

AI in the Real World

Data, Power, & Society - Day 03

The US Census and Data

CMSE 492 (aka CMSE 101) • Fall 2026

Prof. Danny Caballero

This Week's Agenda

1. **Course intro** (✓)
2. **Group the class!** - Get up and move around! (✓)
3. **Wednesday: Constructing Categories** - How we perceive people matters (✓).
4. **Wednesday: Who do we make into groups?** – We'll work through the Census timeline together (✓)
 - *In your assigned groups*
5. **Friday: First Case - Census Data** – Focusing on the Data in DTPA (you're here ✓)

Exit ticket – Your third one is due by 5pm today on D2L.

Case Analyses - Today, we will work to complete the first case study; due Sunday at 11:59pm

We have been trying to switch to a classroom with A/C

- Devin and I have been in contact with Registrar's Office; no response yet
- Look for an email from me if we make a change; sign will appear on C102

Wednesday's Activity: Tracing racial/ethnic grouping over time

Create a historical timeline of changes to the US Census

[Google Slides](#)

1. In your preparatory materials, we included the Pew research center's interactive tool on racial data collected on the US census: <https://www.pewresearch.org/interactives/what-census-calls-us/>
2. In this activity you will select a racial category to follow over time
 - Discuss in your group at least 2 categories to dive into as a group
 - Using events that were happening in the US (see the slides 3 and 4 for examples, and slide 5 for more links), place your census categories on this timeline
 - On your group's slide, create a representation of this history

Did your group complete the timeline before today's class?

Today's Activity: Completing your first Case Study - Data

Use your timeline as an artifact in your Case Study

To help you meet the standard this week, we provide these scaffolding questions:

also appearing in the [Google Doc](#) instructions

- **Collection:** What was collected, by what method, and by whom? Was race self-reported or assigned by an enumerator? How did that change over time and why?
- **Criteria:** Who is included and who is excluded by the categories themselves? Name a specific group and a specific census year. Unpack or follow what happened.
- **Manipulation / Encoding:** What happens to a response after it is submitted? Look for editing, imputation, recoding, and back-end processing rules. *You might need to do more research here.*
- **Bias & Inequity:** Give a concrete downstream consequence. Who lost funding, representation, visibility, or safety because of how the data was structured? *You might need to do more research here.*

Take notes in your Group's tab of the [Google Doc](#)

What does a complete First Case Study look like?

Your group will need to:

- Complete the introduction and information on the case section **in a narrative format** with proper spelling and grammar
- Include your **timeline as an artifact** and draw from it
 - Be specific about the group(s) you followed and the history you've researched
- Write **in a narrative format** answers to the questions under **Data** portion of the DTPA Framework Analysis section
 - Take into account the scaffolding questions not just the generic questions to achieve the standard
- Write **in a narrative format** answers to the questions under **Data Literacy** portion of the Four Pillars of AI Literacy section
- Provide **in APA format** primary and secondary resources that you used
- Reflect **in a narrative format** as a group noting your impressions, disagreements, or points of contention as you worked through this case

Reminders for this weekend

Exit Tickets, D2L, and the Course Website

- Don't forget to complete today's Exit Ticket by 5pm (on D2L)
- Case study due 11:59pm Sunday
- Individual and Metacognitive Reflection due 11:59pm Sunday
- Spend time before Sunday (~90 minutes) going over next week's preparatory materials
 - Forum Post due 11:59pm **Tuesday** <- *No class on Monday!*

Have a great Labor Day weekend



MSU vs Toledo (20:00 tonight on FS1)

