

**17.03. Introduction to Political Thought**  
**Lecture Outline: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk I (all) and II (ch. 1-4, 6-9)**

I. Problem/Challenge

- A. Show when political rule is legitimate
- B. Replace sham contract of *Second Discourse*; task of politics is to replicate our natural freedom and equality under social conditions
- C. “Find a form of association which defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate, and by means of which each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before?” (ch. 6)

II. Rousseau’s answer: social contract

- A. Horizontal contract creating a ‘body politic’; an association, not aggregation
- B. General will
  - 1. What is it?
  - 2. Combination of two different political traditions?
    - a. Republicanism: citizen virtues of Sparta and republican Rome; common good (‘general’)
    - b. Liberal contractarianism (‘will’)
  - 3. General will vs. will of all
- C. How is will made general?
  - 1. Limits on social inequality
  - 2. No representation; each member participates in political rule
  - 3. General Laws
    - a. Paradox: “men would be, prior to the advent of laws, what they ought to become by means of laws”
  - 4. Education and civil religion

III. Freedom

- A. Task is to recover freedom in the social state
  - 1. Substitute justice for instinct, law for personal inclination
- B. Distinguishes between three forms of freedom (ch. 8)
  - 1. Natural freedom
  - 2. Civil freedom
  - 3. Moral freedom: “obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself”; autonomy
- C. Paradox of freedom and compulsion: “forced to be free”