

Reading Questions for December 1

These questions cover part of a book chapter by Alan Wertheimer titled “Liberty, Coercion, and the Limits of the State.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

We are spending this class and the next discussing the question: should we have the freedom to do whatever we want, so long as it doesn’t harm anyone? We’re going to spend today’s class and part of next Tuesday’s looking at Wertheimer’s discussion of the issue, then we’ll spend the rest of next Tuesday looking at some particular cases.

*Questions:*

1. *Note: on pages 38-41 Wertheimer introduces a bunch of examples that he references by name later on, so you might want to skim those.* On pages 44-5, Wertheimer introduces the harm principle. What does the harm principle say? In discussing the principle, Wertheimer raises the question: what is harm to *others*? What issues does he raise related to this? What do you think about the issues he raises?
2. On page 45-6, Wertheimer raises several issues connected with the question: what is *harm* to others? What are the first three issues he raises? What do you think about the issues he raises?
3. On pages 46-7, Wertheimer raises several more issues connected with the question: what is *harm* to others? What are the fourth and fifth he raises? What do you think about the issues he raises?
4. On pages 47-8, Wertheimer raises a sixth issue connection with the question: what is *harm* to others? What is this issue? What do you think about it?
5. On pages 48-50, Wertheimer discusses the offense principle. What is this principle? What does he think of it? Is he right and why?