

SAMUEL STRONG MA MPhil PhD

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PROFILE

I am an urban geographer currently employed as Assistant Professor at Nottingham University and Associate Fellow at Homerton College, Cambridge. I obtained my doctorate in geography from the University of Cambridge in 2017 and have since held a stipendiary four-year Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) at Cambridge University, and lectureships at Durham University and QMUL. I am the author of 13 solo-authored, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, an award-winning teacher, and have secured ~quarter million pounds in research funding.

My research examines contemporary poverty and inequality from ethnographic perspectives. Influenced by feminist and postcolonial theory, my work sits at the intersection of cultural, political, and economic geography, with an empirical focus on austerity, social reproduction, welfare reform, work, food charity, and mental health. It has advanced theoretical questions around agency, governmentality, place, the politics of life, and affect – as well as methodological concerns with undoing past and present epistemic violence.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- 09/23 – Assistant Professor in Human Geography, School of Geography, Nottingham University**
Permanent teaching and research post. I lecture on the Level 1 module Globalisation: Economy, Space and Power; the Level 2 modules Economic Geography and Techniques in Human Geography; and the MSC Project in Environmental Leadership and Management.
- 09/22 – 09/25 Associate Fellow, Homerton College, University of Cambridge**
Non-stipendiary research position: affiliation to support ongoing research, 'Unequal Lives,' with particular focus on public-facing impact and widening participation/EDI.
- 09/22 – 09/23 Lecturer in Human Geography, Department of Geography, Durham University**
Teaching and research post. I lectured on the Level 2 modules: Social Research in Human Geography (questionnaires; ethnography); Theories and Concepts in Human Geography (Feminist geography and queer theory); Urban Geography (urban inequalities).
- 09/18 – 09/22 Junior Research Fellow, Homerton College, University of Cambridge**
This role centred on running a new independent research project, 'Unequal Lives,' exploring lived experiences of inequality in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. I also launched two funded research initiatives, *London Inequality Studies* and *Social Power & Mental Health*. Whilst a research position, I also co-convened three undergraduate modules, and supervised postgraduate students and over 40 undergraduate dissertations.
- 09/17 – 08/18 Lecturer in Human Geography, School of Geography, QMUL**
Teaching and scholarship post with an administrative focus on implementing the QMUL Model (improving student employability and transferable skills) at a School-wide level. I convened 2 research-led first year modules, lectured on 6 modules, co-led a fieldtrip of 120 students to Liverpool, and acted as academic adviser to 30 students
- 09/17 – 03/18 Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge**
Researcher on the ESRC funded project 'Operationalizing the Leave No One Behind Agenda' (PI Prof. Sarah Radcliffe). Tasks included: literature review; case study analysis; disseminating results to academic, public and third sector organisations; organising and presenting findings at a workshop for representatives of numerous global institutions; and contributing to the design of a follow-up funding bid for a large, multidisciplinary grant.

09/16 – 06/18 Fellow for Study Skills, Girton College, University of Cambridge

A bespoke fellowship designed around my skills and expertise in teaching and learning. I was responsible for designing, producing and delivering a new study skills curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate students across disciplines and backgrounds. This was delivered via lectures, small group and one-to-one teaching. A blended academic and pastoral role, it included working with other specialist services in the university. I also sat on education board and created an online virtual study skills portal via Moodle.

09/16 – 08/17 Special Supervisor of Studies, Fitzwilliam & Robinson Colleges, University of Cambridge

Stipendiary posts recognising my contribution to teaching and administration in geography at both colleges. Duties included organising and running small and medium group learning, setting and marking college exam papers, supervising independent research projects, pastoral and study skills support, and admissions and widening participation projects.

10/13 – 06/17 PhD in Geography, Department of Geography, Cambridge

Fully funded 1+3 year studentship sponsored by the ESRC.

Thesis title: 'The Production of Poverty: Politics, Place and Social Abandonment in Blaenau Gwent, Wales.' Submitted March 2017, approved April 2017, and awarded June 2017. 11 peer-reviewed, solo-authored papers/chapters published from this research, with more under review and in preparation – including a monograph based on my doctoral thesis.

09/12 – 08/13 MPhil in Geographical Research, Department of Geography, Cambridge

Fully funded 1+3 year studentship sponsored by the ESRC.

10/09 – 06/12 MA (Hons) Geography, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Triple first class, twice with distinction. 85.2% average across tripos.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

03/20 Lush Charity Pot

£2,500 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

01/20 Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Conference Award

£2,985 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

04/19 Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH)

£2,500 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

10/18 Junior Research Fellowship (Homerton College, Cambridge)

£151,984 (equivalent, not including institutional overheads) 4-year stipendiary fellowship.

03/16 Fitzwilliam College Trethewey Fund

£400 – to support conference panel organised at AAG 2016, San Francisco.

03/16 Cambridge University Doctoral Training Centre

£300 – discretionary funding to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

10/15 Philip Lake scholarship award for research (Department of Geography, Cambridge)

£750 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

09/14 Faculty of Earth Sciences & Geography Fieldwork Fund

£1,793 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

08/14 Fitzwilliam College Travel Fund

£250 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

10/12 Economic and Social Research Council 1+3 year studentship

£75,812 – administered by the Cambridge Doctoral Training Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Strong, S. (In preparation) *Vernaculars of Poverty: Feeling, Living and Knowing Inequality*. Developed with CRASSH *Opening Lines* Fellowship; to be proposed to publishers autumn 2023 (University of Georgia Press Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Series; RGS-IBG Book Series).

Refereed Articles

Strong, S. (under review). Unequal Lives in London: Urban Change, Intimate Inequalities and the Relational Epistemologies of Ruth Glass. *The London Journal* (submitted May 2023).

Kiely, E. and Strong, S. 2023. The Indexification of Poverty: The Covert Politics of Small-area Indices. *Antipode* (early view online), 1-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12959>

Strong, S. 2023. Love in the Space-Time of Inequality: Attachment and Detachment Across Unequal Lives. *The Sociological Review* 71(2), 370-386.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221150085>

Strong, S. 2023. Taking Back Taste in Food Bank Britain: On Privilege, Failure and (Un)learning with Auto-Corporeal Methods. *cultural geographies* 30(3), 453-470.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14744740221086258>

Strong, S. 2022. Facing Hunger, Framing Food Banks, Imaging Austerity. *Social & Cultural Geography* 23(9), 1333-1350.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2021.1921247>

Strong, S. 2021. Towards a Geographical Account of Shame: Foodbanks, Austerity and the Spaces of Austere Affective Governmentality. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 46(1), 73-86.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12406>

Strong, S. 2020. Food Banks, Actually Existing Austerity and the Localisation of Responsibility. *Geoforum* 110, 211-219.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.025>

Strong, S. 2019. The Vital Politics of Foodbanking: Hunger, Austerity, Biopower. *Political Geography* 75, 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.102053>

Strong, S. 2014. Underclass Ontologies. *Political Geography* 42, 117-120.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.07.008>

Book Chapters

Strong, S. 2023. Austere Rationalities, Food Banks and the Depoliticization of Need. In I. Desportes, A. Corbet and A. Siddiqi (eds.) *Depoliticizing Humanitarian Practice*. London: Routledge (forthcoming).

Strong, S. 2021. The Work of Looking for Work: Surviving Without a Wage in Austerity Britain. In W. Monteith, P. Williams and O. Vicol (eds.) *Beyond the Wage: Ordinary Work in Diverse Economies*. Bristol: Policy Press, 45-70.

Strong, S. 2020. Austere social reproduction and the gendered geographies of debt. In J. Gardner, M. Gray and K. Moser (eds.) *Debt and Austerity*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing; 151-173.

Strong, S. 2020. People's Geography. In A. Kobayashi (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Second Edition, 55-59.

Strong, S. 2017. Re-placing Poverty. *The King's Review* (Volume: Extremes), 78-88.

Reviews

Strong, S. 2021. Alpha City: How London was Captured by the Super-Rich. *Urban Geography* 42(2), 245-247.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1833592>

Selected Public Scholarship

Kiely, E. and Strong, S. 2023. The Indexification of Poverty. *Antipode – The Critical Classroom*.
<https://antipodeonline.org/cc-the-indexification-of-poverty/>

Screenbound International Films 2023. *Alpha City*. Contributor
<https://screenbound.co.uk/alpha-city/>

The Social Power & Mental Health Steering Group 2022. *A Road Map for the Future of Mental Health Service Provision*.
www.tinyurl.com/socialpowerreport

Strong, S. 2021. I'm Hungry. Whose Fault is That? And who Should Fix it? *The Homersphere*.
<https://tinyurl.com/3anafkt8>

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Department of Geography, Durham University (2022-2023): I delivered **30 hours of lectures** across four modules including **methods courses** on ‘questionnaires’ and ‘ethnography,’ and conceptual blocks on ‘**feminism and queer theory**’ and ‘**urban inequalities**.’ I was academic adviser to 30 students, ran a seminar series for second year students on ‘feminist geographies,’ and co-led a week-long **residential fieldtrip** to Liverpool.

In official student feedback during this role, I received an average **overall satisfaction score of 4.65**. My teaching was described as: “very well delivered” and “a real highlight as I loved that Sam explained everything really effectively and included really interesting content.” Another noted that my teaching “pushed me to achieve my best work,” and that “Sam listened to what we wanted out of the sessions and provided us with exactly that” — with another recommending that that my approach “should be used across all lectures as he created such a safe learning environment.” One wrote that: “Sam is incredible. He is my favourite lecture in the whole Department and I was so happy to have him teach me. Genuinely his lectures were a joy to attend!”

Department of Geography, University of Cambridge (2015-2022): I co-convened **three modules** – *Austerity and Affluence; Inequality; and Political Appetites* – delivering lecture series on ‘Intimate Austerities,’ ‘Living Inequalities,’ and ‘Technologies of Self-Improvement.’ I delivered **methods courses (qualitative and quantitative)**; ran **fieldtrip teaching** on the second-year paper *Citizenship, Cities and Civil Society*, including a ‘virtual’ fieldtrip during the pandemic; completed **over 800 hours of small group teaching**; and **supervised over 40 undergraduate dissertations**. I was an assessor for the MPhil’s in Geography and Geographical Research and on **supervisory committees for four postgraduate students**. I received the Fitzwilliam College Graduate Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2017 in recognition of pedagogical distinction. I also undertook **admissions work** (outreach talks, marking assessment materials, running open days, interviewing) for seven different colleges.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “exceptional, engaging, and very interactive,” “incredibly well organised,” and maintaining an “engaging, kind, and calm lecturing style [with a] willingness to get us discussing topics that brought us with him into contemporary issues.” Others said that “Sam presents ideas really clearly,” “his examples were fascinating... I loved these lectures!” and that my teaching “reminded me why I love studying geography.” My lectures were highlighted as “my favourite of the entire course,” with requests “Sam should lecture for longer – he was really good!” and that “Sam is the best lecturer in the department!”

School of Geography, Queen Mary University of London (2017-18): I convened **two courses**: *Cities and Regions in Transition*, an entirely new module I designed and solo-lectured that was **rated 4.93/5 for satisfaction with the quality of the module in official student feedback**; and *Research Methods for Geographers*, a module taken by all **200 first-year undergraduates**. I lectured on *Reinventing Britain* (including **co-leader of a 5-day fieldtrip for 120 students**); *Geography in the World*; *Contemporary London: Life in the Global Metropolis*; and *Ideas and Practice in Geography and Environmental Science*. I was academic adviser to over 30 students across all year groups; supervised student dissertations; contributed to examination board and teaching and learning committees; and held an **administrative lead** implementing the QMUL model at School-wide level.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “fascinating and stimulating.” Students welcomed my approach to teaching through reflection on the contemporary world: “I think it is great as it is engaging and you learn everyday rather than just in class.” My modules were described as “taught clearly and thoughtfully so I always go away feeling like I have learned something.” Students mentioned that “Sam always makes sure we understand key concepts,” “Sam is really good at getting points across and really shows how much he cares about each individual student by having a clear teaching technique.” One student wrote that “Sam is the best lecturer.”

Girton College, University of Cambridge (2016-8): I designed and implemented a **new study skills curriculum across the college**, suitable for all academic disciplines and **undergraduate and postgraduate** students. Identifying the need for cross-college provision, I delivered lectures on ‘time management,’ ‘reading and writing skills,’ ‘essay writing,’ ‘revision techniques,’ and ‘essay writing under exam conditions.’ I also created a **study skills virtual learning environment**, and undertook bespoke supervisions with students facing varied barriers to learning—including **counselling, motivating, and enabling students from diverse backgrounds to thrive**.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “so useful for helping me organise my term,” with one student noting that “it’s stopped me getting overwhelmed with my work now.” Another said that “I’ve already used Sam’s techniques to use my time more wisely,” and that “Sam gives us so many methods to get work done more easily. I feel less stressed and able to get more done now.”

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

03/21	CRASSH Opening Lines Fellowship, 2021-22.
01/17	Fitzwilliam Graduate Award for Excellence in Teaching 2016 (£250, sole recipient, for teaching excellence).
10/16	Fitzwilliam College Senior Graduate Scholar 2015-6 (£1500, sole recipient, for research excellence).
06/16	Best oral presentation prize at RGS-ENRGHI 2016 Conference for talk on 'The struggle for care in austere times' (£50, sole recipient).
10/15	Fitzwilliam College Senior Graduate Scholar 2014-5 (£1500, sole recipient, for research excellence).
09/15	Blaenau Gwent GAVO Communities First Volunteer of the Year 2015 (runner-up, for community work during doctoral fieldwork).
06/12	Fitzwilliam College Scholar of the Year (£1000, sole recipient, for highest finalist academic achievement across the college).
06/11	Excelet Scholarship (£250, sole recipient, for highest academic achievement amongst second year students across the college).
06/10	Barbara Humphrey Prize and Irene Walker Scholarship (£500, for highest academic achievement amongst first years across the college, sole recipient).

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Scholarly referee	Agriculture and Human Values; Area; CITY; Economy and Society; EPD Society and Space; Emotion, Space and Society; Food Ethics; Geoforum; Nutrition Bulletin; Political Geography; Routledge Research in Planning & Urban Design book series; Social & Cultural Geography; Social Science & Medicine; The Geographical Journal; The Sociological Review; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.
Grant referee	Independent assessor for the Independent Social Research Foundation (early career fellowship, 2020); independent reviewer for the Economic and Social Research Council (new investigator grant, 2018).
Committee work	Ordinary Member of RGS-GHWRG 2016-2019; Postgraduate Representative of RGS-PolGRG 2015-6; Cambridge ESRC-DTC Student representative 2016-7. Board of Studies (Durham, 22-23); Governing body, dean's committee (Homerton, 18-22); QMUL Model working group, teaching and learning committee, exam board (QMUL, 17-8); education board, chair of study skills working group (Girton, 16-8).
Research networks	I co-convened (with Prof. Simon Reid-Henry, QMUL) <i>London Inequality Studies</i> , a network of over 80 multidisciplinary academics, practitioners, activists and members of the public with an interest in issues of in/equality. We organised numerous in-person and virtual events since launching in 2018, including talks from academics at the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, UCL, and the Resolution Foundation. I also co-convened <i>Social Power & Mental Health</i> (with Dr. Ed Kiely, Cambridge), a steering group consisting of practitioners, academics and experts by experience co-producing research into mental wellbeing. This culminated in a festival of events held in April 2021 that was engaged with by 1000 people from six different continents. I curate our website (http://socialpowermh.crassh.cam.ac.uk/), and we co-produced a report with local experts by experience for national and regional decisionmakers to function as a roadmap for the future of mental health service provision. The initiative is funded by CRASSH, the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness, Lush, QTI Coalition of Colour, the NHS and the University of Cambridge.

QUALIFICATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

Associate Fellow of the HEA (Higher Education Academy) following successful completion of Teaching Associates' Programme, September 2017.

ITC Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work and Outdoors valid until 2026.

Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and the **American Association of Geographers (AAG)**

SELECTED INVITED TALKS, PUBLIC LECTURES AND CONFERENCES ORGANISED

Conferences, Workshops and Panels Organised

Blurred Boundaries: Caring Institutions in Pandemic Times (Aug 2021): panel sessions at the RGS-IBG annual conference. PyGyRG and GHWRG sponsored.

Social Power & Mental Health: Evolving Research through Lived Experience (Apr 2021): a week-long virtual festival of events exploring the links between inequality and mental wellbeing. Sponsored by CRASSH, FSHI, QTI Coalition of Colour, NHS-CPFT.

New and Emerging Research in Health and Wellbeing (Aug 2017): panel sessions at the RGS-IBG annual conference. GHWRG sponsored.

New Forms of Data: Innovation in the Social Sciences (Dec 2016): co-convenor of postgraduate conference for those affiliated with Cambridge ESRC-DTC and Anglia Ruskin. Funded by Cambridge ESRC-DTC.

Public Geographies (with Professor Don Mitchell; Nov 2016): workshop sponsored by Department of Geography, Cambridge.

Realising the Right to Food (Apr 2016): panel session organised at the AAG annual conference.

Selected Invited Academic Talks

Love in the space-time of inequality. *Feeling Class* University of Sheffield, Apr 2023.

Living, feeling and surviving indebted life in pandemic times. *Debt & Covid: Implications of the Pandemic* St. John's College, University Cambridge, Jun 2022.

The work of looking for work. *Beyond the Wage Launch Seminar* Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge, Oct 2021.

What kind of teaching do our students need now? *Homerton Annual Teaching Roundtable* University of Cambridge, Sep 2021.

Grenfell, grief, inequality. *Research Supper Series* Homerton College, Cambridge, May 2019.

Austerity, credit, inequality: Gendered geographies of debt, affect and emotion. *High-cost Credit in an Age of Austerity* CRASSH, Cambridge, May 2019.

Food banks beyond the 'face' of austerity? Thinking through emotions, scale and intersecting inequalities. *Feminist Engagements with Austerity* University of Bristol, Jan 2019.

On being precarious. *Post-wage Economy: Rethorizing 'Work' across the Global North-South Divide* School of Geography, QMUL, Jun 2018.

Food banks and the spaces of affective governmentality. *Research Seminar Series* School of Geography, QMUL, Dec 2017.

Against a 'poverty of aspiration': Neoliberal governmentality, surplus labour and the organised abandonment of place. *Human Geography Seminar Series* Department of Geography, UCL, Nov 2017.

Populism, protest or the persistence of poverty? On placing Brexit. *The Chorley Society* Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, Mar 2017.

Inequality, Brexit, geography. *Inequality, Brexit and More* Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, Jan 2017.

The spatial politics of aspiration. *Cultural and Historical Geography Research Group Seminar* Department of Geography, Cambridge, Nov 2015.

Selected Public Talks and Outreach

Food banking and the geographies of emotion during times of austerity. *Fitzwilliam College Progress in Geography*, annual taster day for sixth form pupils, Jun 2017.

The geographies of food. *Girton College Open Day*, geography taster day with sixth form pupils, Feb 2017.

The geographies of globalisation and the British economy. *Cambridge HE+ Masterclass Weekend*, Swansea, Feb 2016.

Why study geography? *Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone*, workshop for GCSE geography students, Jul 2015.

