

Call for Papers

Complicity in Human Rights Violations

Annual Course “The Diversity of Human Rights”
1-7 September 2019, Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik

The annual course “The Diversity of Human Rights” aims at an interdisciplinary debate about the theory and practice of human rights, especially between philosophy, jurisprudence and political science. The course also intends to establish a dialogue between academic researchers and human rights activists. The topic of this year’s edition of the course is “Complicity in Human Rights Violations”.

Human rights violations often involve many agents besides the party directly committing the violation. Taking the notion of complicity as a starting point, we aim to explore both theoretical and applied questions about the legal and moral responsibility of agents who provide material support to a primary perpetrator or are implicated in the violation of human rights in some other way.

The notion of complicity figures prominently in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and it is the subject of long-standing debates in both legal scholarship and moral philosophy. However, much work is still to be done in connecting debates about complicity to the human rights framework.

Theoretical topics to be explored include the interplay between theories of complicity and theories of human rights (e.g., is complicity only a viable concept in the context of violations of the duty to respect human rights, or can we make sense of complicity in failures to protect and realize human rights?), the *mens rea* of complicity, and the causal relationship that has to obtain between a secondary agent and a primary perpetrator for the secondary agent to count as an accomplice.

We are also interested in contributions about political and legal developments in the field. Questions of interest to the course include the following: What role do charges of complicity play in the political sphere? How has the response to such charges changed in recent years? What legal remedies are, will be or should be available to victims of human rights violations vis-à-vis corporations or governments that are implicated in these violations?

Finally, we invite applied contributions on the legal or moral assessment of specific cases, such as: Are European governments complicit in the torture of migrants committed by the Libyan coast guard? Are transnational corporations complicit in human rights abuses committed by authoritarian regimes that finance their activities by selling the country’s national resources?

The organizers invite researchers as well as human rights activists from all fields and disciplines to send in abstracts that deal with the topics indicated above. The course language is English.

Submission details

If you are interested in presenting a paper or work in progress, please send an anonymised abstract of no more than 500 words, as well as your contact information in a separate file, to andreas.cassee@philo.unibe.ch by 31 March 2019. Due to budgetary restrictions, we unfortunately cannot reimburse travel or accommodation costs.

Keynotes

Miles Jackson (University of Oxford), Christopher Kutz (University of California, Berkeley) and Chiara Lepora (ICRC)

Conveners

Andreas Cassee (University of Bern), Anna Goppel (University of Bern) and Corinna Mieth (University of Bochum)

Course Directors

Elvio Baccharini (University of Rijeka), Bernd Ladwig (Free University Berlin), Georg Lohmann (University of Magdeburg), Ana Matan (University of Zagreb), Corinna Mieth (University of Bochum), Christian Neuhäuser (University of Dortmund) and Arnd Pollmann (ASH Berlin)