

## Call for Papers

**"Human Rights in Translation: Intercultural Pathways" conference at Saint Louis University, St. Louis, March 31--April 1, 2016.**

When defining human rights, we often invoke certain beliefs--deemed to be universal--on which such rights are based: dignity inherent to every person, common humanity, and natural state of liberty. However, the norms and values of many cultures are incommensurable, or even incompatible, with these "universal" principles.

One way out of this quandary, rooted in the concept of organic wholeness of humanity, has been to call for a convergence of world cultures around the universal idea of human rights, presumed to be shared by all people at a "deeper" level. The problem with this view is that homogenizing world cultures implies eradicating their diversity, in itself a denial of the right to uphold one's culture. Another solution has been to acknowledge the cultural differences in interpreting human rights, and to treat them as mere variations of the basic, universal set of standards. This approach necessitates drawing a line beyond which the universal would be invalidated by the local, a problematic undertaking at best. Both methods tend to assume timeless universality and thus run the risk of a historicism.

The goal of this conference is to encourage reflection on the intercultural translation of human rights. Instead of using such rights as yardsticks to measure diverse cultures on compliance with them, we welcome papers that translate the differences between cultures through the prism of human rights, illuminating different cognitive contexts that produce different meanings of rights, identifying spaces of intercultural crossing where differences can coexist, and offering usable narratives and metaphors that could serve as interfaces between distinct cultures. Ideally, these translations should view human rights not as an integral and finite goal but as a dynamic process of trying to achieve them.

Proposals should include: a one-page abstract of the paper, with a title and name of the author; the author's brief curriculum vitae; postal address; email address; and phone number. Complete proposals should be emailed as attachments in MS Word to: Mary Bokern at [bokernmp@slu.edu](mailto:bokernmp@slu.edu) with a subject line "Human Rights in Translation".

The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2015.

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