



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Global Resource for Anti-Corruption  
Education and Youth Empowerment

# Knowledge tools for academics and professionals

## **Module Series on Integrity and Ethics**

### Module 2

### Ethics and Universal Values



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UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics

# MODULE 2

## ETHICS AND UNIVERSAL VALUES



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**Background information**

The UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics offers 14 Modules focusing on a range of core issues within these two areas. This includes universal values; ethics and society; the importance of ethics in the public and private sectors; diversity and pluralism, behavioural ethics; and ethics and gender mainstreaming. The Modules also illustrate how integrity and ethics relate to critical areas such as the media, business, law, public service, and various professions.

The Modules are designed for use by both academic institutions and professional academies across the world. They are built to help lecturers and trainers deliver ethics education, including those who are not dedicated ethics lecturers and trainers but would like to incorporate these components into their courses. Lecturers are encouraged to customize the Modules before integrating them into their classes and courses. The Modules include discussions of relevant issues, suggestions for class activities and exercises, recommended class structures, student assessments, reading lists (with an emphasis on open access materials), PowerPoint slides, video materials and other teaching tools. Each Module provides an outline for a three-hour class, as well as includes guidelines on how to develop it into a full course.

The Modules focus on universal values and problems and can easily be adapted to different local and cultural contexts, including a variety of degree programmes as they are multi-disciplinary. The Modules seek to enhance trainees and students’ ethical awareness and commitment to acting with integrity and equip them with the necessary skills to apply and spread these norms in life, work and society. To increase their effectiveness, the Modules cover both theoretical and practical perspectives, and use interactive teaching methods such as experiential learning and group-based work. These methods keep students and trainees engaged and help them develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, all of which are important for ethics education.

The topics of the Modules were chosen following consultations with academic experts who participated in a meeting of experts convened by UNODC, both at a global level in Vienna in March 2017, and in three regional workshops held in different parts of the world in April 2017. The experts emphasized the need for increased integrity and ethics education globally and advised on core areas to be addressed through the Modules. They considered it paramount that the Modules prepare university students and trainees for value driven effective action, keep students engaged, lend themselves to adaptation to different regional and disciplinary contexts, and allow lecturers to incorporate them as ethics components within non-ethics courses.

To achieve these objectives, the experts recommended that the Modules have a range of characteristics, ultimately being able to:

- » Connect theory to practice
- » Emphasize the importance of integrity and ethics to everyday life
- » Encourage critical thinking
- » Stress not only the importance of making ethical decisions but also demonstrate how to implement the decisions
- » Use innovative interactive teaching methods
- » Balance general ethics with applied ethics
- » Draw on good practices from practitioners
- » Link integrity and ethics to other global issues and the SDGs
- » Adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-level approach
- » Focus on global ethics and universal values while leaving room for diverse regional and cultural perspectives
- » Employ non-technical and clear terminology
- » Be user-friendly

Drawing on these recommendations, UNODC worked for over a year with more than 70+ academic experts from over 30 countries to develop the 14 University Modules on Integrity and Ethics. Each Module was drafted by a core team of academics and UNODC experts, and then peer-reviewed by a larger group of academics from different disciplines and regions to ensure a multi-disciplinary and universal coverage. The Modules passed through a meticulous clearance process at the UNODC headquarters before finally being edited and published on its website as open-source materials. In addition, it was agreed that the content of the Modules would be regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with contemporary studies and correspond to current needs of educators.

The present knowledge tool has been developed by the UNODC Corruption and Economic Crime Branch (CEB), as part of the Education for Justice initiative under the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration.

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These modules have not been formally edited.

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## Introduction

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This Module explores the existence of universal human values, which are those things or behaviours that we believe should be privileged and promoted in the lives of all human beings. A value is one of our most important and enduring beliefs, whether that be about a thing or a behaviour. Even though some values may be universal, they often arise from particular religious, social and political contexts. To understand this, students will examine one of the “universal values” within the United Nations system, i.e. human rights. Students will be introduced to the formation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and understand how it originated from debates among a multicultural group of individual philosophers, diplomats, and politicians. Students will undertake an active learning exercise to create a Universal Declaration of Human Values (UDHV) to reinforce these ideas.



## Learning outcomes

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- Understand the ideas of values, ethics, and morality in a multicultural context
- Understand how universal values can be uncovered by different means, including scientific investigation, historical research, or public debate and deliberation (what some philosophers call a dialectic method)
- Understand and discuss the idea of moral relativism and the challenges it poses to universal values
- Critically assess the relationship between theory and practice in the formulation of values
- Understand that values arise from lived experiences, but need to be justified to others
- Understand the role of deliberation and debate in framing such values
- Understand how to create an actionable document through such a process



## Key issues

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This Module explores the existence of universal human values. Everyone has a set of values that arise from their family, social, cultural, religious, and political contexts, some of which correspond to more “global” and “universal” frameworks. The Module encourages students to articulate their values and put them into conversation with values from other contexts. The overarching goal is to demonstrate that it is possible to articulate universal values and yet to recognize that such standards are always open to contestation. One of the goals of this Module is to highlight this tension between the universal nature of values, ethics and morality and the particular contexts that create those values, ethics, and morals. Important themes to be addressed include ethics, morality, values, relativism, rights, and responsibilities.

The term “value” means something that an individual or community believes has a worth that merits it being pursued, promoted, or privileged. This can be a thing (money, food, art), a state of mind (peace, security, certainty) or a behaviour that results from those things or states of mind (protecting innocents, telling the truth, being creative).

A value is not the same as a desire. To desire something means wanting a thing without much reflection on it; that is, a desire might come from an instinct, urge, or physical need. A value may originate in a desire or a series of desires, but a value arises after reflection on whether or not the thing I desire is good. Philosophers focus on how we get from our desires to our values often by focusing on the word good. One philosopher, G. E. Moore (1873-1958), argued that the word “good” cannot really be defined because there is no standard against which we can discover what goodness means. He called this inability to define evaluative terms “the naturalistic fallacy” because it assumes that there is something in nature or in reality that evaluative terms can match. He argued that good was a non-naturalistic quality, because it cannot be verified by science (Baldwin, 2010).

Every individual will value certain things, states of minds or behaviours as these relate to his or her upbringing and social context. Every community will privilege certain things, states and behaviours as a result of its geographical location, historical trajectory, or ideational background. To claim that there are universal values, however, means seeking to uncover something that applies across all persons and communities as a result of their very humanity. Such universal values might be derived from scientific investigation, social science testing, or philosophical reflection. They might also arise from more nefarious methods, such as imperial practices, ideological and religious proselytizing, or economic exploitation. To explore universal values, then, requires attention not only to the values themselves but the ways in which they have appeared in the current global order.

Values are the subject of ethical investigation. Sometimes the terms ethics, morality and values are conflated into one subject. In English, it is common to use these terms interchangeably, but philosophers distinguish them in the following way. Values and morals are closely related, though morals and morality, according to most philosophers, result from rationality, while values might arise from social contexts, emotional dispositions, or rationality. As noted above, a value is different from a simple desire, for the former is something that we want after some reflection upon whether it is actually a good thing. Ethics, on the other hand, is the study of morals, including their origins, their uses, their justifications, and their relationships.



There have been efforts to articulate universal human values. Professor Hans Kung, a Catholic theologian who teaches at the University of Tübingen in Germany, helped to create a Parliament of World Religions which issued a Declaration Toward a Global Ethic<sup>1</sup>. The Hindu spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also issued a Universal Declaration of Human Values<sup>2</sup>. Both of these documents emphasize values, and overlap in many important ways. How can we find universal values? There are many ways to investigate the existence of such values. Those approaches can perhaps be organized into three broad categories: scientific, historical, and dialectic. These categories can be represented by three different philosophers: Aristotle, Mencius, and Jürgen Habermas.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) is considered one of the three great philosophers of Ancient Greece. From Macedonia, he moved to Athens as a young man where he became a student of Plato, another great philosopher (428-348 B.C.), who himself was a student of Socrates (470-399 B.C.), perhaps the greatest Greek philosopher of antiquity. Socrates did not write anything down, but interrogated the people of Athens about what they valued. In those interrogations, he would often raise more questions than answers, pointing out how established traditions do not really reflect what is good for the human person.

Plato, who wrote many dialogues using the person of Socrates as his main character, argued that ethics and values should be understood through the idea of virtues, or the standard of excellence within particular activities as a guide for how to act. For example, being a good captain means ensuring that a ship does not crash, that its goods and people arrive safely at port, and that a ship remains seaworthy. When it comes to universal values, however, we are talking about what it means to be not just a good pilot but a good human being.

Aristotle took Plato's main idea about the virtues and tried to ground it in empirical observations; hence, he took a scientific approach to finding out what is good and what is a universal value. Aristotle did this by comparing people to other non-human animals and comparing different political communities. So, for Aristotle, to understand the virtue of the human person means looking for those activities which the best people do and which make them happy.

He argued that there are two activities that differentiate human beings from all other animals: humans think and humans live in political communities. We do know that other animals have some ability for critical reflection, such as other primates and dolphins. And, we know that some other animals live in what look like organized political communities, such as primates, dolphins, and even ants. But no other animals use language, giving humans the ability to reflect critically on what they are thinking and doing. The Greek word *logos* means both language and reason, and it is that word that provides Aristotle the key to finding the good and value for the human person. Humans are defined by the combination of these two sets of activities. Aristotle concluded that the best possible person is one who engages in two types of activity: critical reflection and political activity. He called the first set of activities the intellectual virtues and the second set of activities the practical virtues.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://parliamentofreligions.org/program-areas/global-ethic>

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.iahv.org/us-en/wp-content/themes/IAHV/PDF/Universal-Declaration-of-Human-Values.pdf](http://www.iahv.org/us-en/wp-content/themes/IAHV/PDF/Universal-Declaration-of-Human-Values.pdf)

Aristotle believed that people need to be educated into the virtues. Individuals might desire many things which they believe will make them happy, such as wealth, food, drink, sex, or power. Each of these is important, according to Aristotle, but all of them, on reflection, need to be enjoyed in moderation in order to become truly valued. Only by using our rationality for thinking and creating a community in which thinking is encouraged, and in which education is valued, can universal values flourish (Shields, 2016).

A second approach to discovering universal values is to focus on history and tradition. The Chinese philosopher Mencius (372-289 B.C.) lived at roughly the same time as Aristotle. Just as Aristotle was a student of Plato who studied under Socrates, so Mencius was a disciple of the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551- 479 B.C.). Some believe that Mencius studied under the grandson of Confucius, though this is disputed. Mencius is sometimes called the “second great Confucian scholar”, as he developed and improved upon the ideas of Confucius in important ways.

Confucius, perhaps the most famous Chinese philosopher, argued for a moral theory based on virtues. One virtue in particular was the most important; ren, or benevolence to others. But this compassion was not directed at all people, but rather to those within certain social systems, beginning with the family. This means that being a good person means understanding one’s place in society and understanding the traditions and rules that arise from that place. A central principle of Confucius is respect for one’s elders, a respect that would then radiate outward to respect for the leaders of a society. These relationships are the focus of Confucian ethical and political thought.

Like Aristotle’s Greece, the culture in which Mencius lived had well-developed social, cultural and political structures. Ancient China was a flourishing political system, though not without its problems. Indeed, Mencius lived during what is sometimes called the “warring states” period in Chinese history when dynastic and political conflict was rife. Like Aristotle, Mencius was born in one place (modern day Zhoucheng, a city in eastern China) and moved about, serving for a time as a government official in Qi. In this role, he advised the government on their invasion of another province, Yan, which they undertook, though Mencius resigned from his role because the ruler would not implement changes he advocated.

Mencius adapted the teachings of Confucius, proposing four virtues: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Together, these virtues expand upon Confucius’ central one of benevolence, resulting in a fuller and more comprehensive moral theory. But, like Confucius, Mencius believed that the family and the society provide the basis for these virtues. To find these virtues, one needs to understand one’s place in a society and one’s respect for tradition. Mencius argued that benevolence was most important, but he also believed that cultivating wisdom to know just how to orient that benevolence was important as well. Because of this, he placed a great deal of emphasis on education, as did Aristotle (Van Norden, 2017).

There are some parallels with Aristotle in terms of what counts as values but also some important differences. Both Aristotle and Mencius see critical reflection on human life to be central; for Aristotle this translates into the intellectual virtues, and for Mencius this translates into the virtue of wisdom. They differ, however, in how they see the importance of politics. For Aristotle, the practical virtues mean cultivating a life in which one can participate directly in politics; this perhaps arises from the fact that Aristotle lived in Ancient Greece which was a democracy. Mencius does not place as much

emphasis on all humans being political actors, though he himself certainly participated in politics. Rather, because of the social and political contexts of his world, Mencius, like Confucius, placed more emphasis on respecting one's elders and rulers and recognizing one's place in society and the family. Both, though, believed that the human person flourishes when educated.

Comparing these two philosophers, we can see how we might come to the same conclusions about universal values (the value of education and wisdom) and yet disagree about others (the value of participating directly in politics or being ruled by wise rulers). We can also see how the methods of the two philosophers differ in coming to their conclusions; Aristotle sought to observe the natural world to come to his conclusions while Mencius observed the social context to come to his conclusions. There are other philosophers from different cultures who come to similar conclusions. For instance, the Arab philosopher, al-Farabi (872-951) came to similar conclusions as Aristotle concerning the relationship of the natural world to ethics.

In today's interconnected world, there is another way of seeking to find universal values, which we might call the dialectic. This method involves engaging in debate and dialogue with others who come from different perspectives in order to come to some consensus about what we all agree upon. One modern day philosopher who advocates for this approach is the German Jürgen Habermas (1929-). In his early life, Habermas was a Marxist thinker, but he moved away from strict Marxism to embrace a more nuanced critical theory. His association with a group of philosophers living in Frankfurt led him to be associated with the Frankfurt School, which sought to combine critical reflection on social and economic matters with an appreciation for democratic principles.

Habermas proposed what he called "an ideal speech situation" as a way to capture how ethical and political dialogue took place. This is an imagined approach to dialoguing about complex issues in which all persons are equally able to discuss and debate their positions. The goal of such a situation is to find some consensus by which the community can advance its ideas and values. Habermas has written about how modern democracies can capture this approach through combining the roles of legislators and judges; the legislatures provide a space to debate making laws while judiciaries provide a space for debate about legal disagreement. He has also argued that the European Union provides an example of how an international order might be designed that will lead states and their peoples to peacefully interact in order to advance certain values.

This method differs from both the scientific and the historical. Rather than relying on abstract scientific observation or respect for historical traditions, the dialectic approach points to the creation of spaces in which disagreements and differing political views can be aired in order to reach some consensus. Underlying it is the presumption that universal values do exist, but that they can only come about through finding the space to debate differences. Furthermore, there is the need to continually recreate those spaces to ensure that future disagreements can be resolved (Bohman and Reig, 2017).

One example of how the consensus model might work can be found in the way in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was created. Rights are not the same as values, for they express a particular normative ideal that arose out of liberalism. Underlying the UDHR, however, are important values, such as the values of human security, free speech, and equality. These values could be expressed in language other than rights, but they do represent something close to a body of universal values.

More importantly, the process by which the UDHR came into existence mirrors the consensus model described above. The UDHR was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. The idea for such a document was proposed in the General Assembly in 1946. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the six main organs of the United Nations established by the United Nations Charter in 1946, was tasked with developing the document, and to do this it created a drafting committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. The drafting committee included individuals from around the world, representing very different political, religious and ideological beliefs. The drafting efforts were aided by an international commission organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which published a book compiling 20 essays on whether or not there existed any shared rights authored by intellectual leaders from around the world. The book included contributions from some of the most famous religious and philosophical figures of the day, including Mahatma Gandhi. As one of the contributors, the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, said about the deliberations of the Commission:

It is related that at one of the meetings of a UNESCO National Commission where Human Rights were being discussed, someone expressed astonishment that certain champions of violently opposed ideologies had agreed on a list of those rights. Yes, they said, we agree about the rights, but on condition that no one asks us why. That “why” is where the argument begins. (Ackerly, 2017, p.135)

The UDHR is not a long document, with a preamble and 30 articles. The Declaration is not legally binding, though it did inform the language of the two binding covenants on human rights which came into existence in the 1960s and have been signed by almost every country in the world. The Declaration focuses on rights but it also emphasizes the importance of dignity and the value of the individual person. Today, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) has made the promotion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a central element of its work (see the video here [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA)).

Again, rights are not the same as values. But what this shows us is that it is possible to find some consensus on broad human values, in this case expressed in terms of rights.

The Module will require students to consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in relation to their own experiences, while also giving them the context of the document, its applications today, and its relationship to wider issues concerning universal values. The Module will also encourage students to critique the UDHR in the way it gives rights greater importance than responsibilities, leaves out important questions of sexuality and the environment, and may not reflect the lived experiences of all people around the world. In addition, by focusing on the drafting of the UDHR, and the role of individuals from around the world, students can identify, assess and put into practice universal values that transcend their particular national, cultural, and religious traditions.

The Module will enable students to see the relationship between universal human values and concrete social and political realities. Debates about such values often take place without considering how they apply in real life decision making. While theoretical analysis and understanding is good as a starting point, it can prevent students from appreciating how they can engage in practices that promote values.

Students will have a chance to understand how coming to agreement about values requires engaging in deliberation and compromise, an activity that some would regard as a fundamentally political exercise. There is a two way street here, in which practice informs values and values inform practices. Using the UDHR as a way to think about this intersection of practice and value creation provides students with a more hands-on understanding of universal values as the result of particular contexts.

The Module will begin with the lecturer defining some of the terms that will be used throughout the discussion.

Based on this theoretical discussion, students then undertake a simulation, this one a more fictional one in which they are asked to create a Universal Declaration of Human Values. In this simulation, they act as representatives of different traditions and seek to create a document like the UDHR. In so doing, they should also think about how values differ from rights (something discussed in the lecture and discussion prior to this).

## > References

The final section of the Module sums up what was learned and connects it to the wider issue of values.

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## Exercises

This section contains suggestions for in-class and pre-class educational exercises, while a post-class assignment for assessing student understanding of the Module is suggested in a separate section.

The exercises in this section are most appropriate for classes of up to 50 students, where students can be easily organized into small groups in which they discuss cases or conduct activities before group representatives provide feedback to the entire class. Although it is possible to have the same small group structure in large classes comprising a few hundred students, it is more challenging and the lecturer might wish to adapt facilitation techniques to ensure sufficient time for group discussions as well as providing feedback to the entire class. The easiest way to deal with the requirement for small group discussion in a large class is to ask students to discuss the issues with the four or five students sitting close to them. Given time limitations, not all groups will be able to provide feedback in each exercise. It is recommended that the lecturer makes random selections and tries to ensure that all groups get the opportunity to provide feedback at least once during the session. If time permits, the lecturer could facilitate a discussion in plenary after each group has provided feedback.

All exercises in this section are appropriate for both graduate and undergraduate students. However, as students' prior knowledge and exposure to these issues vary widely, decisions about appropriateness of exercises should be based on their educational and social context. The lecturer is encouraged to relate and connect each exercise to the key issues of the Module.

### ➤ Exercise 1: Performance: Enacting universal values

Ask the students to read this speech by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan<sup>3</sup>.

The speech was given at the University of Tübingen, Germany in honour of Professor Hans Kung, the Catholic theologian who helped drafted the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (see section on Key Issues). United Nations Secretary General Annan argues in this document that Kung's ideas about universal values are captured in the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other United Nations activities. He argues further that those values need to be defended by all people and should not be a point of division between peoples.

#### Lecturer Guidelines

Five values mentioned in the speech are: peace, freedom, social progress, equal rights, and human dignity. Create five teams of students and assign one of the values to each team. Each team must then write a short performance in which they act out their value. Each play should be 2-3 minutes long, and students should be allowed 15-30 minutes to develop it. The plays can be based on real life events or fictional scenarios. If they cannot finish the task in the time allotted, encourage them to develop this further outside of the classroom.

<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm9076.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm9076.doc.htm)

## ➤ Exercise 2: Simulation: Creating a Universal Declaration of Human Values

In this exercise, students are asked to create a Universal Declaration of Human Values (UDHV). This is modelled on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), though its focus is on values rather than rights. Students will be organized into groups of at least five and no more than eight to create a 10-15 article declaration.

### Lecturer guidelines

Students should have read the UDHR along with selections from the edited volume from UNESCO, "Human rights: comments and interpretations" (UNESCO/PHS/3)<sup>4</sup>. They will have listened to two 15-minute lectures on universal values and the UDHR, along with discussing their own ideas about values and ethics.

Students should be reminded that they are doing something different from what the drafters of the UDHR did, since they are focusing on values rather than rights. This might provide an opportunity for the lecturer to discuss the differences between rights and values. The idea of the exercise is to use the same format as the UDHR and try to create a document which they can all agree to.

Students should be divided into groups of 5-8 students each. They have 45 minutes to complete the assignment. On the screen or board, the lecturer should post the following questions:

1. What do you value?
2. How can what you value be turned into a rule of behaviour?
3. What areas of life are most important to delimit in such a document, i.e., politics, law, economics, society, family, etc.?

The lecturer should encourage students to use the first 15 minutes to discuss these questions and have a rapporteur write down some of their answers. After this, the lecturer should intervene and suggest that they start working toward a document of no more than 15 articles. This can be written in a formal language (similar to what they have read in United Nations documents) or in a language with which they are more comfortable. This should take them the next 30 minutes.

The last 15 minutes should be set aside for students to read out their answers and then have some summary discussion by the class and lecturer. The differences between values and rights should again be emphasized. This exercise works for large and small classes as it suggests students should be broken up into groups for the exercise.

By the end of the exercise, each group should have produced a 10-15 article declaration. These should be typed up at the end of the Module and put onto a shared drive which all students can access. Students should then be asked to read through and reflect upon the different outcomes.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/155042/001550/0015eb.pdf>.

## Possible class structure

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This section contains recommendations for a teaching sequence and timing intended to achieve learning outcomes through a three-hour class. The lecturer may wish to disregard or shorten some of the segments below in order to give more time to other elements, including introduction, icebreakers, conclusion or short breaks. The structure could also be adapted for shorter or longer classes, given that the class durations vary across countries.

### Universal Values: Definitions (45 minutes)

- Lecturer gives PowerPoint presentation (PPT) on universal values (15 minutes) [see PPT in Additional Teaching Tools section]. Alternatively, lecturer can provide his/her own explanation of universal values, drawing on background provided above.
- Discussion about values (questions on last slide of PPT) (15 minutes)
  - » Ask the four questions listed and write answers on screen.
  - » See if it is possible to group answers about students' values into categories.
  - » Be sure to conclude discussion with a reminder of what was discussed by lecturer but also emphasize what students discussed and that their values are to be taken seriously.

### Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) (45 minutes)

- Watch the video from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>5</sup>.
- Lecturer gives PPT on UDHR (15 minutes) [see PPT in Additional Teaching Tools section]. Alternatively, lecturer can provide his/her own explanation of universal values, drawing on background provided above.
- Discussion about the difference between values and rights (question on last slide of PPT):
  - » What is a right? How does it compare to a value?
  - » Does the UDHR represent any values? Are these values universal?
  - » What are the possible negative elements of rights? Do they unite or separate people?
  - » Would a Universal Declaration of Human Values function better than the UDHR?

### Enacting universal values (45 minutes)

- Student activity of performing universal values (see performance description in Exercises section).

### Universal Declaration of Human Values (45 minutes)

- Student activity to create a Universal Declaration of Human Values (UDHV) [see simulation description in Exercises section].

### Summary (10 minutes)

- Spend time discussing the exercises and what was learned from them.
- Conclude with an emphasis on the possibility of turning ideas into realities, as the UDHR demonstrates. However, also conclude that we should start with an acceptance of values, but move toward spaces in which values must be defended and rationalized by participants in dialogue with each other.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA)





## Core reading

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This section provides a list of (mostly) open access materials that the lecturer could ask the students to read before taking a class based on this Module. The readings from the Stanford Encyclopedia come from philosophers with great expertise in these areas. The resources from the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs are written by both political scientists and philosophers who focus on the role of ethics and values in international affairs. The edited collection on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is mentioned above; it is the result of UNESCO's efforts to organize a group of leading intellectuals in the post-World War II period who reflected on the shared values that underlie human rights. The chapters mentioned highlight certain important statements, though the entire book is well worth reading. The book edited by former United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown is a contemporary collection of essays which update the UDHR for today's world. The speech by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan is his attempt to articulate universal values based on his experiences in the United Nations. The final core reading is a declaration by a group of contemporary religious leaders to articulate what they see as shared universal values.

### > Universal Values

The following entries in *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

The Definition of Morality

» Available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/>

Moral Particularism and Moral Generalism

» Available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-particularism-generalism/>

Aristotle

» Available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle/>

Mencius

» Available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mencius/>

Habermas

» Available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/>

The following resources from *the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*:

Norms, Morals and Ethics

» Available here [www.carnegiecouncil.org/education/002/normsmoralsethics](http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/education/002/normsmoralsethics)

Global Ethics Corner

» Available from [www.carnegiecouncil.org/education/008/GEC](http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/education/008/GEC)

## > Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (including the historical background on this page).

» Available from [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html).

UNESCO. Human rights: comments and interpretations.

» Available from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001550/155042eb.pdf>.

» Mahatma Gandhi, "Letter to the Director General of UNESCO", pp. 3-5

» Jacques Maritain, "Philosophic examination of human rights", pp. 59-64

» Chung Sho-Lo, "Human rights in the Chinese tradition", pp. 185-190

» Humayan Kabir, "The rights of Man and the Islamic tradition", pp. 191-196

Brown, Gordon, ed. (2016). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 21st Century*. Open Book Publishers.

Annan, Kofi. Speech on Universal Values.

» Available from [www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm9076.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm9076.doc.htm)

Parliament of World Religions. Declaration toward a Global Ethic.

» Available from <https://parliamentofreligions.org/program-areas/global-ethic>



## Advanced reading

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The following readings are recommended for students interested in exploring the topics of this Module in more detail, and for lecturers teaching the Module:

Deign, John (2002). *An Introduction to Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- » An easy to read introduction to ethics.

Kung, Hans (1991). *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. London: SCM.

- » The efforts of a Christian theologian to articulate a universal ethic based on responsibility.

MacIntyre, Alasdair (1989). *A Short History of Ethics*. London: Routledge.

- » A good short history of ethics from within the Western tradition.

Rosenthal, Joel H. and Christian Barry, eds. (2009). *Ethics and International Affairs: A Reader*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

- » A series of essays by scholars from the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs treating different moral dilemmas such as poverty, war, and the environment.

Sterba, James P., ed. (1998). *Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- » An easy to read introduction to ethics that focuses on questions students have.

Arat, Zehra F. Kabaskal (2006). "Forging a global culture of human rights: origins and prospects of the international bill of rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 416-437.

- » A philosophical reflection on the cultural power of human rights.

Del Valle, Fernando Berdion and Kathryn Sikkink (2017). "(Re)Discovering duties: individual responsibilities in the age of rights." *Minnesota Journal of International Law*, vol. 26, Nos. 1-2, pp. 189-245.

- » An important article on the idea of responsibility and how it relates to values.

Buergenthal, Thomas (1997). "The normative and institutional evolution of international human rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 703-723.

- » A historical study of human rights.

Lauren, Paul Gordon (2003). *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- » A historical and conceptual study of human rights.

Maritain, Jacques (2007). "The grounds for an international declaration of human rights." In Micheline R. Ishay, ed. *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents from Ancient Times to the Present*. New York and London: Routledge.

- » A short article by the editor of the UNESCO volume with a focus on the shared origins of human rights.

Morsink, Johannes (1999). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- » A detailed study of the drafting and acceptance of the UDHR.

Waltz, Susan (2004). "Universal human rights: the contribution of Muslim states." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 799-844.

» An interesting study of how Muslim states, such as Saudi Arabia, played an important role in the UDHR.

Waltz, Susan (2001). "Universalizing human rights: the role of small states in the construction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 44-72.

- » A focus on the role of small states in the formation of the UDHR.

## Student assessment

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This section provides a suggestion for a post-class assignment for the purpose of assessing student understanding of the Module. Suggestions for pre-class or in-class assignments are provided in the Exercises section.

To assess the students' understanding of the Module, it is recommended to ask students to write a follow-up essay of approximately 1,000 words in answer to the following question:

You have read Kofi Annan's speech arguing that the United Nations system embodies human rights. Is this true? Can the United Nations embody those rights? Does the United Nations system provide the space in which we might work out these differences and create universal values that can help us advance as a human species?



## Additional teaching tools

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This section includes links to relevant teaching aides such as PowerPoint slides and video material, that could help the lecturer teach the issues covered by the Module. Lecturers can adapt the slides and other resources to their needs.

### > Video material

Video from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the UDHR.

» Available from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA).

Gordon Brown's TED Talk on global ethic versus national interest.

» Available from [www.ted.com/talks/gordon\\_brown\\_on\\_global\\_ethic\\_vs\\_national\\_interest](http://www.ted.com/talks/gordon_brown_on_global_ethic_vs_national_interest).



## Guidelines to develop a stand-alone course

This Module provides an outline for a three-hour class, but there is potential to develop its topics further into a stand-alone course. The scope and structure of such a course will be determined by the specific needs of each context, but a possible structure is presented here as a suggestion.

Session	Topic	Brief description
1	Introduction	Introduce students to core terms and ideas
2	What are values?	Introduces students to the idea of values, valuing and how this relates to ethics
3	Universalism	What is universalism? Are all ethical ideas universal?
4	Aristotle	Introduces Aristotle's ideas of deriving virtue and ethics from nature as he understood it
5	Mencius	Introduces Mencius' ideas about deriving virtue and ethics from history and tradition
6	Habermas	Introduces students to Habermas, ideal speech theory and ethics
7	Kung	Introduces the work of theologian Hans Kung and his attempt to create universal values through religious dialogue
8	Human Rights 1	Introduces students to the idea of human rights and how they emerged from various cultural and political ideas
9	Human Rights 2	Examines human rights within the UN system, particularly the passage of the UDHR
10	Simulation on Human Values	Conduct simulation
11	Simulation on Human Values (cont.)	Conduct simulation
12	Conclusions	



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