

Philosophy in the Social Contract and Forms of Government

Abstract:

This unit is designed to study philosophy and its role in history for ninth grade world history students but may be applied to any history or philosophy class. Specifically, it looks at basic philosophical ideas such as relativism and objectivism and expands upon them into historical figures and their writings. The main part of the unit focuses on Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau's impact on government and life in enlightenment Europe. The unit wraps up with a study of what is a person and how to classify somebody as a person or human. Beyond the content this unit looks to build students comparison skills, as well as their ability to think critically and create arguments supported by facts and logic not wild claims.

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Seminar: Philosophy, Science, and Society

Problem Statement:

Throughout history philosophies arose and became a basis for justification of power for elites. Commonly accepted philosophies of the time period allowed those with power to control those without it and run governments how they saw fit. Hobbes social contract is a great example of philosophical justification to society for absolute monarchical government, which influenced how sovereigns held onto power within their respective countries. Objectivist philosophy created the basis for the Catholic Church's control over most of medieval Europe, while the expansion of relative philosophies opened the door to the renaissance and reformation periods. To balance out the objectivist view students must learn about relativism in philosophy and its impact on the individual. Today, many students are being taught and starting to grasp their role in society and how that affects the world around them. In order to better realize that role in society, students need to understand the philosophical constructs around them that allow them to live and operate in the role they undertake.

This unit encompasses multiple lessons structured to combine history and philosophy together. It begins with an introduction to the basic philosophy to lay down a base layer of knowledge for the students to build on. This base layer consists of defining objectivism and relativism and figuring out which of the two they lean toward. After the introduction, the historical aspect enters with Hobbes, Locke, and enlightenment thinkers. This allows students to see how philosophy impacts government and the world. Transitioning from renaissance and reformation period into modern thought, students will learn about the idea of social constructionism. The unit presents a wide variety of topics to peak student interest and force them to think about the world and history from a different lens.

Rationale:

I work at a small neighborhood high school in Kensington, Philadelphia. The school population is comprised of 70% Latino students, 25% African American students and 5% listed

as “other.” A majority of the students feel left out or underrepresented in the current American Government. As a result, they do not realize how philosophy ties directly into government and, the control over societal norms that aid in their feeling of outcaste. This unit looks to address the basic understanding of what philosophy actually is and expand upon that to see how it has and does influence society and government. To begin, students must look at the basics of relativism and objectivism in philosophy while tying those to Medieval Europe. From the renaissance and reformation periods on the students will look at the changes in philosophy and government over the next three hundred years. This foundation of philosophical understanding will lead directly into modern ideas of how governments and governed should interact. By the end of the unit students will know the philosophy behind how the United States works and how they can fit into that picture if they do at all.

Background:

Two philosophical schools of thought dominate the beginning of this unit, relativism and objectivism. Relativism finds its basis in the individual and how they are shaped by their culture. A relativist believes that each separate culture possesses its own moral code and that code then influences the beliefs of the individual. In her article *Defense of Ethical Relativism*, Ruth Benedict argues that relativism demonstrates the values of different cultures. “The most spectacular illustrations of the extent to which normality may be culturally defined are those cultures where an abnormality of our culture is the cornerstone of their social structure.” (Benedict 35) She describes tribes who use magic to become productive with gardening, and human sacrifices to prove her point here. Within relativism there is no singular right way to live a moral life, as each individual culture determines what is right and moral therefore no culture can tell another that it is right or wrong. Cultural determination of morality means relativists think every culture has a truth which is defined through their moral code. An argument against this thought finds form in the Nazi concentration camps and holocaust. If relativism is to be believed, no person could condemn the Holocaust as Nazis shaped by their culture and moral code believed the mass murder of Jews to be acceptable. This type of philosophy argues against a universal truth or moral law which by definition applies to all peoples.

Objectivism brings balance as the other side to relativism. At the core of objectivist philosophy lies the principle of an underlying truth that is out there to be discovered. To argue against relativism and thus supporting objectivism, Louis Pojman in his article *A Defense of Ethical Objectivism* uses Ted Bundy as an example of why there needs to be a universal moral. “Notions of good and bad, or right and wrong, cease to have interpersonal evaluative meaning.” (Pojman 41) If we do not have a universal moral then Bundy cannot have committed a crime because he did not see it as one. Right and wrong being left to the individual leads to chaos. Objectivists often believe this truth stems from a god figure and applies to every person who lives, rather than the individual culture creating truths and values. Variations of objectivism exist such as metaphysical and pragmatic objectivism, however the unifying factor remains a truth that applies to all peoples. Individuality of cultures and their perceived oddities make a strong argument against objectivism. A culture which believes in human sacrifice does not fit the generally accepted ideals of not to kill fellow man. If this practice is unacceptable in some cultures but accepted in others, how is it possible to have a universal truth for all peoples?

Thomas Hobbes theory of social contract in his book *Leviathan* influences world governments for generations. He argued that the governed entered into a contract with the sovereign of the state. In order for the state to exist, Hobbes argued individuals give up some of their civil rights. For the state to be effective they must be ruled by someone similar to the individual or else it delves back into a state of wild chaos. Absolute monarchs use Hobbes arguments to gain political advantage and attempt to hold onto power. By giving up rights to the monarch the governed are protected and as long as that remains the contract is in place. The only way to avoid chaos and civil war is for this contract to be held up and an undivided government to be in place. Hobbes claimed that if no government existed, people would fall back to state of nature. He described this state as "...the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." (Hobbes *Leviathan*). Clearly Hobbes thought humans without government reverted back to their most basic brutish survival of the fittest selves. This theory and opinion on mankind means people cannot innovate or create the levels of complexity necessary for society to function due to a fear of death. The absolutist ideas of Hobbes bled into the religious realm as well. He thought it best for uniformity in religion of a state. This made it easier for control to be maintained. If everybody believed in the same god, then to Hobbes it should stop some conflict from forthcoming.

John Locke wrote about two important ideas in philosophy and history. First, he discussed the relationship between governed and governing in *Two Treatises of Government*. Here he argued against Hobbes idea of an absolute monarch. Instead, he argued that people must obey the laws of nature and God. In this he brought forth an objectivist view point to government and relations within a country. However, Locke did not believe all people of a country should be of a single religion. He thought religious tolerance a key to the overall cooperation of the state. His views contrast the absolutism of Hobbes. Locke laid the foundations for later republican governments, including the United States, when he wrote about "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions" (Locke). This small phrase was taken almost word for word by Jefferson when he wrote out the Declaration of Independence.

Locke also wrote in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* about personal identity. He argues the difference between a human and person comes down to thought processes. If a being is able to use memory and demonstrate metacognitive skills, then they are a person. Locke claimed humans are guaranteed rights not necessarily responsibilities. He went on to describe the effects of education on the human. Locke said that "I think I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education." (Locke *Education* 10) He firmly believed in the education of man being the determining factor of good vs evil in a person. To create a good person then they needed to undergo a good education, those that lacked that education, lacked the goodness.

A third voice on government and education in philosophy is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He argued directly against Hobbes on the state of nature. In his treatise *On Education* he claimed "...when placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man" (Rousseau, 64). Rousseau did not believe man by nature was wicked. In fact, he believed that men in the wild away from people and bad influences were at their best. His change in position puts him in opposition directly to Hobbes and plays into the relativist philosophy of culture shaping a person. Perhaps the most important work published b

Rousseau was his social contract theory. He played on republicanism as the ideal form of government. This puts him in direct opposition to the claims of Hobbes who argued for monarchical rule. His famous line of “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains” (Rousseau) perfectly demonstrates his thoughts on government. Monarchies do not allow freedom they chain the governed to a single being while the republican form allow choice and opens up the government for the people. He wanted people to band together and form a contract with themselves not a single individual.

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau all lived in the same era of enlightenment. This era influenced their ability to write and develop their philosophies. Historians often struggle to define the beginning of the enlightenment period, but roughly 1620 CE. Enlightenment Europe included philosophers and others start to look beyond what was the common accepted way. A drive to follow the scientific method and a questioning of religious orthodoxy highlighted the core aspects of the period. Ideas such as liberty and tolerance along with the role of government in life became central questions. While not all the philosophers fit the exact core beliefs of the enlightenment, they did benefit from writing and living in an era where people began to question beliefs and ask “Why?” to many traditions. (Gay) Understanding the period and historical shifts happening during a philosopher’s life helps explain where their ideas may have come from. These influential philosophers benefitted from a time when questioning the establishment started and they used that as a basis to write for or against their points.

The question of who is a person and how is that determined brings deep discussion. This question lays at the core of the definition of self-people have. Marya Schechtman writes in her book *The Constitution of Selves* about the idea of a narrative form for defining a person. Narrative form means life is a story and context to the story matters. “... constituting an identity requires that an individual conceive of his life as having the form and logic of a story...” (Schechtman 96) She argues people’s lives are all part of a story and must be interpreted by understanding the context of that particular story. A person’s beliefs and personal culture create them as a person and fit within a story of their lives. These characteristics fit the story of their lives and thus a person self-conception of themselves. Figuring out how people view themselves and why can open the door for student’s minds.

Objectives: This unit is intended for 9th grade World History students but could also be applied to the 10th grade US History or the 12th grade Social Science curriculums. Students meet every other day for 90-minute block periods.

The overall objectives for the unit include:

- Establish a firm understanding of the different basic philosophies specifically including relativism and objectivism.
- Examine the historical relevance of the different philosophies and how they changed over time.
- Analyze how the changing philosophies played into government and any possible change in government.

Specific objectives for the unit that relate directly to the lessons.

- Students will be able to compare and contrast relativism and objectivism in order to understand basic philosophical concepts.
- Students will be able to analyze Thomas Hobbes philosophies on government in order to explain the importance of government in history.
- Students will be able to compare and analyze the philosophies of Rousseau and Locke in order to explicate the role of government in history.
- Students will be able to argue a point of view on what is human or a person and who can be considered each in order to understand basic philosophical concepts.
- Students will be able to create a final project in order demonstrate mastery of philosophical concepts.

Standards: The Core Curriculum of the School District of Philadelphia is aligned to the Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards for History. These standards support instruction and development of content knowledge related to Historical Analysis and Skills Development, United States History and World History. The goal of this unit is to include these topics and more as it explores philosophy and its role in history.

8.1.9.A. Analyze chronological thinking.

- Difference between past, present and future
- Sequential order of historical narrative
- Data presented in time lines
- Continuity and change Context for events

8.4.12.A Evaluate the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history since 1450.

- Political and Military Leaders
- Cultural and Commercial Leaders
- Innovators and Reformers

8.4.9.B: Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history.

8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women.

8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.

Teaching Strategies:

This unit incorporates a variety of teaching strategies in order to better enhance learning. These methods include the following.

- *Graphic organizers*- these are used to help students visually see the flow of ideas and information.
- *Direct instruction*- uses a lecture format with students taking notes on information. This is used effectively with the Socratic method in order to fill in background information. It is a great way to present a large amount of information in a small amount of time.
- *Guided practice*- Following the I do, we do, you do method, guided practice incorporates students following along and complete tasks at the same time as the instructor. This builds up their skill and confidence in order to complete the task on their own.
- *Independent practice*- Students are off on their own beginning to master the desired skill. This follows closely after the guided practice section and can done in a variety of different activities.
- *Jigsaw*- This is a strategy which requires the class be split into multiple small groups. Once in the groups, each group receives different information to become a “master” of. Following an allotted time, the small groups either present their information to the class, or every group is jig-sawed so that the new groups contain one member from the different topics. In the new groups, everybody must teach their “mastered” material to the remaining group. Jigsaw technique allows for total class participation in an assignment and makes every student responsible for learning and then teaching or presenting their information to others.

- *Small and large group discussion*- Discussing philosophy in both large and small groups allows students to simply talk. Philosophy can be difficult and sometimes confusing, however, getting the chance to discuss different aspects with peers in both settings. This can allow comfort and deep ideas.

Lessons

Prior to the unit teacher should create a PowerPoint to go along with the entire unit. This will be the background for the direct instruction portion of the unit. Instructor should also create their own guided questions to go with the readings in order to steer the class in the direction they would like.

Relativism vs. Objectivism Lesson

Class:	World History: All sections
Topic:	Philosophy- Relativism/Objectivism
Objectives:	<p>SWBAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast relativism and objectivism in philosophy <p>IOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand basic philosophical concepts.

Instructional Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided inquiry • Reading, outlining, and reading recall • Socratic method • Graphic organizer and flowchart • Case study problem solving • Whole class discussion: compare and contrast
Daily Activities:	<p>Do Now (Anticipatory Set -- Activate Prior Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you determine what is right and what is wrong? <p>Direct Instruction: (using instructor generated ppt)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the unit and forms of philosophy. <p>Guided Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split students into small groups of 4. (any even number will do) Each group half receive a different reading. One on relativism (Benedict) and the other on objectivism (Pojman). As students read they will answer guided questions to help them grasp concepts. <p>Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once appropriate amount of time goes by, have students discuss in small groups. Each half should pair share before sharing with their small group. Once the small groups have a chance to share and discuss amongst themselves, bring in a large class discussion to make sure students grasp ideas. • Use a Venn Diagram on SMARTboard if necessary to illustrate the differences between in large group discussion <p>Exit Ticket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the philosophies do you believe best fits with your personal ideas? <p>Homework:</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Now • Continual guided questions during the lesson • Class participation • Student inquiries • Exit ticket
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs - Repetition of instructions, additional time if necessary • Relating the material to the real world • Teacher assistance during the lesson • Breaking up of lesson into various parts • After school tutoring is available
Resources/materials	Smartboard, whiteboard, markers, student notebooks, readings: Relativism- Benedict, Objectivism- Pojman

Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.4.9.A: Analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history. • 8.4.9.B: Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history. • 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women. • 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.
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Lesson 2 Hobbes and Social Contract

Class:	World History: All sections
Topic:	Philosophy- Social Contract
Objectives:	<p>SWBAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the Hobbes Social Contract in philosophy <p>IOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicate governments in history.
Instructional Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, outlining, and reading recall • Lecture and demonstration • Socratic method • Graphic organizer and flowchart • Whole class discussion: compare and contrast
Daily Activities:	<p>Do Now (Anticipatory Set -- Activate Prior Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do government maintain order? <p>Direct Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through the PowerPoint on the world in the times of Hobbes. Fill in background information and explain monarchial rule.

	<p>Independent Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students read the abbreviated version of Thomas Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i>. While they read independently, students need to complete graphic organizer <p>Socratic Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students clarifying questions on Hobbes work. Guide them toward why he believes people empower government when they don't have any direct say. • Also look <p>Exit Ticket 3 Things you learned 2 Most interesting parts 1 Question you still have</p> <p>Homework:</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Now • Continual guided questions during the lesson • Class participation • Student inquiries • Exit ticket
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs - Repetition of instructions, additional time if necessary • Relating the material to the real world • Teacher assistance during the lesson • Breaking up of lesson into various parts • After school tutoring is available
Resources/materials	Smartboard, whiteboard, markers, student notebooks, readings.
Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.4.9.A: Analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history. • 8.4.9.B: Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history. • 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women. • 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.

Lesson Locke/Rousseau Jigsaw

World History: All sections
Philosophy- Social Contract
SWBAT <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze and compare Locke and Rousseau philosophies on government IOT <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explicate government in history.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group WorkJigsawDiscussionGuided ResearchSocratic Method
Do Now (Anticipatory Set -- Activate Prior Knowledge) <ul style="list-style-type: none">How do government maintain order? Direct Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Go through the PowerPoint on the world in the times of Hobbes. Fill in background information and explain monarchical rule. Continue to inform about Rousseau and his thoughts on government. Independent Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">Have students read the abbreviated version of Thomas Hobbes. While they read independently, students need to complete graphic organizer as they go.Other students will read Rousseau and determine his point of view on social contract filling out a graphic organizer of their own. Socratic Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">Have each set of students teach their individuals social contract and views to the rest of the class. As each group shares they begin to ask the other students questions they came across, or predetermined ones, to foster discussion.They should find out in the end Hobbes and Rousseau are closely related in they both argued against the monarchical rule. Exit Ticket <ul style="list-style-type: none">3 Things you learned2 Most interesting parts1 Question you still have

Homework:

- Do Now
- Continual guided questions during the lesson
- Class participation
- Student inquiries
- Exit ticket

- IEPs - Repetition of instructions, additional time if necessary
- Relating the material to the real world
- Teacher assistance during the lesson
- Breaking up of lesson into various parts
- After school tutoring is available

Smartboard, whiteboard, markers, student notebooks, reading Locke *Treatises son Government* Rousseau *On Education*

- **8.4.9.A:** Analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history.
- **8.4.9.B:** Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history.
- **8.4.9.C:** Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women.
- **8.4.9.D:** Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.

Lesson What is a human?

Class:	World History: All sections
Topic:	Philosophy- What is human
Objectives:	<p>SWBAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argue a point of view on what is human or a person and who can be considered what <p>IOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand basic philosophical concepts.
Instructional Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided inquiry Lecture and demonstration Socratic method Graphic organizer and flowchart Case study problem solving Whole class discussion: compare and contrast
Daily Activities:	<p>Do Now (Anticipatory Set -- Activate Prior Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a human? What is a human <p>Guided Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students read a selected section of philosopher's views of humanity. Start with Schectman's article and begin the discussion. Once the students discuss the article and questions you come up with, introduce Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau's thoughts on humanity. Students can create a comparison chart on the 4 to figure out if there are any overlapping aspects. After they go through the philosopher's opinions, ask them their own and why. If they disagree continue to push the why for maximum discussion. Present the idea of the law's point of view on the matter to see if they can follow <p>Exit Ticket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a person? What is a human? Is there a difference? <p>Homework:</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do Now Continual guided questions during the lesson

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class participation • Student inquiries • Exit ticket
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs - Repetition of instructions, additional time if necessary • Relating the material to the real world • Teacher assistance during the lesson • Breaking up of lesson into various parts • After school tutoring is available
Resources/materials	Smartboard, whiteboard, markers, student notebooks, readings (Schectman, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau)
Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.4.9.A: Analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history. • 8.4.9.B: Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history. • 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women. • 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.

Lesson Philosophy Wrap Project

Class:	World History: All sections
Topic:	Philosophy- Final Project
Objectives:	<p>SWBAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a visual representation of the main ideas of a philosopher <p>IOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate mastery of philosophical concepts.

Instructional Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided inquiry • Reading, outlining, and reading recall • Socratic method • Graphic organizer and flowchart • Case study problem solving • Whole class discussion: compare and contrast • Group work • Performance based instruction
Daily Activities:	<p>Do Now (Anticipatory Set -- Activate Prior Knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in a group of 4 and only 4 people. <p>Group Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are to be grouped up into small groups. • Each group is to choose a philosopher (whatever method for choice is acceptable.) • Each group will need 1 or 2 chromebook computers for research • The posters for each group needs the following <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of the philosopher (written to be aesthetically pleasing) 2. 5 images relating to their beliefs or theories (drawn or printed) 3. 10 of their core beliefs with at least 4 direct quotes <p>Exit Ticket Turn in project</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Now • Continual guided questions during the lesson • Class participation • Student inquiries • Final poster
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs - Repetition of instructions, additional time if necessary • Relating the material to the real world • Teacher assistance during the lesson • Breaking up of lesson into various parts • After school tutoring is available
Resources/materials	Smartboard, whiteboard, markers, student notebooks, chromebooks, poster paper, coloring utensils.

Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.4.9.A: Analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and cultural contributions to world history. • 8.4.9.B: Analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history. • 8.4.9.C: Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women. • 8.4.9.D: Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.
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Appendices

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