

# Introduction to Legal Studies

Spring 2007

Discussion Questions for Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>

## *What are rights?*

Legal rights are seen as one of the most significant developments and hallmarks of our modern democratic legal system. We all take for granted that we have legal rights, and that we can evoke the law to protect our legal rights. In the new unit of the course that we begin on Tuesday we will ask questions such as: How do you define rights? How and why did they develop? What do you *have* when you have a right? In what circumstances do people evoke (or not evoke) their legal rights?

1. According to the article by Nielsen, why is it important to understand empirically the contexts in which rights are understood by individual people?
2. What is the critique of rights described by Nielsen?
3. According to the article by Hajjar, when did modern legal rights develop? In response to what did they develop? Why did they develop at the time they did?
4. How does Hajjar define the term "rights"?
5. What are the Geneva conventions? What authority and power do they carry?
6. What is the new field of "Legal Humanitarianism" about?