

JEAN MONNET MODULE - ESAF 2022

'Academic Freedom and Human Rights: European and International Perspectives' (135923)

a.a: 2022/2023

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Semester: I

Day/time: Wednesday 13-15; Thursday 17-19. Aula 12

CFU: 48h; 8CFU (DSRS); 6CFU (IUS)

Language: English

The course develops in parallel with a cycle of seminars which are offered to students as 'Seminari di Credito', with the title: 'Histories of Missed Freedom/Storie di libertà mancate'. This seminar series will start at the beginning of October and will include one introductory class by the coordinators, a keynote talk given in English by Peter Burke (University of Cambridge), three seminars in Italian language given by Italian experts, and a concluding class run by the coordinators. Students regularly attending the seminar series will be recognised 2 additional CFU. For the students enrolled into the ESAF Course, the registration and regular attendance to the seminar series 'History of Missed Freedom' is of fundamental importance, not least because the interview to the guests offering the public seminars are part of the main course assessment procedures. To register for the public talk series (seminar di credito):

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The course develops through a collaboration between the Department of Sociology and Social research and the Faculty of Law. It aims at offering students an interdisciplinary knowledge on academic freedom and human rights, both in relation to authoritarian and democratic contexts. Academic freedom refers to freedom of research, freedom to teach/learn, university institutional autonomy and liberty to express ideas in the public sphere. It is critical in European top-quality higher education and in democratic societies generally. It is anchored in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the Constitution of most member States. The course will map the historical development of this principle in different geopolitical areas and will reflect on the main violations of academic freedom and on the consequences this holds for universities and for society more broadly. One of the main aims of the course is to combine conceptual-theoretical discussion with advocacy research and campaign on current cases of violations of academic freedom.

By the end of the course students will have acquired (gained knowledge):

1. A detailed and critical knowledge about different interpretations of academic freedom in different times and contexts;
2. An understanding of how different disciplines have contributed to the understanding of one of the key principles of higher education and democratic societies;
3. The capacity to discuss the connections between academic freedom, freedom of expressions and other human rights;
4. The capacity to discuss and compare different cases of violations of academic freedom, the way they involve students, researchers, administrative staff and higher education communities more broadly, and how violations differ between authoritarian and democratic contexts;
5. Awareness about the relevance of policies aiming at protecting academic freedom de jure and de facto at local, national and supranational levels;
6. The capacity to link theory and practice through advocacy research.

By the end of the course students are expected to have acquired (practical and communication skills):

7. Propose and discuss their opinions within the class;
8. Organise and present work in progress to other students and in the public sphere;
9. Autonomy in managing group work and in developing an advocacy campaign, also in collaboration with students working on similar cases in other universities;
10. Writing an advocacy report on the studied case;
11. Conducting an interview with a key expert.

PREREQUISITES

The course does not have specific prerequisites in terms of knowledge but it requires a good spoken and written knowledge of English. Before the start of the course, students are invited to attend the MOOC (Free Online Course) *Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters* by registering to the following link: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/event/free-online-course-dangerous-questions-why-academic-freedom-matters/>

The course offers an excellent introduction to the key concepts and problems related to academic freedom in the contemporary world. Students might also find it useful to engage with some preliminary readings (some PDF will be uploaded in the Moodle community of the course at the end of August):

Marginson, Simon. 2016. *Higher education and the common good*. Melbourne University Press. Part I: Chapter 1 and 2.

Williams, Joanna. 2016. *Academic freedom in the age of conformity. Confronting the fear of knowledge*. Palgrave MacMillan. Introduction and Part I.

Ignatieff, Michael and Roch, Stefan. 2018. *Academic freedom: the global challenge*. Budapest: Central European University.

Gagliardi, Barbara. 2017. *La tutela amministrativa della libertà accademica*. Milano: Cedam. Capitoli I, II e III.

COURSE CONTENTS (see also the weekly program in Moodle)

The course is structured around three main units which are complementary to one another.

First, students will have a **16-hour Theoretical Unit** where they delve into the historical and contemporary developments of academic freedom since the beginning of the XXth century to the present. Students will debate with scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds the de jure and de facto protection of academic freedom at local, national and supranational level, also through the study of specific cases. The main topics covered in this part will be: academic freedom in Europe US and postcolonial and/or developing states; academic freedom, freedom of expressions and human rights; students and academic freedom; gender and discrimination in the academic; censorship and self-censorship.

Second, the **two 4-hour thematic units** (8-hour total) will deepen specific aspects related to freedom of research, teaching and learning. This academic year, the first thematic unit will be devoted to discuss freedom of research, biolaw and genome editing, while the second unit will lead students to debate the relation between political violence, academic freedom and displacement in higher education.

Third, in the **24-hour Laboratory Unit** students will work in small groups and operationalize their theoretical/thematic preparation into concrete advocacy research and campaigns. Each group will work on one selected case of violation and will write an Advocacy Research Report. Cases may involve single students, scholars or a broader academic community. With a completed dossier, each group develops outreach initiatives, addressing civil society organisations, government officials, and generating public awareness on the selected case. During the LbD/Advocacy unit, each student is expected to give a contribution to the design and implementation of the campaign/report, by drawing from its disciplinary knowledge as well as technical and creative skills. During the Laboratory Unit students will work in collaboration with Scholars at Risk (SAR) advocacy office and the European Advocacy Committee, and in

connection with students from other universities in Italy and Europe/US. Their work will be presented at the European and the US Advocacy Day and will be published in the SAR Italy webpage:

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/sections/sar-italy/>.

In the academic year 2022/2023 students will have the opportunity to conduct advocacy research and campaign on the following geopolitical areas, by following either specific cases of violation involving students/scholars and/or entire university communities:

1. Focus Post-Soviet States: Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.
2. Focus Afghanistan
3. Focus Europe
4. Focus Iran

The possibility to cover the four above-mentioned areas depends on the number of students registered and regularly attending the course, and it will be discussed and decided by the teachers and the students at the beginning of the course.

Weekly Program (the integral version will be uploaded in Moodle in late august)

W1: Introduction: academic freedom and advocacy; Academic freedom and its protection in the European Law and in the Law of European States

W2: The development and interpretations of academic freedom since the XXth century; Academic freedom, freedom of expressions and human rights

W3: The violations of academic freedom in the age of tyrannies; Higher Education and academic freedom in EU partner countries, developing and postcolonial states.

W4: Democracy and the crisis of academic freedom in the present; Gender Studies and Women in Academia: Between Internal Marginalisation and External Backlashes.

W5: Academic freedom and scientific research: The European and comparative framework; Freedom of research, genome editing and embryonic stem cells.

W6: Political violence, displacement and precarity in academic labour; Refugee students in higher education.

W7-12: Students work on advocacy cases.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

The course lasts for 12 weeks. Attendance is of fundamental importance: the organisation, contents and aims of the course requires students to be the 'centre' and the main 'agent' of class activities. Constructing, researching on and conducting an advocacy campaign is a delicate task involving ongoing violations of human rights, and this requires students to be committed to collaborative and active participation to weekly tasks. Said otherwise, this is not a course for free riders! The theoretical and the thematic units are structured around 45' lecture and 25-30' debate. The laboratory unit is overall self-managed by the students with the teachers' supervision. Students are welcome to continue their advocacy activities after the end of the course and evaluation, as this offers them the opportunity to collaborate with other advocacy groups in Italy and abroad.

TEACHING METHODS

Class activities will be held in presence, and remote connection is not provided. However, most of the classes for the theoretical and thematic units will be recorded and uploaded in the course Moodle community as a support to the learning activity. We will meet twice a week, and each class will last approximately 90'. The teaching method develops around four main axes:

Interdisciplinary: the multi-disciplinarity of the course is maintained in the theoretical, thematic as well as experiential units. ESAF gathers Trento staff and visiting professors from different disciplinary

backgrounds and research experiences into the teaching of an innovative and understudied subject within European universities.

Debate and learn-by-doing approach: all the course units allow students to develop critical thinking and practical skills. To this end, they are actively involved in the assessment of the course progress, in debating with academic and civil society experts, and in engaging themselves with respect to ongoing cases of violation involving threatened scholars and/or students.

Students-centred teaching method: class activities will foster *inquiry-based learning*, mainly through the combination of theoretically and thematically informed advocacy research. Further, *cooperative learning* will be enhanced by the participation of undergraduate and graduate students of different academic maturity and experience, including working-students who can better combine university study with an awareness of the labour market and expectations.

Outreaching skills: The structure and content of the course develops in close collaboration with experts from national/international organisations and civil society organisations. During the design/implementation of the advocacy campaign students will present their work-in-progress to communication and policy experts, who will comment on and orient further students' skills.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students attending the course

For students who regularly attending the course the evaluation will be based on two typologies of group work which will be conducted to a large extent during the course itself under the supervision of the teachers and the students tutor:

Task 1: Video-Interview preparation and transcription with key experts. The course and the public seminars (Histories of missed freedom) will have national and international speakers who have since long worked on the issue of academic freedom. Students will divide in small groups and each group will be assigned a key expert. Each group will structure an interview guide by drawing on the contents of the course, will conduct the interview in English and will then transcribe the text to make it available in the Jean Monnet Project Website. The accomplishment of Task 1 is due by the 20th of December 2022 and it counts for the 40% of the final grade.

Task 2: Advocacy campaign and Report. Students will divide themselves into groups and each group will work on a country focus. Each group will conduct research on the political standing of the country, on ongoing violations and its consequences and on the reaction of the international community. The group will then design some advocacy actions (petition; public statements; video-message to national/European authorities; campaign with UniTrento students; other), graphic materials and will draft a final report. The accomplishment of Tasks 2 is ideally expected by February 2023 but the teachers will discuss this with students during the course in order to find the best solution for each group. Task 2 will count for the **60% of the final evaluation**.

Key readings for students attending the course (see also the weekly program)

Fish, S. 2014. *Versions of Academic Freedom. From Professionalism to Revolution*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. [Chapter 1 \(The Five Schools\)](#).

Gerstmann, E. and Streb, M. (eds) *Academic Freedom at the Dawn of the Century. How Terrorism, Governments, and Culture Wars Impact Free Speech*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. [Chapters 2 and 7](#).

Hoefler, R. 2019. *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karran, T. 2009. 'Academic Freedom: In Defence of a Universal Ideal' *Studies in Higher Education* 34(2)

Lackey, J. (ed) 2018. *Academic Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Part I and II](#).

Macfarlane, Bruce. 2017. *Freedom to learn. The threat to student academic freedom and why it needs to be reclaimed*. London: Routledge. [Introduction and Chapter 1.](#)

Required readings for students who do NOT attend the course

Students who do not attend the course will have to prepare three of the following readings. The exam will consist of 3 compulsory open questions and one bonus question. For each of the open questions students will receive a score ranging from 0 to 10, whereas for the bonus question a score between 0 and 3. The final grade will be the sum of the score received for each question.

Gerstmann, E. and Streb, M. (eds). 2006. *Academic Freedom at the Dawn of the Century. How Terrorism, Governments, and Culture Wars Impact Free Speech*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Karran, T. 2009. 'Academic Freedom: In Defence of a Universal Ideal' *Studies in Higher Education* 34(2)

Macfarlane, Bruce. 2017. *Freedom to learn. The threat to student academic freedom and why it needs to be reclaimed*. London: Routledge.

De Gennaro, Ivo- Hofmeister, Hannes- Luffer, Ralf (ed by) (2022), *Academic Freedom in the European Context*, Palgrave Critical Universities Studies-Macmillan (open access).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CURIOUS STUDENTS

AAUP 1915 Declaration on Academic Freedom: <https://www.aaup.org/NR/ronlyres/A6520A9D-0A9A-47B3-B550-C006B5B224E7/0/1915Declaration.pdf>

AAUP Journal of Academic Freedom: <https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/journal-academic-freedom>

Scholars at Risk: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>

Scholars at Risk Media review: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/academic-freedom-media-review/>

Journal of Interrupted Studies: <https://brill.com/view/journals/tjis/tjis-overview.xml#:~:text=The%20Journal%20of%20Interrupted%20Studies%20publishes%20complete%20and%20incomplete%20articles,political%2C%20humanitarian%20and%20environmental%20situations.>

Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/>

CEU Observatory on Academic Freedom: <https://elkanacenter.ceu.edu/global-observatory-academic-freedom>

New University in Exile Consortium: <https://newuniversityinexileconsortium.org/>.