Anybody can learn visualization

Data visualization consists of mapping data onto objects in order to be able to extract meaning from those data. So data facilitation is basically the design of charts, graphs, maps to tell the stories based on those data.

The two main ideas that you're going to get from this module, from this conceptual part of the module, is first of all, that before we can become good designers of these visualizations, we need to become good readers of visualization. So this module, this part of the module is more about how to think about data visualization in order to prepare ourselves to later design those data visualizations.

The other main idea behind this module is that anybody can learn how to design good data visualizations. This is an idea that I introduce in my classes at the University of Miami at the very beginning of the semester. And the reason why I do this is that most of my students don't have a background in graphic design, or in visual storytelling, or in the arts.

And some of them are a little bit wary about my class. They say, "Well, I don't have any sort of background in this. I don't know how to draw. I have never designed a map. Am I going to be able to succeed in this class?".

And my answer to that question is always, "Yes." Because data visualization is a little bit like writing. I mean, it is very hard to become such a great writer as, I don't know, Philip Roth, or Shakespeare, etc.. Right? But it is very easy to become a good writer, per se.

It is very similar to data visualization. You may never be able to become a famous data visualization designer, such as Moritz Stefaner or Nadieh Bremer, which are very big names in the world of data visualization. But you can become a pretty decent visualisation designer if you first pay attention to the principles that you are going to learn in this class. And later on, if you learn how to use data visualization tools such as Flourish and many others.