

Spring 2014
PHI 302, Section 01
Second Paper Assignment
Prof. Douglas Ficek

Write a paper, six-to-eight pages in length, on one of the following topics. Revise your work carefully, and remember to cite your sources appropriately. Your typed and stapled essay is due at the beginning of class on May 15th.

1. Edmund Burke and Jeremy Bentham both criticize the idea of natural rights, specifically in terms of the French Revolution. What are their criticisms, and what do you make of them? Use three additional sources.
2. What does Mary Wollstonecraft argue in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and how does her argument relate to the development of (first wave) feminism? Use three additional sources.
3. What does Karl Marx argue in *On the Jewish Question*, and why is he so critical of rights discourse? Why does his philosophical position on history (seemingly) preclude individual rights? Use three additional sources.
4. What does Thomas Pogge argue in “How Should Human Rights Be Conceived?”, and how is his argument indebted to John Rawls? What do you make of his philosophical position? Use three additional sources.
5. How does Martha Nussbaum theorize rights in “Capabilities and Human Rights,” and why is her approach to rights discourse unique? What do you make of her argument? Use three additional sources.
6. Richard Rorty is very critical of rights discourse. What does he argue in “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality,” and what do you make of his “neo-pragmatist” argument? Use three additional sources.
7. What does Kwasi Wiredu argue in “An Akan Perspective on Human Rights”? Do Western conceptions of human rights translate in an African environment? Use three additional sources.
8. What does Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im argue in “Human Rights in the Muslim World”? How do human rights conflict with Shari'a law, and how can this be overcome? Use three additional sources.