



Midwest Sociological Society Teaching Excellence Award for Graduate Student Instructors

The MSS Award for Teaching Excellence for Graduate Student Instructors recognizes a graduate student's ongoing commitment to teaching effectiveness, student engagement and innovative instruction. This honor reflects the Teaching and Learning Committee's commitment to recognize a graduate student's long-term career potential to contribute to sociology through teaching excellence. The award is offered annually and carries a cash prize of \$250.00.

Eligibility

Sociology graduate teaching assistants/fellows/instructors who are committed to outstanding teaching, and have taught at least two stand-alone courses (i.e., formally prepped and taught solely by the nominee) are eligible to apply. Students whose experience is limited to grading assistance and leading discussions are not eligible to apply. Nominees must be members of MSS; however, nominators are not required to be members. The Teaching and Learning Committee welcomes self-nominations. Women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and/or members of the LGBTQ+ community are encouraged to apply for the award.

Application materials (Due by Oct 15): **EXTENDED TO OCT 31, 2025**

1. Statement of nomination (no more than 2–3 double-spaced pages). This statement should describe the nominee's teaching-related accomplishments, innovations, etc., articulate how they uniquely engage students, and why they deserve this honor.
2. Targeted CV (no more than 3 pages) focused on teaching/teaching related activities.
3. A letter of support from a supervisor, colleague, student, or mentee familiar with the applicant's teaching.
4. Two pieces of evidence of teaching excellence testifying to the nominee's teaching quality and impact. Examples of evidence include, but are not limited to, peer-classroom observations, an abridged teaching portfolio (no more than 5 pages), examples of student work, sample teaching evaluations, completion of certification/workshops related to teaching, or other artifacts/professional activities that demonstrate a commitment to teaching effectiveness.

Please send nomination packets, along with contact information to the committee chair, Doug Valentine, at teachingandlearning@themss.org by Oct 15 (**EXTENDED to October 31, 2025**). The Teaching and Learning Committee will select the award recipient in accordance with following criteria:

- Teaching Effectiveness: Nominee demonstrates ability to encourage and motivate student learning.

- Teaching Commitment: Nominee pursues continued improvement and growth through participation in teaching workshops, solicitation of peer feedback, submission of teaching articles, etc.
- Student Engagement: Nominee has a history of mentorship/advising, supervising independent studies, and/or working closely with underrepresented/non-traditional students.
- Innovative Instruction: Nominee demonstrates an openness to new techniques and approaches to foster learning and to enhance active student participation.

The awardee will be recognized in the following manner:

- Recipient will receive award at the MSS annual meeting.
- Recipient will receive a cash prize of \$250.00.
- Recipient will be recognized on the MSS website and social media efforts after the annual meeting.
- Past recipients of this award (after first award is given) are listed on the MSS Awards page.