

# HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS

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## Defending Economic & Social Rights

### Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

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 position on an issue, rather than another.

### Reading

Nickel, J. W. (2005, July). Poverty and Rights. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 55(220), 385–402.

### Questions

1. In his article, James Nickel is trying to counter hostility and skepticism towards economic and social rights, such as what we saw last time from Onora O'Neill.

According to Nickel, why are economic and social (welfare) rights thought to be more problematic when compared to civil and political (liberty) rights?

2. Why is Nickel dissatisfied with more traditional understandings of economic and social rights?
3. What is the "Vance" conception of economic and social rights? Why does Nickel argue this is better than the traditional understandings?
4. How does Nickel justify economic and social rights using the Vance conception? What positive and/or negative duties does this justify?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

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 about these issues at our next class meeting.