

Politics 215 : The First Amendment: Speech, Press, and Assembly

The First Amendment is central to the functioning of U.S. democracy. Moreover, some scholars contend that the First Amendment is at the very heart of the "meaning of America." In this class, we will focus on the clauses regarding speech, assembly, and the press while concentrating on the intertwined issues of freedom, democracy, and power. Some specific questions to be addressed include: what is the relationship between the First Amendment and the politics of public space; concentrated media power; new political economies of knowledge; the suppression and protection of dissent; and socio-political inequalities (e.g., group libel and hate speech)? We will also interrogate the alleged distinction between speech/act and, more broadly, between reason-persuasion/violence-force. In this course we will study the development of legal doctrine and spend a fair amount of time reading case law.

Credits 4