# Kantian Theory and International Human Rights Courts

MultiRights Workshop & Graduate Conference
University of Oslo 27 August 2012

Human rights are rapidly becoming an important force in international relations. The number of human rights covenants and conventions is increasing, human rights courts and other regulatory organs proliferate, and the discourse of human rights has become important to global political agents ranging from NGOs to world leaders. While this indicates a new respect for human dignity and the rule of law it also raises several difficulties. How are human rights courts to be legitimate unless they are held accountable in properly democratic procedures? How can human rights treaties avoid reflecting ethnocentric values? What is the justification for the margin of appreciation courts sometimes gives states when it comes to human rights? At the deepest level: what is the philosophical foundation of international human rights?

This workshop will explore the contribution of Kantian theory in understanding these difficulties. Kantian theory is often invoked in debates about international human rights, but rarely systematically and with attention to the connection between principles and institutions such as courts. Participants are encouraged to explore how human rights should be understood in a Kantian perspective, and what the implications are for the legitimacy of the emerging international human rights regime.

## Workshop schedule

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| 9.00-9.15: | Opening remarks: Andreas Føllesdal and Reidar Maliks |
| 9.15-10:45 | Katrin Flikschuh (LSE): 'Universal Human Rights and Selective Enforcement: some Kantian Reservations' |
| 10:45-11:00 | Coffee break |
| 11.00-12:30 | Peter Niesen (Darmstadt): 'Border-crossing Speech as a Human Right: a Kantian Perspective' |
| 12:30-13:30 | Lunch |
| 13.30-15.00 | Howard Williams (Aberystwyth): 'Kantian Underpinnings for a Theory of Multirights' |
| 15:00-15:15 | Coffee break |
| 15:15-16:45 | Thomas Pogge (Yale): 'Kantian Theory and International Human Rights Courts' |
| 19:00 | Dinner |

## Graduate conference

A graduate conference on Kantian political philosophy will take place on August 28. The program will be available soon at http://tinyurl.com/cevdu4x.

## Organizers

MultiRights - The Legitimacy of Multi-Level Human Rights Judiciary, http://tinyurl.com/cevdu4x
Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature, http://www.csmn.uio.no/
Norwegian Kant Society, http://tinyurl.com/c7g5q42
Norwegian Association for Legal Philosophy: http://tinyurl.com/c73zgdl

## Location

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Cort Adelers gate 30, Oslo. Participation is free and open to the public but prior registration is encouraged. Registration for meals is mandatory, with the exception of speakers. Please contact reidar.maliks@nchr.uio.no.