

Political Philosophy

JAN. 17-18: Introduction to Machiavelli

Essential Question What is “order,” and how much control is necessary to maintain it?

Lesson Question According to Niccolo Machiavelli (Italian philosopher during the 1400s and 1500s), what is “order,” and how much control should rulers establish to keep order?

The Prince

Niccolo Machiavelli

In What Way Princes Must Keep the Faith

You must know, then, that there are two methods of fighting, the one by law, the other by force: the first method is that of men, the second of beasts; but as the first method is often insufficient, one must have recourse to the second. It is therefore necessary for a prince to know well how to use both the beast and the man....

A prince being thus obliged to know well how to act as a beast must imitate the fox and the lion, for the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves. One must therefore be a fox to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten wolves. Those that wish to be only lions do not understand this. Therefore, a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest, and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist. If men were all good, this precept would not be a good one; but as they are bad, and would not observe their faith with you, so you are not bound to keep faith with them.

Main Ideas

ARGUMENT:

CITE/EXPLAIN EVIDENCE:

ILLUSTRATIONS