

# Influential Philosophers

Social Studies 30-1

# Philosophy 101

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. Such questions are often posed as problems to be studied or resolved.



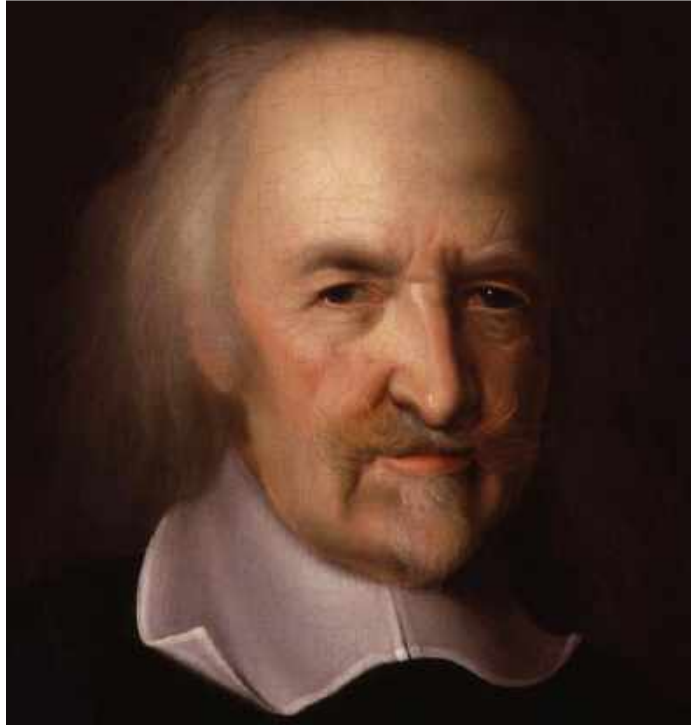
# Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)



Thomas Hobbes was an English philosopher, whose famous 1651 book *Leviathan* set the agenda for nearly all subsequent Western political philosophy and expounded an influential formulation of **social contract theory**.

Hobbes viewed government primarily as a device for ensuring collective security. He believe political authority is justified by a hypothetical social contract among society for the responsibility for the safety and well-being of all. His enduring contribution is as a political philosopher who justified wide-ranging government powers on the basis of the self-interested consent of citizens.

# Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)



- People are by nature cruel, selfish, greedy, and power hungry
- State of Nature
  - “war of every man against every man” means life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short
- People establish government for personal/mutual protection because it will protect us from our own selfishness
- The best form of government is one absolute authority so the ruler can maintain order and make decisions that are good for society as a whole
- Freedom is only possible if the people surrender their liberty to an all powerful ruler
- Social-Contract Theory

# John Locke (1632 – 1704)



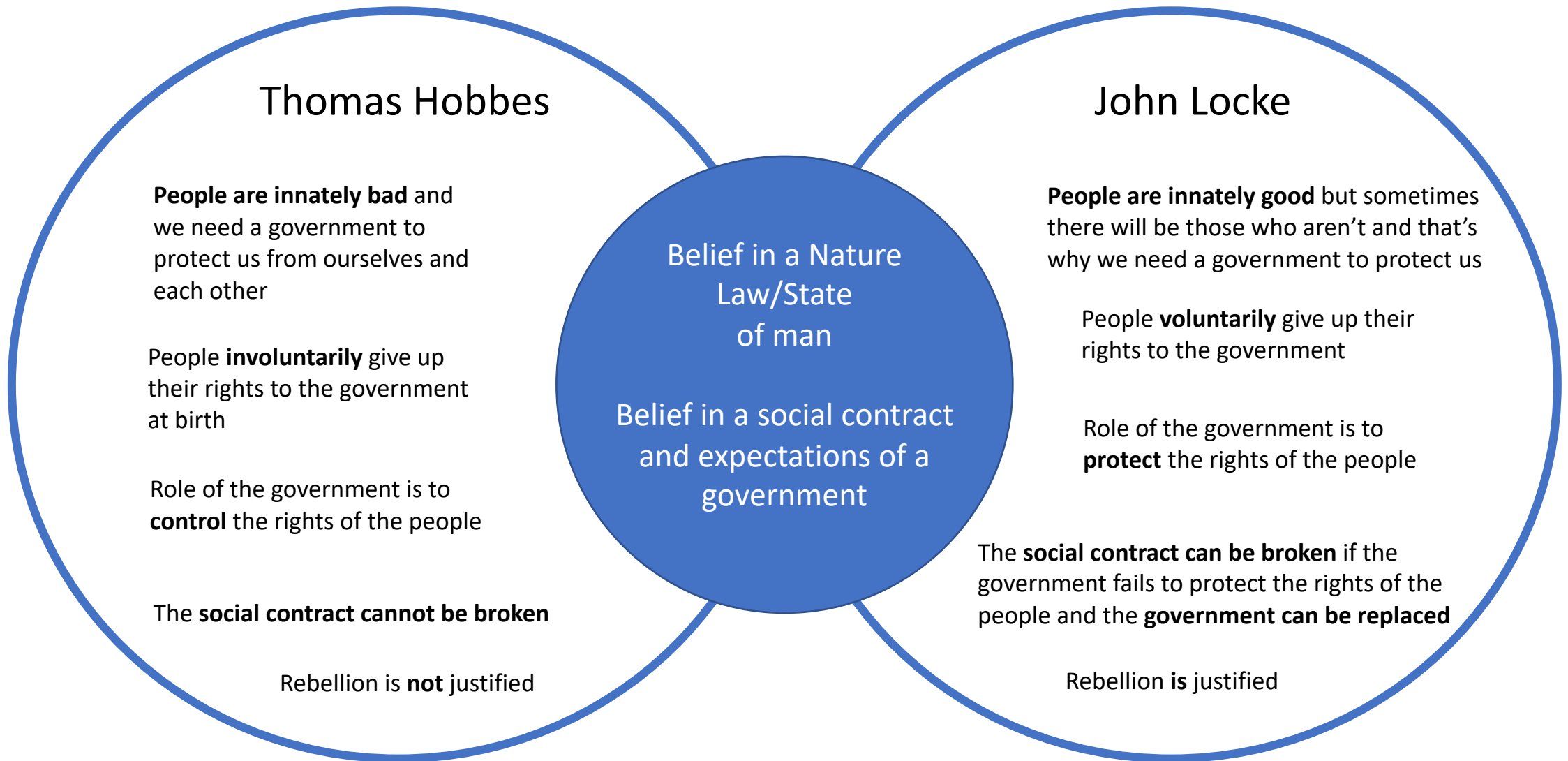
John Locke was an English philosopher developed an alternative to the Hobbesian state of nature and argued a government could only be legitimate if it received the consent of the governed through a social contract and protected the natural rights of life, liberty, and property.

If such consent was not given, argued Locke, citizens had a right of rebellion. Most central concept in Locke's political philosophy is his theory of **natural law and natural rights**.

# John Locke (1632 – 1704)

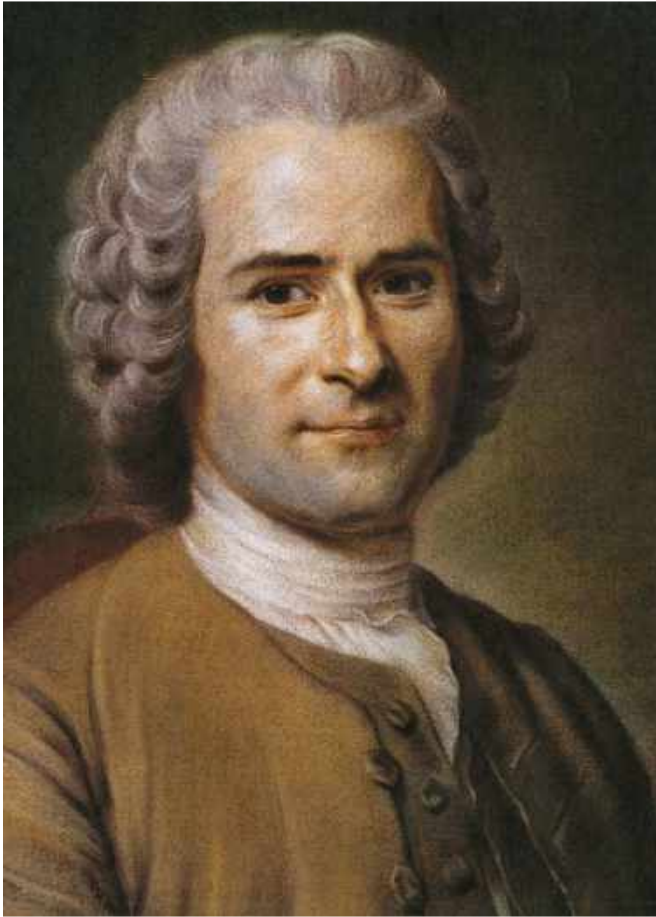


- People are innately good
- We have natural rights (life, liberty, and property) and since these are natural, no one could take these away – including the government
- Government is created to protect the rights of people and only has the limited and specific powers the people consent to give them
- If the government fails to protect the people, the people have the right to change the government



*What kinds of governments do these sound like?*

# Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778)



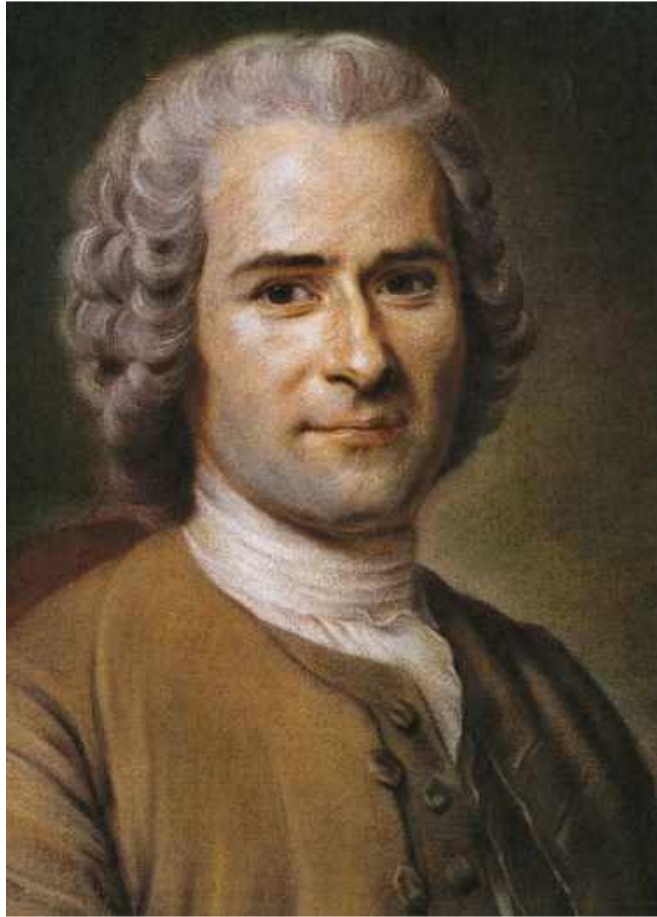
Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a Genevan philosopher who wrote *The Social Contract* whose political philosophy influenced the progress of the Enlightenment throughout Europe, as well as aspects of the French Revolution and the growth of nationalism.

He believed that the only good form of government was one that was freely formed by the people and guided by the will of the majority. To have this type of system, people would have to give up some freedom for the good of all the people, but this minority still had rights.

He was committed to individual freedom and believed people were happiest when alone.



# Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778)



- Saw a fundamental divide between society and human nature. He contended that man was neither inherently good nor bad when in a state of nature, but is corrupted by society
- People are naturally good but society corrupts them
- *“No man has any natural authority over his fellow man”*



|                         | <b>Thomas Hobbes</b>                   | <b>John Locke</b>                 | <b>Jean-Jacques Rousseau</b>                       |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Man is naturally...     | Evil                                   | Good                              | Good, but society corrupts us                      |
| Government is...        | needed to protect the public           | wanted to benefit the public      | needed to enforce the social contract              |
| Government should be... | all powerful and cannot be overthrown  | conditional and can be overthrown | arbitrary and can be overthrown                    |
| Power should be...      | not shared, the government is absolute | shared, legislative and executive | Shared and direct (representatives are not needed) |

“In a state of nature, life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”



**Thomas Hobbes**



Absolute Monarchy

“All of mankind... being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.”

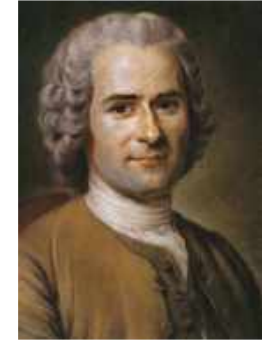


**John Locke**



Representative Democracy

“Man is born free and everyone he is in chains.”



**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**



Direct Democracy