



## Max Weber Programme Conference

### *“Thomas Hobbes and the Modern State: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Interdisciplinary Perspective”*

5<sup>th</sup> Classics Revisited Conference  
San Domenico di Fiesole,  
Villa la Fonte, 30 March 2011

#### “The Modern State Through the Hobbesian Lense”

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Abstract:

The problems of the modern state are different in two major ways from the problem of the state Hobbes addressed. First, Hobbes did not foresee the possibility of states exercising totalitarian control over their subjects, or control anything close to the degree seen in the 20th Century in Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, Mao's China, or present day North Korea. Second, Hobbes did not foresee the possibility that international conflicts could have any serious, let alone catastrophic, impact on the quality of life of civilians within the warring states, as WWII did in much of Europe and Asia. However, I'll argue, Hobbes's theory has the resources to address these modern problems, as well as a promising strategy for confronting emerging challenges to states, such as suicide terrorism.