Your project proposal is due at noon on Monday, February 3rd, and will be worth 10% of your final grade. It should be 5–7 pages long and will build on your initial problem-based and source-based prospectuses, giving a better sense of the research interests driving your study and primary source materials you are using, with an added discussion of broader historiographical trends in your research area(s) and elaboration of your provisional critical framework. This proposal should also include an expanded annotated bibliography (not included in the 5–7 page target length). For your completed proposal, please use the following format:

1. Identify your topic area and research questions (1–2 paragraphs). What is your study about, and why is this topic an important one for your research area? What research questions will be driving this study?

The history of recording and archiving mugshots in policing has led to the practice of anthropometry. Anthropometry is the “physical measurement of the size and proportions of the human body,” and the history of anthropometry is fraught with overt and covert racism that is still impactful today. (32)[[1]](#footnote-1) The origins of anthropometry begins in the mid-1800s with the Parisian police department’s record clerk Alphonse Bertillon. [[2]](#footnote-2) Alphonse took mugshots of criminals and recorded their physical features and measurements to prevent recidivism by accurately identifying criminals that came through the Paris police department multiple times.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Bertillon’s success in anthropometry throughout Europe and some parts of the United States brought a worldwide recognition to the science,[[4]](#footnote-4) anthropometry’s popularization seeped into institutions policing citizens, **including eugenicists**. [[5]](#footnote-5) Contemporary anthropometry tools are found in police departments across the country, with facial recognition systems used to algorithmically measure the facial features of citizens, encourage racial prejudices and discrimination embedded in our society is flowing into our technologies.

An understanding that technology is built by people with inherent prejudices is important. Bertillon’s anthropometry was the foundation that birthed algorithmic bias in policing, whether algorithmic calculations are created using measuring tools or autonomous facial recognition systems, biases are imbedded into the infrastructure. The historic study of the Bertillon system of anthropometry importantly points out the evolution of algorithmic oppression. In this study I plan to delve into the cause and effect of biases baked into the tools used to police society. Do anthropometry technologies inherently promote biases? Is a new institutionalist approach taking hold in the United States against anthropometry technologies like facial recognition systems? What can the public discourse tell us about the trajectory of anthropometry? How has the institution of policing changed overtime and has it impacted the use of anthropometry technologies?

Bertillon’s anthropometry was the foundation that birthed algorithmic bias, whether algorithmic calculations are created by using measuring tools or autonomous facial recognition, biases are imbedded into these systems. An understanding that technology is built by people with inherent prejudices is important, and brings to light covert and overt biases, in this study I hope to examine the evolution of such biases in the technological tools used to police society. Is a new institutionalist approach taking hold in the United States against anthropometry technologies like facial recognition systems? What can public discourse regarding this topic tell us about the perception of anthropometry technologies in policing? How has the institution of policing changed overtime, and has that impacted the use of anthropometry technologies?

Has the public’s opinion changed regarding anthropometry technologies? How has discourse around the topic changed over time? Can people’s agency change the trajectory of anthropometry tools in policing?

How did facial recognition technology become a weapon of surveillance and what does this forecast about its future use? Is it ethical for commercial ventures to intertwine themselves with police departments serving the public? Has the safety brought on by facial recognition proven to outweigh the impact on privacy? Does the United States traditionally favor safety over privacy? Why was facial recognition developed and has its purpose for development impacted its use today?

agency grown overtime in (battling against) surveillance

**How has discourse around the topic changed over time? How have institutions that use predictive policing technology changed over time? Do some institutions have more agency than others when perpetuating predictive? (process + mechanism) What can police institution’s today take from the success and failures from Bertillon’s system?**

biases are calculated using tools and hand of humans or by the

exemplifies the biases built into algorithmic measurements used in policing, and

in taking measurements and making

(algorithms/science) can be impacted by social influences, showing a greater structural issue of algorithmic trust/trust in numbers(aka math and science).

In order to analyze this oversight in trust, I will analyze the evolution of the discourse of anthropometry in institutions with policing powers/(utilizing/enforcing) policing.

attempt to answer the research questions

to (catch) repeat offenders grew into

This science was not exempt from social infleuces such as racial biases

Need an awareness for this.

analysis can be shrouded in racism, and technology such as facial recognition is not safe from covert and overt (influence/structures).

in understanding the historical evolution of anthropometry in policing. Trust is fundamental to the institution of policing, but

Anthropometry is a tool shrouded in a great deal of racial tension, measurements used to analyze

algorithms used to establish

the history of anthropometry is important in understanding the

Changes the discourse from an safety to a surveillance state.

Current rhetoric

and the institutional (baggage) that have evolved with its use.

Impact of anthropometry in contemporary policing and the evaluation of

**How has discourse around the topic changed over time? How have institutions that use predictive policing technology for changed over time? Do some institutions have more agency than others when perpetuating predictive? (process + mechanism) What can police institution’s today take from the success and failures from Bertillon’s system?**

Algorithmic biases

and continues to promote both covert and overt institutional racial biases.

Embedded into the

keeping has led to

Anthropometry has created structural

Anthropometry

Bertillon to Anthropometry to facial recognition

**The collection of mugshot records have allowed for police to utilize predictive policing tactics to (predict) when and where crimes will occur.**

**The analysis of these records has evolved from their origin of use by Police Chief (A Boretllion) in the mid-1800s to their current use in facial recognition systems.**

**This topic is an important one because it highlights the intrinsic biases that human bring to technology. It shows that over time (things) do not necessarily change. Overt structures can be found in even the most trustworthy institutions.**

**Encourages Overt and covert algorithmic Systems:**

The history of predictive policing has relied on mugshots and photograph analysis from the point of its inception, as technology and tools evolve, predictive policing become more intrusive and invasive.

I want to explore the history and origins of predictive policing, using Bertillon’s journals and books will allow me to understand the (inspiration) of this tool. Is it rooted in a practice of discrimination?

Because tools not and then are built by humans on photograph databases archived byhumans, predictive policing continues to be bias. French police officer’s work ws cosndered baseless, bit police departs around the world value similar tactics.

2. Discuss your intended primary source materials and plan for accessing them (1–2 pages). What archival collection will your study focus on, what kinds of collection materials will you be using, and how will those help you address those research questions? What other primary sources outside of that collection will you use to supplement or contextualize those collection materials, and what additional information will those other sources provide? What progress have you made so far in your efforts to secure access to these materials and conduct a preliminary review of sample collection items, and what next steps do you have planned?

The collection I will be using is Alphonse Bertillon’s digitized collection of work archived in the University of Michigan Library. Securing access to these materials is not a hindrance to my research, because of the University of Michigan Library efforts to translate and digitize Bertillon’s books, journals, articles, and diagrams. The records include diagramed sketches of body parts with measurements, notes taken by Bertillon, mugshot records that he used for his studies, and lengthy descriptions of his findings. These sources can be accessed through the archives and manuscripts search on the University of Michigan Library website. This archive is important in that it serves as the foundational example of anthropometry at work in policing. Examining Bertillon’s archive will force us to confront the cyclical nature of oppression embedded within the infrastructure of our society and more specifically the infrastructure of policing. It will help us understand where, why, and how these bias could have seeped into technologies, and how influences from its founding impact the present. Furthermore, examining Bertillon’s language will allow for a greater understanding of his motives to introduce policing to anthropometry, and will uncover parallels between Bertillon’s work and contemporary policing.

Similarly, biographic sources documenting Bertillon’s life and work are important in contextualizing Bertillon’s motives and inspirations to introduce the anthropometry system to the world of policing. Henry T. F. Rhodes’ book *Alphonse Bertillon: Father of Scientific Detection* is a salient account of Bertillon’s life and explores Bertillon’s nationalist orientation as Rhodes explains, “[Bertillon] could lecture his family and his friends upon the biological decline of France and her need for regeneration. It was a subject upon which he had a very limited knowledge but the most pronounced opinion.” (Rhodes, 176)[[6]](#footnote-6) Understanding Bertillon’s background and ideals is important when accounting for the origin of Bertillon’s system, confronting the past can inform the future, and bring to question if such a system can ever be free of prejudice.

Primary sources I will utilizes to address infrastructural prejudices perpetuated by anthropometry post the Bertillon system. These primary sources will include a discursive analysis of newspaper articles in the last five-years documenting the public perception of prejudice in facial recognition technology. In order to unravel facial recognition system’s use of mugshot databases, I will look to police department’s internal reports documenting the deployment of facial recognition such as the Detroit Police Departments 2019 manual. Professor Safiya Noble’s book *Algorithms of Oppression* will also be an important sourceto grasp a greater understanding of current examples and practices of algorithmic oppression and the societal implications of the oppression it perpetuates.

anthropometry

“It may be evident from what has already been of him here that he was a man who was dangerously liable to carry both his virtues and vices to excess. So it was with his patriotism. He He could scarify French policy and French politicians, but in a last resort it was his country, right or wrong. A (so to call it) strong social orientation is as common among scientific men as among others. The difficulty is that in some circumstances it can be much more dangerous to them than to the man in the street. In his ordinary professional work Bertillon’s social conscience could inspire but could not, even subconsciously, prejudice his findings.” (176)[[7]](#footnote-7)

can help inform past action to present

Force us to confront the cyclical nature

This archive is important for addressing my research questions because it will (offer) an insight into the original uses of anth

It is an origin point that grew bias and prompted bias in policing and understand the roots of such a science is important to the history and future of the science.

Furthermore, these archived journals and notes Bertillon will allow me to understand the discourse around (that came with) the topic

* Look for trends of prejudice

This archive will help address my research questions in that it will act as the authority

Serve as a baseline/starting point

Progenitor

The roots of

I will also be using biographic sources documenting Bertillon’s life and work, to garner a better understanding of Bertillon’s motives and inspirations to introduce the anthroprmetry system to the Parisian Police Department. Henry T. F. Rhodes’ book *Alphonse Bertillon: Father of Scientific Detection*

Bibliographic sources are important to understand the Bertillon’s motives in bringing the anthroprmetry system to the Parisian Police Department.

3. Map current historiographical trends in your research area(s) (1–3 pages). What recent trends in historical scholarship in your research area(s) have you identified, based on your preliminary review of books and articles published within the past decade? Who are the key authorities in your field? How might your proposed study help to build on, refute, or supplement the existing literature?

Bertillon’s system starting losing traction in the 1914, but was the premier system used to identify criminals in countries across the globe, “[w]hen, therefore, in 1883, Bertillon announced an exact method of identification by means of measurement he placed the entire world in his debt. His system was adopted in nearly every civilized country. England, Germany, Austria, Russia, Switzerland, and many states in the United States applied it in their police departments, and the Bertillon cabinet became the distinguishing mark of the modern police organization.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Bertillon used a variety of tools to measure

“as has been previously remarked, in some American cities an identification method seems to be looked upon by the police officials as a sort of charm or talisman, and in more than one department visited by the writer the boast was made that it had two identificati6n systems.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

4. Elaborate your intended interpretive framework (1–3 pages). What critical traditions in history, LIS scholarship, or other research areas does your study draw on? What key thinkers and concepts inform your own ideas, and what theoretical commitments and critical goals drive your intended study? How do you expect this critical and theoretical framework will inform your selection and interpretation of historical evidence?

Algorithms of Opression

I will be taking a discursive approach in framing my history. It is clear that the discourse behind predictive policing using mugshots has evolved overtime. From Bertillon’s mugshot analysis to facial recognition’s use of mugshots, Bertillon’s analytical theory moved from trusted to obsolete. The support behind Bertillon was great, but

Racial implications of analyzing these systems became clear, he become a pioneer of his own oppressive algorithms that he covertly and likely unintentionally created.

Predictive policing and the use of tolls such as facial recognition are reliant on artificial intelligence (AI). The AI that facial recognition is built

While Professor Safiya Noble focuses on the oppressive nature of search engines, the oppressive characteristic of facial recognition systems used in predictive policing rely on

Studying how to impact infrastructural change in the technology industry is also a way in which the structure of

5. Annotated Bibliography (3–5 scholarly books and 5–10 scholarly journal articles). For each source, provide full citations and a 1–3 sentence explanation of the author’s topic, argument, and relevance for your own research. While there may be earlier works that are critical to your thinking and intended critical/theoretical framework and provide important historical or historiographical context, be sure to also include some recent sources published within the past decade.

1. Do a history of Bertillon's methods, using his papers, and frame that using scholarship on the history of policing and surveillance. If you want to have a contemporary angle, perhaps your argument is that many of the technologies, practices, and public concerns about uses of facial recognition in policing today actually have their origins in the pre-digital era. So, find a prominent report from the past couple of years or some current press coverage that identifies those issues to use as your launching point in the essay, make a list of what the issues are (perhaps it's issues of image resolution and camera angle/distortion on the technology side, what parts of the face are important and how you deal with different skin tones or other issues in interpreting facial features on the practices side, then privacy concerns or racial profiling on the public debates side) -- then you see which of those issues seem to crop up in Bertillon's papers, and you propose a study that explores how he dealt with those issues. So, it's focused completely on Bertillon, but through a modern-day lens.

2. If it's really current practices and debates that interest you, dump Bertillon. You can just nod toward him to note that these things have a long history, but you're going to focus on the history of current facial recognition technologies (in policing, specifically?) and the public debates surrounding them. So, then think about what sources you can use for this (training manuals? professional magazines? records of a university lab or scientist? websites of prominent lobbyist groups?)

Problem: Policing the public has evolved from mugshots and detective work to surveillance through autonomous facial recognition systems. The presence of facial recognition systems throughout society, prevent illicit acts from occurring and detect illicit actors once the crimes have occurred; making these systems integral to governments, police departments, or intelligence agencies aiming to capture the activities of the public to increase safety. Surveilling communities is easier than ever with facial recognition’s omniscient presence, and in the wrong hands, facial recognition can threaten an individual’s autonomy. Capturing, collecting, and archiving photographs of individuals has been and continues to be a critical practice in policing. Historically, mugshots help to identify and track criminals, yet capturing a person’s likeness and sharing it publicly creates stigmas and diminishes anonymity even for individuals who have not been charged with a crime. The ability of facial recognition systems to track anyone, anywhere, at any time without human intervention subjects innocent community members to the oppressive and discriminatory nature of the technology.

This topic is of particular interest to me because of the policy concerns these tools surface when integrated into policing. Facial recognition systems are uniquely positioned at the intersection of societal benefit and societal detriment and teasing out the value between safety and privacy is particularly interesting to me. The United States historically stands to protect the privacy of its citizens, but what happens with present regulation of facial recognition practices in police departments will alter the trajectory of privacy for citizens in the future. My goal is to explore the history of policing and understand if facial recognition can harmoniously exist in a country that has historically fought for autonomy and privacy of its citizens. How did facial recognition technology become a weapon of surveillance and what does this forecast about its future use? Is it ethical for commercial ventures to intertwine themselves with police departments serving the public? Has the safety brought on by facial recognition proven to outweigh the impact on privacy? Does the United States traditionally favor safety over privacy? Why was facial recognition developed and has its purpose for development impacted its use today?

This project will help me in my professional development because of the topic’s examination of technology policy. I am interested in advancing equity in technology through policy driven solution, and hope to work at a non-profit, government agency, or corporation that strives to analyze and build processes to protect the rights of users and/or citizens, while promoting the evolution of technology.

Police departments and government agencies have historically used predictive policing tactics to forecast and prevent crimes. From mugshots to facial recognition, predictive policing tools are used to determine who is likely to commit a crime before a crime occurs. Policing has kept up with technological advances such as facial recognition systems that allow police to target criminals, prevent illicit acts from occurring, and detect illicit actors once the crimes have occurred. Yet, facial recognition systems and predictive analytics used by police have been criticized for implicit bias through the targeting of racial minorities. Facial recognition’s omniscience has a suppressive presence, but eradicating this technology may mean surrendering a sense of safety and security. During this research process, I will explore the effectiveness of predictive policing throughout history. Has predictive policing historically been a useful practice in preventing crime? Has predictive policing historically been a practice fraught with racial discrimination and/or bias?

Source: As a basis for these research questions, I will be using Alphonse Bertillon’s digitized collection of work archived in the University of Michigan Library. Alphonse Bertillon was a French police chief in the 1800s who famously used mugshots to measure and record physical characteristics of inmates. He believed physiological trends would emerge that would allow police to predict who would commit crimes. This collection is important because it is where I begin my historical account of predictive policing. The University of Michigan Library has translated and digitized his books and research, including sketches of body parts and mugshot photos that he used as part of his studies, and these sources can be accessed through the University of Michigan Library website in conjunction with logging into the UCLA VPN. To better understand the evolution of predictive policing, I will use primary sources that explore the technologies used in predictive policing and algorithmic biases found in technology like facial recognition systems. While the Alphonse Bertillon collection will allow me to understand the beginning of predictive policing, scholarly sources will help to illustrate the evolution and current state of predictive policing, including: *The Rise of Big Data Policing: Surveillance, Race, and the Future of Law Enforcement*, *Moving Toward the Future of Policing*, and *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*.

1. <https://books.google.com/books?id=3CYqtVk6oI8C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewAPI#v=snippet&q=anthropometry&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/visibleproofs/galleries/biographies/bertillon.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://books.google.com/books?id=3CYqtVk6oI8C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewAPI#v=onepage&q=bertillon&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/jclc6&div=34&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=berhcMAjzZEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=Anthropometry+racism&ots=KK3Hmq_411&sig=DBRDUfNjqZwnQoJpYQaKVgnTAIY#v=onepage&q=recidivism&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?men_tab=srchresults&handle=hein.beal/albrtl0001&id=184&size=2&collection=beal&terms=bias&termtype=phrase&set_as_cursor=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?men_tab=srchresults&handle=hein.beal/albrtl0001&id=184&size=2&collection=beal&terms=bias&termtype=phrase&set_as_cursor=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1374&context=jclc> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1374&context=jclc> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)