

# HUL 258: Social and Political Philosophy

IIInd Semester, 2017-18

Major exam

## A (4 marks)

For each of the following questions, choose *one* of the possible options. Explain your answer in one line: no marks will be awarded without a correct explanation.

1. According to the “more speech” argument
  - (a) People should speak more because it will get us closer to the truth
  - (b) People should speak less, because more speech will only cause confusion
  - (c) We should not restrict another person from speaking, even if the speech may cause harm, if we can prevent the harm by counter-speech
  - (d) If another person’s speech causes harm, then we need to prevent them from speaking more
  
2. According to Alexander Meiklejohn, which of the following restrictions is *not* a problem from a free speech perspective:
  - (a) A rule of order in a meeting which says that only one person can speak at a time
  - (b) A government order saying that the doctrine of Communism should not be taught in schools
  - (c) A law banning “anti-national” speech
  - (d) A rule saying that advertisements in favour of cigarette smoking are illegal
  
3. Mill’s “infallibility” argument can be most clearly applied to which of the following restrictions of expression?
  - (a) Restricting anti-communist booklets in a country which is officially communist
  - (b) Restricting kissing scenes in Bollywood movies

- (c) Restricting cruelty to animals during the making of a movie
  - (d) Restricting loud music after 11 pm
4. The "chilling effect" involves
- (a) Telling people to chill out and not get so angry when something offends them
  - (b) Discouraging people from speaking because they fear they will violate the law, even when what they would have said is perfectly legal
  - (c) Imposing unfair restrictions on advertising, originally applied in the case of air conditioners
  - (d) Preventing people from voting by scheduling elections in cold weather

## B (26 marks)

Under the *Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act*, 1987, it is unlawful to support, justify or propagate the practice of sati in any manner. The punishment for doing so is 1-7 years of imprisonment, along with a fine of between Rs. 5,000-30,000.

You are a Member of Parliament deciding whether or not to vote for this Act when it comes up for discussion.

1. The Act clearly penalises speech which is in favour of sati. What is the strongest free speech argument *against* the Act? (9 marks)
2. How should a defender of the Act respond to this argument? (9 marks)
3. In the light of these arguments, how would you vote, and why? If your decision depends upon some empirical assumptions, describe what they are and how they can be tested. (8 marks)