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Introduction to the Special Issue of The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology: Teaching Sociology in Challenging Times

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Introduction to the Special Issue of *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*: Teaching Sociology in Challenging Times

Even under ideal conditions, teaching sociology can be challenging; however, recent attacks on academic freedom involving core sociological tenets have brought a sense of urgency to the discipline. As authors Karen Young and Rodger A. Bates discuss in "[Singing the Blues: Sociology/Sociologists in Challenging Times](#)," political tensions between free speech proclamations and banning critical race theory in grades K-12 could signal bad things to come for sociology programs. Offering an unflinching assessment of the decline and decreasing significance of sociology programs, Young and Bates take a critical and historical look at sociological ideologies and methodologies.

The management of COVID-19 has required changes in college course delivery, necessitating a variety of modalities. In "[Lemons to Lemonade: Educational Modifications During COVID-19 and their Utility Moving Forward](#)," authors Ellis S. Logan, Brandon Atkins, and Anne M. Price address pivoting instructional forms during the tumult of COVID-19. As Logan, Atkins, and Price offer an historical and practical look at the innovations that continue to be utilized even though the pandemic has waned, the message received is clear: social upheavals often lead to lasting social change.

Should your treatment in the academic workplace depend on whether you are on a tenure track/tenured or not? As author Roscoe Scarborough notes, contingent faculty have long been considered "nonpersons" in academia, lacking access to the valued resources that colleges and universities have to offer. In "[The Nonperson Treatment in Higher Education: The Case of Contingent Faculty](#)," Scarborough discusses the exploitation of part-time and contingent faculty and offers suggestions for reform.

Next, as author Nathan S. Palmer suggests, teaching the sociological imagination has become more important than ever, but too often the concept has been derailed. In "[The Sociological Imagination in Challenging Times](#)," Palmer asserts that the sociological imagination provides a needed theoretical framework that helps students make sense of the impact of extraordinary times on their lives, including the COVID-19 pandemic, social media, and political and economic upheavals.

These four articles represent different yet overlapping examples of what's happening in sociology. Please share them widely! *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology (JPPS)* is a completely open access journal. *JPPS* adheres to this definition of open access:

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Sincerely,

Linda Ann Treiber, PhD.

Editor, *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*