

**SHORT VITA  
THEODORE M. PORTER**

**PERSONAL**

Home Address: 2319 N. Mar Vista Avenue  
Altadena, CA 91001

Phone: (626) 797-2882

Work Address: Department of History  
UCLA Box 951473  
6265 Bunche Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1473

Phone: (310) 206-2352

fax: (310) 206-9630

email: [tporter@history.ucla.edu](mailto:tporter@history.ucla.edu)

**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); academic vice-chair, 1997-98; undergraduate vice chair 2005-2008.

University of Utrecht (Netherlands), 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/TU 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 University Press, 1986; paperback 1988); Italian translation, 1993; Japanese translation.1995.

*The Empire of Chance: How Probability Changed Science and Everyday Life*, with G. Gigerenzer, Z. Swijtink, L. Daston, J. Beatty, L. Krüger (Cambridge University Press, 1989); German translation, 1998.

*Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton

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University Press, 1995). Fleck Prize of Society for Social Studies of Science, 1997.  
Editor, with Dorothy Ross, *Cambridge History of Science, volume 7, Modern Social Sciences*  
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Chinese translation (Daxiang, 2008).  
*Karl Pearson: The Scientific Life in a Statistical Age* (Princeton University Press, 2004)

### Selected Papers

- "The Promotion of Mining and the Advancement of Science: The Chemical Revolution of Mineralogy," *Annals of Science*, 38 (1981): 543-570.
- "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* (Cambridge: Bradford Books/MIT Press, 1987): 351-375. Japanese translation, 1992.
- "Natural Science and Social Theory," R. C. Olby et al., eds., *Companion to the History of Modern Science* (London: Routledge, 1990): 1024-1043.
- "Objectivity and Authority: How French Engineers Reduced Public Utility to Numbers," *Poetics Today*, 12 (1991): 245-265.
- "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 UP, 1994), 197-237.
- "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal in Science," *Social Studies of Science*, 22 (1992): 633-652.
- "Statistics and the Politics of Objectivity," *Revue de Synthèse*, 114 (1993): 87-101.
- "Information, Power, and the View from Nowhere" in Lisa Bud-Frierman, ed., *Information Acumen: The Understanding and Use of Knowledge in Modern Business* (London: Routledge, 1994), 217-230.
- "The Death of the Object: Fin-de-siècle Philosophy of Physics," in Dorothy Ross, ed., *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), 128-151, 329-333
- "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*, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 128-170.
- "Making Things Quantitative" *Science in Context* 7 (1994), 389-407
- "Statistical Subjects," in Thomas Kavanagh, ed., *Chance, Culture, and the Literary Text, Michigan Romance Studies*, 14 (1994), 49-64.
- "Information Cultures," *Accounting, Organizations, and Society*, 20 (1995), 83-92.
- "Precision and Trust: Early Victorian Insurance and the Politics of Calculation," in M. N. Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 173-197
- "Statistical and Social Facts from Quetelet to Durkheim," *Sociological Perspectives on Durkheim's Rules of Sociological Method*, 38 (1995), 15-26.
- "Les Polytechniciens, le calcul économique, et la gestion des travaux publics," Dominique Pestre et al., eds., *La France des X: deux siècles d'histoire* (Paris: Economica, 1995), 195-202.
- "Statistics, Social Science, and the Culture of Objectivity," *Oesterreichische Zeitschrift für*

- Geschichtswissenschaften*, 7 (1996), 177-191.
- "The Management of Society by Numbers," in John Krige and Dominique Pestre, eds., *Science in the 20th Century* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 97-110.
- "Les professionnels des chiffres," *Les Cahiers de Science et Vie*, no. 48 (dec., 1998), 24-30.
- "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.
- "Life Insurance, Medical Testing, and the Management of Mortality," in Lorraine Daston, ed., *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 226-246.
- "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.
- "The Social Sciences," in David L. Cahan, ed., *From Natural Philosophy to the Sciences: Historiography of Nineteenth-Century Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 254-299
- "The Culture of Quantification and the History of Public Reason," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 26, no. 2 (2004), 165-177.
- "Measurement, Objectivity, and Trust" and "Objectivity and Trust: a Measured Rejoinder" in *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*, vol. 1, no. 4 (2003) [issue, including six commentaries, devoted to my topic essay, itself a presentation of my book *Trust in Numbers*], 241-255 and 286-298.
- Paul Fleming, "Life on the Bell Curve: An Interview with Theodore Porter," *Cabinet*, Issue 15 (fall, 2004), 90-95
- "Karl Pearson's Utopia of Scientific Education: From Graphical Statics to Mathematical Statistics," in Rudolf Seising, Menso Foklerts, and Ulf Hashagen, eds., *Form, Zahl, Ordnung: Studien zur Wissenschafts- und Technikgeschichte* (Munich: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 3339-352.
- "Medical Quantification: Science, Regulation, and the State," in Gerard Jorland, Annick Opinel, and George Weisz, eds., *Body Counts: Medical Quantification in Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), 394-401
- "Introduction: Historicizing the Two Cultures," *History of Science*, 43 (2005), 109-114.
- "Is the Life of the Scientist a Scientific Unit," *Isis*, focus section on Biography in the History of Science, 97 (2006), 314-321
- "Speaking Precision to Power: The Modern Political Role of Social Science" *Social Research*, 73, 4 (2006), 1273-1294
- "Locating the Domain of Calculation," *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 1 no. 1 (2008), 39-50
- "Accounts of Science" in C. S. Chapman, D. S. Cooper, and P. B. Miller, eds., *Accounting, Organizations, and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 315-323
- "How Science Became Technical," *Isis*, 100 (2009), 292-309.
- "Measurement and Meritocracy: An Intellectual History of IQ," essay review of John Carson, *The Measure of Merit in Modern Intellectual History*, 6:3 (2009), 637-644.
- "La estadística y el curso de la razón pública: compromiso e imparcialidad en un mundo cuantificao," *Empiria*, 18 (July-Dec. 2009), 19-36

**PAPERS DELIVERED** (about 300 conference papers and invited lectures in the US, Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, Britain, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Greece, Israel, Turkey, Hungary, China, and Taiwan, including the 2007 History of Science Society Distinguished Lecture and keynotes for the West Coast Society for History of Science; Cheiron: Society for History of the Social and Behavioral Sciences; European Society for History of the Human Sciences; Society for the History of Economic Thought, Interdisciplinary Accounting Society, and various local conferences).

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

Research fellow, Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld (Project on the probabilistic revolution), Bielefeld, Germany, 1982-83.  
American Council of Learned Societies, summer research fellowship, 1986.  
Sesquicentennial Fellowship of University 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 and Political Science (April 1990).  
National Science Foundation grants 1991-93, 1994-96, 2000-2002, 2006-2009.  
Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris: Directeur d'Etudes Associé, May 1996.  
European Summer School in Science Studies, invited professor, Enschede, The Netherlands, August, 1996.  
Summer School on Sociology, Avila, Spain, invited lecturer (1997).  
Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, research fellow, June-July 1998, June-July 2008.  
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris: professeur invité, June 1999, June 2003, May 2004, 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).  
Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan : professeur invité, Sept. 2002.  
Vienna Summer University, history and philosophy of science, summer course on "Chance and Necessity," University of Vienna, July 2005.  
ESRC Genomics, Policy and Research Forum, Univ. of Edinburgh, visiting scholar, April 2007  
Central European University Budapest, summer course on mathematics and literature (July 2009)  
Corresponding member, International Academy for History of Science (elected 2006)  
Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences (elected 2008)