



LAWS5080

Human Rights and Moral Dilemmas

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

Macquarie Law School

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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see iLearn

Co-Convenor

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

80cp in LAW or LAWS units incl LAWS2100

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the intersections between law and morality by analysing cases drawn from a variety of jurisdictions - Australia, the US, the UK, Canada, Europe and South Africa - which raise topical and controversial human rights dilemmas. For example, cases on hate speech are explored against the background of philosophical analyses of the value of freedom of speech. Cases involving state funding of religious schools and religious symbols in state schools are explored in light of philosophical debates about separation between religion and state. Other topics covered include: privacy; multiculturalism and gender; anti-terrorism legislation; and socio-economic rights.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Explain and analyse the philosophical foundations of the idea of human rights.

ULO2: Describe, compare and critique the different ways in which human rights are protected against legislative infringement in a variety of jurisdictions.

ULO3: Analyse the moral and political values that underpin a range of human rights.

ULO4: Critically assess the way in which different jurisdictions balance the moral and political values underpinning human rights in selected human rights cases.

ULO5: Resolve human rights dilemmas by applying relevant theoretical approaches.

General Assessment Information

Academic Honesty

Students should be aware of and apply the University policy on academic honesty and Macquarie Law School's guidance on Generative AI, Unverifiable content and Law Assessments.

Late Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of 0 (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

Submission of assessments

All written assessments in the unit are to be submitted electronically by way of Turnitin on the iLearn page. Plagiarism detection software is used in this unit to check all written assessments.

Students should carefully check that they **submit the correct file for an assessment** as no re-submissions will be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file in error.

Format

All assessment tasks in this unit must be typed in **Word format** and be **double spaced** to facilitate marking in Turnitin.

Word Limits

Word limits will be strictly applied and work above the word limit will not be assessed.

Moderation

Detailed marking rubrics will be made available on iLearn. In addition, tutors will be provided with detailed marking guides.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Professional Skills	30%	No	Ongoing	Individual	No	Observed
Practice-Based Task	20%	No	11/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Exam	50%	No	Exam Period	Individual	No	Observed

Professional Skills

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12 hours

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

Students will engage in classroom activities including mootings, presentations or demonstrations, structured discussion and problem solving, doctrinal analysis, simulated client consultations, and collaborative legal research. Through these activities students will develop skills in oral advocacy, legal analysis, critical reasoning, teamwork and team leadership, and/or strategic problem-solving. These activities are designed to strengthen students' ability to communicate legal concepts verbally and engage professionally within a supportive learning environment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain and analyse the philosophical foundations of the idea of human rights.
- Describe, compare and critique the different ways in which human rights are protected against legislative infringement in a variety of jurisdictions.
- Analyse the moral and political values that underpin a range of human rights.
- Critically assess the way in which different jurisdictions balance the moral and political values underpinning human rights in selected human rights cases.
- Resolve human rights dilemmas by applying relevant theoretical approaches.

Practice-Based Task

Assessment Type ¹: Practice-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **11/09/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

An assessment on professional skills and knowledge relevant to the unit. This could be a legal or policy brief, a report, an essay, a law reform proposal, legal pleadings or other related professional task. This assessment may require students to prepare a response through research and adhere to discipline-specific scholarly conventions.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain and analyse the philosophical foundations of the idea of human rights.
- Describe, compare and critique the different ways in which human rights are protected against legislative infringement in a variety of jurisdictions.

Exam

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **Exam Period**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

An invigilated exam held in the formal examination period. The exam may cover any or all topics and materials covered in the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain and analyse the philosophical foundations of the idea of human rights.
- Describe, compare and critique the different ways in which human rights are protected against legislative infringement in a variety of jurisdictions.
- Analyse the moral and political values that underpin a range of human rights.
- Critically assess the way in which different jurisdictions balance the moral and political values underpinning human rights in selected human rights cases.
- Resolve human rights dilemmas by applying relevant theoretical approaches.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Technology used and required

To participate successfully in this unit, students will require access to the unit iLearn page. This will require access to secure and reliable computer facilities. Students will be required to upload assessment tasks by way of Turnitin on the unit iLearn page.

Delivery

The unit will be delivered as a series of weekly lectures running from Week 1 until Week 12, which will be recorded and available via Echo360. It is important that you attend or listen to the lectures every week for guidance on content. The unit will include a series of weekly one hour tutorials running from Week 2 to Week 13 either face to face or online, which will be used to assess professional skills.

All unit content is potentially examinable.

Readings

A list of required readings is available through the link to Leganto (Unit Readings) via iLearn. Where students are required to only read extracts from the readings, the relevant pages or sections are indicated in Leganto.

Unit Schedule

A detailed weekly schedule will be provided on the unit iLearn page. The topics to be covered in this unit include:

- Basic Concepts
- Rights Protection
- Non-Discrimination I
- Non-Discrimination II
- Privacy and Paternalism
- Security and the Law
- Free Speech Theory
- Free Speech Issues
- State and Religion Relations
- Faith, Culture and Gender
- Emotion and the Law

- Rights of the Non-Human

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.05 of the **Handbook**