Course Description
In 1945 Vannevar Bush decried the deleterious effect of information overload and poor data management, noting that Mendel’s groundbreaking work on genetics was lost to the world for a generation because it was not accessible to those who might expand upon it. More than half a century later, the situation has increased exponentially: Contemporary culture is characterized by information overload, data deluge and an awareness of the systems complexity of a globally networked world. As such it is no surprise that the visual display of information has exploded as a means of representing vast datasets.

Infographics and three-dimensional simulations join conventional pie charts and bar graphs as numerous consumer level tools for creating these visualizations have emerged over the last few years. Critical engagement with these images, with their underlying data structures, and with the tools that produce them will form the basis of this course, as we move through the interpretation and production of information visualizations in various forms.

Texts:
Required: The Wall Street Journal Guide to Information Graphics (Donna Wong), available at the USC Bookstore or Amazon
Other readings available on course wiki including excerpts from Alfred Crosby’s The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600

Grading Breakdown
Reading responses 15%
Software exercises (2) 15%
Project I: Comparative Viz 25%
Final Project: Prototype 25%
Peer Review 10%
Presentation (open topic) 10%

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Statement for Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
**Weekly schedule: subject to change as necessary to improve the course. Please refer to the weekly schedule in the class wiki, which will always be kept current.**

**JAN**


1/17: Models and Metaphors. How do models cull data? How does one judge the veracity of Introductory Infographics presented (as time permits). For next time, please read *The Measure of Reality* chapters 1, 5, 7 and listen to the *Under the Skin* podcast, episode 33 with Kehinde Andrews, “Is Trump Better for Black America than Obama?”

1/24: A History of Quantification: Structures of Data Society. Reading discussion. For next time, please read *WSJ’s Guide to Info Graphics*, Chapters 1 and 2. Get a Tableau account from here <tableau.com/student> and view one training video from the Tableau site: [https://www.tableau.com/learn](https://www.tableau.com/learn)

**FEB**

2/7: From data to information. First project assigned. Tableau workshop. For next time, please read *The Information*, Chapter 4, “To Throw the Powers of Thought into Wheel-Work,” and *The History of the Scatter Plot*.

2/14: Culling data. Tutorials and tool overview. For next time, please read the *WSJ’s Guide to Info Graphics*, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

2/21: Good and bad practices. Sign up for presentation (weeks 12-14). For next time, please read Ch 1 of *The Secret Language of Color*, and “Color and Information,” (Tufte).


**MAR**

3/7: Sensory data: computer vision. Structured peer review due on course wiki. For next time, please read Johanna Drucker’s “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display,” *DHQ*, 2012.


**APR**

4/4: Presentations cont’d.

4/11: Workshops and catch up work.

4/18: Workshops cont’d.

4/25: Last Class: Course evaluations, project updates.

**Final May 2, 2-4pm.** Final project presentations. Any revised work due on the wiki.