

Questions for Wolff, Chapter 4 (“The Place of Liberty”)

- According to Mill, when may the state interfere with individual behavior/choices?
- Why does Mill think that it’s important that the state “protect the minority”?
- Mill claims that there are some exceptions to the Liberty Principle. (There are some people to whom it does not apply.) What are these exceptions?
- Why, according to Mill, should thought and discussion be freely allowed?
- Does Mill advocate *absolute* freedom of expression? Does he recognize any exceptions?
- Wolff argues that “[m]ere offence or dislike” cannot be the sort of “harm” that Mill has in mind. Why is this?
- Why, according to Wolff, is the idea of natural rights “highly problematic”?
- What is the difference between direct and indirect utilitarianism?
- Wolff argues that “it does not follow that a utilitarian theory (of rights) would be a liberal theory.” Why is this?
- In objecting to liberalism, Marx argues that Mill’s followers have failed to distinguish between two kinds of emancipation. What are these two kinds?
- According to communitarians, what are the results of “denying the importance of our community?”
- What is the “positive liberty” that communitarians advocate?