SELECT **THREE QUESTIONS,** ONE QUESTION PER SECTION.

**I. Ancient**

1) What is Plato’s pattern of decline of regimes in *The Republic*? Why is this pattern not a circle or cycle? How does it relate to Aristotle’s account of change (or “revolution”) in *The Politics*?

2) What role does the idea of hubris play in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*? In Socrates (in Plato's *Apology*, for example)?

3) Plato's *Republic* is a great indictment of tyranny. What according to Plato and Aristotle (and Xenophon) are the leading problems with tyranny? Do they see any accompanying benefits to tyrannical rule? What else can tyranny become?

4) “The differing treatments that Thucydides and Hobbes give to the seemingly similar triads of fear, honor, and interest and competition, diffidence, and glory illustrate the gap between ancient and modern understandings of politics.” Discuss.

5) "Greek political theory was so centered on the unique political form of the *polis* that in the end it proves surprisingly unhelpful for thinking about politics elsewhere." Discuss.

6) What is the relationship, according to Plato, between philosophy and poetry (Socrates and Homer)? Why in the Myth of Er does Odysseus, who chooses last, replace Achilles as a hero?

**II. Modern**

7) In the Preface to *The Discourses*, Machiavelli proposes "to enter a path not yet trodden by anyone" and to introduce "new modes and orders." In which way does Machiavelli breaks from Ancient Political thought. Discuss.

8) Compare Locke on the accumulation of property and the “public good” with Rousseau on property, inequality (oligarchy) and the “general will.”

9) “One of the most deeply rooted traits of the modern soul is doubt of the good.” Discuss.

10) Freedom of opinion and religion, the right to life, and property were central tenets of individual rights during the Enlightenment? What account for the development of such ideals? What were the limitations of human rights during the Enlightenment? Discuss.
11) The concept of reason underwent various transmutations from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. Discuss these changes while focusing on the distinction between empiricists (for example Hobbes and Hume) and Kant. What are the political ramifications of these two interpretations of reason?

12) Draw on relevant thinkers to show how the concept of the nation-state as a vehicle to protect human rights collided with the Enlightenment spirit of cosmopolitanism. Your assessment of this tension should place the thinking in the context of historical developments.

**III. Modern/Contemporary**

13) “A self-regulating market demands nothing less than the institutional separation of society into an economic and political sphere.” Discuss.

14) Walter Benjamin describes history as a journey captured by Paul Klee’s painting “Angel Novus”:

[The angel] is looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread….his face is turned to the past/ Where we perceived a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet/ The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him from skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Explain Benjamin’s eloquent description of history. Discuss the notion of progress as a process and an end, drawing on Benjamin’s predecessors such as Hegel and Marx.

15) What is Marx’s account of the difference between the exchange-value of commodities and their use? Does use include potential moral aspects of activities or relationships? To what extent does Marx understand or articulate this aspect?

16) How can civil society become an antidote against a centralized or authoritarian state? Draw on at least two political traditions to discuss that matter (Tocqueville, Marx, Gramsci, etc.).

17) To what extent does Barbara Deming offer a successful internal critique of Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth?* How might someone sympathetic to Fanon try to answer her arguments? How might Deming or an advocate of nonviolence respond? Speculate what you think the best arguments might be on both sides.
Jessica Benjamin defines recognition as “that response from the other which makes meaningful the feelings, intentions, and actions of the self.” She goes on to insist that recognition “allows the self to realize its agency and authorship in a tangible way. If the other denies me recognition, my acts have no meaning.” This means that recognition is a relation in which we are made dependent on the other, but this dependence is conceived as reciprocal since “recognition can only come from an other whom we, in turn, recognize as a person in his or her own right.” Drawing on her writings and/or other perspectives on recognition, explain the importance of this concept in modern political theory.