The struggle over moral ideas has been an essential part of international politics in the modern world but, unfortunately, this process remains poorly understood. Are there universally shared moral sentiments across civilizations? Is cultural relativism trustworthy? What does cultural relativism include or exclude? Take the notion of “human rights.” Is this a Western idea? In my lecture, I will open up some of these issues by revisiting the UN archives relating to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the immediate postwar years. I conclude by reflecting on the future of moral ideas in the increasingly multipolar world of the 21st century.

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Art Auditorium (ART 132)