**Questions on Individualism:**

1. What does it mean to **be an individual**? Thinking for yourself? Developing your own tastes in clothing, food, music, and so on? Being in charge of your emotional life? Choosing your own life goals? Taking responsibility for your successes and failures? Being economically independent? Being free politically?
2. What is **collectivism**? Being born into a group and shaped by it? Deciding one’s beliefs and values based on what most people believe and want? Putting one’s group’s values above your own? Seeing your group as fundamentally different from and in conflict with other groups?
3. What is **authoritarianism**? Being born under the authority of higher-status people, e.g., one’s parents or politicians? The belief that some people know better and so should have power over others? The view that one should being willing to serve or sacrifice for higher authorities—e.g., religious or political leaders?
4. Is **Ayn Rand** correct in [***Anthem***](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1250)that collectivism is a danger—that it undermines one’s personal development, stifles creativity and innovation, etc.?
5. Does the [**Myth of Gyges**](https://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/republic-2-gyges-text.pdf) teach us that individualism is dangerous—that it leads to anti-social behavior?
6. Fashion: People wear clothes for many reasons—protection, privacy, self-expression, beauty, social signaling. Is [**Less Wrong’s hypothesis**](https://www.lesswrong.com/posts/vXCK3kptLLggEfojX/why-real-men-wear-pink) correct that social status is the major driver of fashion changes? What does this imply for individualism?
7. In Walt Whitman’s [**“Song of Myself,”**](https://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/WhitmanWalt-Song-of-Myself.pdf) individuality is celebrated, yet it is expressed as being harmonious with celebrating the individuality of others. Can individualism be so universally embraced?