



Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice

Jack Donnelly

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In a thoroughly revised second edition of Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Jack Donnelly elaborates a theory of human rights, addresses arguments of cultural relativism, and explores the efficacy of bilateral and multilateral international action. Entirely new chapters address prominent post-Cold War issues including humanitarian intervention, democracy and human rights, "Asian values," group rights, and discrimination against sexual minorities.

"Every once in a while a book appears that treats the leading issues of a subject in such a clear and challenging manner that it becomes central to understanding that subject. Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice is just such a book. . . . Donnelly's interpretations are clear and argued with zest." American Political Science Review (reviewing the first edition)"

Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice Details

Date : Published October 31st 2002 by Cornell University Press (first published January 1st 1989)

ISBN : 9780801487767

Author : Jack Donnelly

Format : Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Politics, Nonfiction, Philosophy, History, Social Movements, Social Justice, Political Science, International Relations, Academic, School, Law, Read For School



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From Reader Review Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice for online ebook

Clare says

Very informative, if a little dry at times. Donnelly has updated the book quite a bit since the original publication, so make sure you have this recent edition!!!

Read for English 593: Human Rights Literature and Law

Puri Kencana Putri says

A wonderful book for beginner to understand about the idea of human rights, the development of the element of rights after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, and the debate inside of the discourse. A solid content, and I'm sure once you start, you gonna like it.

Meesh says

I'm not an avid reader of law or human rights. The reason I picked up this book was for a college research paper. Although it was a very slow read, it proved to be more than useful and I got all the information I needed.

Jenn says

I had to buy this book for class and really enjoyed it.

Muhammad Murad says

A must-read for all those who are interested in Human Rights. ,

Md Zahid says

i am thinking to know about the of human rights law

sarah says

Jack Donnelly was one of my grad school professors. Good, solid book on human rights.

Utpal Banerjee says

I want to read this books.....

Jen says

Wow,

so far I am SUPER impressed by Donnelly's ability to use circular logic and get stuck in the rut of "modern/traditional" "us/them" binary thinking. I am trying to resolve the fact that I agree with many of his conclusions, but find the logic that Donnelly is taking to those conclusions to be, for lack of a more coherent way to articulate it, kind of fucked up. At least I'm learning a lot as I read.

Mike Fraser says

Really tough to get through. Not an easy read. I think I have more notes in the margins and underlines than there are words in the book.

Stefanie says

Brought up great issues with human rights: humanitarian intervention, concepts of democracy with human rights, "Asian Values," torture, genocide. But I didn't feel it provided a good argument. Anything that did not fit with the "international standard" was simply thrown out the window with no excuse. It didn't make sense to me, particularly when Lee Kuan Yew described Asian Values as the counter-argument against an international standard for human rights. I got the impression the book pretends only the UN-approved concept exists, although all regions of the world interprets it differently.

Ed says

The four stars in this review are more for the organization and clarity of Donnelly's ideas and to a lesser extent for the ideas themselves. It works well as an introduction to the validity of human rights, the vocabulary of practitioners and some of the founding documents, particularly, in this case, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The Holocaust, plus the forced relocation of millions and the destruction of the most basic necessities to maintain life during World War II was the impetus for the Declaration (grammatically the upper case D is correct but if Donnelly were reading it aloud you could hear it) and the subsequent treaties that amended and extended it.

An important aspect of the UDHR is that all the rights it enumerates and defines are individual and not group rights. The rights of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities are dealt with as the rights of individuals

belonging to the group, not the group itself as a collective entity, since human rights are literally the rights that one has simply because one is a human being. Human rights are equal rights; all people have the same human rights as everyone else. They are inalienable; one cannot stop being human no matter how badly one behaves or how monstrously one is treated. And they are universal in that we consider all members of the species *Homo Sapiens* as human beings and thus, automatically, holders of human rights.

Human rights can be violated, ignored or abrogated and often are with impunity for the violators. Attempting to claim a right--the right of free assembly and association, for example, can lead, in many countries to extra-judicial execution--one can simply disappear or, now that it has become a transitive verb, can be disappeared--El Salvador, Chile under Pinochet, Iraq, the Philippines, the USSR, many others. Regimes that feature summary executions of suspected enemies of the state will almost always fail in most other categories of maintaining or expanding human rights. However, no matter how the concept of individual rights is trampled under the jackboots of fascism those rights still exist and individuals in these unfortunate countries are still fully entitled to them. The right to the presumption of innocence in a free and fair hearing before an independent and impartial judiciary doesn't evaporate in, for example, the People's Republic of China even though those rights may seem to be in permanent abeyance.

An important distinction for Donnelly is that human rights are not moral rights--human rights have played what he calls a "vanishingly small part of Western moral theory." He follows John Rawls in identifying them as political rights and is much more specific regarding them than Jurgen Habermas whose political philosophy often complements Rawls but who is in conflict with him as well. An excellent introduction and summary of their thoughts is in an article by Habermas criticizing Rawls in the *Journal of Philosophy* and the reply by Rawls in the same journal. For those interested the easiest route to search for "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism". I would post the urls but they are each three lines long and subject to being broken.

Donnelly knows his stuff. He is cited everywhere by everyone, has been consulted by the United Nations and governments throughout the world. "Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice" is a valuable and timely book.

Laura says

Grad school required reading and a book that never left my side. Best thing about the book? It's human rights IN THEORY *and* PRACTICE. In a policy-oriented program, that was of upmost importance to me.
