Matt Jones is a professor of history at Columbia University. He specializes in the history of science and technology, focused on early modern Europe and on recent information technologies. A Guggenheim and a Mellon New Directions fellow, he is completing a book on state surveillance of communications, as well as Data Mining: The Critique of Artificial Reason, 1963-2005, a historical and ethnographic account of “big data,” its relation to statistics and machine learning, and its growth as a fundamental new form of technical expertise in business and scientific research. His publications include: "Querying the Archive: Data Mining from Apriori to Page Rank," in L. Daston, ed. Archives of the Sciences and Reckoning with Matter: Calculating Machines, Innovation, and Thinking about Thinking from Pascal to Babbage.

Chris Wiggins is an associate professor of applied mathematics at Columbia University and the Chief Data Scientist at The New York Times. At Columbia he is a founding member of the executive committee of the Data Science Institute, and of the Department of Systems Biology, and is affiliated faculty in Statistics. He is a co-founder and co-organizer of hackNY (http://hackNY.org), a nonprofit which since 2010 has organized once a semester student hackathons and the hackNY Fellows Program, a structured summer internship at NYC startups. Prior to joining the faculty at Columbia he was a Courant Instructor at NYU (1998–2001) and earned his PhD at Princeton University (1993–1998) in theoretical physics. He is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and is a recipient of Columbia's Avenessians Diversity Award.

Abstract: Data-empowered algorithms are reshaping our professional, personal, and political realities. Most courses are predominantly designed either for future technologists, focusing on functional capabilities or for future humanists, focusing on critical and rhetorical context surrounding data. Our new course “Data: Past, Present, and Future” seeks to define a curriculum at present taught to neither group. The intellectual arc traces from the 18th century to present day, beginning with examples of contemporary technological advances, disquieting ethical debates, and financial success powered by panoptic persuasion architectures. The weekly cadence of the course pairs primary and secondary readings with labs done largely with Jupyter notebooks in Python. Throughout, technical advances are paired with critical inquiry into the forces which encouraged and benefited from these new capabilities. Syllabus, Jupyter notebooks, and additional info can be found via https://data-pf.github.io/.