

GV150 Week 18 The Origin of Inequality Questions

Lecture:

1. How does Rousseau's argument relate to the nature versus nurture debate, and what policy implications might this have?
2. Is the argument that pity is a natural human instinct convincing, or is it another imposition of a constructed concept on an animalistic human in the state of nature?
3. How important is empirical evidence in supporting Rousseau's arguments, and does this differentiate them from Locke's arguments?

Reading:

4. What are the capabilities of 'savage' man?
5. What would 'savage' man think of the modern world?
6. What does 'savage' man want to do with his life?
7. Are humans naturally evil?
8. Why does Rousseau distinguish between 'natural' (or physical) and 'moral' (or political) inequality?
9. Why does Rousseau feel it's necessary to go back to 'nature' to explain the origin of inequality?
10. Why would there be no serious conflict in the state of nature?
11. What is amour-propre?
12. How does Rousseau's picture of nature compare with those of Hobbes and Locke?