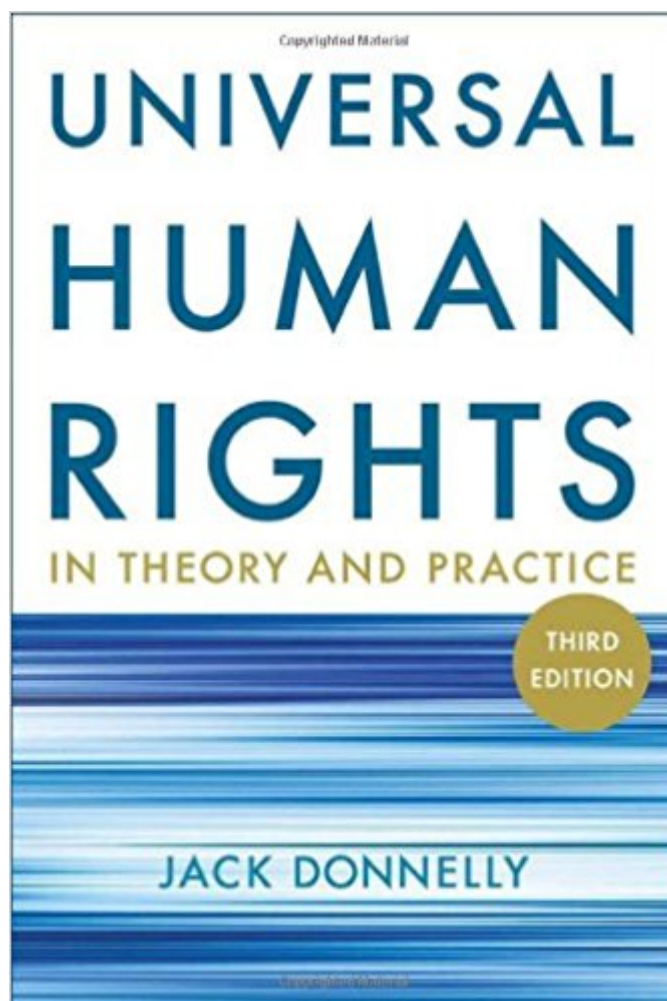


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# Universal Human Rights In Theory And Practice



## Synopsis

In the third edition of his classic work, revised extensively and updated to include recent developments on the international scene, Jack Donnelly explains and defends a richly interdisciplinary account of human rights as universal rights. He shows that any conception of human rights and the idea of human rights itself is historically specific and contingent. Since publication of the first edition in 1989, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* has justified Donnelly's claim that "conceptual clarity, the fruit of sound theory, can facilitate action. At the very least it can help to unmask the arguments of dictators and their allies."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"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 a previous edition) "This wide-ranging book looks at all aspects of human rights, drawing on political theory, sociology, and international relations as well as international law." *Foreign Affairs* (reviewing a previous edition) "What Donnelly does better than anyone else is to lay before the reader a coherent conceptual framework for an understanding of international human rights as an operative part of international life. The book remains at the top of any bibliography of indispensable books dealing with human rights." *Human Rights & Human Welfare* (reviewing a previous edition)

Jack Donnelly is Andrew Mellon Professor and John Evans Professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. His other books include *International Human Rights and Realism in International Relations*.

This was a required book for a Human Rights class I was taking. I hadn't studied Human rights before, so I found it useful, but a little boring and repetitive. Human rights seem like they should be common sense, but they get more complicated as you travel around the world, and deal with so many different cultures.

Used it as a textbook, but it was written in a way that tackles many of the basic questions that students may have about human rights as well as discussing the substantive schema within which human rights regimes operate.

The kindle version is worthless as a textbook. Without clear chapters and page numbers it makes using this book as a reference almost impossible.

pretty good book and Kindle for works good in my laptop and android cellphone.

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. 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.

Very interesting and good read!!

Excellent.SR

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