



## Course syllabus

Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of Political Science

1SK154 Mänskliga rättigheter i ett historiskt, filosofiskt och teoretiskt perspektiv, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Human Rights in Historical and Philosophical Perspective, 7.5 credits

### **Main field of study**

Political Science

### **Subject Group**

Political Science

### **Level of classification**

First Level

### **Progression**

GIN

### **Date of Ratification**

Approved 2014-10-01

Revised 2017-06-13 by Faculty of Social Sciences. Revision of literature

The course syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2017

### **Prerequisites**

General entry requirements.

## Objectives

After completing the course the students will:

- acquire a general understanding about the making and development of the idea(s) and practice of rights and duties in different times and spaces and the dialectics of different forces in society working for and against it
- be able to put the ideas and practices of human rights in a global and local settings, and to discuss critically the historical and philosophical controversies surrounding the issue of human rights/duties
- be able to recognize how rights and duties issues have interacted with politics of power and the powerlessness, economy and culture in a historical and philosophical perspective
- be able to gear human rights issues towards questions of new issues relating to human rights i.e. women, gender, minorities, indigenous and tribal people, homosexuals etc - and how the advent of a culture of human rights is possible
- acquire a basic knowledge of history and philosophy and prepare themselves to study further Human Rights Law

## Content

The course follows the historical and philosophical development of human rights in a general sense, but also looks at issues in modern history where the rights of ethnic,

religious or other minorities have been at stake, as has gender and women's rights etc and highlights the emerging practice and intellectual debates that have accompanied the concept in modern history, the role of different actors, States, individuals and specially the role of Political and Social Movements with examples from various parts of the world, Asia, America, Africa and Europe.

This course has mainly two parts: One part focuses on the historical aspect how the idea of human rights has evolved in human society, using a long-time perspective from ancient times onwards, but mainly focusing on the last 250 years. It follows the dissemination of ideas formulated since the 18th century and to our present time.

The second part deals with the philosophical aspects of Human Rights. What the rights and duties are? How different religions, cultures, theories and ideologies have coloured and contributed for the development of the modern idea of Human Rights.

The course enables the students to confront basic ethical and intellectual problems and controversies concerning the idea and practice of human rights. The course follows the debate that has arisen, both with regard to those who claim a set of universal human rights, and those who claim it as culture-specific, or even incompatible with particular ideological or religious creeds.

### Type of Instruction

Instruction consists of lectures and seminars where active participation by the learners will be an essential part. A precondition for the seminars is that the appropriate literature has been read before each seminar occasion. All these seminars are compulsory.

### Examination

The course is assessed with the grades A, B, C, D, E, Fx or F.

The examination consists of a written seminar paper and oral presentation of it.

The grade A constitutes the highest grade on the scale and the remaining grades follow in descending order where the grade E is the lowest grade on the scale that will result in a pass. The grade F means that the student's performance is assessed as fail (i.e. received the grade F). Fx is not a grade and is only used when a student is allowed to complement her/his examination.

Students who have not passed (i.e. received the grade of F) at the regular examination will be offered a new examination shortly after the regular examination.

### Course Evaluation

A written evaluation is conducted and compiled in a report, which is filed at the department. The result and actions, if taken, are communicated to the teacher responsible for the course and presented to the students in the way most appropriate according to the teacher responsible for the course. Other types of evaluations, such as continuous during the course or oral communication with the students, can occur and is encouraged to secure continuous quality improvement.

### Credit Overlap

The course cannot be included in a degree along with the following courses of which the content fully, or partly, corresponds to the content of this course: 1SK173

### Other

Grade criteria for the A–F scale are communicated to the student through a special document. The student is to be informed about the grade criteria for the course by the start of the course at the latest.

### Required Reading and Additional Study Material

#### Required reading

Dembour, Marie Bénédicte (2006): *Who believe in Human Rights? Reflections on European Convention of Human Rights*. Cambridge University Press, 340 pages. ISBN: 9780521683074

Hunt, Lynn, *Inventing Human Rights: A History (latest edition)*, New York & London: Norton & Co, 260 pages

Ishay, Micheline R, *History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era (latest edition)*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 404 pages

Compendium of texts and documents, 200 pages