Course description

- This course will explore the limits of individual liberty and state authority through an examination of Mill's *On Liberty* and a number of contemporary ethical debates. The readings will alternate, week by week, between chapters of *On Liberty* and recent philosophical articles. The contemporary debates we will focus on will concern hate speech, food regulations, genetic enhancement, and the use of steroids in sports.

Course aims

- Developing philosophical skills for advancing clear and cogent arguments about ethical issues
- Analyzing ethical positions as advanced in the history of philosophy, in contemporary philosophy, and in general interest intellectual publications
- Understanding John Stuart Mill’s philosophy of freedom and its implications for political and moral philosophy
- Understanding contemporary debates about the extent and limits of personal liberty and governmental control

Assessment

There are three parts to your grade: two writing assignments and participation.

- The first writing assignment is due at noon on 25 February. It will be 1,500 words and is worth 40% of your grade.
- The second writing assignment is due at noon on 15 April. It will be 2,500 words, and is worth 55% of your grade.
- Participation is worth 5% of your grade. This will be based on your weekly posts and activity in Friday discussion sections.

Course format

Every week you will:

- Do the required reading. The required reading for each week will consist of one or two chapters from John Stuart Mill, or one or two contemporary articles. I will also list additional readings on the week’s topic, but these are not required.
• Watch the lectures and power point presentations on the readings.
• Post a 200- to 400-word comment by 5pm on the day before your tutorial. In the lectures, I will pose questions about the readings, and you are welcome to make your comment a response to one of the questions I pose. But you also may develop your own objection or novel argument about an aspect of the reading you find particularly interesting.
• Read the comments of the other students in your group.
• Participate in the tutorial. You should come to tutorial ready to discuss the readings, the questions posed in lectures, your own comment, and the comments of the other students in your group.
• Information about the timing and venue of tutorials will be posted on the course LEARN page.

Course Schedule

Week 1
Required reading
• John Stuart Mill, On Liberty chapter 1

Additional reading
  o John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism chapter 2

Week 2
Required reading
• John Stuart Mill, On Liberty chapter 2

Additional reading

Week 3
Required reading
• Rae Langton, “Hate speech and the epistemology of justice”
• Jason Stanley, “What Mill got wrong about freedom of speech”

Additional reading
  o Jonathan Riley, “Racism, blasphemy, and free speech”

Week 4
Required reading
• Gerald Lang, “Free Speech and Liberal Community”
• Harper’s letter on justice and open debate: https://harpers.org/a-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/
• Response to Harper’s letter: https://www.objectivejournalism.org/p/a-more-specific-letter-on-justice

Additional reading

Week 5
Required reading
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* chapter 3

Additional reading
- Gerald F. Gaus, “State neutrality and controversial values”

**Week 6**
**Required reading**
- Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism”
- Michael Huemer, “America’s Unjust Drug War”

Additional reading
- Elizabeth Anderson, “John Stuart Mill and experiments in living”
- Ryan Muldoon, “Expanding the justificatory framework of Mill’s experiments in living”
- Neera Badhwar, “Experiments in living”

25 February: mid-term essay due

**Week 7**
**Required reading**
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* chapter 4

Additional reading
- Frank Lovett, “Mill on consensual domination”

**Week 8**
**Required reading**
- Sarah Conly, “Paternalism, food, and personal freedom”
- J.M. Dieterle, “Shifting the focus: food choice, paternalism, and state regulation”

Additional reading
- Priest, “Paternalism, autonomy, and food regulation”

**Week 9**
**Required reading**

Additional reading
- Wendy Donner, “Autonomy, tradition, and the enforcement of morals”

**Week 10**
**Required reading**
- Justine Burley, “Mill, liberty, and (genetic) ‘experiments in living’”
- Joan McGregor, “Why John Stuart Mill would support restrictions on DTC marketing of genetic tests”

Additional viewing

**Week 11**
**Required reading**
• Brent M. Kious, “Philosophy on steroids: why the anti-doping argument could use a little enhancement”
• Eric Chwang, “Why athletic doping should be banned”

Additional reading
  - Oskar MacGregor and Michael John McNamee, “Philosophy on steroids: a reply”
  - Brent Michael Kious, “Dispelling a few false-positives”
  - Oskar MacGregor and Michael John McNamee, “Harm, risk, and doping analogies”

15 April: final essay due