

## ANARCHISM AND ITS CHALLENGES

Sponsored by the Institute for Humane Studies

**Reader Abstract:** This reader serves two general purposes. First, to introduce students to the concept and theories of anarchism as a political or ethical ideology. Second, to encourage students to think critically about the role of the state and the challenges of social organization.

### **Session 1: First Shot – The Case for Anarchism**

Hasnas, John. "The Obviousness of Anarchy." In *Anarchism/Minarchism: Is a Government Part of a Free Country?*, edited by Roderick Long & Tibor Machan, 111-131. Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2008.

Leeson, Peter T. "Anarchy Unbound, or: Why Self-Governance Works Better Than You Think." In *Pirates, Collapsed States, and the Possibility of Anarchy. Cato Unbound* ([August 2007](#)): 1-12.

**Session Abstract:** These readings establish the basic idea that anarchy, as an alternative system of social organization, is *plausible*. They do not make an overt argument in favor of anarchy, but by establishing it as a plausible idea, these readings can help frame the subsequent sessions as to whether or not anarchy is *desirable*. The Hasnas piece covers many of the common objections to anarchy in brief, with particular emphasis on the arbitration question, since Hasnas is a legal philosopher. The Leeson piece offers thought-provoking examples of stateless societies that have existed in history.

### **Session 2: Reply On Behalf of the State**

Burke, Edmund. "An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." In *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France*, edited by Daniel E. Ritchie, 104-114, 159-180. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992.

Holcombe, Randall J. "Government: Unnecessary but Inevitable." *The Independent Review* 8, no. 3 (2004): 325-342.

**Session Abstract:** The readings in this session object to anarchy as being either undesirable or impossible. The Edmund Burke piece makes a democratic-aristocratic case for liberty that advocates letting people choose their political leaders, but suggesting that they should or will choose the "best" among them – a "natural aristocracy." The Holcombe piece argues a common objection that regardless of the *desirability* of anarchy, individual self-interest makes the establishment of a state inevitable, and positive attempts to establish a state allow people the freedom to establish one more to their liking.

### **Session 3: Anarchism Strikes Back**

Huemer, Michael. "The Problem of Political Authority." In *The Problem of Political Authority*, 2-22. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Goldman, Emma, and Richard Drinnon. "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For." In *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 1-9. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

**Session Abstract:** These readings offer a rejoinder to the previous session. The Huemer piece makes a sophisticated argument against political authority as an ethical matter. The Emma Goldman article makes a case for anarchy that resembles a different form of anarchist theory: anarcho-communism and "thick" anarchism, in that it rejects both property and religion. The Goldman piece offers a foil to both the session two anti-anarchism readings and Huemer's relatively pro-capitalism piece.

### **Session 4: The Economics of Anarchism**

Cowen, Tyler. "Law as a Public Good: The Economics of Anarchy." *Economics and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2002): 249-267.

Friedman, David. "Law as a Private Good: A Response to Tyler Cowen on the Economics of Anarchy." *Economics and Philosophy* 10 (1994): 319-327.

Cowen, Tyler. "Rejoinder to David Friedman on the Economics of Anarchy." *Economics and Philosophy* 10 (1994): 329-332.

**Session Abstract:** These readings naturally feed off of each other as each one is a direct response to the one before it (the first Cowen reading is a direct response to an unassigned David Friedman writing). They deal predominantly with a specific economic objection to anarchism, being the "public goods" question applied to the provision of security. Both perspectives deal more with the theoretical possibility of private security, rather than the subjective desirability of it.