

# *Philosophy 257*

## Identified

**Civic Discourse  
Communication  
Digital Literacy**

## Assignment (Covers All): The Ideal State

**Length:** Four FULL Pages (1200-1400 words)

**Format:** double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font

**MLA Guidelines:** All papers for this course should be in MLA format. If you follow the guidelines you learned in English 101 and/or 102, you should be fine. If you need to brush up on MLA format, consult Blackboard for a list of MLA formatting requirements. Pay special attention to the section on parenthetical citations. You will need to use this kind of citation when you refer to texts in your paper.

Imagine a time before there was any society, rules, laws, or government (i.e., the state of nature). In such a situation, there would be no governing body to protect and serve the people. Life is, as Hobbes puts it, "poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Until one day when a group of like-minded individuals decide enough is enough. They want a set of rules and a government to enforce the rules. As someone who has training in social and political philosophy, they look to you to make the crucial decisions. Assuming you wanted to set up a state that was just, what kind of a society would you choose? That is, in your mind, what is the ideal state?

Your purpose in this essay is twofold. First, pick at least three of the philosophers we have interacted with thus far and tell me how each of them would answer the preceding question. Here are your options:

1) Plato, 2) Aristotle, 3) Augustine, 4) Aquinas, 5) Machiavelli, 6) Hobbes

Be sure to include discussions on following topics: (a) the order and structure of society, (b) the role and behavior of rulers, (c) the education of citizens, (d) policy on war, (e) the division of labor (f) the distribution of wealth

Second, tell me which philosopher, or combination of philosophers, you most agree with and why. If it depends, tell me what it depends on. Feel free to pick to elements from each view the you agree with or do not agree with. You are not locked into choosing one view.

This needs to be written as a complete paper (not just a response to each question), meaning that you need to include an introduction with a clear thesis, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Moreover, you need to incorporate material from the relevant authors who we have read. Be sure to properly cite any and all sources using parenthetical citations and a works cited page (consult MLA document for explanation and examples).

**EVALUATION** 1. Content: Do you state your answers clearly and support them with reasons?

**CRITERIA:**

\*\*See  
Blackboard for a  
complete  
grading rubric.

2. Organization: Are your thoughts clearly organized? Do you have a clear introduction, body and conclusion? Does each paragraph have a clear goal?
3. Language/Style: Do you write complete sentences and use correct grammar and spelling?
4. Use of Texts: Does your discussion of course texts show that you understand them? Do you use quotations appropriately?

**Policy regarding late papers:** NO LATE PAPERS!!!