

## DISCOVERY SEMINAR

### **Advocating for Scholars at Risk**



This seminar is designed for students who are interested in merging ethical-political activism with knowledge-building practices informed by various disciplines, within the space of a collective pedagogy. In collaboration with the organization [Scholars at Risk](#) (SAR) we will work as the case-responsible entity for a writer or thinker who is being persecuted for his/her ideas and freedom of expression in a foreign country. The seminar will be run as a hybrid between the editorial room of a news agency and the planning meeting of an NGO. With the assistance of SAR personnel we will identify and assume an appropriate case from their list of imprisoned or persecuted scholars and we will spend the whole quarter on developing an advocacy strategy to help raise consciousness and ultimately ensure the release of this person from prison or from persecution. To these ends, we will discuss and compare pertinent notions of academic freedom, human rights, and free speech, conduct background research on the region, the politics and the specific issues pertaining to the case with the aim of building a dossier to be presented to SAR at the end of the course, and of developing and implementing an appropriate advocacy strategy on campus during the quarter. While the overall objective of this “humanist laboratory” is the ongoing effort to free or reduce the harm suffered by our assigned case, students enrolled are expected to acquire skills in preparing reports, developing and maintaining blogs, creating video and multimedia presentations, working with NGOs and government officials, and generating public awareness and interest.