

Title: Don't Believe Me On This: Engaging with Truth and Skepticism In Maps and Data
Speaker: Dr. Garrett Dash Nelson, President & Head Curator of the Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library
Date: 17 May 2023
Time: 1200-1315
Where: C-138
POC: Dr. Christopher Jasparro, Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security

SYNOPSIS:

How do maps and cartographic visualizations shape our understanding of what is “really” real in the world? Because all forms of representation rely on omission, simplification, symbolization, and aggregation in order to make complex real-world phenomena presentable and knowable, bias and distortion are inherent in maps, and no map can ever be “perfectly” accurate. Instead, truth and trust are more appropriately understood as issues which are depending on the social, political, and rhetorical context within which a representation is situated. In this lecture, Garrett Dash Nelson will discuss the Leventhal Map & Education Center’s 2020–2022 exhibition *Bending Lines* as an entry point into interrogating how maps mediate our collective understanding of what is true about the geography of the world.

BIOs:

Garrett Dash Nelson, PhD is the President & Head Curator at the Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library. Dr. Nelson is a historical geographer whose work focuses on the relationship between community structure, geographic units, and political ideology. He holds an AB from Harvard College in Social Studies and Visual & Environmental Studies, an MA from the University of Nottingham in Landscape & Culture, and a PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Geography