

Study Questions
Messer, Nagel 213-228, 234-248

1. Why did the American Anthropological Association object to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
2. Provide two examples of variation in the way “human rights” is conceptualized.
3. What *are* human rights? Civil rights? What are “rights”? What rights do people have, in your opinion?
4. Name some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) concerned with rights.
5. Describe the evolution of human rights discourse from its beginning to the present. Why did this discourse begin when it did? What issues became more prominent during the 1970s? (Messer, p. 323)
6. What kinds of development projects have resulted in protests about disregard of human rights, according to Messer?
7. What should be the aims of international development? What impedes international development projects’ full observance of their target communities’ human rights?
8. Describe the difference between a universal language of human rights and a language of culture-specific rights.
9. What is cultural relativism? Discuss “White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men” with respect to this difference.
10. Discuss the issue of indigenous intellectual property rights (Messer p. 331). What kinds of rights are threatened? Include “White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men” in your discussion.
11. Nagel says that throughout U.S. history federal Indian policy has shifted between two essentially contradictory goals. What are they?
12. “I have utterly no patience with those who think more about Indian culture than they do about Indians” (p. 214). Place this statements within an ideological framework. Within a human rights framework.
13. Nagel lists four factors contributing to the reversal of federal termination policy (p. 220). What were these?
14. Nagel discusses Tarrow’s notion of “protest spread” (p. 221). Describe and illustrate.

15. Describe the atmosphere created by “the politics of civil rights” in the 1960s. List three themes (p. 223).
16. Nagel mentions *The White Man’s Burden* (p. 224). What kind of burden is this?
17. Compare the relationship between federally recognized Indian tribes and unrecognized tribes seeking recognition, to the relationship between various Hui communities and the Chinese state. Similarities? Differences?
18. What are your criteria for determining who is “really an Indian”—has the *right* to be considered indigenous? Defend your criteria.
19. Should people who self-identify as Indian but who are not enrolled members of a tribe qualify for jobs intended for Indians? Discuss.
20. Compare the Red Power and Black Power movements (p. 247).
21. Discuss the differences in how rights were conceived in the two movements.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21A.226 Ethnic and National Identity
Fall 2011

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.