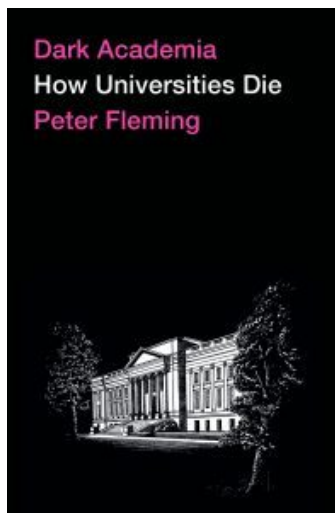
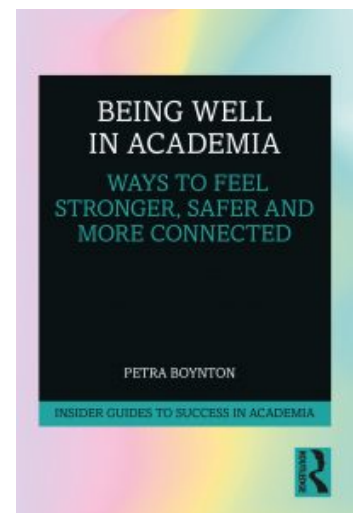


2021 In Review: What we've been reading.



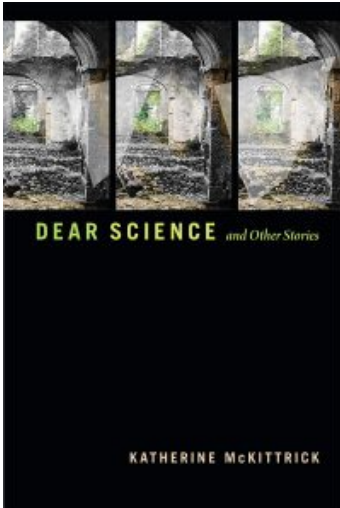
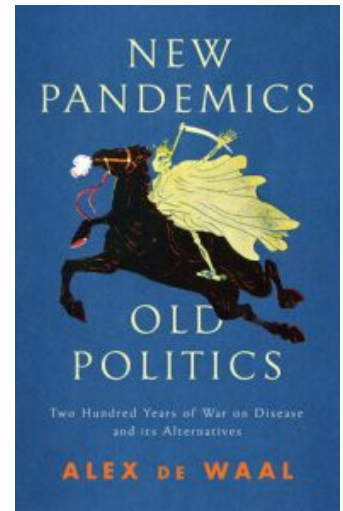
The LSE Impact Blog regularly republishes book reviews from the LSE Review of Books (if you haven't already, you can check out its [extensive catalogue of book reviews here!](#)) This review brings together a selection of books that have resonated with our readers this year.

In [Being Well in Academia: Ways to Feel Stronger, Safer and More Connected](#), **Petra Boynton** provides a practical guide to how to recognise and confront the various issues that can arise from being in academia. Through Boynton's sensitive approach to academic self-help, the book offers a succinct overview of the challenges that can be thrown at those studying or working in academia and a useful toolkit for addressing them, finds **Chris Featherstone**.



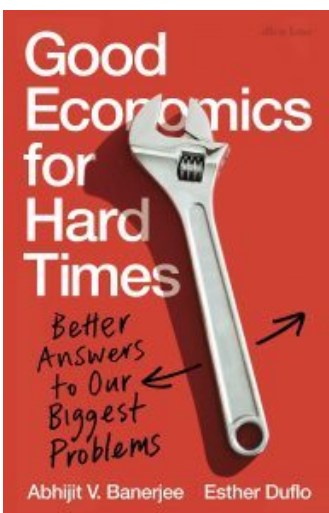
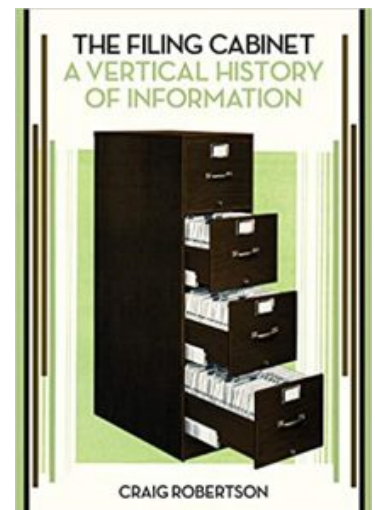
In [Dark Academia: How Universities Die](#), **Peter Fleming** explores the destructive impact of the bureaucratic and neoliberal structures of academia, which have turned universities into toxic workplaces. The book powerfully evokes despair and despondency at the loss of the intellectual environment promised of academics, writes **Chelsea Guo**, yet she questions whether the traditional academic institution has ever truly been a sanctuary for everyone.

In [New Pandemics, Old Politics: Two Hundred Years of War on Disease and its Alternatives](#), **Alex de Waal** offers a new political history of epidemics, identifying and critiquing a repeated mobilisation of the 'war metaphor' of pandemic disease to show our persistent (mis-)framing of biological illness. The book is an extremely comprehensive and fascinating history of previous epidemics, their metaphors and manifestations, and a highly thought-provoking read in our current times, writes **Hannah Farrimond**.



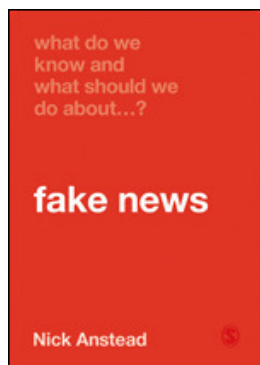
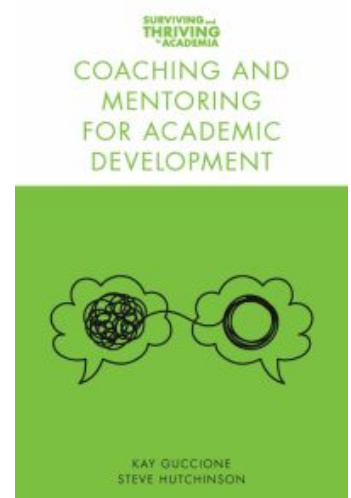
In [Dear Science and Other Stories](#), **Katherine McKittrick** positions Black storytelling 'as a way to hold on to the rebellious methodological work of sharing ideas in an unkind world'. Exploring how Black creatives have always used such interdisciplinary and rebellious methodologies to invent ways of living outside of prevailing knowledge systems, this richly poetic and sonically-driven project constructs a theory and method of storytelling, demonstrates reading practice as a way to undo discipline and embodies the reimagination of the academic text as a genre, writes **Anna Nguyen**.

In [The Filing Cabinet: A Vertical History of Information](#), **Craig Robertson** presents a history of the storage and circulation of documents in early-twentieth-century US offices, showing how the filing cabinet reconfigured office architecture, working conditions and the very definition of information. Revealing the unspooling consequences of the adoption of the filing cabinet by US business, this enjoyable and well-presented book will particularly appeal to researchers exploring media materialism, writes **Sam di Bella**.



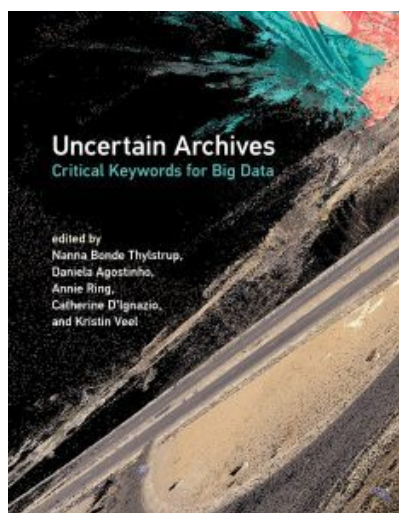
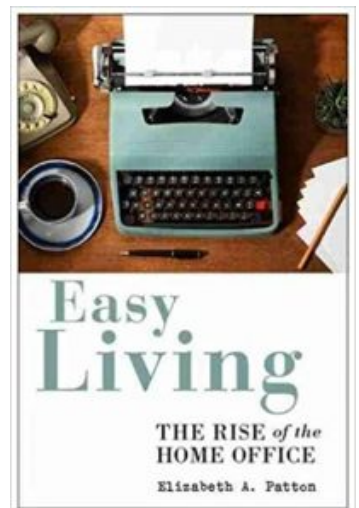
In [Good Economics for Hard Times: Better Answers to Our Biggest Problems](#), Nobel-Prize winning economists **Abhijit V. Banerjee** and **Esther Duflo** carefully lay out evidence to provide a grounded approach to tackling today's most pressing global problems. With a focus on alleviating inequality and poverty, Banerjee and Duflo's book clears a path for more interdisciplinary work centred on improving citizens' wellbeing and protecting human dignity, writes **Shruti Patel**.

In [Coaching and Mentoring for Academic Development](#), **Kay Guccione** and **Steve Hutchinson** make the case for mentoring and coaching as key to building a learning culture in higher education, exploring how coaching and mentoring programmes can be embedded to provide learning opportunities as well as support and growth for academic and research staff. **Jo Collins** welcomes this invaluable and timely book for offering tools, clarity and a framework for those supporting mentoring programmes to develop practice and experiment.



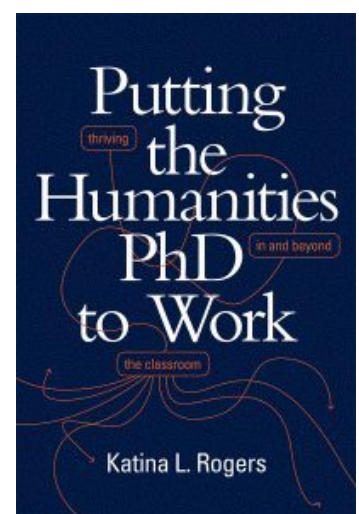
In [What Do We Know and What Should We Do About Fake News?](#), **Nick Anstead** explores what we mean by fake news and possible ways to address it. Situating fake news in its historical context and providing clear and brief summaries of the current scholarly work on the subject, this concise book will provide a solid touchpoint for people looking to understand one of the most pressing issues of our time, writes **Matt Bluemink**.

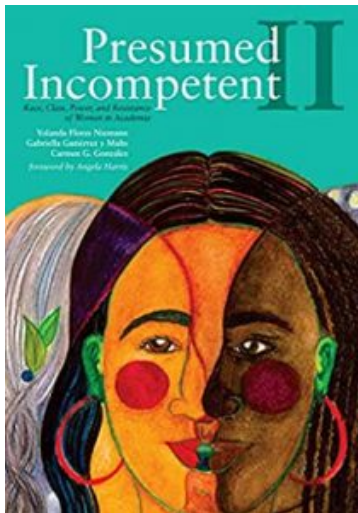
In [Easy Living: The Rise of the Home Office](#), **Elizabeth A. Patton** explores how the status of the home as an intimate space and locus of economic activity is closely tied to the economic, social and cultural transformations of the past century. This accessible and engaging account sheds necessary light on the history of working from home and the vested interests behind our changing work practices, writes **Ignas Kalpokas**.



In [Uncertain Archives: Critical Keywords for Big Data](#), editors **Nanna Bonde Thylstrup**, **Daniela Agostinho**, **Annie Ring**, **Catherine D'Ignazio** and **Kristin Veel** bring together scholars to think about various key terms associated with big data. This is a valuable contribution that invites readers to question and expand their critical vocabularies, writes **Catriona Gray**, and will particularly appeal to researchers in STS, applied data science, digital humanities and many others who are thinking about and with data across disciplines.

In [Putting the Humanities PhD to Work: Thriving In and Beyond the Classroom](#), **Katina L. Rogers** draws on personal experience, resources and interviews to offer a refreshing look at potential career pathways for humanities graduates to explore in and beyond the academy. With particular value for graduate students and academics within the humanities as well as administrators who work with both parties, this is an empowering and emboldening book that encourages the humanities doctorate to see the world in a way that is deserving of their time and hard work, writes **Kristen Vogt Veggeberg**.





In [Presumed Incompetent II: Race, Class, Power and Resistance of Women in Academia](#), editors **Yolanda Flores Niemann**, **Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs** and **Carmen G. González** offer a new collection of essays highlighting challenges to access, survival and success in the academy, focusing on the experiences of women from Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. Tracy McFarlane welcomes this important book for contesting the fabled view of the equitable educational environment, while calling for the need for more radically critical national, regional and transnational analysis to better understand how racism, sexism and classism are being reproduced in the academy worldwide, with devastating effects.

In [The Public and their Platforms: Public Sociology in an Era of Social Media](#), **Mark Carrigan** and **Lambros Fatsis** explore the discipline of sociology at a time when public life is increasingly shaped by social media platforms. Published in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this timely book argues that contemporary interactions between sociology, publics and social media platforms demand a new understanding of public sociology, writes **Rituparna Patgiri**.

MARK CARRIGAN
LAMBROS FATSI

THE
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PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of the Impact of Social Science blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [Comments Policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.

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