

Paper Topics – Paper 1
17.042 Citizenship and Pluralism

* If you choose the two paper option, you must write and submit an 8-10 page paper on one of the following topics by **12:00 Noon, Monday, October 27**, at my office.

* If you decide to write one long seminar paper instead of writing the two 8-10 page papers, you must submit a **one-page paper proposal** by **12:00 Noon, Monday, October 27**.

Write an 8-10 page paper on one of the following topics:

1. Explain and evaluate Berlin's argument that there are many values that are uncombinable and incommensurable. Does Berlin's value-pluralism differ from moral skepticism and relativism? What implications for political thought and practice follow from accepting the fact of value-pluralism?
2. Explain how and why Rawls attempts, in *Political Liberalism*, to steer a middle course between liberalism conceived of as a *modus vivendi* and liberalism conceived of as a "comprehensive moral doctrine." Is the attempt successful, in your opinion? Why or why not?
3. Explain and critically assess Kymlicka's argument that liberals in particular have compelling reasons for granting special rights to the members of certain minority cultures.
4. Taylor argues that multiculturalist movements demand that we all *recognize* the equal value of different cultures. What does such recognition entail? Why, in Taylor's view, might we owe such recognition to different cultures? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
5. Some argue for multicultural policies on the grounds that cultural diversity is valuable for the wider society. What are the benefits (if any) of cultural diversity for the wider society? How persuasive do you find the "value of cultural diversity" argument for multiculturalism?
6. Which defense of multiculturalism do you find most convincing, and why? Be sure to discuss at least two different arguments for multiculturalism.
7. Barry argues that multiculturalist policies "are not in general well designed to advance the values of liberty and equality." Why does Barry think this? Do you agree? Why or why not?