**Overview:**

This lesson will allow students in philosophy, geography, earth science, political science, and global studies to learn about social contract theory while applying it to water access problems in India.

Social contract theory explains why people need to cooperate to escape suffering and to behave ethically. Social contract theory is an ethical theory and a justification for government.

Students will use Internet resources and documents that I will develop.

The Internet resources about water access problems in India will principally be the Sehgal Foundation website: [smsfoundation.org](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fsmsfoundation.org%2F&data=02%7C01%7Claurel.panser%40riverland.edu%7Ceb188259ea58404b854408d7f42030f9%7C5011c7c60ab446ab9ef4fae74a921a7f%7C0%7C0%7C637246291419141064&sdata=jq6qJlnj0Xgp7YLUHJXcgyVNH52xDn4NUdS7QUlwK0Y%3D&reserved=0)

Using the Sehgal Foundation website primarily is optimal, because it has a lot of useful content, and since I need to understand their work for another project I proposed.

**Curriculum materials including resources students will use:**

The principle Internet resources students will use for social contract theory are the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. These scholarly, peer-reviewed websites offer high quality content.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University): <https://plato.stanford.edu/>

Here are a few of the articles within these websites that I may use.

**Thomas Hobbes** (He founded social contract theory.)

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/hobmoral/>

# Social Contract Theory

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/>

# Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712—1778) (Rousseau wrote about social contract theory.)

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/rousseau/>

# Justice

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice/>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html#j>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-global/>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>

**Course where first used:**

I will first use the curriculum I will develop in the Riverland Community College philosophy 1150 course entitled ‘philosophy of social justice’ during spring 2021.

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the fundamentals of social contract theory first espoused by Thomas Hobbes and subsequently considered by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others.
2. Describe the work of at least one non-governmental organizations (NGO) in India that is working to deliver water to people, especially in rural areas.
3. Evaluate various possible water mitigation systems to serve the needs of Indian villagers after considering their limited resources and physical conditions, such as salinity, the presence of naturally occurring arsenic, locations of aquifers, presence of fertilizers, soil composition…
4. Describe the types of village water systems created by the Sehgal Foundation and the rational for those decisions based on physical geography and financial limitations.
5. Explain the water technologies used to install better water systems in rural India during the Twenty-First Century.
6. Elucidate the historical and current use of the panchayati raj in India with respect to improved water access.
7. Describe methods of gaining grass roots consensus through literacy regarding water technology as well as methods to peacefully reach consensus.

**Social contract theory overview**

Generally, social contract theory explains that giving up some power to an authority and other personal resources, such as time and effort, leads to rational, practical solutions. The power is usually the government; for this lesson, NGOs, the panchayati raj and other governmental units will be the holders of power allocated by the citizen’s consensus. The result of using the social contract is the promotion of harmony lessoning conflict over water, thus avoiding what Thomas Hobbes called the State of Nature (State of War). We reason ourselves away from perpetual conflict over water resources, by exercising our duty to cooperate. Generally, social contract theory avoids assumptions while focusing on the use of reason leading to the ability of individuals and the group to flourish. Citizens will make sacrifices, such as giving up time to reach community consensus, while losing a modicum of power to reach the opportunity to use altruism and beneficence.

The panchayati Raj is a traditional system in India to arrive at village decisions. Historically, these bodies have been male dominated. The panchayati raj, was added to the Indian constitution during 1992.

**Physical terrain and Twenty-First Century Rural Indian Water Systems**

Physical geography and earth science students will be able to use this lesson to evaluate the existing soil composition, other aspects of physical terrain, remnants of Moghul step wells, and current water technologies.

Obstacles to potable water in rural India include nitrates, excessive amounts of contaminates, such as iron and fluoride. Students will become familiar with these complications.

Technologies that students will learn about include reverse osmosis, activated aluminum technology, filtration using pebbles and sand columns, checked dams, aeration and oxidation, gravity-based systems, collection of roof water, copper foils, ceramic filters and ground water including aquifers.

**Timeline for this project**

My revised goal is to complete this project by July 20, 2020.