

EXAM ESSAY, HUMR 5131, AUTUMN 2012

Deadline: 15 November, 2012, at 1300 hrs.

ANSWER ONE OF THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW

1) Human Rights as a Category of Thought

In his standard reference book about human rights, James Nickel notes that ‘many people around the world have adopted "human rights violations" as a category of political thought and appraisal'. Discuss this assertion and give examples of how the use of terms like ‘human rights violations’ or, for instance, ‘a critical human rights situation’, influence the way political issues are handled. Use material from the reading list to show the implications of adopting human rights as a framework for political action and choose a country where this *problematique* is particularly acute at the moment.

2) Promoting Human Rights

Various works on your reading list discuss how and why human rights have acquired an ever more prominent role in international politics over the last 40 years—to the extent of using concepts like ‘revolution’. The works offer various explanations for this development, some of which may be said to complement each other whereas others seem to be differing or even conflicting. Discuss two or three explanations or perspectives on the role that human rights play in international politics and choose a political process to show the weak and strong points of the theories in question. The case you choose may be mostly internal (i.e., domestic human rights compliance) or mostly external (the application of human rights in an international conflict).