

Reading/Discussion Questions for October 8
17.042 Citizenship and Pluralism

1. Mill argues for tolerating a diversity of religious and moral opinions in society. Why does he think it important to tolerate a diversity of opinions? What are the benefits and the costs of such toleration, and why do the benefits outweigh the costs, in his view?
2. What, in Kymlicka's view, is the value of cultural diversity for the wider society? In what ways does he think that the diversity argument is insufficient in defending the rights of minority cultures?
3. Kronman explains that the claim that racial and ethnic diversity is an educational good rests on two propositions: (i) that diversity of experience and values is an educational good, and (ii) that diversity of experience and values is strongly linked to racial and ethnic diversity. Be sure to think through the arguments behind each of these propositions. Why is the diversity of experience and values an educational good? (How does a diverse student body contribute to the goals of a liberal education? Why is the diversity of experience and values relevant in studying the human sciences and not the natural sciences, in Kronman's view?) What are the grounds for thinking that racial and ethnic diversity serves as a proxy for the diversity of experience and values? What are some reasons Kronman gives for being cautious about the diversity argument?
4. What does the majority of the Supreme Court mean by "diversity", and why does the Court think it is important? Do you agree that diversity is an important goal? Why or why not? Does promoting a racially and ethnically diverse student body through affirmative action conflict with ensuring equal protection of the laws to non-minorities?