

POLITICAL & SOCIAL THOUGHT

Equality & Liberty

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What premises, assumptions, reasons, evidence, and other important considerations lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support and justify accepting the author's conclusions as opposed to other ones.

Reading

Friedman, M., & Friedman, R. (1990). Created Equal. [Chapter 5]. In *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (Harvest ed., pp. 128–149). New York: Harcourt. (Original work from 1980.)

Questions

1. Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman consider three different conceptions of equality: (1) equality before god (or personal equality), (2) equality of opportunity, and (3) equality of outcome.
What is meant by each of these forms of equality? Under each, what does it mean to treat two persons equally? Under each, how is government supposed to promote that form of equality?
2. What do Friedman and Friedman mean by liberty? What are acceptable limitations to liberty? Are these the same ideas about liberty as seen in John Stuart Mill?
3. Which conceptions of equality are compatible with liberty according to Friedman and Friedman? Why? Which are not? Why not?
4. Which conception of equality do they ultimately endorse? Why? What role does responsibility play in their argument?
5. How do Friedman and Friedman defend the free market against charges of promoting inequality?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses (unless you miss or are late to class, and must then submit a written reading question review).

You do need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting. You may, during the following class, be randomly selected to present answers to these if selected to do so for a verbal reading question review.