Modern and Contemporary Political Theory

Lectures

Lecture 1: Modern Philosophy and Political Theory

Text: *Leviathan* Part I, chs. i-xi

* Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), *Leviathan* (1651)
* Thirty Years War (1618-1648)
* Geometric Method (*More Geometrico*) – René Descartes’ “Rules for the Direction of the Mind” (1628); e.g., Leviathan I.1 (p. 13)
* Inertia (p. 15) – Overcoming Aristotle’s authority: Galileo (*On Motion* [1590] and *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* [1632, forbidden till 1835]) 🡪 Newton (*Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, or, as it is known Principia [1687]).
* Imagination (defined p. 15) and experience (p. 16)
* Distinguishing “strong fancies from vision and sense” (19)
* Train of thoughts (19), of two kinds (causal and experimental, 22)
* Signs (23)
* Speech, truth, and definitions (29)
* Reason (defined, 34) = adding names to get affirmation, and affirmations to get syllogism
* 7 reasons for absurdity (36-7)
* Desire and aversion (40-41), hope, fear, etc. (43-4)
* Judgment (50), virtues (53), knowledge (tree of knowledge, 64)
* Power (natural and instrumental, 66), and restless desire for power (75)