

Teaching about Leadership: How does *the Comedy Gaze* contribute?

What happens to how we think about 'leaders' – and the practice(s) of 'leadership' – when we gaze through the lens of comedy? There is currently much scepticism about the impacts and outcomes of modern leadership practice(s) on wider economy, society and environment. Teaching reflectively about 'leaders' and 'leadership' in Business School settings poses particular challenges at a time when trust in the character, motivations and behaviours of leaders is breaking down. At the same time, modern and diverse University Undergraduate cohorts expect a leadership learning experience that is original, thought provoking and work relevant. Drawing on theory of comedy and progressive pedagogy, I argue for the value of employing *the comedy gaze* as an aid to teaching about leadership; as a uniquely engaging way of facilitating insight, (self) reflection and debate concerning the incongruities and anomalies inherent in contemporary conceptions and practices of business, political and organisational 'leaders' and leadership. However, while thoughtful humour is useful in learning, comedy is neither impartial nor necessarily benign. The use of *the comedy gaze* as a critical thinking device in the learning space poses a number of important ethical questions for leadership curriculum designers and tutors.

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