

Open Syllabus: Mobilizing Data for Justice

This open syllabus provides teaching modules for various topics related to data activism. It can be followed either as a full course or you can pick and choose modules related to your work.

It is loosely framed around the structure of our book:

Hurl, C., Rowan, E., Senneville, M. and Walby, K. (2026). *Mobilizing Data for Justice*. Toronto: Between the Lines.

This is a work in progress. We welcome any recommendations for additional articles or resources. If you have any feedback, you can get in touch with us at datajusticehub@concordia.ca.

1) Thinking Through Data Justice and Data Activism

Activity: Identifying your issue.

- "Questions to Consider," From *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.

Readings:

- Dencik, Lina, et al. (2019). Exploring data justice: Conceptions, applications and directions. *Information, Communication & Society* 22/7: 873-881.
- D'Ignazio, Catherine, and Lauren F. Klein. (2023) *Data Feminism*. MIT Press.
- Fuchs, C. (2017). From Digital Positivism and Administrative Big Data Analytics towards Critical Digital and Social Media Research! *European Journal of Communication* 32/1: 37-49.
- Kennedy, H. (2018). Living with Data: Aligning Data Studies and Data Activism through a Focus on Everyday Experiences of Datafication. *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* 1: 18-30.
- Meng, Amanda, and Carlo DiSalvo. (2018). Grassroots resource mobilization through counter-data action. *Big Data & Society*, 5(2).
- Milan, S., & Van der Velden, L. (2016). The Alternative Epistemologies of Data Activism. *Digital Culture & Society* 2/2: 57-74.

2) Problematizing Extractivism and Surveillance Capitalism

Activity: List all of the ways governments and corporations collect your data.

Readings:

- Benjamin, Ruha. (2019). *Race after technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*. Polity.
- Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias. (2019). Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. *Television & new media* 20/4: 336-349.
- Gebrial, D. (2022). Racial platform capitalism: Empire, migration and the making of Uber in London. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 56/4: 1170-1194.

- Migozzi, Julien. (2023). The good, the bad and the tenant: Rental platforms renewing racial capitalism in the post-apartheid housing market. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 0(0).
- Sadowski, Jathan. (2019). When data is capital: Datafication, accumulation, and extraction. *Big data & society* 6/1: 2053951718820549.
- Srnicek, Nick. (2017). *Platform Capitalism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Srnicek, N. (2021). Value, Rent, and Platform Capitalism. In: Haidar, J. & Keune, M. (Eds). *Work and Labour Relations in Global Platform Capitalism*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar/ILO, pp. 29-45.
- Steinberg, M., Zhang, L., & Mukherjee, R. (2024). Platform capitalisms and platform cultures. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 28/1: 21-29.
- Zuboff, Shoshana. (2022). Surveillance capitalism or democracy? The death match of institutional orders and the politics of knowledge in our information civilization. *Organization Theory* 3/3.

3) Social Movement Learning

Activity: Reflect on your approach to theorizing and to activism

Readings:

- Arribas Lozano, A. (2018). Knowledge Co-Production with Social Movement Networks: Redefining Grassroots Politics, Rethinking Research. *Social Movement Studies* 17/4: 451–63.
- Bevington, D., & Dixon, C. (2005). Movement-Relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism. *Social Movement Studies* 4/3: 185-208.
- Casas-Cortés, M., Osterweil, M. & Powell, D. (2008). Blurring Boundaries: Recognizing Knowledge-Practices in the Study of Social Movements. *Anthropological Quarterly* 81/1: 17-58.
- Choudry, A. & Kapoor, D. (2010). Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production. In *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production*. Kapoor, D., & A. Choudry (eds). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 1-13.
- Mathew, B. (2010). Conversations on the M60: Knowledge Production through Collective Ethnographies. In *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production*. Choudry, A. & D. Kapoor (eds). New York: Palgrave. Pp. 157-172.

4) Assembling Communities of Care and Practice

Activity: Assessing Wants/Needs

- “User Stories as a Means of Generating Communities of Concern,” From *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.

Readings:

- "Assembling Communities of Practice: Care and Capacity Building in Data Activism," From *Mobilizing Data for Justice: Activist Strategies for the Digital Age*.
- Arribas Lozano, A. (2018). Knowledge Co-Production with Social Movement Networks: Redefining Grassroots Politics, Rethinking Research. *Social Movement Studies* 17/4: 451–63.
- Gray, Jonathan, Liliana Bounegru, Richard Rogers, Tommaso Venturini, Donato Ricci, Axel Meunier, Michele Mauri, Sabine Niederer, Natalia Sánchez Querubin, Marc Tuters. Lucy Kimbell and Kristian Munk. (2022). Engaged Research-Led Teaching: Composing Collective Inquiry with Digital Methods and Data. *Digital Culture & Education* 14/3: 55–86.
- Punch Up Collective. Getting It Together: Ideas for Organizing Collectives. *Briarpatch Magazine*, 26 February 2018.
<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/getting-it-together>.

5) Participatory Action Research and Community-Based Research

Activity: Think about a research design / project for PAR or CBR.

Readings:

- "Assembling Communities of Practice: Care and Capacity Building in Data Activism," From *Mobilizing Data for Justice: Activist Strategies for the Digital Age*.
- Data Center. *An Introduction to Research Justice*.
https://www.powershift.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/Intro_Research_Justice_Toolkit_FINAL1.pdf
- Centre for Social Justice and Community Action & National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. (2022). *Community-Based Participatory Research: A Guide to Ethical Principles and Practice*. 2nd ed. Durham and Bristol: CSJCA & NCCPE.
- Chevalier, Jacques M., and Daniel J. Buckles. (2021). *Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation*. Ottawa: SAS2 Dialogue.
- Hall, R., Z. Brent, J. Franco, M. Isaacs, and T. Shegro. (2017). *A Toolkit for Participatory Action Research*. Amsterdam: FIAN International, Heidelberg TNI.
- Lloyd-Evans, S. (2023). *Participatory Action Research: A Toolkit*. Community Based Research, University of Reading, UK.
<https://research.reading.ac.uk/community-based-research/wp-content/uploads/sites/114/2023/06/PAR-Toolkit-v10.pdf>.
- Jordan, S. & Kapoor, D. (2016). Re-politicizing Participatory Action Research: Unmasking Neoliberalism and the Illusions of Participation. *Educational Action Research* 24/1: 134-149.
- Mahoney, T., K. Grain, P. Fraser, and J. Wong. (2021). *Community Resource Handbook*. Community-Engaged Research Initiative, Simon Fraser University.

- Pasick, R., G. Oliva, E. Goldstein, and T. Nguyen. *Community-Engaged Research with Community-Based Organizations: A Resource Manual for UCSF Researchers*. From the series UCSF Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) Resource Manuals and Guides to Community-Engaged Research, ed. P. Fleisher. Clinical Translational Science Institute Community Engagement Program, University of California, San Francisco.
http://ctsi.ucsf.edu/files/CE/manual_for_researchers_agencies.pdf.

6) Power Mapping

Activity: Understanding the interests surrounding your issue

- “Map the Power with Little Sis,” From *Mobilizing Data for Justice*

Readings:

- Batliwala, Srilatha. *All About Power: Understanding Social Power and Power Structures*.
<https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/All-About-Power.pdf>.
- Dirt Diggers Guide to Strategic Corporate Research
(<https://www.corp-research.org/dddresearchguide>)
- Beautiful Trouble. Power Mapping to Design a Winning Strategy.
<https://beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/tool/power-mapping>.
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The Care and Feeding of Power Structures. 1965. https://www.crmvet.org/docs/65_minnis_power-r.pdf.
- Tang, Anita. Power Mapping and Analysis.
<https://commonslibrary.org/guide-power-mapping-and-analysis/>.
- *Controversy Mapping: A Field Guide*—Tommaso Venturini & Anders Kristian Munk
<http://www.tommasoventurini.it/wp/category/controversy-mapping/>
- National Academy of Community Organizing, *A Guide to Power Analysis in Community Organizing*.
<https://www.corganisers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Guide-to-Power-Analysis-Dec-21.pdf>.

Resources:

- LittleSis, *Map the Power* (<https://littlesis.org/toolkit>)
- Strategic Corporate Research (<https://strategiccorporateresearch.org/>)
- Corporate Mapping Project (<https://www.corporatemapping.ca/>).
- Gephi (<https://gephi.org/>).
- LittleSis (<https://littlesis.org/>).
- Strategic Corporate Research
(<https://strategiccorporateresearch.org/strategic-corporate-research/muckro>).

Webinars/Podcasts:

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Corporate Mapping Project:
<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/corporate-mapping-project--56232533>

7) Negotiating Surveillance Infrastructures

Activity: Surveillance Walking Tour – Put together a walking tour on the surveillance infrastructure in your city.

- Coveillance. The People's Field Guide to Spotting Surveillance Infrastructure. <https://coveillance.org/>.

Readings:

- Lina Dencik, Arne Hintz, and Jonathan Cable. (2019). Towards Data Justice: Bridging Anti-Surveillance and Social Justice Activism, in *Data Politics: Worlds, Subjects, Rights*, ed. Didier Bigo, Engin Isin, and Evelyn Ruppert (London: Routledge), pp. 167–86.
- *Automating Banishment: The Surveillance and Policing of Stolen Land*—Stop LAPD Spying Coalition
<https://stoplapdspying.org/automating-banishment-the-surveillance-and-policing-of-looted-land/>
- *People's Tech for People's Power: A Guide to Digital Self-Empowerment*—Right2Know Campaign
<https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1144&context=mgdr>
- *Exposing the Invisible: The Kit*—Tactical Tech
<https://kit.exposingtheinvisible.org/en/>
- *Digital Defense Playbook*—Our Data Bodies
https://www.odbproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ODB_DDP_HighRes_Single.pdf
- Our Data Our Selves. “The Organiser’s Activity Book.”
<https://ourdataourselves.tacticaltech.org/>.

Resources:

- Electronic Frontier Foundation: Tool Guides for Surveillance Self-Defense (<https://ssd.eff.org/module-categories/tool-guides>)
- Security-in-a-box: Digital security tools and tactics (<https://securityinabox.org/en/>)
- Tactical Tech:
 - o *Exposing the Invisible* (<https://kit.exposingtheinvisible.org/en/safety.html#resources>)
 - o *Data Detox Kit* (<https://datadetoxkit.org/en/home>)
 - o Zebra Crossing: An easy-to-use digital safety checklist (<https://zebracrossing.narwhalacademy.org/>)
- Copwatch (copwatch.com/).
- Lucy Parsons Labs (<https://www.lucyparsonslabs.com/>).
- Mijente (<https://mijente.net/>).
- No Tech for ICE (<https://notechforice.com/>).
- Right2Know Campaign (<http://www.r2k.org.za/>).
- Stop LAPD Spying Coalition (<https://stoplapdspying.org/>).

- Surveillance Technology Oversight Project. (<https://www.stopspying.org/>).
- Tactical Tech (<https://tacticaltech.org/>).
- We Clock (<https://weclock.it/>).
- Workers' Algorithm Observatory (<https://wao.cs.princeton.edu/>).

Webinars/Podcasts:

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Tactical Tech: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/tactical-tech--65708900>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Mijente: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/no-tech-for-ice--56102268>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Refugee Law Lab: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/refugee-law-lab--65708899>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Webinar: Etienne 'tek' Maynier, Countering Digital Surveillance with Research, Data and Art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ru1b7il6aM>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Webinar: Sanjin Ibrahimovic, "Inverse Surveillance," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtBC5nZDmyA>

8) Accessing Data

Activity: Access to Information Workshop – File an Access to Information Request

- See "FOI Requests: The Basics," from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.

Readings:

- "Accessing Data," from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.
- Dickson, G. (2012). Access regimes: Provincial freedom of information law across Canada. In *Brokering Access: Power, Politics, and Freedom of Information Process in Canada*, Larsen, M. and K. Walby (eds). Vancouver: UBC Press. Pp. 68-94.
- Luscombe, A., & Walby, K. (2023). Practicing Freedom of Information as Feral Law and Advancing Research Methods in Socio-Legal Studies. In *Violence, Imagination, and Resistance: Socio-legal Interrogations of Power*. Alam, M., P. Dwyer and K. Roots (eds). Edmonton: Athabasca University Press. Pp 153-172.
- Walby, K. and B. Enkhtugs. (2022). 'Freedom of Information Law in Action: From Global Explosion to Erosion in the Realm of Government Transparency'. *Journal of Civic Information*, 4/3: 1-23.

Resources:

- Centre for Access to Information and Justice (<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/caij/>).
- IMPACT (<https://impactoronto.ca/>).
- Lucy Parsons Labs (<https://www.lucyparsonslabs.com/>).
- MuckRock (<https://www.muckrock.com/>).
- Right2Know Campaign (<http://www.r2k.org.za/>).
- Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (<https://www.stopspying.org/>).
- Tactical Tech (<https://tacticaltech.org/>).

Webinars/Podcasts

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Kevin Walby, "Mobilizing FOI," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INeJFhJurEs>

9) Open data/open archives

Activity: Use the Wayback Machine

- See "Fighting Recency Bias: The Wayback Machine as a Resource for Data Activism"

Readings:

- "Archiving Data" from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.
- Schrock, A. (2016). Civic Hacking as Data Activism and Advocacy: A History from Publicity to Open Government Data. *New Media & Society* 18/4: 581-599.
- Schrock, A., & Shaffer, G. (2017). Data Ideologies of an Interested Public: A Study of Grassroots Open Government Data Intermediaries. *Big Data & Society* 4/1: 2053951717690750.
- Mattoni, A. (2018). From Data Extraction to Data Leaking. Data-activism in Italian and Spanish anti-Corruption Campaigns. *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 10/3: 723-746.
- Eskander, W. and B. Murray. "Retrieving and Archiving Information from Websites," <https://kit.exposingtheinvisible.org/en/web-archive.html>
- Okune, Angela. (2020). Open ethnographic archiving as feminist, decolonizing practice. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 6.2.
- Kandek, B. (2022). *Ten ways to close the gender gap on Wikipedia and beyond*. Wikimedia Foundation. <https://wikimediafoundation.org/news/2022/03/11/ten-ways-to-close-the-gender-gap-on-wikipedia-and-beyond/>
- Rowan, E. (2023). Activist Internet Archivists: Caring about how and who to archive on the internet. *Data Justice Hub*. <https://datajusticehub.ca/blog/>
- The New Design Congress. "Memory in Uncertainty: Web Preservation in the Polycrisis," November 2022. <https://newdesigncongress.org/en/report/2022/memory-in-uncertainty/>.

Resources:

- Archive Team (<https://wiki.archiveteam.org/>)
- Art+Feminism (<https://artandfeminism.org/>)
- Internet Archive Wayback Machine (<https://web.archive.org/>)
- Missing Basti (<https://missingbasti.com/>)

Webinars/Podcasts:

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Archive Team: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/archive-team--56441120>

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Accountability Archive:
<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/accountability-archive--65708722>

10) Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Activity: Read the blogs or newsletter of Indigenous Data Sovereignty groups

Readings:

- “Archiving Data” from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*.
- Carroll, Stephanie Russo, et al. (2022). Using Indigenous Standards to Implement the CARE Principles: Setting Expectations Through Tribal Research Codes. *Frontiers in Genetics* 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fgene.2022.823309>.
- Carroll, Stephanie Russo. et al. (2022). Extending the CARE Principles from Tribal Research Policies to Benefit Sharing in Genomic Research. *Frontiers in Genetics* 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fgene.2022.1052620>.
- Jennings, Lydia, et al. (2023). Applying the ‘CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance’ to Ecology and Biodiversity Research. *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 7: 1547–51. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02161-2>.
- Quinless, Jacqueline. (2022). *Decolonizing Data: Unsettling Conversations About Social Research Methods*. University of Toronto Press.
- Walter, Maggie, and Michele Suina. (2019). Indigenous Data, Indigenous Methodologies and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 22/3: 233–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1531228>.

Resources:

- OCAP Principles (<https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>)
- CARE Principles (<https://www.gida-global.org/care>)
- The First Nations Information Governance Centre (<https://fnigc.ca/>).
- Global Indigenous Data Alliance (<https://www.gida-global.org/>).
- Sovereign Bodies Institute (<https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/>).
- *Māori Data Audit Tool*—Te Mana Raraunga
<https://www.temanararaunga.maori.nz/nga-rauemi#MaoriDataAuditTool>
- *Composing Collective Inquiry with Digital Methods and Data*—Open Data for Tax Justice
<https://www.digitalcultureandeducation.com/volume-143-papers/gray-et-al-2022>

11) Debunking Data: Building Data Literacy

Activity: Spot the Bias

- Spot the Bias media literacy exercise:
- https://ischoolonline.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2021/12/data-literacy_activity3_understanding-research.pdf

Readings:

- “Visualizing Data,” from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*
- Tactical Tech, Digital and Media Literacy Education: Navigating an Ever-Evolving Landscape,
https://tacticaltech.org/news/project-launches/mlce_research_report/
- *Critical Data Literacy Tools for Advocating Data Justice: A Guidebook*—Data Justice Lab
<https://datajusticelab.org/2020/06/12/djl-publishes-guidebook-on-data-literacy-tools/>
- UNESCO, *Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, click wisely!* UNESCO, 2021
- UNESCO, Global Standards for Media and Information Literacy Curricula Development Guidelines, 2022.
- Hobbs, Renee. (2021). *Media Literacy in Action: Questioning the Media*.
- National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE). Tools and Resources.

Podcasts/Webinars

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Bellingcat:
<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/bellingcat--65708898>

12) Visualizing Data: Participatory Mapping and Counter-mapping

Activity: Collective Mapping

- See “Collective Mapping on Paper, Cardboard, and Concrete: Cartographic Action Research as Activist and Geographical Tool.”

Readings:

- “Visualizing Data,” from *Mobilizing Data for Justice*
- *AEMP Handbook by The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP)*—Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323691711_AEMP_Handbook
- Crooks, Roderic, and Morgan Currie. (2021). Numbers will not save us: Agonistic data practices. *The Information Society* 37/4: 201-213.
- D’ignazio, Catherine, and Lauren F. Klein. (2020). On Rational, Scientific, Objective Viewpoints from Mythical, Imaginary, Impossible Standpoints, From *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dávila, Patricio. (2017). Visualization as assemblage: Exploring critical visualization practice. *Information Design Journal* 23/1: 19-31.
- Gommeh, Efrat, Huub Dijkstra, and Tamara Metze. (2021). Visual discourse coalitions: visualization and discourse formation in controversies over shale gas development. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 23/3: 363-380.
- Gralke, Tobias. (2022). Another World is Depictable! Imaginal Climate Justice and the Affective Rhetoric of Visible Futures. *ffk Journal* 6/7: 108-124.

- Hall, P. A., & Dávila, P. (2022). *Critical visualization: Rethinking the representation of data*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hsueh, Stacy, et al. (2023). Crippling data visualizations: Crip technoscience as a critical lens for designing digital access. *Proceedings of the 25th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility*.
- International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies/kollektiv orangotango (2024). *Beyond Molotovs: A Visual Handbook of Anti-Authoritarian Strategies*, transcript.
- kollektiv orangotango (2018). *This is not an Atlas*, transcript.
- Lee, Crystal, Tanya Yang, Gabrielle Inchoco, Graham M. Jones, and Arvind Satyanarayan. 2021. Viral Visualizations: How Coronavirus Skeptics Use Orthodox Data Practices to Promote Unorthodox Science Online. In CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '21), May 8–13, Yokohama, Japan. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 18 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445211>
- Lucchesi, Annita Hetoeevohotohke'e. (2022). Mapping Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls: Beyond Colonizing Data and Mapping Practices, *ACME*, 21(4): 389-398.
- Schwabish, Jonathan, Susan J. Popkin, and Alice Feng. (2022). *Do No Harm Guide: Centering Accessibility in Data Visualization*. Urban Institute.

Resources:

- Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (<https://antievictionmap.com/>).
- Bellingcat (<https://www.bellingcat.com/>).
- Iconoclasistas (<https://iconoclasistas.net/>).
- Imani Jacqueline Brown (<https://imanijacquelinebrown.net/>).
- Hilando Futuros (<https://futuros-lab.org/hilando-futuros-2/>).
- kollektiv orangotango. (<https://orangotango.info/>).
- Landlord Mapper (<https://landlordmapper.org/chi>).
- OWN-IT! (Organizers Warning Notification and Information for Tenants) (<https://www.ownit.la/>).
- Queering the Map (<https://www.queeringthemap.com/>).
- Visualizing Palestine (<https://visualizingpalestine.org/>).

Podcasts/Webinars:

- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-strategies and kollektiv orangotango: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/kollektiv-orangotango--71562165>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Visualizing Palestine: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/visualizing-palestine--65708901>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Interview with Queering the Map: <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/queering-the-map--55611589>
- Mobilizing Data for Justice, Webinar: Erin McElroy, "Mapping Against Property," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImuL28UqCzI>

13) Final Reflections

Activity: Create a Research Diary and a Research Plan

Readings:

- Lentz, B. (2014). Building the Pipeline of Media and Technology Policy Advocates: The Role of Situated Learning. *Journal of Information Policy* 4: 176-204.

Resources:

- Data Activism in the Time of Trump, on YouTube
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6Tof4kxdus&t=32s>