

HUL 258: Social and Political Philosophy

Ind Semester, 2017-18

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January 1, 2018

Course description

This is a general introduction to some core themes in social and political philosophy. In the first part of the course we will explore the nature and limits of the philosophical position known as *utilitarianism*, and use it to draw connections between philosophy and the discipline of economics, particularly with respect to the study of well-being and aggregation.

In the second part of the course we will be concerned with the idea of individual freedom, and ask: what are the nature and limits of the authority of society and the State over the individual? This question will be addressed by a detailed consideration of John Stuart Mill's "Harm Principle."

In the third part of the course, we will apply the lessons of the first two parts to examine contemporary debates on freedom in India, particularly those concerning freedom of speech.

Expectations and pre-requisites

There are no prerequisites, but be warned that this is a demanding, reading-intensive course. The amount of reading for each lecture is likely to be no more than 5-10 pages, but the material is dense and will require multiple readings: expect to read each assigned reading *at least* two-three times in order to grasp it.

Administrative details

Lectures: Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 12-12.50 pm (J slot), LH 310

Readings will be available from SCOOPS and online. I expect you to bring hardcopies to class, rather than read them on laptops or electronic devices.

Tutorials: There will be four tutorial slots in all, two each on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Tutorial allocation will be made by the end of the first week of classes. They will begin on Monday, January 8th.

Piazza site: piazza.com/iit_delhi/spring2018/hul258. Access code: hul258. The piazza site will be used by me to post announcements, and by you to post lecture-notes.

Contact: burra@hss.iitd.ac.in

Office hours: TBA and by appointment (MS 620)

Evaluation policy

Pass marks: 40% (same for auditors)

Evaluation components:

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| Minor I | 20% |
| Minor II | 20% |
| Major | 35% |
| Online participation | 5% |
| Tutorials | 20% |

Exams: all exams will be closed-book. You will be allowed to bring your own notes on one A-4 sized sheet of paper.

Online participation: you will be required to post lecture notes on piazza once during the semester.

Tutorials: tutorial marks will be awarded for attendance, presentations, and other activities.