

# Government Class

## *State of Nature Skits*

### **OBJECTIVES/State Standards:**

#### **C1: Conceptual Foundations of Civics and Political Life: *What is the Purpose of Government***

**1.1.2** Explain and provide examples of the concepts of “power”, “legitimacy”, “authority”, and “sovereignty”.

In preparation for the class which will cover the origins of government and the philosophies of human nature students must answer questions in order to form their own opinions on how they think people act when no one is looking. Are we naturally selfish or are we naturally social? Students received guided homework questions about their view of people and what guides us in our day to day life. Students will consider what life would be like with out a government.

#### *Homework questions:*

1. What is human nature? In other words, what traits do most human beings have in common? Are they generally selfish or do they tend to care for others?
2. How do you think most people act when nobody else is looking?
3. Without any direction and any government what would guide your daily actions? What would you spend your time doing?
4. Using your answers from above, what would happen when people interacted with each other?
5. If you wanted to bring people together given the descriptions above, what would be the best way to accomplish this organization?

#### **Procedure:**

- To start the class: for the first 10 minutes, students will discuss their answers with a partner.
- Then we discuss each question as a class in a large group. Bring in multiple student views and discuss how they came to those conclusions.
- Then divide class into four groups. Each group will be given a description of a different philosopher’s view of human nature : Locke/Hobbes/Montesquieu/Rousseau
- Each group must *create a skit* to show the philosophers unique view of how humans acted in the state of nature.
- After each skit, ask the observing students what this philosopher’s view of human nature is: are people naturally good or bad? Etc.
- *Include students’ answers and responses after skits as their notes.*
- Students must then decide why it is important for humans to join a “Social Contract” and turn over rights to government based on each philosopher.

#### **Wrap up:**

- To wrap up class, students must use the information from the class and do a quick write to analyze which philosopher they agree with most. And from this, students will understand which type of government they would be most in favor of.