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# Open Data for Urban Research

## A Data + Social Science Workshop

Master Governing the Large Metropolis  
Sciences Po, Fall 2018

### OVERVIEW

This workshop offers a critical analysis of how urban-level data are produced, interpreted, and, increasingly, released to the public. It was designed specifically for this Masters, alongside the “[Advanced Quantitative Methods](#)” course, which enables students to build on their existing statistical training by mixing qualitative and quantitative insights.

Students will learn to assess the quality of existing open data resources, critically discuss their political implications, and produce their own catalogue of real-world public datasets.

### OUTCOMES

The students in this course will be invited to produce two (graded) outcomes:

- **Open Data Census entries:** Students will fill an [Open Data Census](#) website with the results of their research, giving precise explanations on their research process.
- **Data quality sprint:** students will follow a guided methodology to assess the quality of a specific dataset and publish their findings in a structured way

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## 1 · FIND AND GET DATA

Samuel Goëta

27 September 2018 5-8 PM

117, bd Saint-Germain, Room 720

**Read before class:** Harlan Yu and David G. Robinson, “[The New Ambiguity of ‘Open Government’](#),” *UCLA Law Review* 59(178), 2012.

## 2 · VERIFY DATA

Samuel Goëta

(Date, time and place to be confirmed.)

**Read before class:** David Ribes and Steven J. Jackson, “[Data Bite Man: The Work of Sustaining a Long-Term Study](#),” in Lisa Gitelman (ed.), ‘Raw Data’ is an Oxymoron, MIT Press, 2013, pp. 147–66.

## 3 · CLEAN DATA

Joël Gombin

11 October 2018, 5-8 PM

117, bd Saint-Germain, Room 720

**Read before class:** Garrett Grolemund and Hadley Wickham, “[Tidy Data](#),” in *R for Data Science*, O’Reilly, 2017, ch. 12 [of the online version]; and Open Knowledge International, “[Open Data Quality – The Next Shift in Open Data?](#)” *Open Knowledge International Blog*, 31 May 2017.

## 4 · PRESENT DATA

François Briatte

18 October 2018, 5-8PM

13, rue de l’Université, Room S08 • • • caution, different room!

Read before class: Wendy N. Espeland and Mitchell L. Stevens, “[A Sociology of Quantification](#),” *European Journal of Sociology* 49(3): 401–36, 2008 [download link is at top-right of page].

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## READINGS

- Agar, Jon. 2003. *The Government Machine. A Revolutionary History of the Computer*. Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Barberousse, Anouk. 2013. “Les conditions de possibilité de la mesure.” *Cahiers philosophiques* 135: 7–22.
- Bouk, D. 2015. *How Our Days Became Numbered. Risk and the Rise of the Statistical Individual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bruno, Isabelle, Didier, Emmanuel, and Prévieux, Julien. 2014. *Statactivisme. Comment lutter avec des nombres*. Paris, La Découverte.
- Bruno, Isabelle, Jany-Catrice, Florence, and Touchelay, Beatrice (eds). 2016. *The Social Sciences of Quantification. From Politics of Large Numbers to Target-Driven Policies*. New York, Springer.
- Davies, Tim. 2010. “Open Data, Democracy and Public Sector Reform. A Look at Open Government Data Use from data.gov.uk.”
- Denis, Jérôme and Goëta, Samuel. 2017. “Rawification and the Careful Generation of Open Government Data,” *Social Studies of Science* 47(5): 604–29.
- Desrosières, Alain. 2014. “Statistics and Social Critique.” *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 7(2): 348–59.
- Desrosières, Alain. 1993. *La raison des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique*. Paris, La Découverte [English translation].
- Desrosières, Alain. 2003. “Comment fabriquer un espace de commune mesure ? Harmonisation des statistiques et réalisme de leurs usages,” in Lallement, Michel and Spurk, Jan (eds.), *Stratégies de la comparaison internationale*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, pp. 151–66.
- Elden, Stuart. 2013. “How Should We Do the History of Territory?” *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 1(1): 5–20.
- Erkkilä, Tero, Peters, B. Guy and Piironen, Ossi. 2016. “Politics of Comparative Quantification: The Case of Governance Metrics,” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 18(4): 319–438. Introduction to a special issue on “Governance Indices, Politics and Expert Knowledge.”
- Espeland, Wendy N. and Mitchell L. Stevens. 2008. “A Sociology of Quantification.” *European Journal of Sociology* 49(3): 401–36.
- Gitelman, Lisa (ed.). 2013. *‘Raw Data’ is an Oxymoron*. Cambridge, MIT Press.

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Goëta, Samuel. 2016. *Instaurer des données, instaurer des publics : une enquête sociologique dans les coulisses de l'open data*. PhD dissertation, Télécom ParisTech.

Goëta, Samuel and Davies, Tim. 2016. "The Daily Shaping of State Transparency: Standards, Machine-Readability and the Configuration of Open Government Data Policies," *Science & Technology Studies* 29(4).

Goldstein, Harvey. 2014. "Using League Table Rankings in Public Policy Formation: Statistical Issues," *Annual Review of Applied Statistics* 1: 385–99.

Gray, Jonathan. 2018. "Three Aspects of Data Worlds," *Krisis. Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* (1): 3–17.

Hacking, Ian. 1991. "How Should We Do the History of Statistics?" In: Burchell, Graham, Gordon, Colin and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago, Chicago University Press, pp. 181–96.

Kitchin, Rob. 2014. *The Data Revolution. Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and Their Consequences*. London, Sage.

Oliver, Thomas R. 2010. "Population Health Rankings as Policy Indicators and Performance Measures," *Preventing Chronic Disease* 7(5): A101.

Porter, Theodore. 1995. *Trust in Numbers. The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Raman, Nithya V. 2012. "Collecting Data in Chennai City and the Limits of Openness." *Journal of Community Informatics* 8(2).

Sassen, Saskia. 2012. "Urbanising Technology." In: Burdett, Ricky and Wolfgang Nowak (eds), *The Electric City*, London, LSE Cities, pp. 12–4.

Sauder, Michael and Wendy Espeland. 2009. "The Discipline of Rankings: Tight Coupling and Organizational Change", *American Sociological Review* 74(1): 63–82 [summary].

Scott, James C. 1990. *Seeing Like A State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. Yale, Yale University Press.

Yu, Harlan and David G. Robinson. 2012. "The New Ambiguity of 'Open Government'", *UCLA Law Review: Discourse* 59(178).

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## BLOGS

Impact of Social Sciences Blog, London School of Economics and Political Science:

- [Philosophy of Data Series](#)
- [Politics of Data Series](#)

Michael Batty:

- [Smart Cities](#)
- [A Science of Cities](#)

Open Knowledge Foundation:

- [Open Knowledge International Blog](#)
- [School of Data Blog](#)

## WEBSITES

- [LearnOpenData](#) (by Claire Foulquier-Gazagnes, from [Etalab](#))
- [Open Data Institute](#) (London)
- [Open Knowledge International](#)
- [Urban Complexity Lab](#) (Potsdam)

Urban-level data-oriented studies:

- [Atlas of Urban Expansion](#)
- [EURO-URHIS2](#) – European Urban Health Indicators Systems Part 2
- [US City Open Data Census](#)

Urban Audit – European City Statistics:

- [Eurostat resources, European Commission](#)
- [Office of National Statistics, United Kingdom](#) (archive)

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development:

- [Urban Development](#)
- [Metropolitan eXplorer](#)

UN-Habitat, United Nations:

- [Open UN-Habitat](#)
- [UN-Habitat Urban Data](#)

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## TEACHER BIOS



François Briatte is Assistant Lecturer in Political Science at the [European School of Political Sciences](#) in Lille, and a member of the [rOpenGov ecosystem](#), which write programs for computational social science and digital humanities. His main hobbies are black coffee, cigarettes and Web scraping.

François blogs in French at [Polit'bistro](#) and in English at [R / Notes](#).

François teaches the **theoretical section** of this workshop.



**Samuel Goëta** is a co-founder of [dataactivi.st](#) and a member of the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#), which campaigns to open up knowledge for everyone. Samuel holds a PhD in Sociology from [Telecom ParisTech](#), and his main hobbies are bike riding, running a coworking [house](#) and cooking for hours.

Samuel used to blog in French at [Les coulisses de l'open data](#).

Samuel teaches the **practical sections** of this workshop.



**Joël Gombin** is a co-founder of [dataactivi.st](#), a PhD candidate in Political Science at the Université Picardie – Jules Verne, and a member of the [Observatory of Political Radicalities](#) at the Jean-Jaurès Foundation, which studies radicality in European societies. His main hobbies are watching political TV shows and changing his kids' diapers.

Joël also used to write a data-driven series in French for the online magazine [Marsactu](#).