



# INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

## **HUMAN RIGHTS** **School-based Syllabus**

### **Notes**

1. This document should be read in conjunction with the Vade Mecum School-based Syllabus (SBS) entry.
2. As an SBS, Human Rights may be offered only by schools authorised by IBO to do so prior to the commencement of the course.
3. An SBS may not be combined within the same Diploma with a pilot programme or another SBS.
4. Any queries arising from this documentation should be directed in the first instance to the Subject Area Manager at the IB Curriculum and Assessment Centre.

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# SYLLABUS DETAILS

## TOPIC 1: Theory of Human Rights

### 1. The Idea of Human Rights

*This subtopic introduces the concept of human rights from philosophical, ethical and legal perspectives. It examines arguments for and against the idea of universal human rights.*

- Nature of Rights
  - Moral Rights and Legal Rights
  - Subject-object exercise, Corresponding Duty and Justification of Rights
  - Negative and Positive Rights
  - Three Generations of Human Rights
  - Basic Rights
- Justification and Critique of Universal Human Rights
  - Human Nature: Needs, Moral Capacity
  - Natural Law Doctrines
  - Social Contract Theories (Groot, Locke, Rousseau, Rawls)
  - Utilitarianism (Bentham, Austin, Hart)
  - Libertarian View on Rights (Nozick)
  - Kantian Approach (Gewirth)
  - Rights as 'Trumps' (Dworkin)
  - Legal Realism (Llewellyn, Pound, McDougal)
  - Marxism
  - Declaration of Human Responsibilities

### 2. Human Rights in Western Thought

*This subtopic gives an overview of the development of the idea of universal human rights in the West, and introduces political developments and organisations that have promoted this view.*

- Pre-World War II Development
  - Antiquity: *Ius Naturale*, *Ius Civile*, Christianity
  - English Tradition: Bill of Rights (1689)
  - The American and French Revolutions
  - Universal Suffrage and Early Feminism
  - The Red Cross
  - The Labour Movement and Socialism
  - The League of Nations
- Post-World War II Development
  - The Nuremberg Trial: Crime against Peace and Humanity
  - The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  - The UN: Fundamental Rights, Civil and Political Rights, Social and Cultural Rights
  - Collective Rights

- The Helsinki Process
- Regional Human Rights Systems
- Non-Governmental Organisations

### **3. Culture and Human Rights**

*This subtopic introduces the challenge of philosophical and anthropological cultural relativism to the universality of human rights. It also examines non-Western conceptions of human rights and the impact of globalisation on culture and human rights.*

- Cultural Relativism and the Critique of Universal Human Rights
  - Conceptions of Rights and Cultural Values
  - Idea of Universal Rights based on Values Common to all Cultures
  - Idea of 'Duties' in Non-Western Human Rights Theories
  
- Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights
  - Human Rights in Africa
  - Human Rights in Islam
  - Human Rights in South Asia
  
- Globalisation, Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights
  - Globalisation and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
  - Globalisation, Hegemony and Cultural Identity
  - Cosmopolitanism vs. Communitarianism
  - Universalism vs. Relativism

## TOPIC 2: Practice of Human Rights

### 1. Human Rights and International Relations

*This subtopic introduces states and non-state actors in international relations and covers the basic features of international political economy from the human rights perspective.*

- States and International Relations
  - Power, Sovereignty and Non-intervention
  - Liberalism, Realism and World-system Theory
  - States and Protection of Human Rights
  - Human Rights and Foreign Policy
  - Humanitarian Intervention
- Non-State Actors
  - Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs)
  - Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)
  - Trans-national Movements and Organisations
  - Multinational Companies (MNCs)
- International Political Economy
  - Free Trade, Protectionism and Economic Globalisation
  - World Trade Organisation (WTO)
  - World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Third World Debt
  - Underdevelopment and Human Rights

### 2. Human Rights Protection Systems

*This subtopic deals with the human rights related intergovernmental (IGO) and non-governmental (NGO) organisations. It concentrates on their purposes, structures and functions in the protection of human rights on global and regional levels.*

- Global System: The United Nations (UN)
  - The International Bill of Human Rights
    - The UN Charter
    - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
    - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its Optional Protocol, 1976)
    - The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)
  - The UN Organs and Human Rights
    - The General Assembly
    - The Security Council
    - The Economic and Social Council
    - Commission on Human Rights
    - Other Relevant Councils and Commissions
    - The International Court of Justice
    - Other Relevant UN Courts and Tribunals

UNESCO  
ILO

- Other Major UN Human Rights Treaties

- Genocide
  - Racial Discrimination
  - Sexual Discrimination
  - Torture
  - Children's Rights

- The UN and the Enforcement of Human Rights

- The UN and the Protection of Human Rights during the Cold War
  - The UN and the Protection of Human Rights in the Post-Cold War Era

- Regional Courts

- The European System

- The Council of Europe and Related Institutions
    - The European Convention of Human Rights
    - The Enforcement Mechanism of the Convention
    - The Convention and the European Union
    - The European Social Charter
    - Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
    - The European Union and Human Rights (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union)

- The Inter-American Human Rights System

- The Organization of American States
    - The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man
    - The American Convention of Human Rights
    - The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
    - The Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

- The African System of Human and People's Rights (Banjul)

- The Organisation of African Unity
    - The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
    - The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

- Non-Governmental Organisations

- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as International Lobbyists
  - NGOs and International Judicial Proceedings
  - NGOs and the United Nations

### 3. Human Rights and International Law

*This subtopic gives an overview of the creation and enforcement of international law. It also deals with the issues of armed conflicts, humanitarian law and war crimes.*

- Sources of International Human Rights Law
  - Custom
  - Treaties
  - The UN resolutions
  - *Ius Cogens*, General Principles, Subsidiary Sources
  - Soft Law
  
- Enforcement of International Human Rights Law
  - International Court of Justice (UN)
  - European Court of Justice
  - European Court of Human Rights
  - Inter-American Court of Human Rights
  - Jurisdiction of National Courts
  - The Role of the Individual in International Law
  
- Non-Judicial Enforcement
  - Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting
  - Humanitarian Intervention
  - Bilateral Foreign Policy Action
  
- Conflicts, Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
  - The Red Cross and Humanitarian Law
  - War Crimes
  - International Criminal Tribunals
  - International Criminal Court (UN)

## **TOPIC 3: Contemporary Human Rights Issues**

### **1. Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups**

*This subtopic concentrates on discrimination against minorities and disadvantaged groups. A student is to choose one of the following themes and find a specific sample case for Internal Assessment Work. (See the details in the chapter “Assessment Outline”)*

- Racial Minorities
- Religious Minorities
- Political and Other Dissidents
- Minorities of Sexual Orientation
- The Aged
- Children
- Women
- The Challenged

### **2. Environment and Technology**

*This subtopic links environmental and technological issues to human rights. It examines such questions as the right to a clean and safe environment; technological change and emerging human rights issues; and the right of access to technologies. A student is to choose one of the following themes and find a specific sample case for Internal Assessment Work. (See the details in the chapter “Assessment Outline”)*

- Environment, Resources and Human Rights
- Medical Technologies and Human Rights
- Technologies, Development and Equality
- Access to Technologies and Power

### **3. Economics, Trade and Labour**

*This subtopic studies the role of economics, trade and labour in the context of human rights. A student is to choose one of the following themes and find a specific sample case for Internal Assessment Work. (See the details in the chapter “Assessment Outline”)*

- Development
- Hunger
- Poverty
- Third World Debt
- North-South Relations
- Migrant Workers
- Labour Rights

### **4. Conflicts and Human Rights**

*This subtopic studies the implications of conflict and war for human rights. A student is to choose one of the following themes and find a specific sample case for Internal Assessment Work. (See the details in the chapter “Assessment Outline”)*

- Arms Race and Arms Trade
- Violence, Conflicts and Human Rights
- War, War Crimes and Human Rights
- Prisoners of War

- Amnesty
- Terrorism
- Humanitarian Intervention

## **5. Political Systems and Paradigms**

This subtopic links political ideas, systems and paradigms to human rights. A student is to choose one of the following themes and find a specific sample case for Internal Assessment Work. (See the details in the chapter “Assessment Outline”)

- Democracy and Human Rights
- Non-democratic Political Systems and Human Rights
- Human Rights and Political Legitimacy
- Ideological Conflicts and Human Rights
- The Cold War