

Critical Data Studies Module 1 – A Brief Introduction to Critical Data Studies  
Suggested Self or Peer-graded assignments, readings and discussion questions.

Video 1 Introduction to the Course and Module

- Discussion Questions (video):
  1. What type of change is possible? How might we intervene?
  2. Can we imagine more just technologies and data practices?
- Critical Reflection Assignment: Write a 250-300 word short answer response.  
What is your interest in Critical Data Studies (CDS)? What questions do you want to explore?
- Readings (cited/optional):
  1. Der, Matthew et al. (2020). "Technological Neutrality," in CDS Collaborative Glossary (website). <https://www.purdue.edu/critical-data-studies/collaborative-glossary/about-glossary.php>

Video 2 Why data?

- Discussion Questions (video):
  1. How are data made? Why are data not the same as 'natural' resources?
  2. Why might even the most banal forms of data have politics?
- Readings (cited/optional):
  1. Rosenberg, Daniel. (2013). "Data Before the Fact," in "Raw Data" is an oxymoron. L. Gitelman, ed. MIT Press.
  2. Gitelman, Lisa and Virginia Jackson. (2013). "Introduction," in "Raw Data" is an oxymoron. L. Gitelman, ed. MIT Press.
  3. Dueñas, Sarah et al. (2020). "Raw Data," in CDS Collaborative Glossary, (website). <https://www.purdue.edu/critical-data-studies/collaborative-glossary/about-glossary.php>

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Video 3 Why study data?

- Discussion Questions (video):
  1. Why study data?
- Discussion Questions (assigned reading):
  1. What narrative do Dalton, Taylor and Thatcher (2016) tell about the history of critical data studies as a field?
  2. Do any of the problems with big data resonate with your own experience?
- Readings (assigned):
  1. Read Craig Dalton, Linnet Taylor, Jim Thatcher. (2016). "Critical Data Studies: a dialogue on data and space," in Big Data & Society. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716648346>
- Readings (cited/optional):
  1. Gerard, Nikita et al. (2020). "Big Data," in CDS Collaborative Glossary (website). <https://www.purdue.edu/critical-data-studies/collaborative-glossary/about-glossary.php>

Video 4 Data Agency

- Discussion Questions (video):
  1. Does data have agency? What do data do? How and when do data act? How are data mobilized?
  2. Who grants data authority? What power relations emerge or are transformed?
- Discussion Questions (assigned reading):
  1. How are 'data bodies' defined in this project?
  2. How might data bodies be said to diminish an individual's agency and self-determination?
- Readings (assigned):
  1. Petty, Tawana, Mariella Saba, Tamika Lewis, Seeta Peña Gangadharan, Virginia Eubanks. (2018). Our Data Bodies: Reclaiming Our Data (interim report). Our Data Bodies Project. June 15, 2018. Available at: [https://www.odbproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ODB.InterimReport.FINAL\\_.7.16.2018.pdf](https://www.odbproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ODB.InterimReport.FINAL_.7.16.2018.pdf)

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- Readings (cited/optional):
  1. Barad, Karen. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.
  2. Bennet, Jane. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.
  3. Bucher, Taina. (2018). *If...then: Algorithmic Power and Politics*. Oxford University Press.
  4. Latour, Bruno. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford University Press.

### Video 5 Data and Sponsored Search

- Discussion Questions (video):
  1. What does search open up and what does it close off?
  2. What might this mean for how you acquire and make knowledge about your surroundings?
  3. What kind of impacts might this have on your community?
- Discussion Questions (assigned reading):
  1. How are racial and gender bias embedded in sponsored search?
  2. What kind of results would you expect from a non-commercial search engine?
  3. Can you think of other examples that demonstrate this point?
- Readings (assigned):
  1. Noble, Safiya. (2013). "Google search: Hyper-visibility as a means of rendering Black women and girls invisible," in *InVisible Culture* 19. Available at: <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/google-search-hyper-visibility-as-a-means-of-rendering-black-women-and-girls-invisible/>
- Readings (cited/optional):
  1. Noble, Safiya. (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression: How Algorithms Reinforce Racism*. New York University Press.

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