The general aim of our H212 seminars is "to study some of the sources of our modern mentality and discover how the great writers from the Enlightenment to the present have shaped our views." I intend this seminar to be a useful step in this endeavor. To give focus to our efforts, we will orient our work around two ideas, liberty and happiness, that are central to our understanding of ourselves and the ways we inspire to live. These ideas or values are complex and do not always go together easily--as seen in John Stuart Mill's remark that it is better to be "Socrates discontented than a contented pig." These ideas can also lead to tensions with other values we cherish. For example, we will explore the argument that during elections our liberty ("free speech") allows us to spend as much of our money as we please in support of or in opposition to anyone we choose, versus the argument that such action threatens to undermine the whole process and value of democracy. These considerations lead us to orient much of our discussion around the concept of ethics. Our working definition of ethics will be: Convictions about the types of lives it is good or bad for people to lead. This orientation will help us relate our discussion of ideas to concrete issues involving us in our private lives, as members of society, and as citizens of the United States.

We will introduce our ideas of liberty and happiness with the classic works of Montaigne, Mill and Seneca. We also will consult more recent works by Kwame Appiah, Ronald Dworkin, John Maynard Keynes, and Amartya Sen among others. We conclude our readings with Eric Weiner's *The Geography of Bliss*. Written assignments will include two noncumulative examinations, and a series of papers based on class reading and discussion. Doing additional reading for these essays is neither necessary nor useful. I would be pleased to talk about this seminar with anyone who might be interested, either in person or by email. My office is located in Woodburn Hall, Room 405, email, furniss@indiana.edu.