The purpose of this reading group instance is to understand more about how data science techniques are being applied in social sciences. What are the kinds of problems being addressed, the questions being asked, and the nature of data and analyses being brought to bear? We want to get an overview of this domain, so that we can then begin to look around campus for specific examples of these kinds of applications. We hope to understand who is doing this, what challenges they face, and what unmet needs they have that we may be able to help with.

Readings:

Data Science is a pipeline between academic disciplines
Example projects overview from Penn State Big Data Social Science group
Big Data for Development: Challenges & Opportunities (UN Global Pulse Report)
Law and order: How big data is professionalising the legal sector

Additional resources:

Info on Data Sources:

- ICPSR: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research
- Northwestern Library’s guide to Social Science Data Resources

Tools and techniques:

- R and Quantitative Data Analysis (an interesting tutorial that includes real use cases against census data)

Additional readings if folks are interested:

- Drew Conway – Do not feed the Wildebeests.
- Future of law includes big data, bigger competition and global jurisdictions
- How lawyers are mining the information mother lode for pricing, practice tips and predictions
- The Visual Criminology Project: Beyond Data Visualization and the Power of Spectacle