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Natural Law: The Classical Tradition

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The Oxford Handbook of Jurisprudence and Philosophy of Law
Edited by Jules L. Coleman, Kenneth Einar Himma, and Scott J. Shapiro

Print Publication Date: Jan 2004  Subject: Law, Jurisprudence and Philosophy of Law
Online Publication Date: Sep 2012  DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270972.013.0001
This article explores natural law theory as traditional and then modern theory. The former works with the idea of natural right but, unlike the latter, has no concept of natural or human rights. Classical natural law theory offers reason for considering general descriptions of law derived from the understanding of good reasons. This article presents the reality of law, both as a ‘social phenomenon’ and as a characteristic kind of ‘reason for action’. It mentions the response to the problems of social life that involves creation of new norms and institutions by the manipulation of language and of other conventional devices such as voting systems and jurisdictional boundaries. The discussion of authority underlines the importance of positivism to provide any account of it that could rationally satisfy those whom law most concerns. The classical theory of natural law is open to development and new insights in every dimension.

Keywords: classical natural law, tradition, natural right, social phenomenon

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