

# Themes

## Session 5

PMAP 8551/4551: Data Visualization with R  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
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# Plan for today

**CRAP and ggplot**

**The anatomy of a ggplot theme**

# CRAP and ggplot

# Universal principles

**Contrast**

**Repetition**

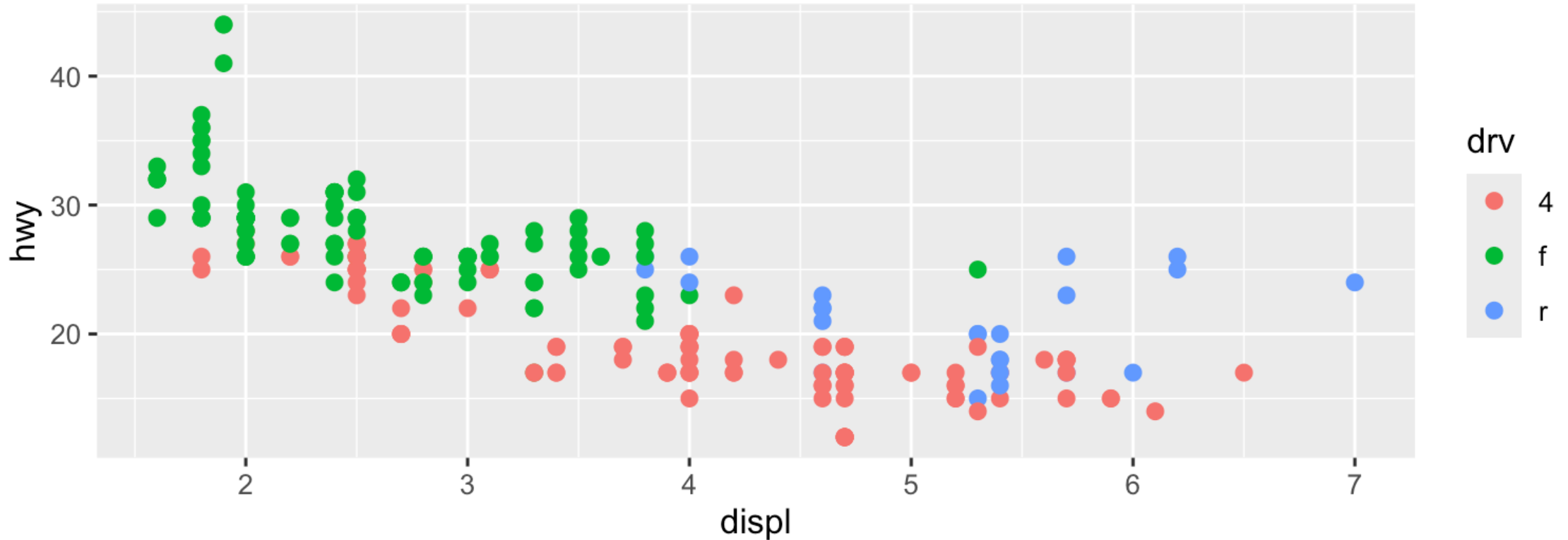
**Alignment**

**Proximity**

**These design principles apply everywhere!**

Graphic design, art, music, architecture... and graphs!

# Is that gray background okay?



# Applying CRAP to ggplot

We can follow CRAP principles to make big improvements to our plots

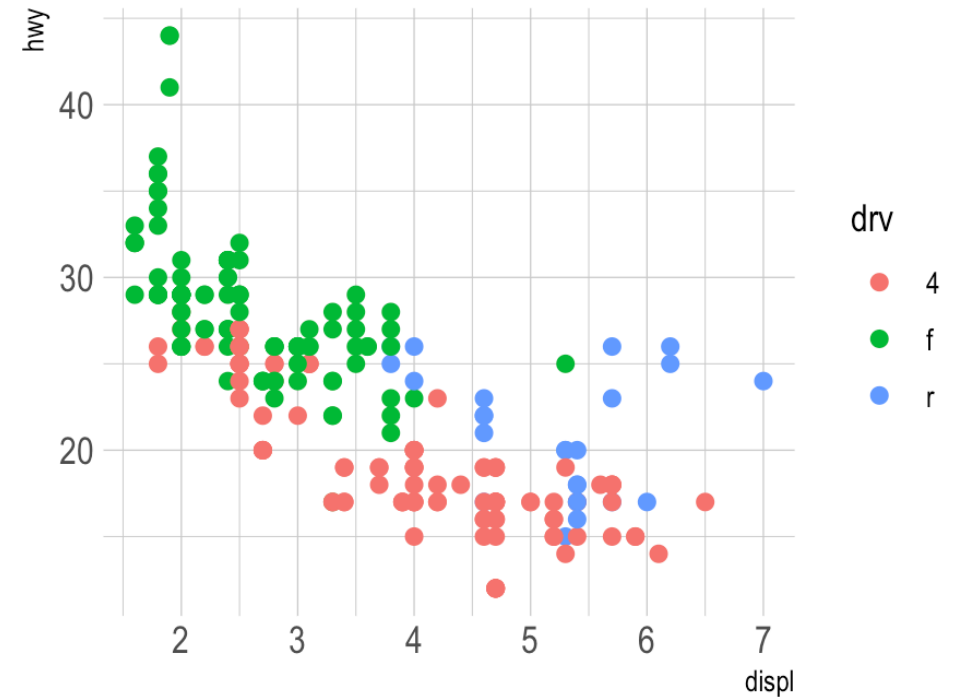
Claus Wilke's chapter covers lots of these graph-specific principles

We can apply these principles to ggplot plots

# Like this!

```
library(hrbrthemes)

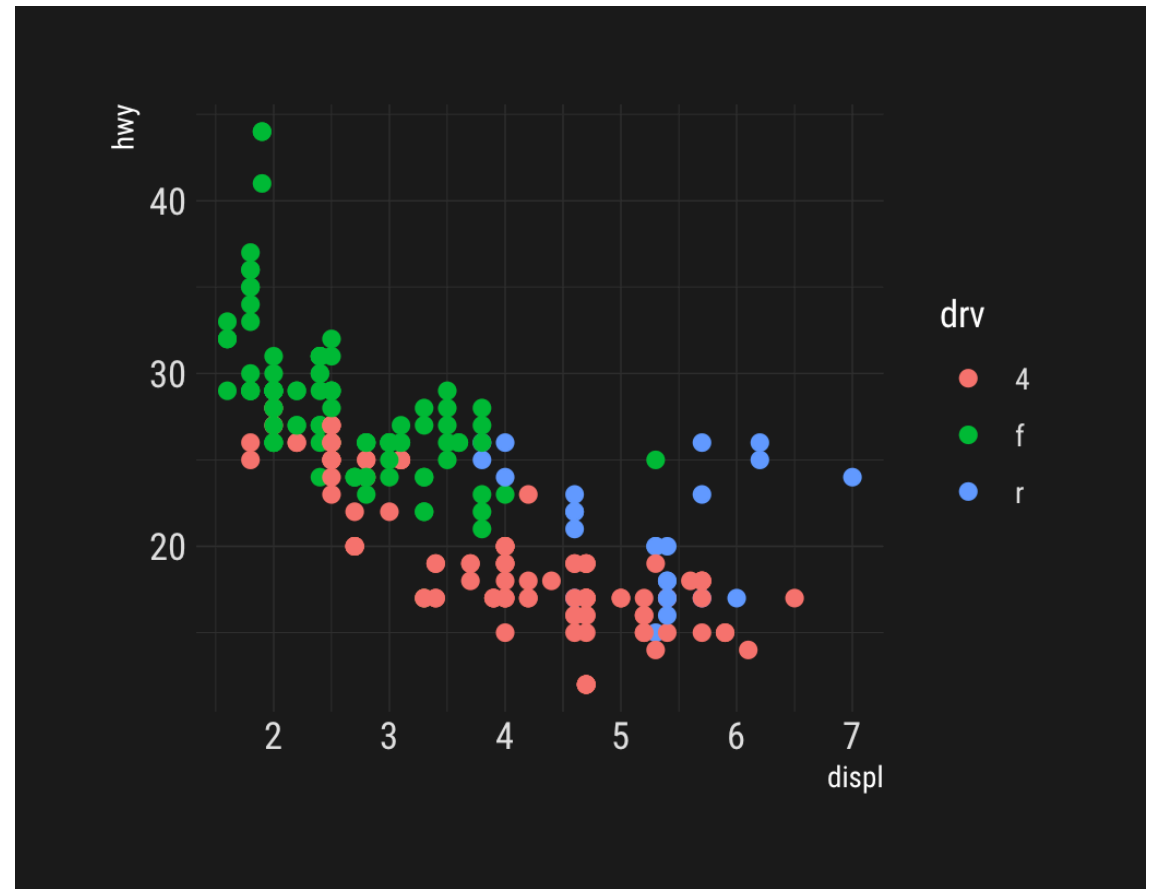
ggplot(mpg, aes(x = displ, y = hwy,
                color = drv)) +
  geom_point(size = 2) +
  theme_ipsum()
```



# And this!

```
library(hrbrthemes)

ggplot(mpg, aes(x = displ, y = hwy,
                color = drv)) +
  geom_point(size = 2) +
  theme_modern_rc()
```

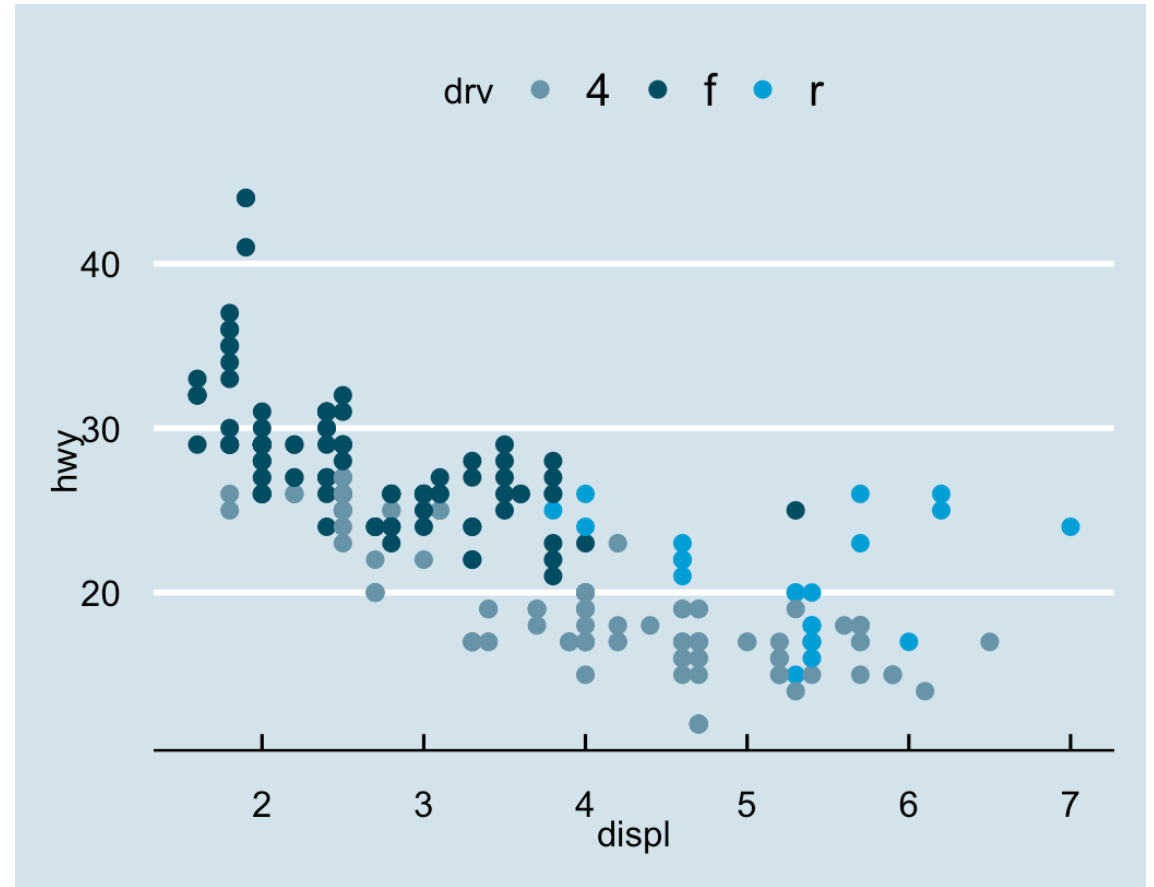




# Or this!

```
library(ggthemes)

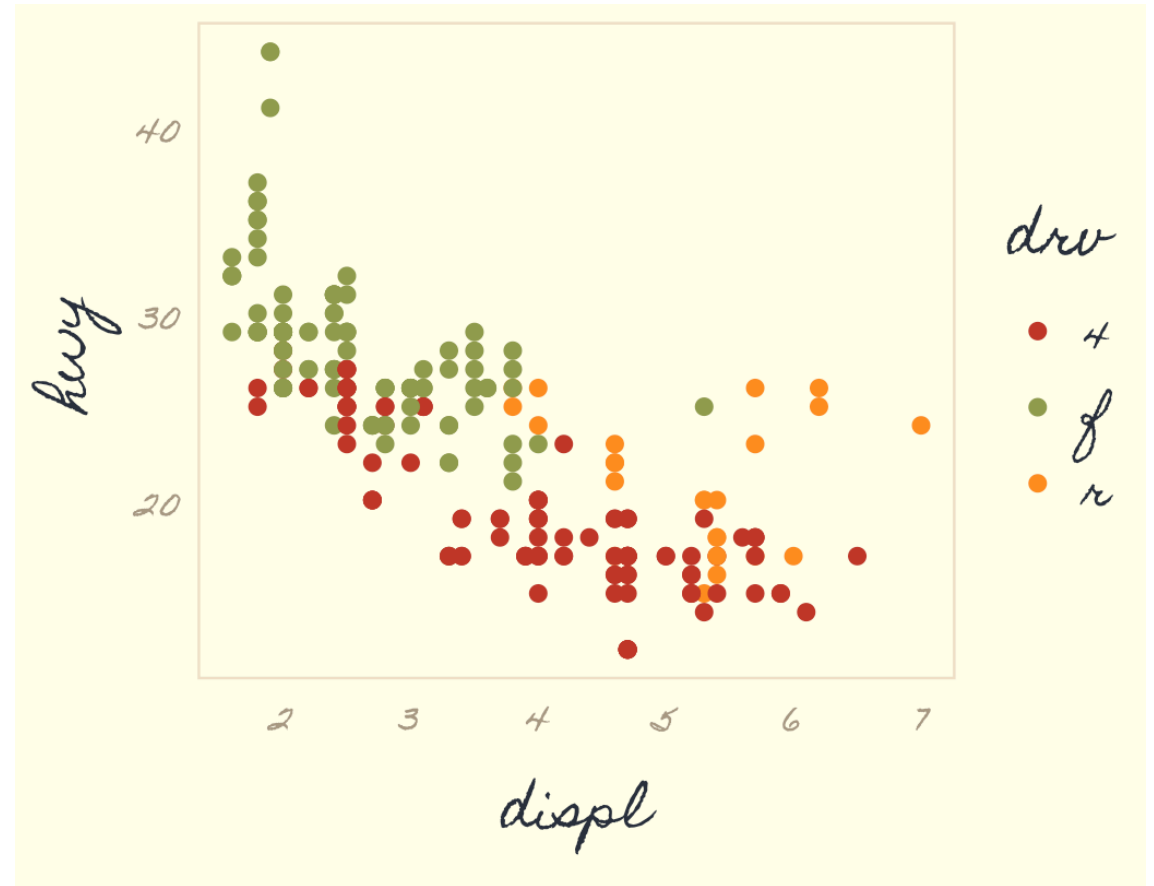
ggplot(mpg, aes(x = displ, y = hwy,
                color = drv)) +
  geom_point(size = 2) +
  scale_color_economist() +
  theme_economist()
```



# And even this!

```
library(ggpomological)

ggplot(mpg, aes(x = displ, y = hwy,
                color = drv)) +
  geom_point(size = 2) +
  scale_color_pomological() +
  theme_pomological_fancy()
```



# One magic, powerful function

**theme()**

# The anatomy of a `ggplot()` theme

# Theme system

## ggplot2 Theme Elements

theme(element\_name = element\_function())

- element\_text()
- element\_line()
- element\_rect()
- element\_blank()

## Axis elements:

axis.ticks  
element\_line()

axis.title  
element\_text()

axis.text  
element\_text()

axis.line  
element\_line()

## Plot elements:

plot.background  
element\_rect()

plot.title  
element\_text()

plot.margin  
margin()

## Facetting elements:

strip.background  
element\_rect()

panel.spacing  
unit()

strip.text  
element\_text()

## Legend elements:

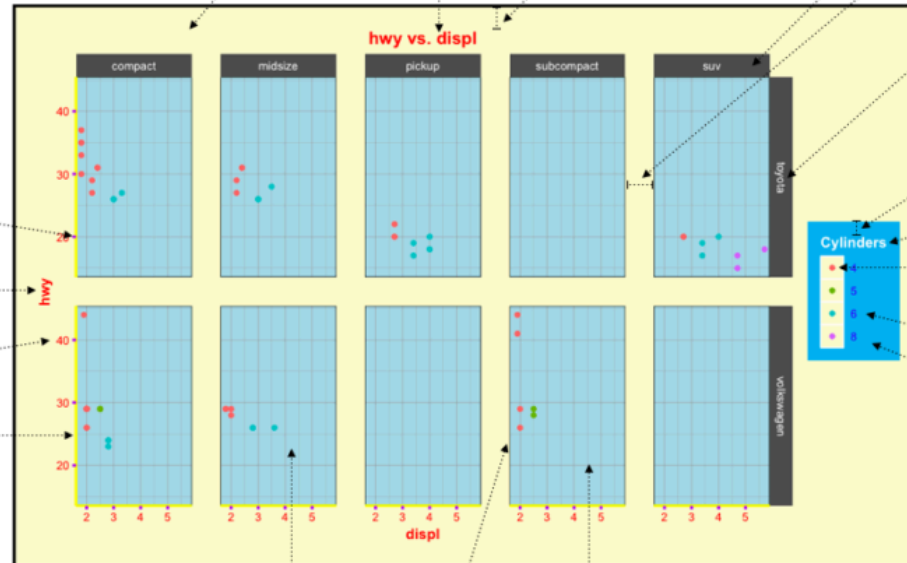
legend.margin  
margin()

legend.title  
element\_text()

legend.key  
element\_rect()

legend.text  
element\_text()

legend.background  
element\_rect()



panel.background  
element\_rect()

panel.grid  
element\_line()

panel.border  
element\_rect(fill = NA)

## Panel elements:

[henrywang.nl](https://henrywang.nl)

Derived from "ggplot2: Elegant Graphics for Data Analysis"

# Theme elements

Each element in the plot can be targeted

Plot title = `plot.title`

Grid lines = `panel.grid`

Legend background = `legend.background`

# Theme functions

Use special functions to  
manipulate specific elements

Text-based things = `element_text()`

Rectangular things (backgrounds) = `element_rect()`

Line-based things (axis lines, grid lines) = `element_line()`

Disable element completely = `element_blank()`

# How to learn `theme()`

The `theme()` function has  
**94 possible arguments(!!!)**

You can get hyper-specific with things like  
`axis.ticks.length.x.bottom`

The only way to learn how to use `theme()`  
is to use it and tinker with it



# How to learn theme()

**I cannot show you everything**

**That's why we have the lesson, example, and exercise!**