

HUMR 5131 – Midterm assignments – Autumn 2017

Choose one of the two questions below:

1. The Status of Human Rights

Even as 'human rights', as a phrase, has become familiar all over the world among scholars and politicians as well as laypeople, there is no complete agreement about how one can justify the status of human rights as universally valid moral or legal claims. Studying justification involves philosophical as well as empirical inquiries into the status of human rights. From your reading list, draw at least two different attempts at proving or disproving the universal validity of human rights and use at least two examples. Discuss the relative merits of these approaches and draw your own conclusions.

2. Human Rights History

Various articles and book chapters on your reading list offer different methodologies to the task of giving an account of the prominent role human rights play in today's world. Select at least two contrasting approaches and apply them to the task of explaining the place of human rights in your own country or another country you know well. What are the strong and weak points of the respective approaches?

