



## The Virtues of Objectivism

A weekend seminar in the theory and practice of rational selfishness

William Thomas, M.A.

“Value’ is that which one acts to gain and keep,” wrote Ayn Rand, “virtue’ is the action by which one gains and keeps it.” This seminar focuses on the distinctive virtues advocated by Objectivism: their basis in fact, their contrast with traditional moral ideals, and their role in a rational, value-seeking human life. We will go into depth on the meaning and importance of Pride, Rationality, Honesty, Integrity, Productiveness, Independence, Benevolence, and Justice, with an additional discussion on some ideas for expanding the list of “Virtues of Selfishness.” The seminar presumes some basic familiarity with Objectivism, but should be intelligible to anyone with a sincere interest in living a happier and less-guilt-ridden life.

Each session includes a lecture followed by an ample discussion period, giving seminar participants a chance to reflect on and chew over the ideas they are hearing about. Discussions will focus on practical applications of these virtues.

### Saturday, November 19, 2005

9:00–9:15     *Registration*

9:20            Introduction

9:25–10:40    Lecture 1 and discussion  
                  **“Pride”**

Pride and the distinctive Objectivist approach to morality. Topics include: Valuing one’s own life; developing objective self-esteem and a commitment of self-improvement.

10:50–12:20   Lecture 2 and discussion  
                  **“Rationality and Honesty”**

Rationality as the prime virtue and honesty as a crucial practical implementation of it. Topics include: the cardinal value of reason; the nature of deception and evasion; objectivity and integration as practices that guard against vices of bias, emotionalism, rationalism, and repression.

12:30–2:00    *Lunch break*

2:00–3:15     Lecture 3 and discussion

### **“Integrity”**

Integrity as the virtue of being virtuous and holding true to one’s values. Topics include: courage and confidence; the role of principles in human thought and action; principled action as against duty and pragmatism; moral character: how it is acquired and lost; living a life of unified value and action, thought and feeling.

3:30–4:15     Lecture 4 and discussion  
                  **“Productiveness”**

Productiveness and taking responsibility for one’s values. Topics include: Objectivism vs. Christianity on the values of work and charity; productive work as the central value in life; thrift, industry and creativity; taking charge of one’s life and goals.

4:15–4:30     Day 1 Wrap up.

*Break for dinner and evening.*

*Optional: Libertarian Alliance/  
Libertarian International banquet  
(separate registration required).*

**Sunday, November 20, 2005**

9:00–10:30 Lecture 5 and discussion  
**“Independence, Benevolence, and Trade”**

Productiveness applied to social relations. Topics include: intellectual independence and thinking for oneself; existential independence; the principle of trade as the model for dealing with others; generosity, sensitivity, and courtesy as investments in friendships and good social relations.

10:45–12:15 Lecture 6 and discussion  
**“Justice ”**

Rationality applied to social relations. The crucial virtue of assessing and responding to values and threats in others. Topics include: the impotence of evil, the theory of moral and existential sanction; justice versus toleration and moral hysteria; putting justice into practice.

12:20–1:50 *Lunch Break*

2:00–3:30: Lecture 7 and discussion:  
**“Virtues of Selfishness”**

Back to the beginning from a new perspective: expanding on pride as the cardinal virtue associated with self-esteem. Topics include: self-esteem and the cardinal value of self more generally; practices of self-awareness, self-care, self-assertiveness, and self-enhancement.

3: 45–4:15 **Closing statement:** putting it all together and into action in work, friendships, family, and other vital areas of life.

*Optional: attend the 5 PM–7PM session of the Libertarian Alliance “Liberty 2005” conference. Featured speaker: William Thomas on “The Values of Liberty.” For more information, see: [www.libertarian.co.uk/conf05.htm](http://www.libertarian.co.uk/conf05.htm) .*

William Thomas is Director of Programs at The Objectivist Center and the Atlas Society. He is the editor of *The Literary Art of Ayn Rand*, the author of *Radical for Capitalism*, and his introductory course on Rand’s philosophy, *The Essence of Objectivism*, is available from The Objectivism Store on audio CD. He has lectured internationally on Objectivism.

**Seminar location:** Chelsea Suite, Royal Horseguard Hotel, Whitehall, London, SW1.  
[http://www.findlondonhotel.com/royal\\_horseguards.htm](http://www.findlondonhotel.com/royal_horseguards.htm)

**Seminar coordinator:** Fran Hill, email: *fran dot hill at rolls-royce.com*

**Registration (for the full weekend seminar):**

Early registration fee (Extended deadline: November 7):  
£127 (cheque or postal order, British Pounds)  
\$227 (credit card, US Dollars)

Late registration fee (~~Oct 25~~ November 8 or later):  
£169 (cheque or postal order, British Pounds)  
\$295 (credit card, US Dollars)

To pay by credit card, go to:

<http://www.objectivismstore.com/c-46-event-registration.aspx>

To pay by cheque or postal order (in British Pounds only), contact Ms. Fran Hill by email.

The seminar is confirmed to take place. Registration fees are non-refundable.