

PIU44114 — Theories of Rights

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU44114
Module Title	Theories of Rights
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Senior Sophister
Module Personnel	Dr. Adina Preda
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	5 ECTS
Semester	2
Contact Hours	2-hour seminar per week

Module Content	
Module Description	The language of moral rights is pervasive, both in everyday life and in legal, moral, and political philosophy. They are commonly invoked in support of claims of a certain weight. But there is no philosophical consensus on what rights are, what status or weight they have, or indeed who can have rights and what their content would be. This module, which blends arguments from legal, moral and political philosophy, will tackle some of these questions. The first part will focus on foundational questions about rights, while the second looks at some putative types of rights, such as welfare rights, and potential right-holders, such as animals, future generations and groups.
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this module, students will be expected to be able to - Understand the differences between different forms of right. - Understand and critically assess different theories about the nature of rights, or direction of duties. - Critically evaluate the role of rights in moral theory. - Offer and assess different arguments about contested (types of) rights.

Module Content

Indicative Reading / Resources

Jones, Peter Rights, MacMillan, 1994 (Introductory)
Kramer, M., N. Simmonds & H. Steiner (eds.) A Debate over Rights: Philosophical Enquiries Oxford, University Press, 1998 (more advanced)

Assessment

Assessment Components

Exam and essay.

Assessment Details

1 hour exam worth 70% and 2000 words essay worth 30%.

Additional Information

Prerequisites

None.

Co-requisites

None.

Any other information

This is an advanced module in moral/political philosophy, so it is most suitable for students that have taken modules in moral and/or political philosophy before.