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# THE PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RIGHTS: THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

SPS/01 - 6 CFU - 2° Semester

## Teaching Staff

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## COURSE STRUCTURE

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, and to take a final oral exam.

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## DETAILED COURSE CONTENT

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.

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## TEXTBOOK INFORMATION

- 1) 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.
- 2) Raz, Joseph, "Human Rights Without Foundations", *The Philosophy of International Law* (henceforth PIL), OUP, 2010: 321-337.
- 3) Buchanan, A. "Why International Legal Human Rights?" *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.244-262.
- 4) Waldron, J., "Is Dignity the Foundation of Human Rights?" in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.117-137.
- 5) Simmons, J. "Human Rights, Natural Rights, Human Dignity" in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.138-152.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Peter, Fabienne, "A Human Rights to Democracy?", in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.481-491.
- 8) Buchanan, Allen, "The Egalitarianism of Human Rights", *Ethics*, Vol. 120, No. 4 (July 2010), pp. 679-710.
- 9) Li, Xiarong "Asian Values and the Universality of Human Rights" *PHR*, p.397-408
- 10) An-Nai'im, Abdullahi A., "Human Rights in the Muslim World", *PHR*, p.315-334
- 11) Held, Virginia *Care and Human Rights?* in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.624-641
- 12) Mendus, Susan *Care and Human Rights. A Reply to Virginia Held*, in Cruft R., Liao S. M., and Renzo M. (eds.) *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: 2015, p.642-652
- 13) "The Responsibility to Protect", available on line (<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>). In particular p. 1-28.
- 14) "The Responsibility to Protect", available on line (<http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>). In particular p. 29-55.
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