

VITA

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EDUCATION

Stanford University, 1972-76, AB in History, June 1976.
Princeton University, 1977-81, Ph.D. in History, August 1981.

POSITIONS HELD

University of California, Los Angeles, Department of History: full professor (1995 to present);
associate professor (1991-95); “distinguished professor” (beginning 2013)

Universiteit Utrecht, visiting chair of history of science, spring 1999.

University of Virginia, Corcoran Department of History: associate professor (1990-1991).
Assistant professor (1984-1990).

University of California, San Diego, Department of History: visiting associate professor, (spring
1991).

Deutsches Museum/University of Munich/Technical University of Munich: guest professor
(summer 1990).

California Institute of Technology, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences: Andrew W.
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow (1981-1984).

PUBLICATIONS

Books

The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986; paperback 1988); Italian translation by Maria Elena Graziani, with introduction by Giorgio Alleva and Enzo Lombardo, as *Le Origini del Moderno Pensiero Statistico* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1993); Japanese translation with new introduction by author (Tokyo: Azusa Shuppansha, 1995).

The Empire of Chance: How Probability Changed Science and Everyday Life, with G. Gigerenzer, Z. Swijtink, L. Daston, J. Beatty, L. Krüger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; paperback 1990); German translation as Das Reich des Zufalls (Heidelberg and Berlin: Spektrum, 1999).

Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995; paperback 1996); Japanese translation by Yuko Fujigaki, Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2013.

Editor, with Dorothy Ross, *Cambridge History of Science, volume 7: Modern Social Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Chinese translation (Daxiang Publishing House, 2008).

Karl Pearson: The Scientific Life in a Statistical Age (Princeton University Press, 2004; paperback 2006)

Selected Papers

1. "A Statistical Survey of Gases: Maxwell's Social Physics," *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences*, 12 (1981): 77-116.
2. "The Promotion of Mining and the Advancement of Science: The Chemical Revolution of Mineralogy," *Annals of Science*, 38 (1981): 543-570.
5. "The Mathematics of Society: Variation and Error in Quetelet's Statistics," *British Journal for the History of Science*, 18 (1985): 51-69.
7. "Lawless Society: Social Science and the Reinterpretation of Statistics in Germany, 1850-1880," Lorenz Krüger, Lorraine Daston and Michel Heidelberger, eds., *The Probabilistic Revolution, volume 1: Ideas in History* (Bradford Books/MIT Press, 1987): 351-375. Japanese translation, 1992.

9. "Natural Science and Social Theory," R. C. Olby et al., eds., *Companion to the History of Modern Science* (London: Routledge, 1990): 1024-1043.
11. "Objectivity and Authority: How French Engineers Reduced Public Utility to Numbers," *Poetics Today*, 12 (1991): 245-265.
13. "Objectivity as Standardization: The Rhetoric of Impersonality in Measurement, Statistics, and Cost-Benefit Analysis," *Annals of Scholarship*, 9 (1992): 19-59; reprinted in Allan Megill, ed., *Rethinking Objectivity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 197-237.
14. "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal in Science," *Social Studies of Science*, 22 (1992): 633-652; reprinted in Mario Biagioli, ed., *The Science Studies Reader* (Routledge, 1999), 394-406.
21. "Information, Power, and the View from Nowhere" in Lisa Bud-Frierman, ed., *Information Acumen: The Understanding and Use of Knowledge in Modern Business* (Routledge, 1994), 217-230.
22. "The Death of the Object: Fin-de-siècle Philosophy of Physics," in Dorothy Ross, ed., *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 128-151.
24. "Rigor and Practicality: Rival Ideals of Quantification in Nineteenth-Century Economics," in Philip Mirowski, ed., *Natural Images in Economic Thought: Markets Read in Tooth and Claw*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 128-170.
26. "Making Things Quantitative" *Science in Context*, 7 (1994), 389-407; reprinted in Michael Power, ed., *Accounting and Science: Natural Inquiry and Commercial Reason* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36-56.
27. "Statistical Subjects," in Thomas Kavanagh, ed., *Chance, Culture, and the Literary Text, Michigan Romance Studies*, 14 (1994), 49-64.
30. "Precision and Trust: Early Victorian Insurance and the Politics of Calculation," in M. Norton Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 173-197.
31. "Statistical and Social Facts from Quetelet to Durkheim," Stephen Turner, ed., special issue of *Sociological Perspectives on Durkheim's Rules of Sociological Method*, 38 (1995), 15-26.
39. "Reason, Faith, and Alienation in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle," in Hans-Erich Bödeker, Peter Reill, and Jürgen Schlumbohm, eds., *Wissenschaft als kulturelle Praxis, 1750-1900* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 401-414.

40. "Life Insurance, Medical Testing, and the Management of Mortality," in Lorraine Daston, ed., *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 226-246. German translation: "Lebensversicherung, medizinische Tests und das Management der Mortalität," in Martin Lengwiler and Jeannette Madarász (Hg.), *Das präventive Selbst. Eine Kulturgeschichte moderner Gesundheitspolitik* (Bielefeld : transcript Verlag, 2010), 55-86
41. "Statistics in the History of Social Science," in Jean-Pierre Beaud et Jean-Guy Prévost, dir., *L'ère du chiffre: Systèmes statistiques et traditions nationales/ The Age of Numbers: Statistical Systems and National Traditions* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2000), 489-497.
44. "It's Not in the Numbers," *Washington Post*, "Outlook" section, B1, B4 (opinion piece), 26 November 2000 (on Florida vote count).
53. "Statistical Utopianism in an Age of Aristocratic Efficiency," Thomas Broman and Lynn Nyhart, eds., *Science and Civil Society*, special issue of *Osiris* (17), 2002, 210-226.
55. "Statistics and Physical Theories," Mary Jo Nye, ed., *Cambridge History of Science, vol. V: The Modern Physical and Mathematical Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 488-504.
56. (with Dorothy Ross), "Introduction: Writing the History of Social Science," Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross, eds., *Cambridge History of Science, vol. 7: Modern Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-12.
57. "Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry from the Enlightenment to 1890," Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross, eds., *Cambridge History of Science, vol. 7: Modern Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-39.
59. "The Social Sciences" in David L. Cahan, ed., *From Natural Philosophy to the Sciences: Writing the History of Nineteenth-Century Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 254-290.
70. "Speaking Precision to Power: The Modern Political Role of Social Science" *Social Research*, 73, 4 (2006), 1273-1294
76. "Locating the Domain of Calculation," *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 1 no. 1 (2008), 39-50. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17530350801913627>
80. "How Science Became Technical," *Isis*, 100 (2009), 292-309.
- 82) "Statistics and the Career of Public Reason: Engagement and Detachment in a Quantified World," in Tom Crook and Glen O'Hara, eds., *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and the People in Modern Britain, c. 1800-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 32-47; (earlier version in Spanish translation as) "La estadística y el curso de la razón pública: compromiso e

Theodore M. Porter, Vita

imparcialidad en un mundo cuantificao,” *Empiria*, 18 (July-Dec. 2009), 19-36

83) “Reforming Vision: The Engineer Le Play Learns to Observe Society Sagely,” in Lorraine Daston and Elizabeth Lunbeck, eds., *Histories of Scientific Observation* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 281-302

87) “Thin Description: Surface and Depth in Science and Science Studies,” Robert Kohler and Kathryn Olesko, eds., *Clio Meets Science: The Challenge of History*, *Osiris*, 27 (2012), 209-226.

88) “Funny Numbers,” *Culture Unbound* (online journal), 4 (2012), 585-598.
<http://www.cultureunbound.ep.liu.se/v4/a32/>

Interview

Paul Fleming, “Life on the Bell Curve: An Interview with Theodore Porter,” *Cabinet*, Issue 15, “The Average” (2004), 90-95.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Research fellow, Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld (Project on the probabilistic revolution), Bielefeld, Germany, 1982-83.

University of Virginia, summer research fellowships, 1985, 1986, 1988.

American Council of Learned Societies, summer research fellowship, 1986.

Sesquicentennial Fellowship of Univ. of Virginia, Fall, 1987.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Fellowship, Spring, 1988.

National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend, 1989.

John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship, 1989-90.

Arthur Andersen Visiting Professor of Accounting, London School of Economics (April 1990).

National Science Foundation scholar’s award DIR 90-21707, 1991-93; SBER 94-12396, 1994-96; SES 00-80104, 2000-03 ; SES 06-22346. 2006-10; SES 10-27100, 2010-13.

Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris: Directeur d’Etudes Associé, May 1996.

European Summer School on Science Studies, Enschede (NL): invited lecturer, August 1996.

Ludwik Fleck Prize of Society for Social Studies of Science for Trust in Numbers (1997)

Max Planck Institute for history of science, Berlin, fellow, June-July 1998, June-July, 2008.

Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales: Professeur invité, June-July 1999, June 2003, May 2005, November-December 2008.

History of science summer laboratory on quantification and representation in eighteenth-century science, Tel Aviv, June 2000 (keynote speaker and senior instructor).

Academic visitor, Department of Economic History, London School of Economics (March 2001)

Fellow, University of California Humanities Research Institute, Irvine (fall 2001)

Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan: Professeur invité, September 2002

Theodore M. Porter, Vita

Principal lecturer, summer school in HPS, University of Vienna, July 2005
International Academy for History of Science, “Effective” (full) member (elected 2010).
“Corresponding” member (2006-2010)
ESRC Genomics, Policy and Research Forum, Univ. of Edinburgh, visiting scholar, April 2007
History of Science Society: Distinguished Lecturer at 2007 annual meeting.
Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (elected 2008)
Central European University, Budapest: summer course on Mathematics and Narrative (2009)
University of California Humanities, Society of Fellows, 2010-11
Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, 2010-2011.
Visiting Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany, May 2012
Norwegian Research Council grant, “The Cultural Logic of Facts and Figures” (member of
research group, organized at University of Trondheim), 2013-2015
Fellow, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin/Berlin Institute for Advanced Study (2013-14)

KEYNOTES, PLENARY LECTURES, ENDOWED LECTURES

Pacific Northwest History of Science Society, keynote speaker (1992).
European Soc. for History of Human Sciences, Leiden, Netherlands, keynote speaker (1996).
Cheiron (Society for History of Social Sciences), San Diego, keynote speaker (1998).
Université de Montréal, conference on history of statistics, closing lecture (1999)
University of Wisconsin, conference on Science and the Public Sphere, keynote (2000)
Univ of Tel Aviv, conf. on quantification and representation in 18C science, keynote (2000)
Paris, conference on “Sociologie de la Quantification,” keynote (2002)
History of Economics Society, Durham, North Carolina: Distinguished Guest Lecture (2003).
Michigan-Chicago grad student conference “Language Trust,” Chicago, keynote (2006).
Burian-McNabb Lecture, Virginia Tech, Dept. of Science and Technology in Society (2007)
History of Science Society, Washington DC: Distinguished Lecture (2007)
Oxford-Brookes Univ., England: conference on Statistics and the Public Sphere, keynote (2008)
Interdisciplinary Accounting Society, Innsbruck: keynote speaker (2009)
Stephen Straker Lecture, University of British Columbia, Science Studies (2010)
Harvard, Kennedy School, conference on 20 Years of Science Studies, opening lecture (2011)
Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung conf. “A World of Indicators,” keynote (2011)
Frankel Center, Univ. of Michigan conf. “The Social Life of Jewish Numbers,” keynote (2012)
CHESS (Computer Sci, Humanities, Education, Econ, Engineering), Saskatoon, keynote (2012)
Forum for History of Human Science (History of Science Society) Distinguished Lecture (2012)
Israeli Society for History and Philosophy of Science, keynote (2013)
Center for Interd. Research, Bielefeld conf. “States’ Stakes in Science,” keynote (2013)
British Association for Victorian Studies annual conference, invited plenary (2013)
Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, conference on history of science, keynote (2013)