

## **IE-HUMANITIES**

**IE University**

Professor: **M<sup>a</sup> JOSÉ FERRARI SÁNCHEZ**

E-mail: [mjferrari@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:mjferrari@faculty.ie.edu)

Academic year: 21-22

Degree course: FIRST

Semester: 2<sup>o</sup>

Category: COMPULSORY

Number of credits: 6.0

Language: English

### **PREREQUISITES**

### **SUBJECT DESCRIPTION**

#### **Free Speech and Dangerous Ideas**

Do we have the right to offend? And do we have the right to not be offended? Should there be a "free marketplace of ideas", or should ideas deemed too dangerous be kept out of reach? These questions, as basic as they may seem, are at the very core of some of the most heated political, legal, religious and philosophical debates taking place all over the world right now.

This course provides an introduction to Free Speech from a historical, philosophical and legal perspective. It aims to foster a deep understanding of the role and functions of Free Speech in society, and to enable the students to build a personal position with regards to speech-related issues. The first half of the course will be devoted to the review of the main historical and philosophical milestones behind the ideas of freedom and freedom of speech, in order to question, in the second half of the course, whether they remain relevant in today's global and digital world.

The course will cover historical events such as the use of propaganda in totalitarian regimes, the Civil Rights Movements, or the Arab Spring; and it will also look at current phenomena like political correctness, hate speech, fake news and disinformation, or the cancel-culture movement. Students will be exposed to primary and secondary journalistic, artistic, legal, musical, literary, political, historical and filmic sources. At the end of the course, they will prove their understanding of Free Speech issues by undertaking a research project about a Free Speech topic of their choice

### **OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS**

The course will focus on the development of the following skills:

- Development of analytical, critical, and creative thinking.
- Comprehensive reading of complex texts.
- Writing and argumentation.
- Research and information competence.
- Sensitivity to other cultures and human experiences.

Upon completion of this course, the successful student will be able to:

- Recognize current Free-Speech related issues.
- Understand the historical evolution of Free Speech and how it has shaped our mentalities and its legal regulation around the world.
- Interpret Free Speech legislation.
- Recognize the main philosophical and political theories related to Free Speech.
- Differentiate, analyze and evaluate the key elements involved in Free Speech controversies.
- Analyze the ethical, political and practical implications of Free Speech.
- Evaluate different approaches and solutions to Free Speech issues.
- Conduct research related to Free Speech.
- Create meaningful, ethical and conscious messages.

## METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught employing IE's Liquid Learning methodology, which combines three essential elements for a complete and dynamic learning experience: synchronous interactions, asynchronous interactions and individual inquiry and discovery. Synchronous Interaction is learning that happens in live, in real-time. For example, attending classes (lectures, discussions, labs, studios) in-person or virtually, working with classmates on team projects in a work-room or video-conference platform, or getting help and feedback from professors in-person or online. Asynchronous Interaction and Individual Inquiry and Discovery are learning experiences that happen interactively and asynchronously using collaboration tools and digital platforms.

During this course, we will be using a flipped-classroom approach, in which students are introduced to the learning material before class through readings and multimedia sources, while classroom time is used to practice and apply concepts, to deepen understanding through group discussion, and to practice problem-solving in the form of class activities. For this reason, two things will be particularly important: that the students come to class prepared by having done the work assigned, and that they participate actively in class discussions and other activities. Studies show that this methodology encourages "deep learning" through the use of higher level cognitive skills.

During the course, students will read a series of texts and relevant articles within the fields of philosophy, intellectual history, cultural studies, legal thought and political science on the topic of Freedom of Speech. Simultaneously, we will be looking at real historical and contemporary debates and controversies related to free speech, so that students learn to apply the theoretical frameworks to real life scenarios.

Teaching methodology	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	20.0 %	30 hours
Discussions	23.33 %	35 hours
Exercises	16.67 %	25 hours
Group work	13.33 %	20 hours
Other individual studying	26.67 %	40 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150 hours

## PROGRAM

### SESSIONS 1 - 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Introduction and course overview

During the first session, we will go over the course's structure, objectives, content, and evaluation system. We will also discuss both the professor's and students' expectations.

In the second session we will introduce the concept of Freedom of Speech, and will try to determine why it is so important and yet so controversial in contemporary society. We will do so by reviewing some recent cases related to Free Speech from different world regions.

*Multimedia Documentation: Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

*Multimedia Documentation: What are Human Rights*

### **SESSION 3 (LIVE ONLINE)**

#### **Free Speech as a Human Right**

During this session we will review the students' findings about their countries' legal provisions with regards to Freedom of Expression. We will discuss what Human Rights are and whether they function as the moral compass of the global society. We will look into the connection of Free Speech and other Human Rights.

*Article: The Rhetorical Situation*

### **SESSION 4 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

#### **Asynchronous activity: Ideas in the 21st century**

*Article: A Message to the 21st Century*

### **SESSIONS 5 - 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

#### **Words that wound**

During this session we will review some key theories from rhetoric, cultural studies and pragmatics to understand the link between language, thought and cognition.

*Article: What is Enlightenment*

*Book Chapters: On Liberty (Chapter 2)*

### **SESSIONS 7 - 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

#### **The Marketplace of Ideas**

In this session we will go back to the origins of the concept of Free Speech (and so many other foundational concepts of modern society): The Enlightenment. We will discuss two of the founding texts of rationalism and freedom of speech. We will introduce the most important theory of free speech: John Stuart Mill's Marketplace of Ideas.

*Article: Two Concepts of Liberty*

*Article: The Market for Goods and the Market for Ideas*

### **SESSION 9 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

#### **Asynchronous activity about Habermas "Public Sphere"**

*Book Chapters: The Public Sphere*

### **SESSIONS 10 - 11 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

#### **Ideas versus goods**

In this session we will first discuss Isaiah Berlin's understanding of freedom and it can be used to understand different forms of Free Speech. In the second session we will look at R.H. Coase's take on the marketplace of ideas and his comparison to the marketplace of goods.

*Book Chapters: There is not such thing as Free Speech, and it's a good thing too*

## **SESSIONS 12 - 13 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Undoing Free Speech**

This session will focus on the postmodernist approach to Free Speech based on the discussion of Stanley Fish's ideas. We will introduce Eric Barendt's classification as an overall contemporary approach to the concept and the limitations of Free Speech.

*Book Chapters: Four Arguments in Support of Free Speech*

## **SESSION 14 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Asynchronous activity based on the documentary "Shouting Fire: Stories from the Edge of Free Speech", by Liz Garbus**

## **SESSION 15 (LIVE ONLINE)**

### **MIDTERM**

*Podcast: The Totalitarian Temptation, part 1 (USSR)*

*Podcast: The Totalitarian Temptation, part 2 (Third Reich)*

*Book Chapters: Social History of the Third Reich*

*Book Chapters: 1984 (chapter 1)*

*Video: The Wave*

## **SESSIONS 16 - 17 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Free Speech and European Totalitarianisms**

In this session we will look at the way in which totalitarian regimes have historically both abused and restricted Free Speech to gain and maintain power.

*Multimedia Documentation: Selection of Negro Spirituals*

*Video: Hope & Fury: MLK, The Movement and The Media | NBC News*

*Book Chapters: A RETROSPECTIVE ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: Political and Intellectual Landmarks*

*Technical note: The Civil Rights Movement: A Cultural Revolution (The role of Music and Fashion)*

*Multimedia Documentation: The Ballot or the Bullet*

*Multimedia Documentation: I have a Dream*

## **SESSIONS 18 - 19 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Free Speech and Collective Action: The Civil Rights Movement**

These sessions will be devoted to the link between free speech and collective action. We will analyze the case of the Civil Rights Movement, whose successful communication strategies became the paradigm for many subsequent social movements.

*Book Chapters: Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*

## **SESSION 20 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

### **Asynchronous Activity: Visit to Reina Sofía Museum**

*Multimedia Documentation: Rethinking Guernica*

## **SESSIONS 21 - 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **The Arab Spring**

During this class we will look at the social protests and uprisings that took place in several largely Muslim countries in the 2010s. We will discuss how they unfolded and what impact they had on their respective societies.

*Article: A declaration of the independence of Cyberspace*

*Book Chapters: The Age of Surveillance Capitalism (Introduction)*

## **SESSIONS 23 - 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Is the Internet an opportunity or a threat for Free Speech? Class debate**

In this session we will review both techno-utopian and techno-dystopian views of the Internet to try to infer how they affect Freedom of Speech. Some of the phenomena that will be discussed are disinformation/fake news, cancel culture or the attention economy.

*Article: Free Speech is a Triangle*

## **SESSION 25 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

### **Asynchronous activity about the documentary "The Great Hack" (Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim)**

## **SESSIONS 26 - 27 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Free Speech and Dangerous Ideas in the digital age**

During this session we will take a look at big tech companies and social media platforms; we will discuss their place as new actors in the digital speech environment.

*Technical note: Is the First Amendment Obsolete?*

*Multimedia Documentation: Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act*

## **SESSIONS 28 - 29 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **The New Gatekeepers**

These sessions will be devoted to the analysis of content moderation through the case of Facebook's Oversight Board, and to the new forms of digital censorship around the world.

## **SESSION 30 (LIVE ONLINE)**

Course wrap-up and final conclusions.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Compulsory**

- Eric Barendt. *Freedom of Speech*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780199244 (Printed)

- Robert Atkins and Svetlana Mintcheva. *Censoring Culture. Contemporary Threats to Free Expression*. The New Press. ISBN 0781595580504 (Printed)

- Stanley Fish. *There Is No Such Thing as Free Speech, and It's a Good Thing Too!*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780195093834 (Printed)

- Lynn Hunt. *Inventing Human Rights*. WW Norton. ISBN 9780393331998 (Digital)

- Shoshana Zuboff. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs. ISBN 1610395697 (Printed)

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

I. PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE LEARNING ATMOSPHERE (20%): Students are expected to participate in class and to actively contribute to enrich its intellectual climate. The participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of class contributions, on the engagement with the readings and assignments, on class attendance and the overall attitude in class.

II. MIDTERM EXAM (20%): Students will be tested on their familiarity with the readings and their ability to use the theories to analyze current cases through an open-book exam. Further instructions will be provided in class.

III. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (30%): This includes all graded assignments done as homework or asynchronous sessions. Students who do not submit at least 50% of the assignments will not be able to pass the course.

IV. FINAL ESSAY (30%): Students will need to write a 4 page research paper about a topic of their choice related to Free Speech. Further instructions will be provided in class.

Criteria	Percentage	Comments
Final Exam	30 %	
Intermediate Tests	20 %	
Final Exam	30 %	
Class Participation	20 %	

## PROFESSOR BIO

Professor: **M<sup>a</sup> JOSÉ FERRARI SÁNCHEZ**

E-mail: [mjferrari@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:mjferrari@faculty.ie.edu)

María José Ferrari received her PhD in Hispanic Cultures from Columbia University, where she specialized in late 19th and early 20th-century Literature and Intellectual History. She holds undergraduate degrees in Law from Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Hispanic Philology from UNED. She has been the recipient of many scholarships and grants to conduct research at institutions in France, Russia, Chile and Spain.

She has more than 15 years of teaching experience in the US and Spain. She currently serves as Academic Director of IE's Arts and Humanities Division.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

