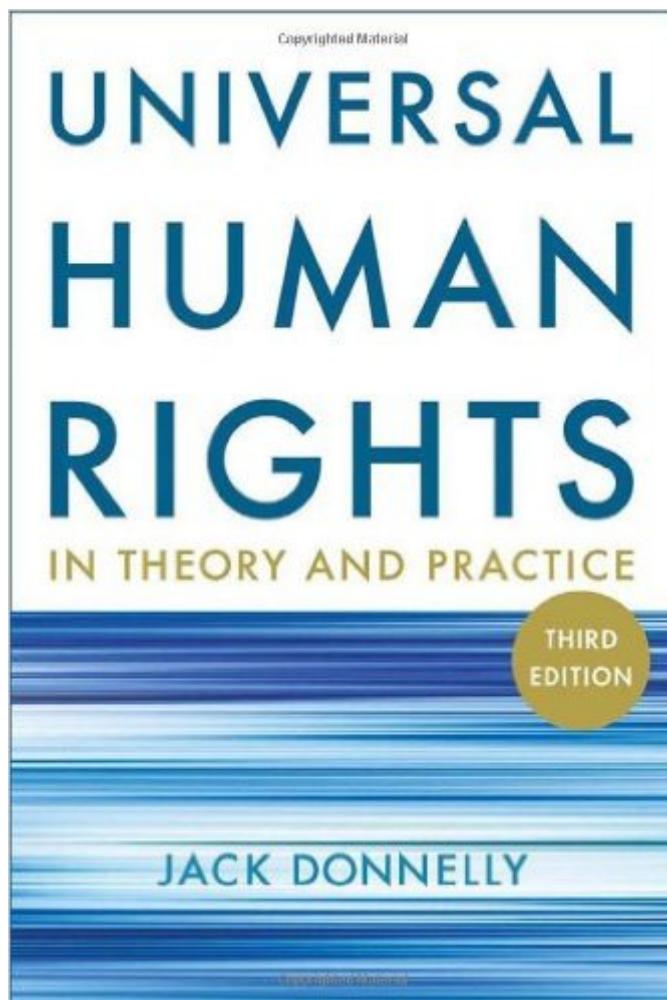


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Universal Human Rights In Theory And Practice



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 rightsâ •and the idea of human rights itselfâ •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

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.

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