute (executive), and interpret (judicial) laws
- B. Right to levy taxes, conduct war and peace, regulate expressions of opinion
- C. No institutional guarantees against abuse of power

VI. Argument for absolute, indivisible sovereignty

- A. Subjects are actually the authors of all the sovereign’s actions and judgments
- B. Unity of sovereign necessary to prevent civil war