

MILL ON LIBERTY

Objectives:

To present and discuss the arguments set out by John Stuart Mill in his essay “On Liberty” (1859), in a short series of lectures and seminars.

Presented by:

William Arthurs
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Location:

Khazar University
(details of location to be confirmed)

Language:

English

Number of sessions:

Four

Dates and times:

March 2007, details to be confirmed

Format of each session:

90 minutes, comprising 50 minutes lecture followed by 40 minutes discussion (subject to timing)

Pre-reading:

None required

Content:

Mill’s “On Liberty” was published in 1859. In it, Mill states and defends his famous principle, a cornerstone of modern liberalism, that the liberty of any individual should be restricted only where necessary in order to prevent harm to others.

Mill’s arguments on the following key topics will be presented, with critical comment, and then opened up for discussion. Other topics may be discussed, subject to timing.

- Should there be restraints on democratic power, and if so, what should those restraints be and by what means should they be put into effect?
- On what grounds could one argue for freedom of thought and expression?
- Is it possible, both to allow complete freedom of thought and expression, and also to maintain social institutions, the effectiveness of which relies on agreement as to certain general principles? If so, how?
- How can character and talent best be encouraged by society?
- How easy is it to apply Mill’s principle of liberty to specific situations?

Website for this course:

MillOnLiberty.org.uk (currently under construction)