

## **Human Rights Lecture Synopsis**

This lecture begins by examining the nature and characteristics of human rights. The development of human rights and natural law (the idea that there is a 'higher' law above man-made law) will then be considered, from Greek and Roman times to the aftermath of the Second World War, with key documents (e.g. Magna Carta and the American Declaration of Independence) and the views of key theorists (e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas, Grotius, Locke and Paine) being briefly considered. The lecture will then examine the development of human rights in bioethics and law. The aftermath of the Second World War saw the development of ethical codes, conventions and declarations governing clinical and research practice, and international human rights declarations, conventions and treaties aimed at preventing human rights abuses. It also saw the development of the European Convention on Human Rights, which was intended to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms were protected and legally enforceable. This lecture will also consider the concept of dignity as an ethical principle and the relationship between human rights and bioethics. Finally, this lecture will address the question of whether human rights might subsume/replace bioethics and how the expansion of human rights discourse may lead to 'a crisis of confidence'.

**Dr. Tracey Elliott**

**University of Leicester**