**Social and Political Philosophy**

* What justifies the relationship between the people and the state?
  + Historically justified by divine authority or public interest
  + Most accepted modern theory is the Social Contract Theory.
* Justification stems from and is made legitimate by the consent of the governed
* Individuals agree to give up certain liberties and rights to the state which in turn guarantees certain freedoms
* Thomas Hobbes – People, by nature, live in a warish, brutal state; the bind together to survive; once created, this state becomes greater than the individual and does not tolerate any challenge to it’s rule: Leviathan.
* John Jacques Rousseau – Social contract based on complete surrendering of each citizen to the community as a whole. The General Will – Complete surrendering of all to the Common Good.

**Criticisms of Social Contract Theory**

* **David Hume –** Pointed out that Social Contract is and has always been a complete fiction – governments were formed by conquest not consent; social contract fell out of favour until mid 20th century.
* **Communitarianism –** Emphasize social nature of human beings our very identify depends on relations with others; social contract wrongly conceives of people in an individualistic fashion; government is not artificially created but is a natural outgrowth of human socialbility (Aristotle) Individuals and governments cannot be understood apart from community and its cultural origins (Hegel).
* **Feminist Critique –** If consent justifies authority of state over individuals, what justifies the authority that males have traditionally exercised over females, particularly in the family. Philosophers have traditionally assumed separation of private/public but his has created an inherent inequality.
* **John Rawls –** 20th century philosopher who made **Social Contract Theory** legitimate again. No longer used to describe how governments are formed; but rather used as a framework for how governments *ought* to be formed; it becomes a method to critique government; the power of the state is justified if we would have chosen it in the first place (imaginary scenario)