What sorts of things do states do?

Public safety / order (e.g., policing)

External defense (military, spies, etc.)

Dispute resolution (e.g., courts)

Public services
- Critical infrastructures (water systems, bridges, roads, etc.)
- Disaster relief
- Public health (e.g., epidemics)
- Education

Economic regulation
- Currency
- Standardized weights and measures
- Establishment and enforcement of property rights
- Consumer protection and product safety
- Redistribution

Revenue collection (e.g., taxes)
Public goods (classic definition)

- Rival
  - Excludable
  - Non-excludable
- Non-rival
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-excludable</th>
<th>Excludable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure public goods (clean air, national defense, currency, legal system, large dams, classified information about cyberthreats)</td>
<td>Public education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water from the village well</td>
<td>Local road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit growing by roadside</td>
<td>Candy bar, car, milk from a dairy cow, agricultural land, apartment building, private education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public beaches</td>
<td>Water from the village well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Goods may also look different when how they are financed is taken into account]
States don’t just provide public goods

Other types of goods
- State may be able to provide a semi-private good more cheaply given economies of scale (e.g., a road)
- Redistribution
- Education

Should certain goods be provided, and in what amount?
- Redistribution (to the poor, elderly, unemployed, etc.)
- National defense

Can they be provided in a different way? (make versus buy)
- E.g., should trash collection be outsourced to private firms or done by state directly?
- Should the state provide public education or provide vouchers?
- How should social welfare programs be administered (Dutch versus Swedish versus Swiss versus Americans)?
- National defense
Can we imagine a different the state?

Countries that are “born free” versus something else
• Assume *isonomia* (equality of political and civil rights)
• Don’t assume anything else

Introduction to the (fictitious) island nation of Compostela
• Backup rainwater catchment versus coastal defense?
• Who should pay for public services?
What are the proper boundaries of the state?

The problem of rights, numbers, and intensities (a.k.a., the James Madison problem):
• What to do when majorities trump minorities with intense preferences on “ordinary” issues? (e.g., trade policy)

The problem of cultural rights and prejudices (a.k.a., the Larry Diamond problem)
• Religious freedom versus religious conformity
• Language policy in a linguistically divided society

The scope of the public sphere
• Can the community regulate indecency and offensiveness that do not actually cause harm (a.k.a., the Joel Feinberg problem)
• How should a conventional society deal with sexuality and gender identity?
• Can the state restrict reproductive rights (e.g., banning birth control)?

Which rights are necessary for citizenship? How do we decide how far those rights should extend?
For Groups A and B

1. The problem of popular ignorance (a.k.a., the H.L. Menken problem)

   • “Democracy is a pathetic belief in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance. No one in this world, so far as I know—and I have researched the records for years, and employed agents to help me—has ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the great masses of the plain people.”

   • Introduction to minimalism

   • Where “experts” lead public opinion

2. Democracy versus liberalism (a.k.a, the Judith Shklar problem)