



Teaching Sociology in Higher Education: Pedagogical Practices and Possibilities

Sociology Special Issue: Call for Abstracts

Special Issue Editors: Rachel Brooks (BSA President, University of Surrey) and Carli Rowell (University of Sussex)

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 16 September 2024

Overview

As sociologists, “our students are our first and captive public” (Buroway 2004: 265), yet the pedagogy of sociology has lacked attention within the UK. British sociology has rarely found time to consider how we might teach sociology, let alone in ways that best engage and inspire our students. Whilst this dearth of discussion may reflect the broader structures and hierarchies of academia, which tend to value research endeavours over pedagogical commitments, it nonetheless serves to stifle discussion of pedagogical practices and possibilities. As a result, dialogue about innovative approaches to sociological teaching tends to be closed down rather than opened up. This contrasts with the position in the United States, where the pedagogy of sociology is a regular feature of debate and discussion. Indeed, the American Sociological Association has an entire journal devoted to this topic: *Teaching Sociology*. This special issue will be an important means through which the British Sociological Association can intervene in, and help advance, debates relating to pedagogical practice – not only in the UK, but across the globe.

Various current pressures make such an intervention particularly timely. The commodification and neo-liberalisation of higher education in many parts of the world (Holmwood 2014; Wright and Shore, 2017) have compressed time and space within the university (Breeze et al 2019) in ways previously unimagined. This has impacted on the time staff have available to devote to teaching, as well as on the educational experiences and wider lives of students (Bennett and Burke, 2018; Brooks et al., 2021). Universities across the world are also still coming to terms with some of the effects of the pandemic – for example, in relation to the increase in student mental ill health; changing patterns of international student mobility; and shifting student preferences for in-person versus online teaching (e.g. Giday and Perumal, 2024; Salami et al., 2023). Most recently, the widespread availability of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has raised important questions about the future shape of teaching and learning in higher education (Bearman and Ajjawi, 2023; Luo, 2024), while the legitimacy of particular types of knowledge (and associated implications for the curriculum) has been questioned by post-colonial scholars (Akena, 2012; Dei, 2008). Against this backdrop, there is an urgent need to



consider how we can best teach sociology and what the pedagogical future of the university could and should look like.

The special issue will bring together those with an interest in the pedagogy of sociology, whilst also engaging the general sociological reader who may have previously given relatively little thought to pedagogical scholarship. It will provide a space where practices can be shared, encouraging readers to reflect upon the various ways in which we might teach sociology to best bring alive the discipline and/or transcend conventional pedagogical approaches. In doing so, the journal will make a significant contribution to the pedagogy of sociology at a time when the discipline and the wider work of the university is often under attack.

We welcome submissions on any relevant aspect of the special issue and particularly those that are under-represented in wider pedagogical debate, such as: pedagogical lessons from the Global South; decolonising quantitative methods; the role of ChatGPT in the Sociology classroom; queering pedagogy; centring working-class perspectives in the teaching of class inequality; and pedagogical utopias.

All submissions should be tailored towards an international audience and should include explication of local political, historical and institutional contexts.

Deadline for submission of abstracts (of approx. 750 words): 16 September 2024

Please send your abstract to Carli Rowell at C.R.Rowell@sussex.ac.uk by the 16 September with the subject line 'BSA Special Issue Teaching Sociology in Higher Education'. For general information and queries (before 16 August), please contact Rachel Brooks at r.brooks@surrey.ac.uk.

The guest editors will review all abstracts and invite a selection to submit full papers to the journal. Authors will be notified whether or not their abstract has been selected for development into a full paper by **16 October 2024**.

Authors of selected abstracts will be invited to submit a full paper (up to 8000 words) to the [Sociology journal ScholarOne Manuscripts](#) for editing and peer review by **17 February 2025**.

This special issue takes inspiration from BSA Presidential Event 'Teaching Sociology in Higher Education: Pedagogical Practices and Possibilities', which took place in May 2024. A video of the event can be found [here](#). The journal considers proposals for special issues resulting from Presidential events.

All papers submitted to the special issue will be edited and peer reviewed according to the journal's normal practices.