



Griffin on Human Rights

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Human rights are one of the most controversial and widely discussed ideas in contemporary politics, ethics, and law. In recent decades, the philosophy of human rights has become one of the most lively areas in philosophy. One of the most significant contributors to the debate has been James Griffin, formerly White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Oxford. In his book, *On Human Rights*, and in other work, Griffin has defended the view that contemporary judicial understandings of human rights rest on an insecure theoretical basis. This has had the result that the language of human rights has been over-extended, and consequently has less force where it really matters. On Griffin's view, human rights are best understood as protections of our agency and personhood, and he argues his case with reference to many real-life human rights cases. Griffin's book has led to a great deal of discussion, and this volume collects several of the most significant responses to Griffin by internationally leading moral and political philosophers. It also includes a response by Griffin himself. The book does not require first-hand knowledge of Griffin's work, and, while being required reading for scholars of human rights, will also make an ideal book for a undergraduate or graduate seminar on human rights.

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Griffin on Human Rights From Oxford University Press Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #3272463 in Books
- Published on: 2014-10-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.60" h x .80" w x 8.60" l, 1.94 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"One of the possible merits of an edited collection of essays discussing an earlier work is that, if done well, it can provide an excellent introduction to different aspects of the volume under consideration while also reflecting the state of the debate. This is such a book. The contributors are all deeply engaged with James Griffin's *On Human Rights*, while also providing some of their own views on the moral foundations of human rights... each contributor raises important concerns with Griffin's account, motivated by the aim to provide a plausible, defensible and, ultimately, ethics-relevant account of the foundations of human rights...Much more could be said about this important volume and its merits, both as a discussion of Griffin's work in particular and as a general commentary on some of the most pressing issues in the philosophy of human rights today."

--*Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews Online*

About the Author

Roger Crisp has taught philosophy at St Anne's College, Oxford, for over twenty-five years. He is the author of *Reasons and the Good* (OUP, 2006), co-editor of *Well-Being and Morality: Essays in Honour of James Griffin* (with Brad Hooker; Clarendon Press, 2000), and editor of *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics* (OUP, 2013).

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