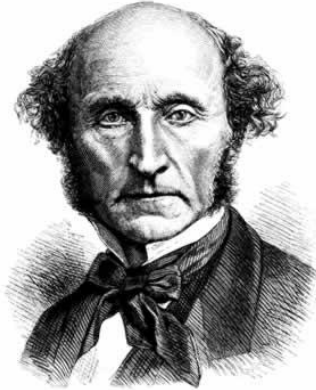


## PHIL 382: John Stuart Mill



Fall 2008

Meeting Times: MWF 8:30 – 9:20 AM

Instructor: Dr. Anthony Reeves

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Office: Hinkle Hall 213

Phone: 513-745-2023

Office Hours: Monday 2:30 – 4:00 PM; Tuesday 10:00 – 11:00 AM; Wednesday 2:30 – 4:00 PM

I will be in my office and available during office hours, but you can make appointments to see me at other times. My preference is that we make appointments by email, and have substantive discussions face-to-face.

### Course Description

This course will be concerned with examining the moral, political, and religious philosophy of John Stuart Mill. Mill can be said, without much dispute, to be the most influential British philosopher of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. He made substantial contributions to economic theory, public policy analysis, psychology, and scientific methodology in addition to his philosophical contributions in logic, epistemology, philosophy of mathematics, ethics, political theory, feminism, and philosophy of religion. Given the breadth and quantity of Mill's writings, the focus of this course will be necessarily narrow. We will primarily attend to his philosophical reflections on practical matters, whose influence still endures today.

Some of Mill's concerns that we will examine include: the foundations of ethics, practical reason, the nature of justice, the moral grounds of individual liberty from government interference, the value of diversity, the justification and proper form of democracy, the basis for the equality of persons (including the equality of the sexes), property, and the value and truth of religion. In addition to achieving a greater understanding of these topics, students should improve their reading and writing skills, their ability to reason through and intelligently talk about difficult problems generally, and their aptitude for analyzing arguments.

## **Ethics, Religion and Society**

This course is part of the Xavier Ethics, Religion, and Society program, and satisfies a course requirement in that program. As part of the E/RS program, this course is intended to promote reflection on questions of moral significance. For those interested, more information about E/RS can be found at their web site: <http://www.xavier.edu/ers/>

### **Texts**

I have tried to keep readings fairly short – usually no more than twenty pages per class. This should permit you to read through the material with care, and perhaps twice should a reading be particularly challenging. As a general note, reading Mill can be deceptively easy. The prose is clear and straightforward, and does not suffer from the obfuscations that can accompany translated texts. No less, the writing is rich in content. Mill is always busy advancing a point and does not waste space belaboring a topic or explicating a tangent.

The required texts for the course are:

Mill, *Autobiography*

Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford)

Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (Oxford)

Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (Oxford)

Recommended, but *not* required:

John Skorupski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mill* [On Reserve in Library]

### **Requirements**

Grade Breakdown:

Short Paper (5-7 pages)	15%
Class Presentation	15%
Long Paper (10-14 pages)	30%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

Papers: Students will be required to write one short and one longer paper. Paper topics for the first will be distributed at least two weeks before the due date. Possible paper topics for the second, longer paper will be distributed at least three weeks before the due date. Students are encouraged to develop their own topic for the longer paper – though any topic *must* be approved me. If you are interested in developing your own topic, we should meet outside of class to discuss it.

In general, papers will be assessed on the basis of: (1) accuracy and completeness in portraying the material in question, and (2) the development of a well-reasoned assessment of that material.

Students are required to maintain a digital backup of all submitted work until the end of the semester. I reserve the right to request a digital copy of any work submitted by the student.

Class Presentation: Each student is required to give a 15-20 minute presentation, individually or with a partner, on some portion of the assigned reading for a particular class meeting. Eligible readings are marked with an asterisk (\*) on the schedule of readings. Students should select an eligible reading and inform me as soon as possible. First come, first serve. After selecting a day for the presentation, the student(s) should meet with me to briefly discuss the presentation.

Presentations will be assessed according to accuracy, the development of a well-reasoned assessment of the material, and ability to field questions about the material.

Final Exam: Students are responsible for all assigned material up to the day of the exam (i.e., the final exam is cumulative). The exam will consist of two essay questions.

Participation: Students will be assessed on their contributions in class. The grade will be based on the frequency with which students provide valuable verbal contributions to the class. Such contributions include informed participation in classroom discussions and asking relevant and cogent questions. Contributions during other students' presentations are also counted.

### **Course Policies**

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory. Students should arrive promptly at the beginning of class with the assigned reading for the day in hand. Students are permitted up to five (5) unexcused absences per semester. After the fifth absence, each successive class missed will result in the student's *final grade* being reduced by a third.

Exceptions will be made for documented absences due to otherwise sanctioned university activity, for observations of religious holidays, due to serious illness (the instructor reserves the right to request documentation from the student's doctor), or due to a family emergency. Students who miss classes for any of these reasons should consult me as far in advance as possible.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with harshly in accordance with Xavier's policies. All cases will be reported to the dean.

The Xavier University Catalog states: "The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based on integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and materials submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic records including letters of recommendation.

“All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct or unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own.

“Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an ‘F’ in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents.”

### **Schedule of Readings**

The following plan is subject to revision, I will inform the class of any changes as we go. Listed on the left are the dates of the lectures, on the right are the readings that will be discussed on those dates.

Aug. 27: Introductory Lecture

Aug. 29: *Autobiography*, chapters I & II

Sep. 3: *Autobiography*, chapter V

“Remarks on Bentham’s Philosophy” [handout]

Sep. 5: *Utilitarianism* (from *On Liberty and Other Essays*), 131-146

Sep. 8: *Utilitarianism*, 146-167\* [Explication of utilitarian doctrine.]

Sep. 10: *Utilitarianism*, 168-175\* [Proof of the principle of utility.]

Sep. 12: *Utilitarianism*, 176-190\* [Justice and utility.]

Sep. 15: *Utilitarianism*, 190-201\* [Further considerations on justice.]

Sep. 17: *On Liberty* (from *On Liberty and Other Essays*), 5-19

Sep. 19: *On Liberty*, 20-34\* [Grounds of liberty of thought and discussion.]

Sep. 22: *On Liberty*, 34-51\* [Liberty further considered.]

Sep. 24: *On Liberty*, 51-66\* [The advantages of the diversity of opinion.]

Sep. 26: *On Liberty*, 66-82\* [Individuality as a component of well-being.]

Sep. 29: *On Liberty*, 83-98\* [Limits to the authority of society over the individual.]

Oct. 1: *On Liberty*, 98-113; **First Paper Assigned**

Oct. 3: *On Liberty*, 113-128

Oct. 6: *Considerations on Representative Government* (from *On Liberty...*) 205-218, 225-234\*  
[Whether government is a matter of choice and what makes for good government.]

Oct. 8: *Representative Government*, 238-256\* [Defense of representative democracy.]

- Oct. 13: *Representative Government*, 257-284\* [Preconditions and functions of rep. democracy.]
- Oct. 15: *Representative Government*, 285-301\* [Dangers of representative democracy.]
- Oct. 17: *Representative Government*, 302-319\* [Proper mode of electing representatives.]
- Oct. 20: *The Subjection of Women* (from *On Liberty...*) 471-484 **First Paper Due**
- Oct. 22: *The Subjection of Women*, 484-501\*  
[The apparent acquiescence of women to subjection; feminist epistemology.]
- Oct. 24: *The Subjection of Women*, 502-523\* [Equality in marriage.]
- Oct. 27: *The Subjection of Women*, 524-532, 544-556\* [Equality of occupation.]
- Oct. 29: *The Subjection of Women*, 557-582\* [The good of equality.]
- Oct. 31: *Nature* (from *Three Essays on Religion*), 3- 33\* [The Nature of Nature.]
- Nov. 3: *Nature*, 33-65\* [Morality and Nature]
- Nov. 5: *Utility of Religion* (from *Three Essays on Religion*), 69-100\*  
[Belief in the supernatural and morality]
- Nov. 7: *Utility of Religion*, 100-122; **Second Paper Assigned**
- Nov. 10: *Theism* (from *Three Essays on Religion*), 125-154\* [Argument for a First Cause]
- Nov. 12: *Theism*, 155-175\* [Argument from Design]
- Nov. 14: *Theism*, 176-195
- Nov. 17: *Theism*, 196-226; **Topic Choice for Second Paper Due**
- Nov. 19: *Theism*, 226-257
- Nov. 21: *Principles of Political Economy*, 5-24\* [Distribution of wealth a matter of choice.]
- Nov. 24: *Principles of Political Economy*, 25-45\* [Nature and grounds of private property.]
- Dec. 1: *Principles of Political Economy*, 46-49, 65-82\* [Typical effects of economic growth.]
- Dec. 3: *Principles of Political Economy*, 100-116\* [Tendency of profits to a minimum.]
- Dec. 5: *Principles of Political Economy*, 117-130\* [The stationary state.]
- Dec. 8: *Chapters on Socialism* (from *Principles...*), 372-386 **Second Paper Due**
- Dec. 10: *Chapters on Socialism*, 400-413\* [Replies to objections to socialism.]
- Dec. 12: *Chapters on Socialism*, 413-436

**Final Exam: 8:30 – 10:20 AM, Wednesday Dec. 17th**