JUSTICE
Lecture 6 – The Utility of Speech

1. Mill’s project in *On Liberty*
   a. Mill’s concern: the existence/threat of social tyranny, by way of law and custom
   b. Mill’s question: when does society have the moral right to coerce the individual?
   c. Mill’s answer: only when it’s necessary to prevent harm to others (Harm Principle)

2. The Harm Principle:
   a. A filter for *reasons* we might invoke to justify coercion
   b. Permits coercion only to prevent harm to others
   c. Forbids coercion for *any* other reason (e.g., paternalistic, moralistic, perfectionist)
   d. Demands freedom of *all* speech & conduct-not-harmful-to-others

3. Mill’s argument for the Harm Principle:
   a. We should always do what will maximize happiness
   b. Allowing freedom of all speech & conduct-not-harmful-to-others will maximize happiness

4. Why does freedom of speech maximize happiness? Why not censor unpopular or false doctrines?
   a. Because censorship of unpopular doctrines can deprive everyone of the benefits of truth (in science, politics, morals)
   b. Because censorship of false doctrines deprives everyone of the benefit of (being confronted with) falsehood: being “intellectually active”

5. Why does freedom of conduct-not-harmful-to-others maximize happiness? Why not more coercion?
   a. Because the best—happiest—ways of living will be discovered only if there is room for “experiments in living” and “variety of characters”
   b. Because freedom of conduct-not-harmful-to-others is necessary for “individuality”—“one of the principal ingredients in human happiness”—whereas coercion stunts “individuality”