

1274: St. Thomas Aquinas finishes
the *Summa Theologica*

1513: Machiavelli writes *The Prince*

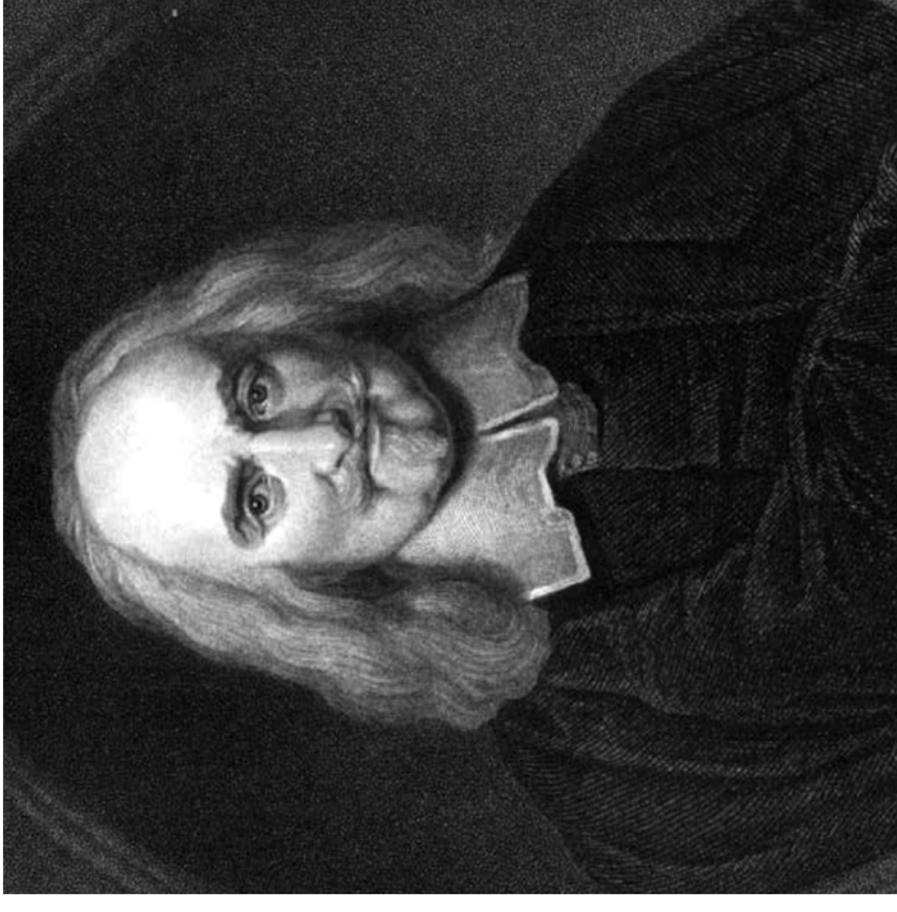
1651: Hobbes publishes *Leviathan*

1517: Luther writes the 95 theses.
Beginning of [Protestant Reformation](#).

- You and your family are going to Portugal on vacation
- The plane has a malfunction and the pilots are forced to land
- Everyone is safe. However, you, your family, and 150 people are now stranded on a desert island.
- The island has food and water. But everyone will need to ration the resources to survive.
- The island does not have other inhabitants, but who knows what dangers lie ahead (wild animals, diseases, droughts...)?
- Pair with someone else and answer this question:
 - What will happen to the inhabitants of the island after 1 day, after 1 month, and then after 1 year?
- Pay special attention to (1) what will happen, (2) why things will evolve in the way that you describe, and (3) how the inhabitants will organize politically and socially. Don't forget to pay special attention to the political aspects and institutions of this hypothetical example.

After 1 day:	After 1 month:	After 1 year:	Why did the situation evolve in this way?

- Hobbes was a bit of a grumpy, arguing kind of guy
 - He was pro-absolutism, but paradoxically held controversial opinions about religion and morality
- For Hobbes, an all-out war will eventually break out between the inhabitants
 - They will eventually start to kill, cheat, deceive... In order to secure resources to defend themselves, their families, and their possessions.
 - He thought that his response to this scenario was the only correct one
 - We'll see later how he uses that scenario to justify absolute kings



- His whole political thought is carefully crafted to defend why his solution to the scenario is the only right one
- Let's look at what he says would happen if there was a “desert island” scenario
 - Then we'll look back at the examples you wrote down

- For Hobbes, the key question is: what conflicts might arise among the inhabitants during their time on the desert island?

- For Hobbes, the key question is: what conflicts might arise among the inhabitants during their time on the desert island?
 - Conflicts over resources: food, water, property
 - Conflicting loyalties: what if my daughter is ill and needs more food? I will want her to have more food than the others.
 - Conflicts over the right course of action: If there is a drought, what decisions should we collectively take?
 - Conflicts over beliefs: what if my son wants to date someone of a different religion, but that this is contrary to my own religion?
 - Conflicts out of pride: what if I don't like a specific person and a fight breaks out?

- For Hobbes, upon arriving on the island, the inhabitants will continue, for a time, to abide by the rules and beliefs that they were conditioned to follow when they lived in a civilization:
 - Religious and moral beliefs (I should not injure, steal, deceive...)
 - Cultural norms and expectations about how we should treat one another
 - Rules of decency and politeness
- However, for Hobbes, what ultimately sustains moral and cultural rules is political power and the fear of being punished
 - Without police forces, prisons, the social costs of breaking the law... individuals will have increasingly less incentives to follow morality and they will prioritize securing resources

- Let's imagine that Aquinas tells Hobbes:
 - Individuals are born with self-evident moral rules. They are constantly reminded of their moral principles.
 - Of course, there are cultural variations and rule-breakers (e.g. criminals) but, essentially, we all have a moral compass and know that we shouldn't kill, steal, lie...
 - Moral principles are not contingent on the presence of political power
- But Hobbes responds:
 - Without police forces, punishments, social shame... individuals have increasingly less incentives to follow morality and they prioritize securing resources.
 - Moral principles are socially conditioned. Thanks to political power, a society enforces moral rules and prevents their breakdown over time.
- Hobbes' point is nicely illustrated by cases of prolonged wars and civil wars
 - When conflicts drag out, consensual and polite rules of war (not pillaging, not killing indiscriminately...) gradually disappear over time

- **Ok, let's look back at the table!**

- Scenario n°1: War of all against all
 - There are occasional and fragile alliances to defeat a stronger person/group
 - All individuals are in a state of permanent war and distrust
- Scenario n°2: War of the families (Game of Thrones?)
 - Family loyalties provide a bond to create groups
 - Each family is in a state of war and distrust with other families
 - Still risky: family members can still betray one another...
- Scenario n°3: Election of a sovereign
 - An absolute sovereign will act as the supreme legislator
 - This legislator will decide who gets what, property rights, punishments...

- Hobbes' hypothetical scenario is called the state of nature
 - State of nature: hypothetical scenario where individuals exist without an overarching political power (no state, no laws, no police, no military forces)
- Which thinker have we studied before who imagined an imaginary political situation in order to draw interesting political conclusions?
 - In the *Republic*, Socrates talks about what the most just city would look like
 - In this way, Plato is able to shed light on the nature of social conflict and the necessity of a philosopher-king
- Let's then look at the political insights that we can get from this hypothetical scenario

- Hobbes tells us to imagine a situation of a society where political power suddenly disappeared: there is no more state, no laws, no police, no military forces
- We saw with the island example that individuals will, at first, respect the moral rules that they used to follow
- Over time, however, as conflicts begin to increase, people will gradually let go of their moral scruples. They will kill, steal, cheat... to secure goods.
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- Hobbes lived in a society where people were overwhelmingly against killing and stealing. Why wouldn't these people simply hold on to their moral beliefs over time? Why would they become increasingly immoral?
 - (1) Because I know that there exist immoral people (e.g. criminals), I am pressured to become increasingly immoral over time in order to secure my future
 - (2) I will break moral codes more easily because I will be under pressure
 - (3) People make exceptions for themselves to established moral codes all the time
 - (4) Even if we all vaguely agree that stealing is bad, there's not a consensual notion of *when* it's bad to steal
- (5) people will break rules exponentially faster over time *because they are aware that everyone else is breaking them too*

- What is the overwhelming emotion that individuals will feel at that moment?

- Fear. We don't know what the others are capable of. We therefore become afraid of one another.

- What do you think he means by “fear”? In what sense: terror, panic, horror, angst, apprehension, distrust...? He talks about it in today's readings:

“(...) fearing is [not merely] being actually frightened. (...) I mean by that word any anticipation of future evil. In my view, not only flight, but also distrust, suspicion, precaution and provision against fear are all characteristic of men who are afraid. On going to bed, men lock their doors; when going on a journey, they arm themselves because they are afraid of robbers. Countries guard their frontiers with fortresses, their cities with walls, through fear of neighbouring countries. (...) Men take precautions because they are afraid (...).” p. 5

- For Hobbes, fear is the “anticipation of future evil.” In the state of nature, individuals become overwhelmingly worried about their future and what might happen to their lives, their possessions, their families...
- For Aquinas, there would be no fear because our moral principles are self-evident. What is Hobbes’ response to Aquinas? What is the implication of his state of nature hypothesis?
 - Our moral principles are not self-evident. Without state power and social rules, people would endlessly disagree on the moral principles they should all follow.
 - Hobbes lived at a time of harsh political and religious conflicts. He sees that individuals are unable to agree on anything when the stakes are raised.

- In our next class, we will explore the following question:

- What is the one thing that people will actually agree on in the state of nature?
- Is it that they're all Christians, that they should all love one another, that they should all follow specific moral rules?

- No. The only thing they will agree on is that they don't want to be afraid anymore
- For Hobbes, the basis of our agreement to form a government and leave the state of nature is the mutual understanding that we all want to not be harmed and that we all want to live in peace

- That will be the basic function of government for Hobbes: not virtue, not religion, not morality, but simply preventing people from harming one another