

Answer Key: Searing Statecraft: A 10th Grade Political Philosophy Flash-Quiz

Go beyond surface-level definitions to analyze structural power dynamics and ethical governance through complex situational reasoning.

1. In Han Feizi's 'Legalist' philosophy, what is the primary justification for a ruler's absolute authority over their subjects?

Answer: B) The belief that human nature is inherently selfish and requires strict laws to maintain order.

Legalism, particularly as expressed by Han Feizi, posits that humans are motivated by self-interest; therefore, a stable society requires clear, harsh laws and absolute authority rather than moral suasion.

2. Frantz Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth' argues that the legitimacy of a colonial state is maintained not by consent, but through ____.

Answer: C) Systemic violence

Fanon, a key figure in post-colonial theory, argues that colonial rule is established and sustained by force, necessitating a different standard for evaluating 'authority' and 'resistance' than in Western democracies.

3. Iris Marion Young's 'Politics of Difference' suggests that justice requires treating all social groups identically, regardless of their historical disadvantages.

Answer: B) False

Young critiqued the 'ideal of impartiality,' arguing that true justice requires acknowledging specific group differences and rectifying institutionalized oppression rather than pursuing 'blind' equality.

4. Consider a 'polycentric' governance model. How does this differ from the classic Westphalian model of state sovereignty?

Answer: C) It involves multiple, overlapping centers of authority rather than one central government.

Polycentricity, explored by Elinor Ostrom, challenges the idea that power must be centralized, showing how various local and regional authorities can manage resources and community life effectively.

5. Michel Foucault's concept of 'Biopower' refers to how modern states exercise control over the ___ of their citizens.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer: B) Biological lives (bodies and health)

Foucault used 'biopower' to describe how governments manage populations through public health, reproduction, and regulation of the body, shifting power from the 'right to kill' to the 'power over life'.

6. In Martha Nussbaum's 'Capabilities Approach,' a government's success is measured primarily by its Total Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Answer: B) False

Nussbaum's approach argues that justice should be measured by what individuals are actually able to do and be (capacities), such as having health and political participation, not just wealth.

7. Mikhail Bakunin's critique of the state hinges on the belief that ____.

Answer: B) Any form of state power, regardless of who runs it, naturally leads to oppression.

As a central figure in Anarchism, Bakunin argued that the state is inherently authoritarian and that true freedom can only be achieved through its total abolition.

8. The concept of 'Negative Liberty' (as described by Isaiah Berlin) is best defined as ____.

Answer: C) Freedom from interference by other people or the state

Negative liberty is 'freedom from' (absence of obstacles), whereas positive liberty is 'freedom to' (the capacity to act on one's free will).

9. Critical Race Theory in political philosophy examines how legal systems and political structures can maintain racial hierarchies even without explicit mentions of race.

Answer: A) True

CRT analyzes how power and justice are distributed through institutional structures and seeks to understand how systemic inequality persists through the law.

10. Which of these concepts describes a society where power is held by people based on their technical expertise and knowledge rather than wealth or popularity?

Answer: B) Technocracy

A technocracy is a system of governance where decision-makers are selected on the basis of their expertise in a given area, particularly scientific or technical knowledge.