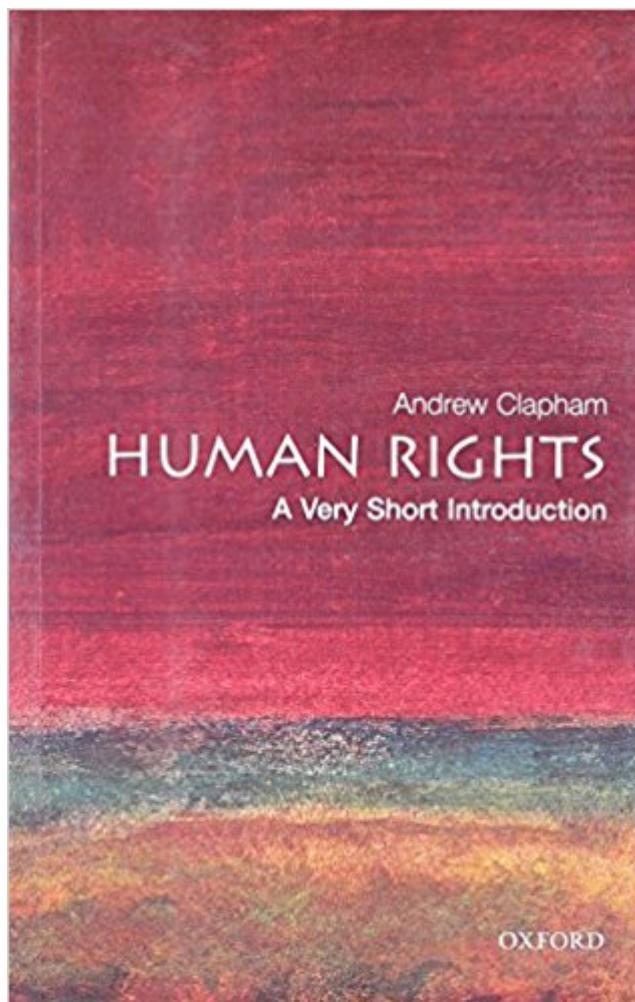


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# Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction



## **Synopsis**

From the controversial incarceration of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, to the brutal ethnic cleansing being practiced in Darfur, to the widespread denial of equal rights to women in many areas of the world, human rights violations are a constant presence in the news and in our lives. Taking an international perspective, and focusing on highly topical issues such as torture, arbitrary detention, privacy, health, and discrimination, this Very Short Introduction will help readers to understand for themselves the controversies and complexities behind this vitally relevant issue. Looking at the philosophical justification for rights, the historical origins of human rights and how they are formed in law, Andrew Clapham explains what our human rights actually are, what they might be, and where the human rights movement is heading.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Andrew Clapham is Director of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, and Professor of Public International Law at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva.

This is an Okay introduction, however, the book is quite Anglo-centric. Also, I would have liked a more straightforward discussion of the historical trajectories of the development of the concept of human rights. I did like the discussion of H. G. Wells' role in the history of human rights though! I would give the 3.5 stars if I could.

Short, succinct, provides adequate examples. It does a good job giving you a taste of human rights with the limited space it has.

An excellent introduction to the human rights issue, this book gives a solid foundation for considering today's global world. I recommend it highly for all who want to understand their place globally.

An easy-to-read concise overview of Human Rights theory and practice. Much appreciated!

Really good introduction. Nice series of topics one may be interested in exploring.

good

Andrew Clapham is Professor of Public International Law at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. His "Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction", is a newly updated introduction to human rights issues and the frameworks within which international human rights legislation is developed and adopted. At nearly 190 pages, this volume is considerably bigger than many others in Oxford's series of "Very Short Introductions", although it still does little more than touch the surface of its subject. In just nine chapters, the book presents a brief overview of what might constitute a human right (and what doesn't) and why they have been developed, looks at the history of human rights thinking, explains how international human rights movements interact with and influence foreign policy development, and considers in turn each of the principal rights that current thinking deems humans to have. The author considers how human rights considerations may sometimes sit at odds with other interests at a national level -- especially those to do with national security, fiscal matters and religious affairs -- as well as relations between nations and states. The book provides a valuable and essential introduction to any important subject. It is a bit of a dense and very academic read in places, but it will tell you most of what you need to know for a reasonable understanding of the current state of play in the ever developing (and widening) arena of fundamental human rights.

**HUMAN RIGHTS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE - ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IN LESS THAN 200 PAGES**  
An appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor of Richmond Green Chambers  
Professor Andrew Clapham brings together the differing contemporary strands of human rights issues we face today. He does so in a very matter-of-fact way and makes the introduction just

for the individual interested reader with his excellent *Very Short* book format from OUP which is set out in a quick and readable fashion. He covers such fascinating issues as the controversial incarceration of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, to the brutal ethnic cleansing being practiced in Darfur, to the widespread denial of equal rights to women in many areas of the world, and human rights violations which remain a constant presence in rolling news items and in our everyday lives at home and at work. Clapham gives an international perspective to the task facing him, and focusing on highly topical issues such as torture, arbitrary detention, privacy, health, and discrimination topics relevant to all. This *Very Short Introduction on Human Rights* does assist readers to understand for themselves the controversies and complexities behind this vitally relevant issue. The author looks at the philosophical justification for rights, the historical origins of human rights and how they are formed in law. He also explains what our human rights actually are, what they might be, and where the human rights movement is heading at the moment which will benefit a wide range of his readership. This short book covers one main area of current interest very well: how the human rights movement has gained increasing attention internationally. The author explains the scope of human rights today, and how they are used in both national and international law. The work is completely up-to-date. Human rights remain a most topical and controversial issue for all of us and recent national and world events mean that they have been regularly invoked and analysed. Clapham looks at the past, the present, and the future of human rights, especially relevant in a general election year in the UK. Questions of whether human rights are under threat as they come to be seen by some as obstacles to peace, development and security are also well covered. In the wider community, ties in law, philosophy, and politics, reveal the role played by human rights in the contemporary world and has a special significance for Andrew Clapham as he was, for six years, the Representative of Amnesty International at the United Nations in New York. Today it's usually not long before a problem gets expressed as a human rights issue! Taking this into account, an appeal to human rights in the face of injustice can be a heartfelt and morally justified demand for some, while for others it remains merely an empty slogan. Such a balance is well presented here in a most succinct manner! These *Very Short Introductions* books form a series from OUP which present themselves as excellent primers for undergraduates. The series contains hundreds of titles in almost every conceivable subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. OUP has brought together expert authors who combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. We feel they are highly suitable starting points for students of law, moral and ethical philosophy, history and politics. And, of course, activists in civil society

movements or those who seek an accessible introduction to human rights and their relevance to current events. So *Clapham on Human Rights* can be summed up as one of the best titles we have read yet from OUP in this series, but we would say that because we are lawyers!

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