

Assessment 3 Instructions: Freedom and Authority

Write a 2-3-page essay on a selected issue related to the tension between individual freedom and social institutions.

Introduction

There is a very delicate balance between the freedoms that individuals enjoy in society and the authority that governs them. Benjamin Franklin (1755) addressed this in a now-famous quote: "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Key ethical theorists Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau considered the relationship between individuals and their governments and social institutions in terms of *social contract theory*. This suggests that a person's ethical and political responsibilities are based on understood agreements (with government, with social institutions, with each other) that shape society. As you prepare for this assessment, you will consider examples of the balance (and sometimes tension) between individual freedom and social institutions and choose one to address in an essay.

Demonstration of Proficiency

By successfully completing this assessment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Explain the nature of ethical issues.
 - Explain the ethical basis for the relation of individuals to their government.
- Competency 2: Critically examine the contributions of key thinkers from the history of ethics.
 - Describe the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.
- Competency 3: Engage in ethical debate.
 - Assess the advantages and disadvantages of theories as they relate to a selected issue.
- Competency 4: Develop a position on a contemporary ethical issue.
 - Apply traditional social contract theories to a selected contemporary issue.
- Competency 5: Communicate effectively in the context of personal and professional moral discourse.
 - Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members of professional communities.

Reference

Larabee, L. W. (1962). *The papers of Benjamin Franklin*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Overview

Political philosophy concerns itself with the formation and maintenance of civil societies. Its central theme is the need to explain the relationship between individual human beings and their governments. You have been

considering several specific examples of the tension between individual freedom and social institutions. From among those examples, you have chosen one as the focus for your own views on freedom and authority.

Instructions

Your assessment is to write an essay assessing the issue you selected, both in terms of versions of social contract theory proposed by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and from your own view of the proper relation between society and the individual.

Address the following concepts in your essay:

1. Explain the ethical basis for the relation of individuals to their government
2. Describe the theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau about how societies are organized.
3. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the theories in justifying the imposition of authority over individuals.
4. Apply these social contract theories to the issue you have selected.

Your instructor may provide video feedback on your work, as well as completing the official scoring guide for the assessment.

Additional Requirements

- **Written communication:** Ensure written communication is free of errors that detract from the overall message.
- **APA formatting:** Format resources and citations according to current APA style guidelines.
- **Number of resources:** Use your judgment to ensure your topic is thoroughly researched. There is no minimum number of resources required, however.
- **Length of paper:** Submit 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages.
- **Font and font size:** Use Arial, 12-point font.



SCORING GUIDE

Use the scoring guide to understand how your assessment will be evaluated.

[VIEW SCORING GUIDE](#) 