

MID-TERM ESSAY 28 September – 11 October 13:00 (p.m), (submission in Fronter)

Answer **one** of the two questions below:

1 Human Rights and Philosophy

Much of the recent philosophical literature on human rights concerns what role the current, institutionalised global-legal practice of human rights and historical experiences of human rights abuses should play in a normative theory of human rights. Thus, a substantial part of the disagreement in the philosophy of human rights revolves around how to correctly give account of human rights as an empirical, historical phenomenon, and to which extent such a descriptive account should set limits for moral theorizing, and vice versa. Your task is to confront the normative literature on the philosophy of human rights with the empirical literature in history and social science. For instance, you might use Moyn and/or Simmons to evaluate and criticise Beitz and/or Nickel, or vice versa.

2 Human Rights and Culture

In response to standard criticisms claiming that human rights are 'Western' or 'Eurocentric', i.e., only fully comprehensible in certain cultures, one may argue that human rights actually can be understood and realised in all cultures; it is a matter of careful and sensitive translation. Or one may argue that this criticism is misplaced because human rights is an answer to modernity and hence possible to realise in all modern societies. Using material from the reading list, discuss the weak and strong points of these two arguments and conclude with your own opinion.