

# **SEMINAR**

## **Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights**

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*“You believe, then, that the fundamentals of justice should be deduced not from a praetor’s proclamation, as many now assert, nor from the Twelve Tables of the Law, as our forefathers maintained, but from the innermost depths of philosophy?” (Cicero, **On the Nature of the Gods**)*

Although discussions about international issues often make reference to the notion of Human Rights – the war in Syria and the ensuing migration of refugees, the killing of demonstrators in Myanmar, the shortage of anti-covid vaccines for poor countries are obvious examples – the philosophical foundations of these rights, their claim to cross-cultural universality, their ability to be a sort of secularized religion of mankind are controversial. This class aims to introduce students to the philosophical debate on the foundational issue and to stimulate independent yet informed thinking.

### **Teaching Methods**

The course presupposes active participation. Students are required to select at least one text from the reading list and present it to their colleagues. Classes will be run as seminars: it is expected that students read the material before class and participate in the discussion of the material presented. In addition to in-class presentations, students are required to write a 10-15 page final paper on a topic relevant to the course OR take a final oral exam.

### **Assessment methods**

Assessment will take place by looking at four aspects of students’ performance: 1) Participation in class, 2) Presentation, 3) Final exam

Grade Weights:

Participation in class: 30%

Presentation: 30%

Term Paper or Final oral exam: 40%

## Schedule

**Block seminar on 9-10-11 December** (Friday, Saturday and Sunday full days)

### Friday, Dec 9<sup>th</sup>

*Morning: Foundational Issues*

9.30-12.15 Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M., “The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights. An Overview”, in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.1-23.

*Afternoon: Is Human Dignity the Foundation of Human Rights?*

2-4 Assignments of presentations to students for Dec 10 and 11

Caranti, L. 2017. *Kant's Political Legacy. Human Rights, Peace, Progress*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. 57-104

4-6 TALK: Marie Goebel, “Human Dignity as the Foundation of Human Rights”

### Saturday, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>

*Morning: Human Rights, Equality, Democracy*

9.30-10.45 Cristiano, Thomas “Self-Determination and the Human Right to Democracy” in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.459-480.

11-12.15 Buchanan, Allen, “The Egalitarianism of Human Rights”, *Ethics*, Vol. 120, No. 4 (July 2010), pp. 679-710.

*Afternoon: Universalism, Pluralism, Multiculturalism: the Asian and the Islamic Challenges to Human Rights*

2-3.50 Li, Xiarong “Asian Values and the Universality of Human Rights” In: P. Hayden (ed.) *The Philosophy of Human Rights* (Henceforth PHR), Paragon House 2001: p.397-408

4-5.55-An-Nai'im, Abdullahi A., “Human Rights in the Muslim World”, *PHR*, p.315-334

### Sunday, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>

*Morning: Human Rights and Animal Rights*

9.30-10.45 P. Singer, *Practical Ethics*, Cambridge University Press 2011, pp. 48-70.

11-12.15 T. Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”. In P. Singer (ed.) *In Defense of Animals*. Wiley-Blackwell 2004, pp.1-10

*Afternoon: Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect*

2-3.15 “The Responsibility to Protect”, (<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>). In particular p. 1-55.

3.25-4.40 Bellamy, Alex “Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq” (*Ethics & International Affairs*, 19(2), 31-54. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7093.2005.tb00499.x)

4.50-6 Petra Perisic, “Implications of the Conflicts in Libya and Syria for the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine” 67(5) *Zbornik PFZ* 783 (2017)