



# Sample PBL Problem from a Philosophy Course

**Note:** These sample materials were developed at UCM and are included in the CREATES Toolkit Co-creative Learning as an example of a Problem-based Learning problem. For more information and additional educational tools, visit: <http://europe-creates.eu>

## History of Western Political Thought

### **Assignment 4 – Geneva and Florence: A tale of two cities**

“In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had five hundred years of democracy and peace—and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.”

Harry Lime, in “The Third Man”

Two forms of government are Republics and Principalities. The archetypical republic was Geneva, where citizens ruled themselves, free from the domination of anyone. Indeed, in the republic non-domination, *i.e.* not being at the mercy of anyone, is the highest value, because it is thought to be essential to a good life. The archetypical

principality was Renaissance Florence, where a glorious Prince ruled his subjects, and led the state to Glory. For all the cruelty, manipulation and dirty tricks that princes need to use to run their states effectively, at least things get done. How could glory be achieved without it?

## **Literature**

Excerpts from *The Prince & The Discourses*, in the Cahn Book (1<sup>st</sup> edition: 185-213 / 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: 256-281 / 3<sup>rd</sup> edition: 273-308)

Pettit, P., *Republicanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 80-97.