

# Teaching R graphics & visual rhetoric

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[www.graphdoctor.com](http://www.graphdoctor.com)  
[github.com/graphdr](https://github.com/graphdr)

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# Creating a data visual is an exercise in rhetorical judgement.



- ▶ meanings
- ▶ comparisons
- ▶ contexts

Different communities focus on different aspects of communication.

scripting  
& analysis

- technique
- patterns
- inference

Different communities focus on different aspects of communication.



- technique
- patterns
- inference
- tips
- clarity
- convention

Different communities focus on different aspects of communication.



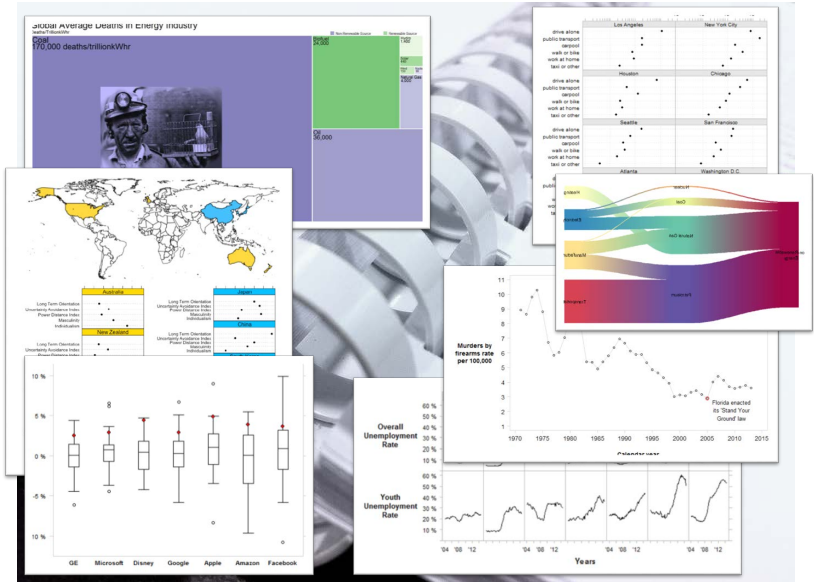
- technique
- patterns
- inference

- tips
- clarity
- convention

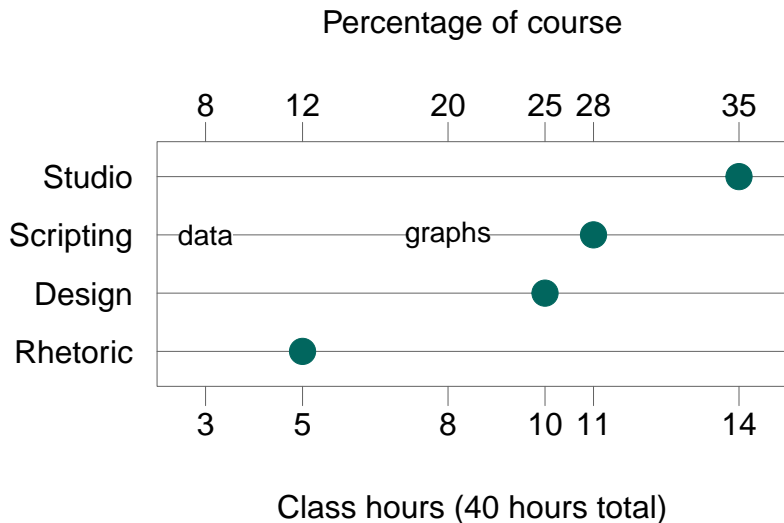
- meaning
- context
- response



# A student creates a portfolio of displays and critiques.

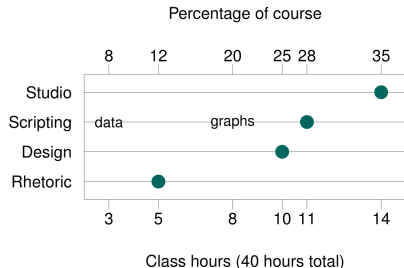


## Allotting the in-class hours to the major topics.





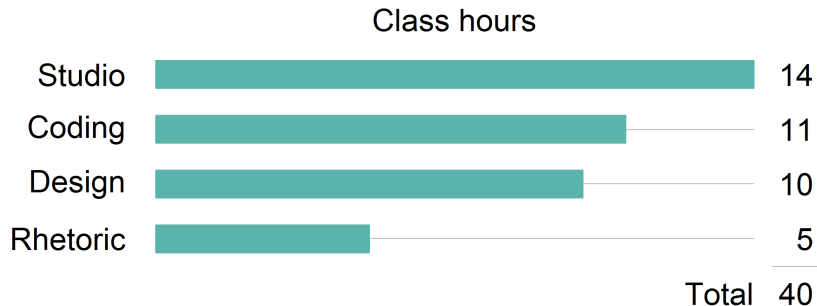
# Consider the rhetorical attributes of the dot plot.



- ▶ empirical-study based
- ▶ optimal data transmission
- ▶ philosophical positivism

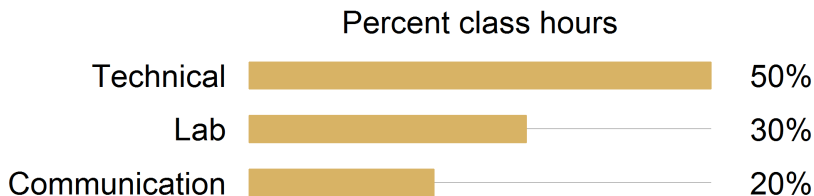
Rhetoric of adaptation: tailoring the communication to a specific situation.

The “Curriculum Committee” version:



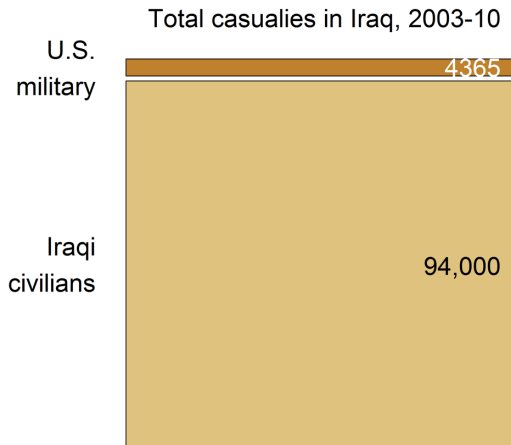
Social rhetoric: readers interpret displays through their collective learning, experience, and values.

The “Board of Trustees” version:

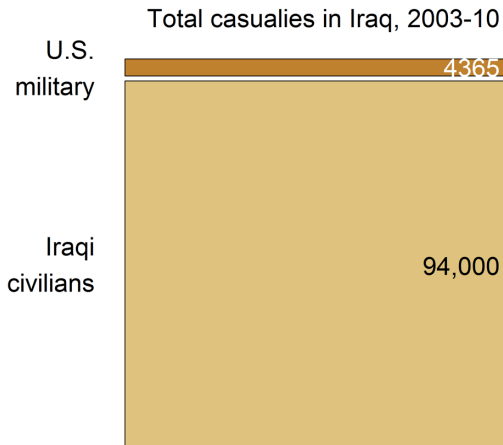




# Indifference to the human condition: a cruel graphic.



# A humanizing image can convey a humanistic ethic.



## Implications for teaching R graphics.

- ▶ Carefully select your technical computing objectives.
- ▶ Continue to design for clarity and truthfulness.
- ▶ Pay attention to the needs of the audience.
- ▶ Convey a humanistic ethic.