



Academic Freedom – Advocacy Seminars

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK

Coordinator:

Ester Gallo

Speakers:

Students; Various scholars (via Skype)

Department of Sociology and Social Research - via Verdi 26

| Date | Topic | Time | Venue |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| Tuesday 19th March | PART A – BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATION Human Rights Advocacy on Academic Freedom: What it is; Selection of the Case-Study; Plan/Timeline of Activities and Distribution of Tasks. | 16-19 | 6 |
| Thursday 21st March | PART A – BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATION Contemporary Challenges to Academic Freedom: An Overview | 16-19 | 11 |
| Tuesday 26th of March | PART A – BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATION Discussing our plans with: Adam Braver, Roger Williams University – US-SAR Chair and Coordinator of Advocacy Seminars | 16 - 19 | 6 |
| Tuesday 2nd April | PART B – RESEARCH ON THE CASE The Political Context and Humanitarian rights situation in scholar's country of origin; IR/global standing of the country. | 16-19 | 6 |
| Tuesday 9th April | PART B – RESEARCH ON THE CASE Scholar's career, activism and circumstances of imprisonment. | 16-19 | 6 |
| Thursday 11th April | PART B – RESEARCH ON THE CASE Media coverage on the case; Actions taken by human rights organisations, governments and others regarding the case. Connection via skype with a country expert (tbd according to the selected case). | 16-19 | 11 |
| Tuesday 16th April | PART B – RESEARCH ON THE CASE Adam Braver, Roger Williams University; Q&A on students' research activities and debate. | 16-19 | 6 |
| Tuesday 7th May (to Tuesday 21 st May) | PART C: ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY In these two weeks, students will promote advocacy activities beyond regular classes, which will involve the university and the city, and possibly neighbouring universities. The activities will be decided with students. Among some possibilities there is: viral social media, tables to collect signatures, social events in the university, seminars in Unin or in neighbouring universities, writing a petition letter to the signed by the Rector of Trento and possible the Rectors of other SAR-Italy member universities, meeting local political or NGOs representatives, writing a newspaper article, campaign in the city squares, other. | Regular follow-up meetings on Tuesdays (16-19) whenever necessary | 6 |
| Thursday 23rd May | PART C: ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY Follow up on advocacy activities with Adam Braver, Roger Williams University; Q&A on students' advocacy activities and debate. | 16-19 | 11 |
| Tuesday 4th June | PART D: WRITING AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL REPORT (in Italian and in English) General discussion on the drafting of the final report. | 16-19 | 6 |
| Tuesday 11th June | PART D: WRITING AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL REPORT General discussion and finalisation of the report. | 16-19 | 6 |

The *Advocacy Seminar Series on Academic Freedom* require students to work in coordination with their teacher at UniTn and with SAR-Advocacy team in the US on a selected case-study. The latter concerns one student (or scholar) who is facing persecution due to his/her political ideas/activism and/or his/her research. Scholars at Risks will propose to our working group few ongoing cases, which necessitate further research and documentation. The aim is – after having chosen one case - to carry together research and advocacy in support of the person, and to write a final report (in Italian and in English). The latter will be distributed to international and national organisations that are active in the defence of human rights. Please note that seminar hours (block of 3 hours) are meant less for lectures, and more as occasions for students and the coordinator to work and debate together on the selected case. The report will be authored by the students under the supervision of the teacher.

The cases that SAR proposes at the moment are briefly outline below (they may be subject to change in the coming month, according to circumstances):

- 1. Amaya Eva Coppens:** a fifth-year medical student at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, who was detained on September 10, 2018, in apparent retaliation for her participation in the 19th of April Student Movement, which sought democratic reforms, protested austerity measures, and called for President Daniel Ortega to step down. [SAR's action alert is here.](#)
- 2. Xiyue Wang:** a fourth-year graduate student of history at Princeton University, who was arrested in Iran in connection with research he was conducting for his doctoral dissertation. He has since been convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison on charges of "infiltration." Further information: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-08-08-princeton-university/>.
- 3. Peter Biar Ajak:** a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge and a prominent political activist who was arrested by National Intelligence Security Service officers on July 28, 2018, and has been imprisoned in South Sudan since. The grounds of these charges remain unclear. [SAR's action alert is here.](#)

The Advocacy Seminars are **open to all the students of the University of Trento**. This experiential laboratory is designed to give students a foundation in: human rights research; organizing and advocacy; persuasive writing; leadership and teamwork skills.

Since this is the first time that this activity is carried by the coordinator - and in our university more generally - we will begin by working in a small group of 12 students, and we will limit ourselves to one case.

Requirements: In the consideration of the fact that students and their teacher will work on a sensitive issue, what we expect from each other is motivation and the possibility to commit ourselves to the project until its completion. Further, students should consider that, while the teacher will be there throughout to coordinate and support the activities, autonomy and spirit of initiative in deciding how, where and with whom to carry advocacy is highly important. Finally, a good knowledge of English (writing, speaking and listening) is essential.

Students should participate to the **80% of the activities** listed in the parts A-D and fully contribute to write the final report. Upon the successful completion of the activities students will be recognised **3 CFU** (*crediti formativi universitari*).

Registration open until Thursday 14th March at: <http://www.sociologia.unitn.it/100/seminari-di-credito> (Places available: 12).

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