
Swarthmore College

Mathematics & Statistics Department

Colloquium Series 2026-2027



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Is There a Future for Public Use Data?

For decades, research and education in the social sciences have been facilitated by record-level, public use data files provided by statistical agencies and other data stewards. Today, however, the future of public use data is uncertain. The growth of readily available digital information and computational tools, while enormously beneficial for advancing research and education, has led to increased risks that ill-intentioned data users could mine the public use data to learn data subjects' identifies and sensitive information. I discuss the future of public use data in the social sciences, focusing on the risks to data subjects' privacy and confidentiality. Along the way, I discuss techniques that statistical agencies have used to reduce disclosure risks in public use data files. I conclude with a vision for the future of access to confidential social science data.

November 10, 2026

4:15pm Refreshments
4:30pm Lecture

Cunniff Hall Tiered Classroom
(Science Center 199)
