
EDITORIAL

The usual focus of *JAPE* is research – its framings, its findings, and the implications of the knowledge that the research generates. This issue of the journal is different because its focus is on teaching.

For university academics, this is familiar territory, of course. Teaching is something they nearly all do and, for the rising proportion of academics who have ‘teaching focused’ contracts, it is effectively the whole job. A journal issue that focuses on teaching should therefore be of keen interest to everyone working in or hoping to work in academia. It should also interest students who are seeking an intelligent and critical appreciation of what shapes the courses they study. For other readers less directly involved in educational institutions, it may also be of interest because of teaching’s influence on the ideologies that shape how the economy is understood and people’s views about what could produce better outcomes.

Political economists experience more challenges and choices in teaching than mainstream economists, because there is no standard template. They usually exercise more personal discretion in course design, curriculum and teaching methods – indeed, most insist on doing so! Moreover, it is in the nature of heterodoxy that the usual outcome is considerable diversity in curricula and teaching practices. Yet more diversity occurs because of the variety of places in which political economy teaching is located, whether in a department of political economy, in an economics department, or in other institutional settings, such as a school of public policy or departments of geography, sociology and political science.

Taking stock of what different approaches to teaching political economy are taken in practice can help with learning from these diverse experiences and deciding what might be done differently. In pursuit of this goal, the discipline of Political Economy at the University of Sydney convened a one-day workshop in December 2025. This issue of *JAPE* builds on that foundational event. Most of the articles included here had their origins in presentations made at the workshop. Others were submitted subsequently in response to an advertised call for papers. All have gone through a peer assessment process and revision prior to publication.

The Editors (2026)

‘Editorial’

Journal of Australian Political Economy

No. 97, pp. 5-7.

The issue begins with an important article on the challenge of decolonising political economy, critically reflecting on how a subject developed in the era of colonialism needs to redress its implicit assumptions and biases.

Then come four articles focusing on pluralism, its nature, its pros and cons, and its significance for teaching and learning. A key issue in these debates is whether the curriculum should be structured according to what Luciano Carment calls 'pluralism by juxtaposition' or 'pluralism by integration'. More broadly, these articles consider the different ways in which pluralism may be interpreted and implemented in the curriculum and the classroom.

The following three articles illustrate the interaction between pedagogic preferences and personal teaching experiences. One looks at the use of case studies for enabling students to understand how political economic power influences the development of public policies. The second looks at how teaching and learning in applied economics benefits by shifting from an *intradisciplinary* to an *interdisciplinary* approach. The third considers the distinctive challenges that arise when teaching political economy in cognate disciplines such as environmental studies and geography.

The next article considers how teaching can incorporate broader ways of assessing economic activity, including how an 'economics in context' approach can have traction even in more conventional economic teaching.

The final three articles draw on five decades of experiences, in and beyond universities, of working to extend political economy. The first considers what types of knowledge and skills are useful in the workplace for people applying political economic analyses to public policies. The second makes a strong case for an empirical approach, both in teaching and research, that keeps political economic knowledge grounded in observable phenomena. The final article describes what principles and practices have shaped the character of political economy teaching at the University of Sydney where the nation's longest and largest program of PE teaching is located.

Other relevant material can be found in previous issues of this journal. For example, Bill Dunn's reflections on problems of pluralism appeared a year ago in *JAPE* 95, along with articles by Elizabeth Hill and Gabrielle Meagher, Gavan Butler and Stuart Rosewarne on teaching gender, development and environmental issues within PE. Also in that issue was Rod O'Donnell's article on 'The Importance of Philosophy to Political Economy': his new article on 'Why Philosophy Components are Highly Desirable in Teaching Political Economy' should be appearing later this year in the international journal, *Review of Political Economy*.

There are ongoing struggles to establish further footholds for teaching political economy in Australian universities. Some of these struggles focus on seeking progress through reform of courses taught in departments of economics while others pursue more PE-oriented studies in cognate social sciences. Providing ammunition for the former, an important new report shows the limitations and uneven qualities of conventional economic courses across a range of Australian universities. The postgraduate students who got together to develop this report for *Rethinking Economics Australia* presented their interim findings to conclude the workshop from which this issue of *JAPE* derives. Their full report is now online at <https://rethinkeconomics.org.au/research/national-report-2026>.

Good reading!

Gareth Bryant, Luciano Carment and Frank Stilwell
Co-editors of *JAPE* 97

FUTURE ISSUES OF *JAPE*

Volume 98, due to be published in December 2026, will be a general issue including articles on a range of topics, likely to include corporate power, e-commerce, industry policies, energy policy and the fiscal state.

Volume 99, to be published in June 2027, will be a special theme issue on the Political Economy of Health Inequalities. Submissions may vary in length up to a maximum of 8,000 words, and should be sent by 1 December 2026 to the guest editors at david.primrose@sydney.edu.au and edward.jegasothy@sydney.edu.au.

Volume 100, due in December 2027, will be a theme issue on Current and Future Political Economic Challenges – and Possibilities. Submissions up to 8,000 words for this special centenary issue should be sent by 1 April 2027 to the coordinating editor at frank.stilwell@sydney.edu.au.

