“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 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 course aims to introduce students to the philosophical debate on these issues and to stimulate independent yet informed thinking.

Teaching Methods
The course presupposes active participation. 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.

Reading assignments / Schedule of classes

Introduction
1) March 6

Human Dignity and Human Rights
2) March 7

Democracy, Equality and Human Rights: Critiques and Interpretations
3) March 8

Universalism and Pluralism: the Asian and the Islamic Challenges
4) May 9
Li, Xiarong “Asian Values and the Universality of Human Rights” PHR, p.397-408
Recommended but non mandatory extra readings


**Li, Xiarong** “Tolerating the Intolerable: the Case of Female Genital Mutilation”, pp. 2-8, in Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly (Winter 2001); on-line www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/reports


**Teson, Ferdinand** “International Human Rights & Cultural Relativism” pp 379-96 PHR

**Charles Taylor** “A World Consensus on Human Rights?” pp 409-22, PHR

**Langlois, Andrew** “The Real Asian Values Debate”, pp. 46-72 in his The Politics of Justice and Human Rights; Cambridge University Press 2001


**Shapiro, Ian and Kymlicka, Will (eds.)** “Introduction” to Ethnicity and Group Rights

**Kymlicka, Will** “The Good, the Bad, and the Intolerable: Minority Group Rights” pp 445-61 in PHR


**McDonald, Michael** “Should Communities Have Rights? Reflections on Liberal Individualism” pp 33-61, CCP

John Rawls *The Law of Peoples*, “Decent Consultation Hierarchy” pp. 71-78

Rao, Arati “Right in the Home: Feminist Theoretical Perspectives on International Human Rights” pp. 505-25 in *PHR*

Li, Xiarong “Tolerating the Intolerable: the Case of Female Genital Mutilation”, pp. 2-8, in *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly* (Winter 2001); on-line reserve and on-line www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/reports/


Smith, Michael J. “Humanitarian Intervention: an Overview of the Ethical Issues” pp.478-501 in *PHR*


Donnelly, Jack “Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention” pp. 242-60 in his *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*

Shue, Henry “Nationality and Responsibility” pp. 131-52 in his *Basic Rights;*

Steiner and Alston “Challenges to Universalism-- Children” pp. 511-37 in, *International Human Rights in Context*


Cranston, Maurice “Human Rights, Real and Supposed” pp 163-73, *PHR*

Buchanan, Allen “Rules for a Vanished Westphalian World” 697-721 *Ethics* (July 2000;)


Pogge, Thomas “An Egalitarian Law of Peoples”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 23, no.3 (Summer 1993)


Smith, Michael J., “Humanitarian Intervention: An Overview of the Ethical Issues”
