

LITERATURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Less than a decade ago literary critics had little interest in human rights, and scholars of human rights (few that they were) made no mention of literature.

Today, however, scholars across disciplines –in and outside of the academy — argue that literature is indispensable to the spread and maintenance of human rights, and furthermore, that human rights have a distinctly literary genealogy: the novel.

There is a recent surge of interest in the relation between literature and human rights that gives students with a diverse range of interests the opportunity to consider if and how literature raises awareness of human rights and thus contributes the alleviation of human suffering.

Exploring how literary texts give form and meaning to human life, and move through a range of issues central to the development of contemporary rights thinking — slavery, private property, empire, women's rights, refugees, labor rights,

Finally, you can trace the rise of a global human rights movement in the late 20th century, focusing on key issues like torture, censorship, genocide, mass incarceration, and apartheid, and key authors.

By Hadji Bakara (University of Chicago. Department of English Language and Literature)

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