

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Malcolm McCullough
ARCH 551, Fall 2024
Tuesday mornings, West Review space

Revealing Data

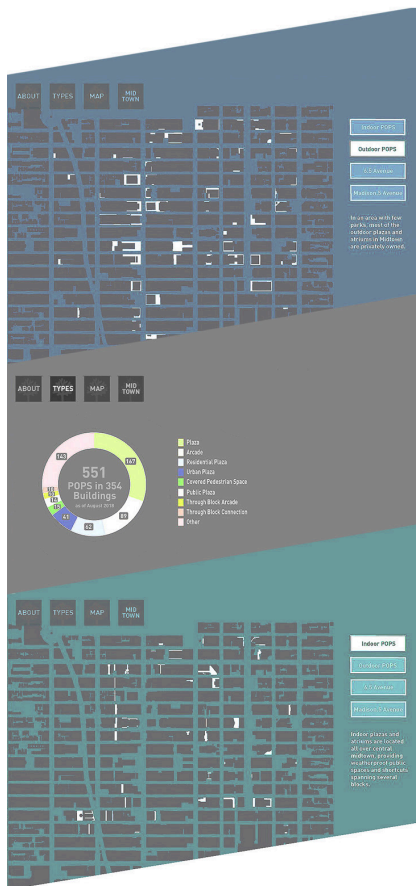
Don't go without, but don't drown!

How do you use data in studio work? This is a skills course in learning to inform. For otherwise too many people use up their review time just dumping too much obvious data, without ever taking a position on their findings. It does not have to be that way. After a couple of years away, this well-seasoned, reliable course returns to help you produce understanding, not just colorful graphics.

Studying attention itself. When data become superabundant, what becomes scarce is attention. Creative work thus happens amid an attention economy, not an information economy. Better attention practices are the best sign of a real education. So for data visualization work, instead of making the most trendy splash to get a moment of scrollable attention, or counting on captive attendance for however much needless reporting at reviews, this is about making concise, persuasive work that respects, rewards, and thus earns just enough real focal conversation.

Here comes AI. You no longer need code skills like P5 or a costly platform like Tableau to do good data visualization. Instead you now need to bring more criticality about AI results. Charting and diagramming are evolving quickly. This course can decide at the start which AI apps to try, and mix that with more conventional work in Illustrator and GIS.

Bring a topic. The course works best for your own ongoing research related to studio, especially thesis. Otherwise participants often default to finding a theme in New York or Chicago open data portals. Everyone can share a few warmup exercises but then in the second half, it really helps to have a theme that you want to investigate and question. We are not here to rehash what is already obvious. Instead, set out to change someone's mind about something, maybe even your own.



Hyun-Ah Kim & Kaya Ramirez:
*Privately Owned Public Space
in Midtown Manhattan (2019)*