The theme is “disagreement in politics”. We will begin with an episode that marks the emergence of the very idea that a polity can contain disagreement, as opposed to requiring consensus of belief: the idea of religious “toleration”. How was it argued for, and how was it argued against? We will spend two weeks (1-2) discussing a late 17th-century debate, and then assess what contemporary theorists make of it (Week 3), and of the idea of “toleration” in general (Week 4). We will then fast-forward to the 19th century and re-read Mill On Liberty, in which disagreement is not just to be tolerated, but positively welcomed – why, exactly? (Weeks 5-6). Some readings on what to make of Mill follow (Week 7). The mid-term exam question will then be provided – a short article, describing an event, on which you will be asked to comment in light of our discussions so far. In Week 8 we will discuss your responses. We then move on to contemporary writings. In Week 9, Will Kymlicka’s defence of cultural diversity, and one of his critics; in Week 10, Elisabeth Galeotti’s move from toleration to recognition, and one of her critics; in Week 11, Iris Young’s “recognition” paradigm and one of her critics; in Week 12, we take a look at what recent psychological theory may have to say about political disagreement.

Evaluation:

Participation 25%

Midterm exam: 15%

Essay (due April 10): 60%. 12-15 pages is recommended. It is up to you to propose a topic that shows serious engagement with the course readings, and to discuss it with me at least a week in advance. It may involve additional reading, especially if it does not address Locke or Mill, to whom we will have devoted half the term.

A copy of all the readings will be made available for consultation or copying. Copies of the Locke/Proast debate and of Mill On Liberty are available in the bookstore but you are not required to buy them.

Readings:

1. Locke vs Proast – Round 1: Locke’s Letter Concerning Toleration and Proast’s The Letter Concerning Toleration Briefly Consider’d and Answer’d.


4. Thoughts on toleration in general: the chapters by Williams, Fletcher, Scanlon in David Heyd ed., *Toleration: The Elusive Virtue*.


7. Readings on Mill – there are several good possibilities, the choice will depend on the issues that have become salient in our discussions. *Mid-term exam distributed, answers duefollowing week.*

8. Discussion of midterm exam answers.


