

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 75: Rethinking and Constructing its Future Together

meet our conveners

Students from the **Quetelet Colleges**, a cross-faculty honours program at UGent, have interviewed several stream conveners about the connection between the stream's theme and human rights, barriers and opportunities for realising these rights, and the unique contributions of an interdisciplinary lens.



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Hendrik Schoukens & Stef Craps on Climate Justice

Nowadays there are countless examples of European governments that have been held accountable for their lack of ambition in terms of climate mitigation, so the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases. The right to life, right to privacy, since dangerous climate change might impact these rights, there is a positive duty resting upon the shoulders of states to do their utmost best to take due diligence vis-à-vis these climate change related impacts.



Literature can shake us out of our stupor, our state of socially organized denial, by exposing and challenging the production of 'sacrifice zones' and disposable people through various 'othering' mechanisms and by encouraging and cultivating empathy for the victims of climate change. It can reveal the personal dimensions of climate injustice in a way that emission graphs, facts, and figures cannot. It adds an affective, experiential, embodied aspect to merely cognitive knowledge about differentiated vulnerability to and responsibility for climate change.

Climate Justice (TS1)



Ingrida Milkaite & Lien Stolle on Digital Technologies

In our work, we try to emphasise that the use of various technologies has both positive and negative effects. One of the key aspects in human rights discussions is to carry out a balancing exercise in every particular case. On the one hand, we could discuss potential gender-based violence and hate speech online. On the other hand, we could discuss vulnerable groups and human rights that we need to protect. The elderly, people with disabilities, children, journalists, activists, and people with migration backgrounds can really benefit from digital technologies because some of them are specifically created to make their lives easier or enable them to access different services and opportunities. Then another important question in this regard is - who should conduct this balancing exercise to ensure that the benefits greatly outweigh the potential risks?

Digital Technologies and Human Rights (TS4)



Ines Keygnaert on Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights

Discussing maternal health and reproductive health is, at international level in policy making by WHO and with the sustainable development goals, considered more acceptable. The SDG's forward among others that by 2030 maternal mortality is heavily reduced, that newborns should start their life in a healthy way and be able to thrive, to leave no one behind,... So that is considered more or less okay because we all depend somehow on a mother that needs to give birth to us. But if we talk about sexual health that's where we see a decline, that is where we're going backwards: what we achieved before, especially rights of women and girls are becoming more and more contested and that is specifically related to that sexual health part in sexual and reproductive health rights.

The Politics of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (TS6)



Elke Evrard on Data, Methods & Methodology

I'll start by saying that the choice of methodology depends on many parameters. I think in the first place, it depends on the research question. Are we looking to describe? Are we looking to prove some causal link and so on? But of course, it's also influenced by the context and by the people involved in the study. Certainly, I think working in post-conflict settings or in other settings where we've seen widespread rights violations with groups who are potentially vulnerable or historically marginalized, this raises important ethical questions that also shape the methodological choices of the research. It can lead, for example, to choose for a participatory research approach that recognizes the agency and the voice of victims and seeks to align the research much more closely with their needs and their priorities.

Data, Methods and Methodology in Human Rights Research (TS12)