



WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 2026

Stream Plenaries

17:15-18:15

Environment & Society - Room 4.206

Borrowed Time: Developing Multi-temporal Imaginations

Ben Highmore

(University of Sussex)

Industrial modernity was fashioned out of a time before humans were born, a time when the planet's provision of coal, oil, and gas was being formed (see Malm 2016, Szeman 2019). Today the fossil fuels that were combusted to forge the industrial expansions of Britain, Europe, America and their colonies are still acting on our planet. We are living in the unfinished business of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, business that was built on the borrowed time of the energy storage that went into producing fossil fuels. If we simply stopped burning fossil fuels today the seas and the atmosphere would continue to heat up. This means that we are living in non-synchronous temporalities: a recent history that was reliant on millions of years of organic transformation; and a future history of the past unfolding in predictable and unpredictable ways. This is the long longue durée of geological time, and the future perfect (or future anterior) – the 'what will have been' – of global warming. These complex conjugations of time are not scholarly pedantry but crucial to trying to understand our present conjuncture as a time of competing catastrophes. As we witness the rise of the far right with its attendant white suprematism, deep misogyny, and dedication to misinformation, we also await levels of climate migration that will make our current refugee crisis seem minor. There is of course no easy solution here, but any response to this situation will require multi-temporal imaginations.

Chair: Pancho Lewis

Families & Relationships - Room 4.204

Queer Lineage: On Generational Sexualities LGBTQ Identity and Visibility

Róisín Ryan-Flood

(University of Essex)

This paper proposes a new concept, 'queer lineage', which refers to intergenerational queer interpersonal connections that look to the past in ways that are significant in the present. It draws on Ken Plummer's theory of generational sexualities, to incorporate an intersectional approach to the generational narratives of sexualities that co-exist in the same present moment. Exploring contemporary representations of elder LGBTQ lives in visual culture and their popularity with younger audiences, it is argued that cross-generational connections can be foundational to queer community and often exist alongside intergenerational dialogue and positive relationality. The paper also presents some reflections on changes in theorising queer kinship over time.

Chair: Shuang Qiu

Race, Ethnicity & Migration - Lecture Theatre A

The Enforced Silence: Gaza and Scholasticide of Palestinian Academics: Parallels, Provocations, and Pathways for Action



Syra Shakir, Anna Liddle, Penny Rabiger, Fadoua Govaerts

(Leeds Trinity University, Sheffield Hallam University, Leeds Beckett University, University of Bath)

In times of crisis, silence is never neutral; it is complicit. This article interrogates the concept of scholasticide, first coined by Nabulsi and further developed by Hajir and Qato (2025) as both a humanitarian and epistemic crisis. Scholasticide captures the systematic destruction of Palestinian universities, scholars, and intellectual life, exposing education as a key target of settler colonial violence. Yet, we argue that scholasticide also illuminates broader global patterns of academic suppression, including censorship, retaliation, and the dismantling of equity and critical pedagogical initiatives. Drawing on examples from Palestine, the United States, and the United Kingdom, the plenary situates the silencing of educators and students within wider nationalist and neoliberal co-optations of the academy.

The analysis engages three interrelated questions: how scholasticide reveals mechanisms of suppression in global academia; what ethical and political responsibilities scholars, universities, and academic organisations bear in resisting complicity; and what strategies can break enforced silence and foster spaces of resistance. Mobilising critical pedagogy (Freire, 2020; hooks, 2014; Giroux, 2022), we contend that education is not a neutral endeavour but a practice of freedom requiring moral clarity.

Historical precedents, from anti-apartheid academic boycotts to anti-war student movements, illustrate pathways for collective resistance, while contemporary examples highlight the urgent need to protect endangered scholars and centre marginalised voices. We conclude with a call to action: for educators, students, and institutions to move beyond performative solidarity, confront systemic injustice, and reclaim academic freedom as a space of resistance. Breaking the silence is a pedagogical imperative and ethical duty.

Chair: Doğu Şimşek and Oluchi Mellor

Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 4.205

Feminist Worldmaking in Turbulent Times: Holding out Hope and Forging Connections

Miranda Horvath, Yemisi Sloane, Kim Heyes, Shoba Arun

(University of Suffolk, Anglia Ruskin University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Essex)

What does it mean to be a feminist researcher working towards a world without violence against women and girls (VAWG) in 2026? This session explores contemporary conflicts, crises and complexities VAWG researchers find ourselves reckoning with, and strategies for holding onto hope, safeguarding wellbeing and building community.

The UK government has pledged to halve VAWG within the next decade, yet gender-based violence remains a fiercely contested terrain. VAWG is becoming increasingly instrumentalised by reactionary political movements in the UK and internationally, even as institutional responses and investment continue to fall far short of societal need.

Session convenors invite speakers to consider their work in context, encouraging reflexive engagement with the evolving status of VAWG research(ers), nationally and globally, in this divided and hostile climate.

Speakers would situate their research journeys in space and time, reflecting on what has changed, whose voices remain dominant, or side-lined, and how they are working to promote community and wellbeing among VAWG researchers globally. Speakers would explore how feminist worldmaking practices can be employed to contest oppression, forge connections and build fairer futures across diverse contexts.

Speakers are invited to reflect on relevant topics including:

- researcher wellbeing and trauma-informed research
- community-led world-building and expressions of solidarity among difference



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- resisting conceptual and epistemic entanglements of VAWG with coloniality and racial hierarchies
- lived experience
- intersectionality
- co-production, creative and participatory methodologies
- navigating tensions and conflicts within VAWG research spaces
- engaging in research that matters/disrupts/provokes in neoliberal environments
- imaginaries of and pathways to VAWG-free future

Chair: Katherine Allen, Mirna Guha, Kim Heyes

Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 2.218

The Special Relationship between Sociology and Science, Technology and Innovation Studies

Robin Williams

(University of Edinburgh)

Science and Technology Studies (STS) has emerged in close engagement with theories and methodologies from Sociology (and related work from Anthropology and History). However, the epistemic orientations of these fields diverge in important ways.

STS has been able to secure attention and voice through its ability to colonise new territories thrown up by technoscientific change - in the process securing funding and policy/stakeholder relevance. It has tackled these by developing generic conceptual frameworks that can readily be applied to almost any context (translation; interestment; boundary object) while cautioning against “theory in the form of grand narrative” (Law 2008).

At the same time, STS is characterised by significant internal heterogeneity, shaped by its multiple engagements with other disciplines and various external audiences and by the diverse orientations of scholarship, from theoretical contributions to practice-focused interventions. These dynamics generate potential tensions.

Recognising and working with these complementary orientations can foster a productive synergy between sociology and STS. Indeed in the UK context, sociology departments have housed many STS groups. The possibilities for a mutually beneficial relationship are particularly evident where Sociology and STS been returned together under Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercises where sociology departments have benefitted in turn from STS research income and impact.

Convergent pressures are countered by the productive engagements between STS and sociologically and sociomaterially oriented scholarship in cognate fields including Innovation Studies (hence the growing STIS designation), Organization Studies, Information Systems, Design.

Chair: Yuhan Wang

Social Divisions / Social Identities - Room 1.218

A Wealth of Insight: What 75 Years of Studying Elites Can Tell Us about Social Change, Inequality and Sociology

Mike Savage, François Schoenberger, Liz Mann

(London School of Economics and Political Science, University of Oxford, University College Cork)

C. Wright Mills's book *The Power Elite*, published 70 years ago in 1956, arguably launched the sociological study of elites as we know it. The book is widely considered both the first large-scale, sociological study of power structures and one of the first that did not take a purely Marxist approach,

instead integrating various theoretical perspectives. However, sociological work on elites seemed to be largely on hold through the overlapping civil rights battles of the 1960s and 1970s, which shifted the focus of the academy to marginalised groups, and the 1980s, when the promise of neoliberalism pushed social class concerns into the background. Although a watershed moment in the field was the arrival of Bourdieu's theories of elite reproduction, it was not until after the global financial crisis of 2008 that inequalities were back in focus and the sociological study of elites rapidly gained traction. Since then, the field has deepened and broadened its engagement with various methods, theories, objects of study, approaches to access and ethical issues. The stream plenary will unpack this history - what it reveals about the nature of social change and inequality, and, importantly, what it tells us about the field itself.

Chair: Emma Taylor, Sarah Kunz

Sociology of Education Special Event - Room 3.205

Rewilding Higher Education

Gaurish Chawla

(University of Sussex)

The land we roam
The episteme we rove
Interconnected.

N.B.: Walking tour on Tues 7 April, 15:45-17:00 (details below) followed by facilitated workshop.

This facilitated workshop will aim to explore the ecological concept of rewilding as a metaphorical inspiration for higher education. Restricting our understanding of 'learning' to cognitive experiences limited to highly industrialised 'classrooms' is problematised: This experience is dissociated from nature, sterile and disconnected and inspires knowledge that struggles to not conform to a similar description.

Rewilding is a response, both environmentally and epistemologically, to the observation that "overly managed systems, whether ecological or educational, can become depleted, homogenous and fragile (Gillies & Compton, 2025)." A call for a Rewilding of Higher Education recognises the role a "command and control (ibid.)" academic culture, rooted in a "technocratic model of education (Woods et al., 2010)" underpinned by Tyler's work (1949, cited in Woods et al., 2010) can and does play in creating intellectual homogeneity, reducing plurality and thereby adversely affecting the intellectual diversity within higher education.

In this facilitated workshop, we draw on rewilding to re-energise our conceptualisation of pedagogy: what if higher education was less about creation of "assessments" that reinforce command and control ideologies akin to harshly, harmfully 'maintained' gardens; and more about embodied experiences? Must knowledge exchange and creation default to a setting reminiscent of industrial workhouses or could we adopt more liberated methods such as 'the walking seminar' (The Walking Seminar, n.d.)? We explore how our understanding of 'pristine gardens' and 'weeds' is intertwined with our understanding of higher education and its exclusionary baggage. The goal of this workshop is to steer us away from Uni-versity to Pluri-versity (Boidin et al, 2012), from a uni-species grass lawn, that may look pristine to our eyes but hides away environmental violence; to a re-wilded garden where we all thrive and harmonise.

The workshop will take the shape of a facilitated discussion on the following three topics followed by a summarising plenary. The discussions will be guided by relevant content on a PowerPoint presentation.

1. Rewilding teaching: Exploring curriculum design and delivery as well as learning experience for ideologically forced homogeneity and devising and studying rewilding- inspired alternatives.
2. Rewilding knowledge creation: How could we dispense with the term Re-search and focus on creation of wild, emancipatory, knowledge?
3. Rewilding higher education relationality: To explore together how higher education could rewild itself into a space less about 'command, control and examine' relationships, and more about a



relationality of trust. A relationship that encourages celebrating our diversity and our unique epistemologies and translating these epistemologies into knowledge.

References (truncated for word count)

- Boidin, et al. (2012). Introduction: From University to Pluriversity: A Decolonial Approach to the Present Crisis of Western Universities.
- Gillies, and Compton, (2025). <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/political-science/events/2025/mar/prof-cathy-elliotts-inaugural-lecture-rewilding-university>
- The Walking Seminar. <https://www.ahk.nl/onderzoek/artist-in-residence-air/publicaties/the-walking-seminar/>.
- Tyler, R. W. (1949). Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction.
- Woods, A., et al (2010). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080448947000580>

N.B. Walking Tour

Interested delegates are welcome to join Gaurish for an optional Rewilding themed walk that we hope will inspire our thoughts ahead of the session. The walk will take place as follows:

Time: 3:45pm to 5pm

Location: Castlefield viaduct

Facilitated by: Gaurish Chawla

Meeting point: just in front of the viaduct entrance.

Sign up: email Gaurish directly on gaurishc@icloud.com

Further details: National Trust owned, free to enter, Castlefield viaduct has been transformed from an industrial revolution era viaduct to a haven for plant and wildlife so will really suit our topic. Please see the website for details and accessibility. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cheshire-greater-manchester/castlefield-viaduct>

Work, Employment & Economic Life - Room 1.219

Born to Rule, Forced to Rationalise: Elite Resilience and Precarious Exclusion

Aaron Reeves, Krzysztof Jankowski

(London School of Economics and Political Science, Independent Scholar)

Understanding Britain's elite matters because they are the gatekeepers and beneficiaries of power and privilege—controlling the rules of work, employment, and economic life. This group often appears to be a conservative "chumocracy," born to privilege and anointed at Eton and Oxford. But to what extent is this caricature true, and how have recent economic shocks altered the pathways into the elite?

Drawing on a novel, definitive dataset covering the careers of over 125,000 members of the British elite from the late 1890s to today, Aaron Reeves argues that the contemporary elite aren't exactly like the elite of the past. Shifts in the political economy are clearly reflected in their composition. And yet, despite these changes, there are critical continuities. The plenary focuses on the powerful mechanisms that enable the elite to sustain itself, revealing structural resilience particularly around social origins. This remaking of the British elite gives us crucial clues about how they will change—or resist change—in response to the profound contemporary crises.

In contrast, Krzysztof Jankowski argues that tertiary-educated young adults in London's low-pay, insecure job market are excluded from the professional careers they expected. Interview data reveals a precarious rationalisation to remain detached and hesitant toward the labour market. Crucially, their social capital acts as a cushion, allowing them to avoid the worst conditions, yet still denying them true financial security. The plenary offers a dual perspective for discussing elite and non-elite reproduction and the increasing instability of social positions in the twenty-first century.

Chair: Irena Grugulis