

Thinking Global Podcast – Quentin Skinner

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This week on the Thinking Global Podcast, Professor Quentin Skinner (Queen Mary, University of London – @QMHistory) speaks with the team about contextualism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and more. Professor Skinner chats with Kieran (@kieranjomeara) and Tusharika (@Tusharika24) about what contextualism is as a methodological approach to political thought, how he applies this to Machiavelli and Hobbes, and how this relays back to what it is to think about global politics.

Quentin Skinner is Emeritus Professor of Humanities at Queen Mary, University of London (@QMHistory). Prof. Skinner has published on a number of philosophical themes, including the nature of interpretation and historical explanation, and on several issues in contemporary political theory, including the concept of political liberty and the character of the state. He has written extensively on questions about historical method and historical explanation, being a key figure in the ‘Cambridge’ contextualist school of political thought (@cambridge_cpt). Many of these essays have been collected in the volume, edited by James Tully, *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (1988).

His historical research centres on early-modern Europe, and one of his principal interests lies in the Italian Renaissance. He has published books on Machiavelli, on early Renaissance political painting, on ideals of civic virtue, and has edited Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. These include *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (2000), *Machiavelli* (1981) and more. The other main focus of his research concerns seventeenth century England, writing on the relations between rhetoric and philosophy, including a book on Shakespeare’s use of classical rhetoric – *Forensic Shakespeare* (2014) – and on debates about political liberty in the English revolution – *Liberty Before Liberalism* (1998). He has also published three books on the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes – *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (2008), *Reason and Rhetoric in The Philosophy of Hobbes* (2010), *From Humanism to Hobbes* (2018) and more. His best-known multi-volume works, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (1978) and *Visions of Politics* (2002), attempt to span his insight into the whole early-modern period. This is without mentioning a host of influential articles, such as his famous ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’ (1969).

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