

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (Third Year)

Subject: Political Science

Paper Code: POC 106

Paper Title: Western Political Thinkers (Rousseau to Marx)

Unit: 1

Module Name: Concept of Equality

Module No: 04

Name of the Presenter: Hegel Conchita Da Costa

- Rousseau demonstrated how humans who were naturally healthy, good, dumb and roughly equal to one another became sickly, evil, intelligent and highly unequal when they mixed in society.
- Rousseau described the human person as endowed with the ability to choose since he was a free agent and not entirely subject to instinct and natural impulse, as other animals were.
- Civilization had multiplied the desire for needs, but the inability to fulfil them made human beings unhappy.
- Rousseau's argument that acquisition of property caused inequality was implicitly challenged by Smith in his 'the wealth of nations' when he pointed out that the self-interested individual unintentionally helped to maximize the wealth of society.
- Once government comes to power, Rousseau argues that those in government use their political power to usurp everybody's rights, including those of the rich. Rousseau mentions two characteristics which distinguish human beings from animals: free will and the capacity for self-improvement.

