Big Data for Social Good will teach you how to use big data, coupled with the tools of data science and economics, to solve some of the most important social problems of our time. Big data can help us cut through politically charged debates and find out what policies actually work from a scientific perspective, making the often-discussed notion of “evidence-based policymaking” a reality. Using big data, we can see how the specific neighborhoods in which we grow up and the schools we attend shape our life outcomes—and how we can take these insights to create better opportunities for all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
<th>Takeaways</th>
<th>Key Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Module 0 |              | • Recognize declining upward mobility in the United States  
|          |              | • Understand how data and empirical evidence are used in social sciences | • Explore the meaning of the “American Dream”  
|          |              |           | • Identify different sources of big data |
| Module 1 | The Opportunity Atlas, Brownsville, Brooklyn | • Recognize some of the statistical techniques used to measure and map opportunity  
| Causal Effects of Neighborhoods |           | • Explore granular variation in levels of upward mobility across places | • Identify different sources of big data  
|          |              |           | • Explore linear regression  
|          |              |           | • Use the Opportunity Atlas to examine patterns across geographic and demographic subgroups |
| Module 3 | Characteristics of high mobility areas and policies to Increase Upward Mobility | • Consider ethical and policy considerations in social science experiments  
|          | Creating Moves to Opportunity, Harlem Children’s Zone | • Understand the design and uses of randomized controlled trials  
|          |              | • Explore two methods for causal inference: experiments and quasi-experiments  
|          |              | • Interpret methods for establishing statistical significance  
|          |              | • Recognize the importance of randomization in experimental design | • Identify scenarios that best demonstrate causal relationships  
|          |              |           | • Explain the difference between sorting and causal effects  
|          |              |           | • Test whether randomization has been successful at assigning for experimental groups  
|          |              |           | • Adjust for non-compliance in calculating treatment effects  
|          |              |           | • Assess whether or not experimental results are statistically significant |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
<th>Takeaways</th>
<th>Key Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Module 4: Historical and International Evidence on the Drivers of Inequality and Mobility | • The American Dream • Social Capital             | • Describe how changes in GDP growth and inequality have affected absolute mobility over time  
• Understand the concept of social capital  
• Understand how economic policies can “pay for themselves” in the long term  
• Identify different statistical approaches to measuring upward mobility  
• Investigate both redistributive policies and policies that invest in human capital | • Compare upward mobility in the US to other countries  
• Hypothesize potential causes of the ‘Fading American Dream’  
• Predict levels of upward mobility historically  
• Calculate the net cost of economic policies |
| Module 5: Upward Mobility, Innovation, and Growth | • The Effect of Mentorship                         | • Explain the relationship between economic growth and equality of opportunity  
• Identify data sources for studying innovation  
• Explore innovation as a potential path for increasing both equality of opportunity and economic growth  
• Understand how to use propensity score reweighting | • Consider the role of mentoring in your own life  
• Describe differences between endowments, constraints, and preferences and consider which factor contributes most to inequality among innovators  
• Utilize propensity score reweighting to explore the gap in innovation rates between high- and low-income children |
| Module 6: Higher Education and Upward Mobility | • College Mobility Rates                           | • Explore the extent to which colleges and universities in the US either promote or hinder upward mobility  
• Understand how to measure the causal effect of college on a student’s outcomes  
• Recognize the importance of both access and outcomes in determining a college’s Mobility Rate | • Utilize a production function framework to explore the relationship between college attendance and future earnings  
• Describe a counterfactual simulation  
• Identify ways to measure the causal effect of colleges on students’ earnings |
### Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
<th>Takeaways</th>
<th>Key Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Module 7**                    | **K-12 Education**                    | • Understand methods for standardizing data from across different sources  
• Study the importance of class size and teacher quality in determining students’ outcomes                                                                                                       | • Interpret results from a regression discontinuity model  
• Interpret results from an event study model                                                                                                                                  |
| **Module 8**                    | **Racial Disparities in Economic Opportunity** | • Understand dynamic models and steady states  
• Explore differences in upward mobility by race/ethnicity and gender  
• Explain that differences in upward mobility lead to the persistence of mobility gaps in “steady state”                                                                 | • Interpret steady state models  
• Propose policies for addressing racial disparities |