Health, Development, and Human Rights

The Status of Economic and Social Rights

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?

2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- General Assembly of the United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

- James Nickel, "Poverty and Rights".

Questions

1. In his article, James Nickels is trying to counter hostility and skepticism towards economic and social rights. Why are economic and social rights often thought to be different from civil and political rights?

2. Why is Nickel dissatisfied with the two main traditional understandings of economic and social rights??

3. What is the "Vance" conception of economic and social rights? Why is it thought to be an improvement over the traditional understandings?

4. How does Nickel justify economic and social rights following from the Vance conception? Does this justify positive or negative duties?

5. Throughout, Nickel argues that he is only trying to provide the most minimal account of economic and social rights that many people should be able to accept. Do you believe his account accomplishes this?