

JOUR4330 – Freedom of Speech

Term paper, spring 2015

Deadline Thursday 30. April, 14.00

The exam and obligatory statement concerning cheating must be submitted in Fronter. The room will close Thursday 30. April at 14.00.

The exam consists of two (2) pages and two (2) questions. Both questions must be answered in order to pass the exam.

The exam must be written in English.

Question 1

1. As we have seen, Internet-based communication as a medium is both similar to but also importantly distinct from print and broadcasting media. A major challenge to defining and defending freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression (F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E) is that these have emerged historically in conjunction with specific *media* – print, mass broadcasting, and then the Internet.

With this history and challenge in mind, *propose* and *defend* a definition of F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E that will “work” for publication and expression in the age of the Internet.

2. F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E have emerged historically in “Western” countries, especially from the Protestant Reformation through the Enlightenment and its affiliated democratic revolutions, and, especially in the 20th century, as strong protections for not only *political* expression, but also *artistic/aesthetic* expression – including expressions that are deeply *offensive* to various groups, whether feminists, (ultra-) conservative religious folk, and/or terrorists. At the same time, a number of important *critiques* of Enlightenment-based arguments and justifications for F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E have also emerged *within* “Western” intellectual and artistic circles.

- A. Given your definition of F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E provided in response to question 1 - which of the critiques of F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E we have seen seems the most challenging to your definition and its foundational arguments?
- B. How can you defend your definition against this critique?

Question 2

You were asked during the course to develop your own case-study, drawing from either the Oxford website on freedom of speech, <freespeechdebate.com/en/casestudies/> or the Winston book, *The Right to Offend* – i.e., a prominent and specific example of how freedom of the press / freedom of speech / freedom of expression has been attacked and/or defended.

Present your case study, being especially clear as to

A) how your case study exemplifies and/or helps us better understand several of the major foci of the course, including:

one or more of the important arguments *for* freedom of expression;

and/or one or more of the important arguments *against* freedom of expression;

and/or one or more of the important *challenges* to “transferring” earlier, print-based and/or broadcasting-based notions of F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E to online environments.

B. How the conflict or debate in play in the case study was resolved, or failed to be resolved, with careful attention to the arguments and factors involved (e.g., commercial interest, national security, etc.)

C. Finally, comment on how *you* think the case should have been resolved, including whatever additional arguments, evidence, etc., that you may want to bring into play.

In particular, how far would the definition of F.o.P./F.o.S/F.o.E you offered in Question 1 be helpful – or not – in attempting to resolve this particular case?

Information about the exam:

The submitted paper may be up to 10 pages (one page is calculated to 2300 characters without spaces), excluding front page and references.

Please see our web site for more practical information about exams at the Department of Media and Communication: <http://www.hf.uio.no/imk/english/studies/admin/information-regarding-exams-at-imk/>

You can find the obligatory statement concerning cheating here:

<http://www.uio.no/english/studies/admin/examinations/cheating/index.html>

Your front page must include your candidate number, and the name of the file must be your candidate number (xxxxxx.pdf/xxxxxx.doc). Remember to upload the document in a recognizable format. We recommend that you use pdf.

The exam results will be published in student web 26. May 2015. Results will not be given by phone or e-mail.