



"True friendship comes when the silence—  
between two people is comfortable."

Your random variables are correlated

# Covariance and Correlation

Chris Piech

CS109, Stanford University

Review

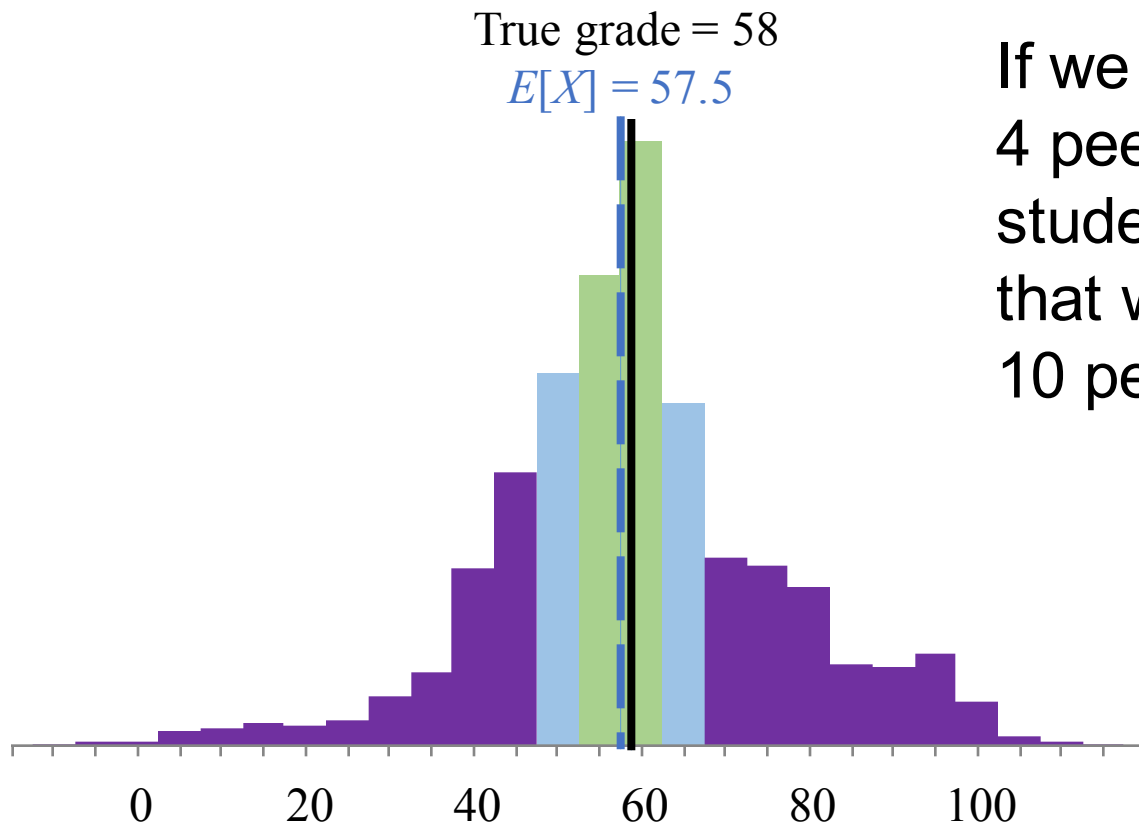
# Expectation and Variance

The two most important descriptors of a distribution, a random variable or a dataset

# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

Let  $X$  be a random variable that represents a peer grade

$$E(X) = \text{weighted average}$$

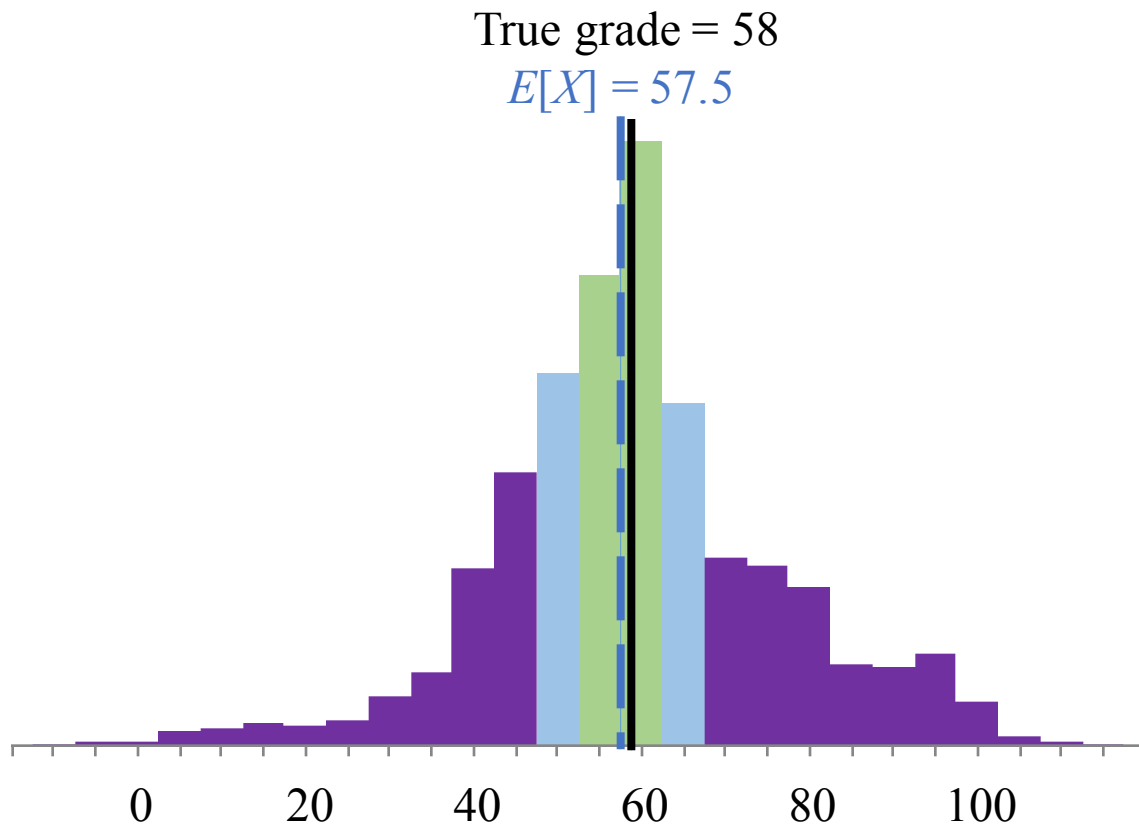


If we base a final score off 4 peer-grades, 19% of students would get a score that was off by more than 10 percentage points

# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

Let  $X$  be a random variable that represents a peer grade

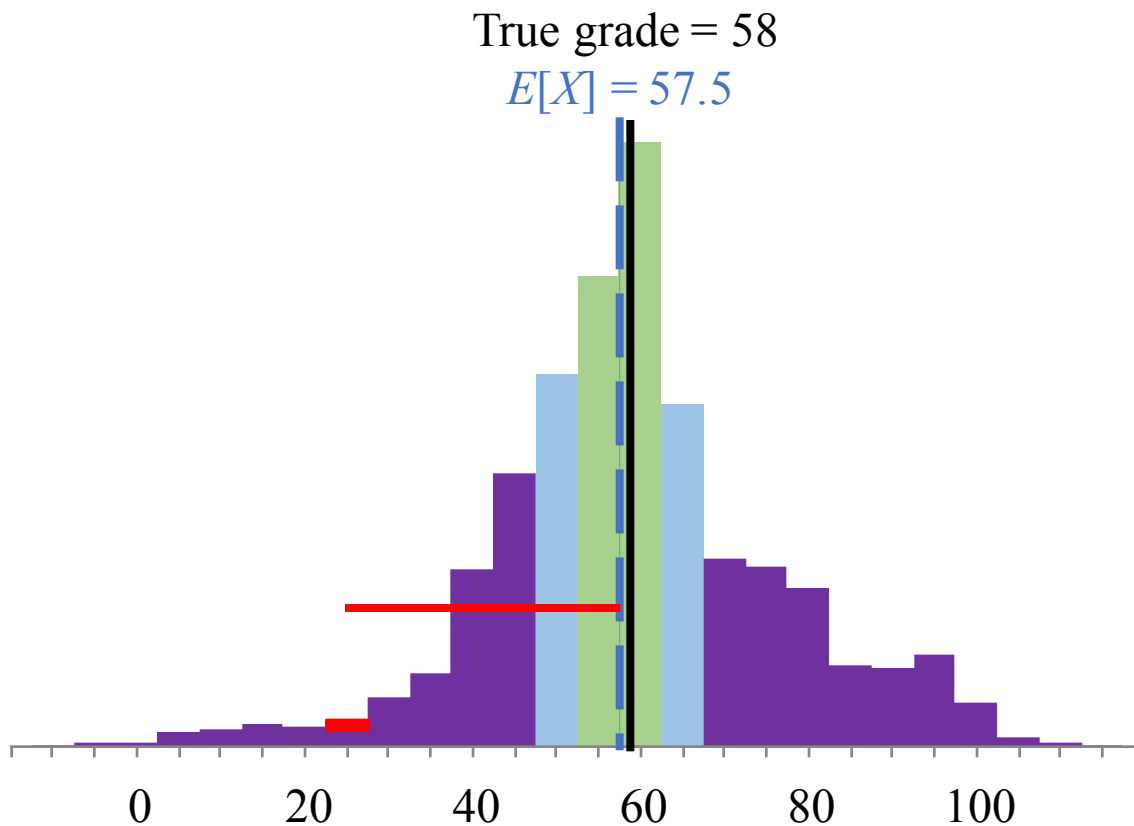
$$\text{Var}(X) = E[(X - \mu)^2]$$



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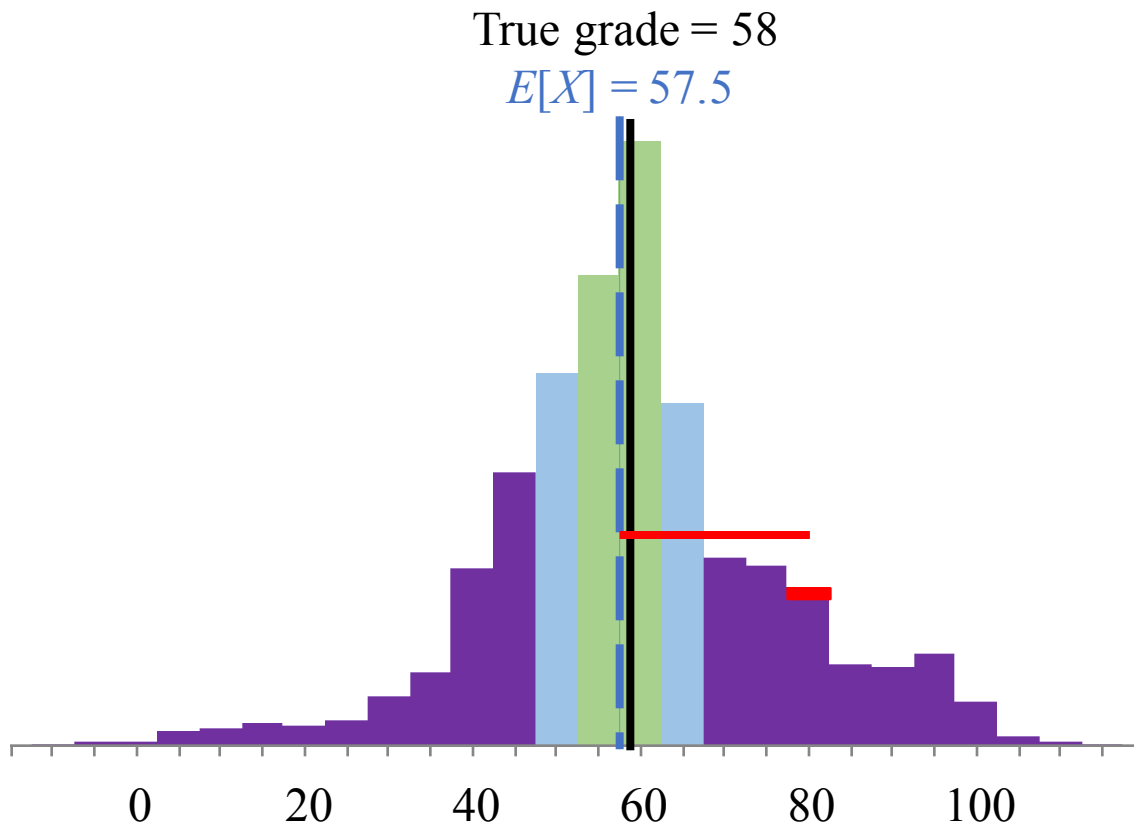


$X$	$(X - \mu)^2$
25 points	1056 points <sup>2</sup>

# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

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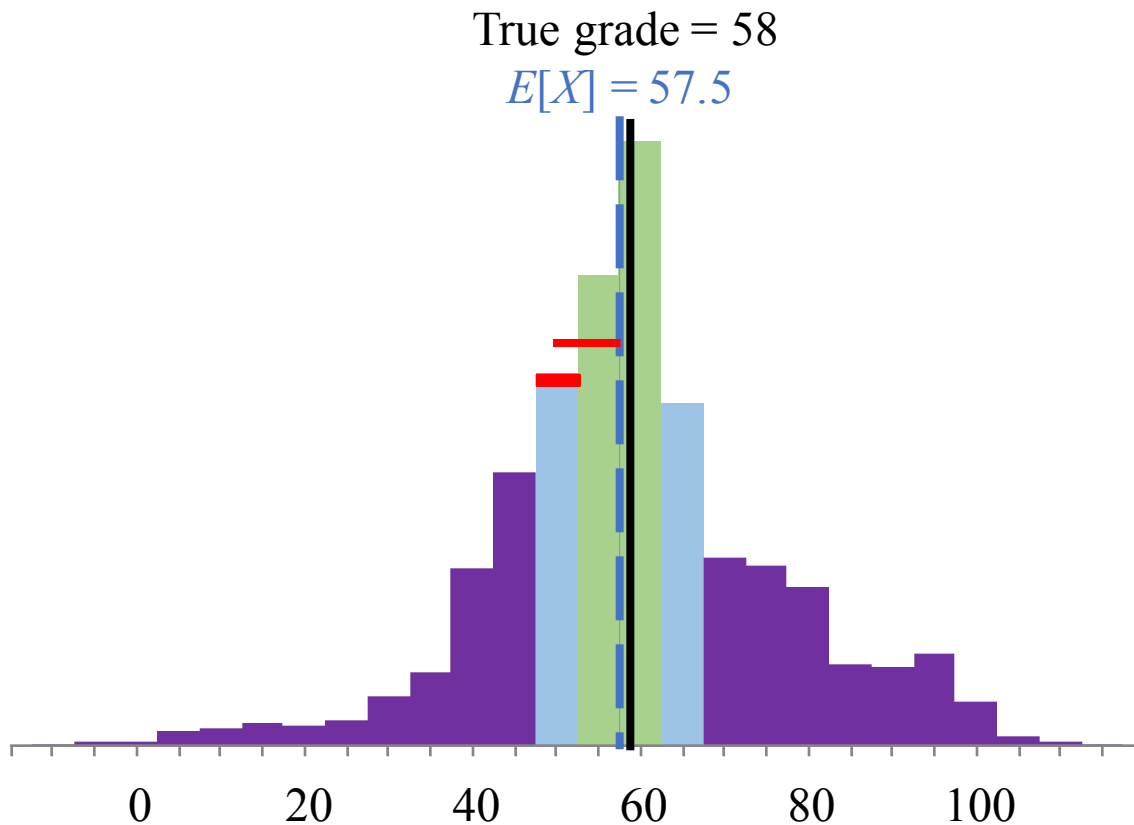


$X$	$(X - \mu)^2$
25 points	1056 points <sup>2</sup>
80 points	506 points <sup>2</sup>

# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

Let  $X$  be a random variable that represents a peer grade

$$\text{Var}(X) = E[(X - \mu)^2]$$



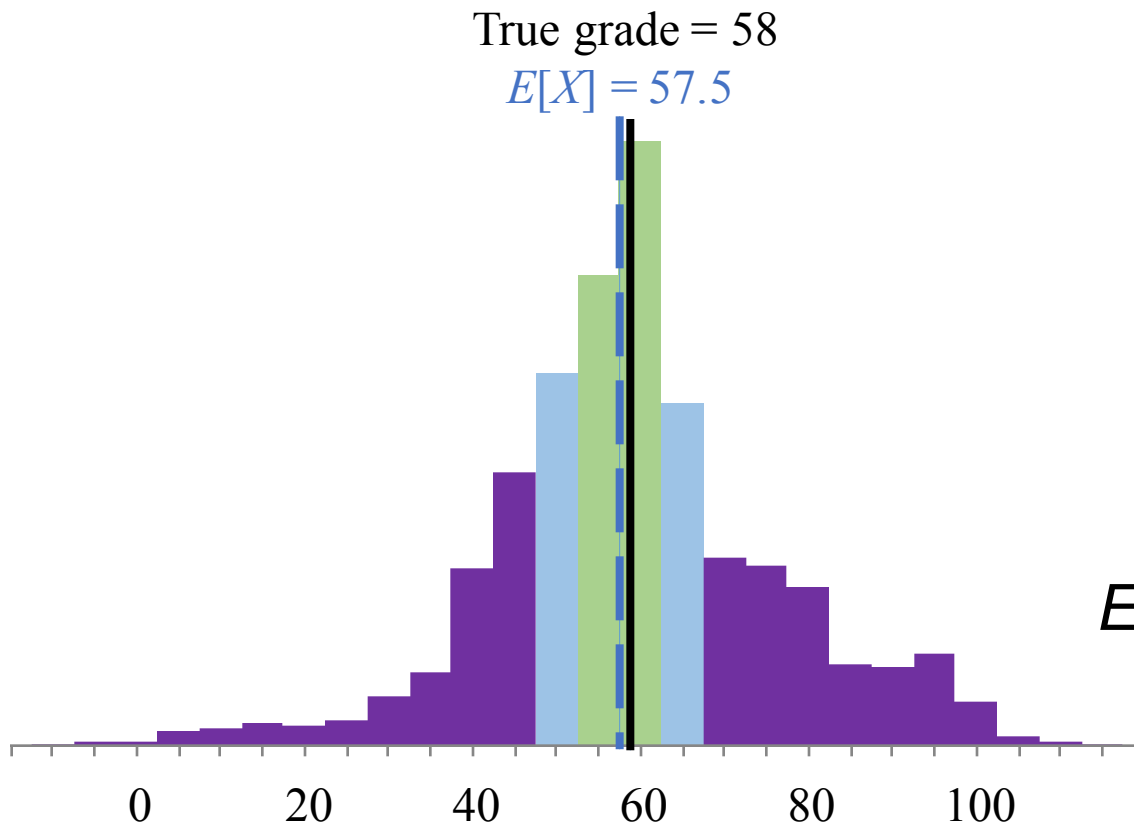
$X$	$(X - \mu)^2$
25 points	1056 points <sup>2</sup>
80 points	506 points <sup>2</sup>
50 points	56 points <sup>2</sup>



# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

Let  $X$  be a random variable that represents a peer grade

$$\text{Var}(X) = E[(X - \mu)^2]$$



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25 points	1056 points <sup>2</sup>

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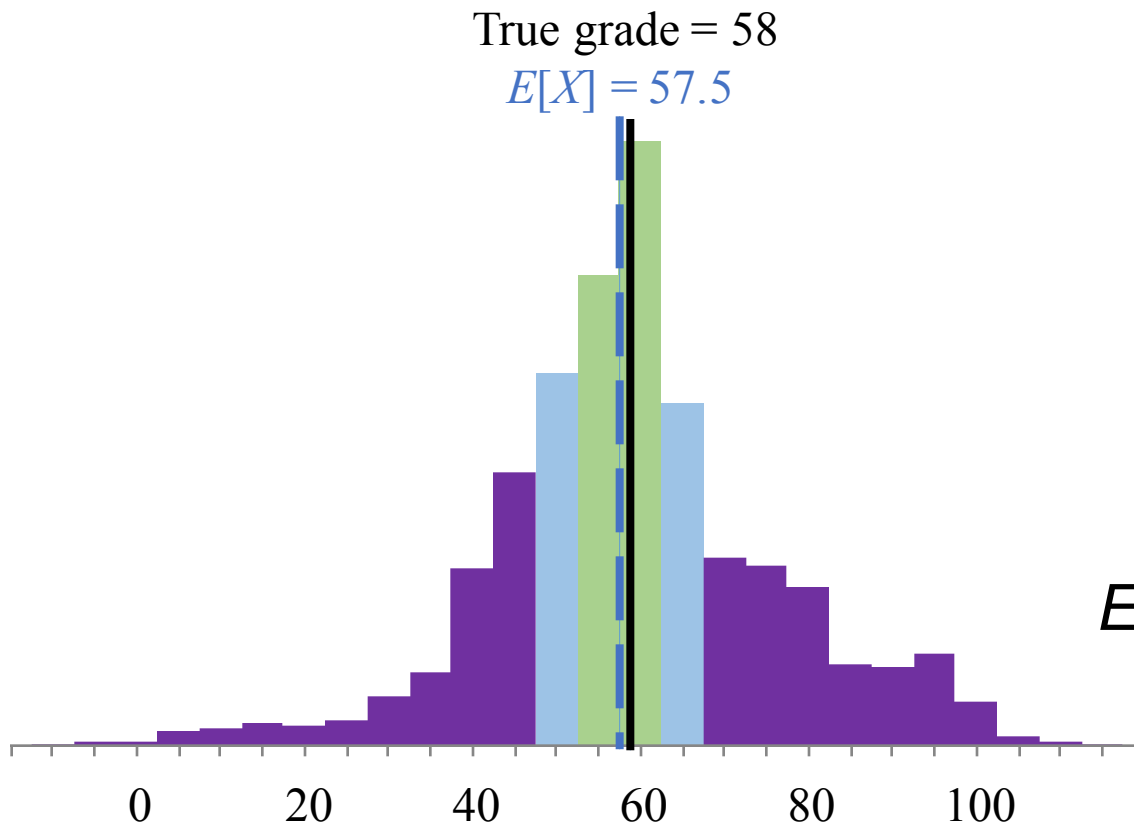
...

$$E[(X - \mu)^2] = 52 \text{ points}^2$$

# Peer Grades in Coursera HCI

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$$\text{Var}(X) = E[(X - \mu)^2]$$



$X$	$(X - \mu)^2$
25 points	1056 points <sup>2</sup>

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-----------	------------------------

...

$$E[(X - \mu)^2] = 52 \text{ points}^2$$

$$SD(X) = 7.2 \text{ points}$$

# Expected Values of Sums

$$E[X + Y] = E[X] + E[Y]$$

Generalized:  $E\left[\sum_{i=1}^n X_i\right] = \sum_{i=1}^n E[X_i]$

Holds regardless of dependency between  $X_i$ 's



# Expected Values of Functions

$$E[g(X)] = \sum_x g(x)p(x)$$

$$E[g(X, Y)] = \sum_{x,y} g(x, y)p(x, y)$$

For example:  $X, Y$  are independent random variables:

$$\begin{aligned} E[X \cdot Y] &= E[g(X, Y)] && \text{Let } g(X, Y) = X \cdot Y \\ &= \sum_{x,y} g(x, y) \cdot p(x, y) \\ &= \sum_{x,y} xy \cdot p(x)p(y) \\ &= \sum_x xp(x) \cdot \sum_y yp(y) = E[X] \cdot E[Y] \end{aligned}$$

# Dance of Covariance

# Recall our Ebola Bats



# Bat Data

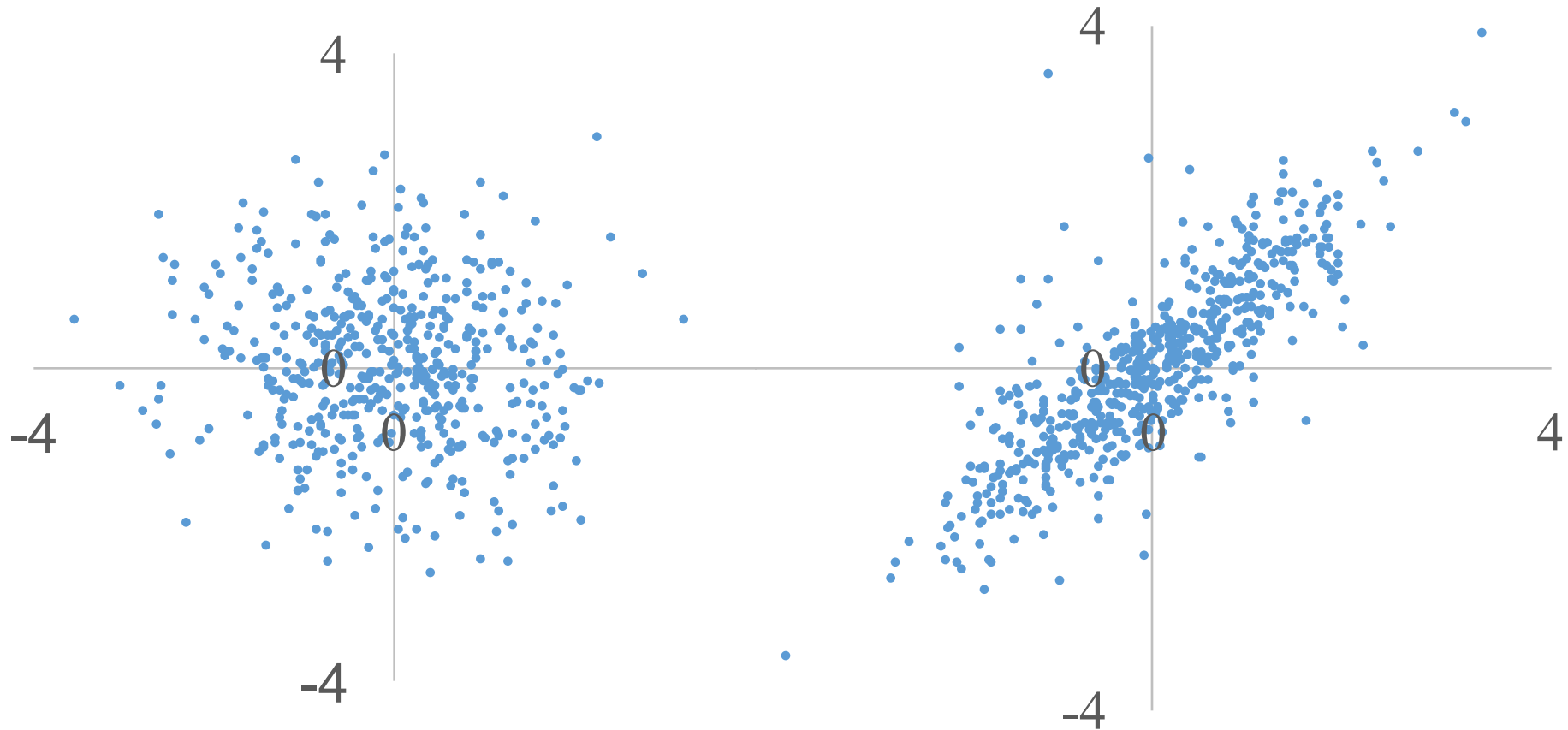
Gene1	Gene2	Gene3	Gene4	Gene5	Trait
TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE
FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE
FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
...					
TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE

# Expression Amount

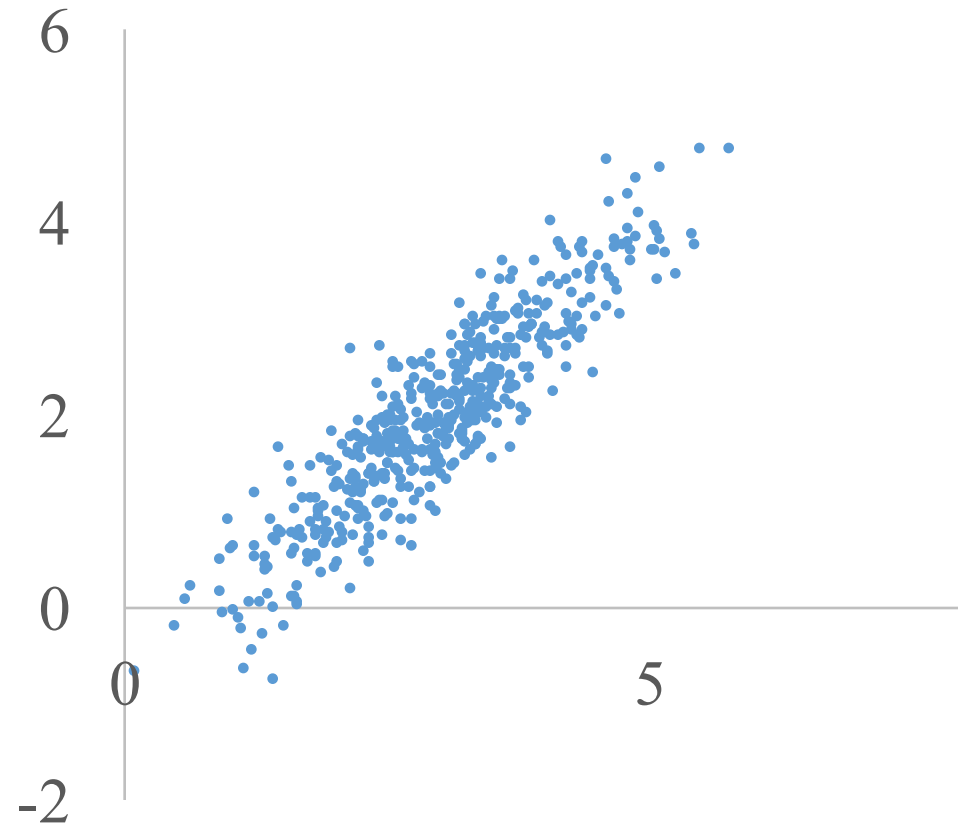
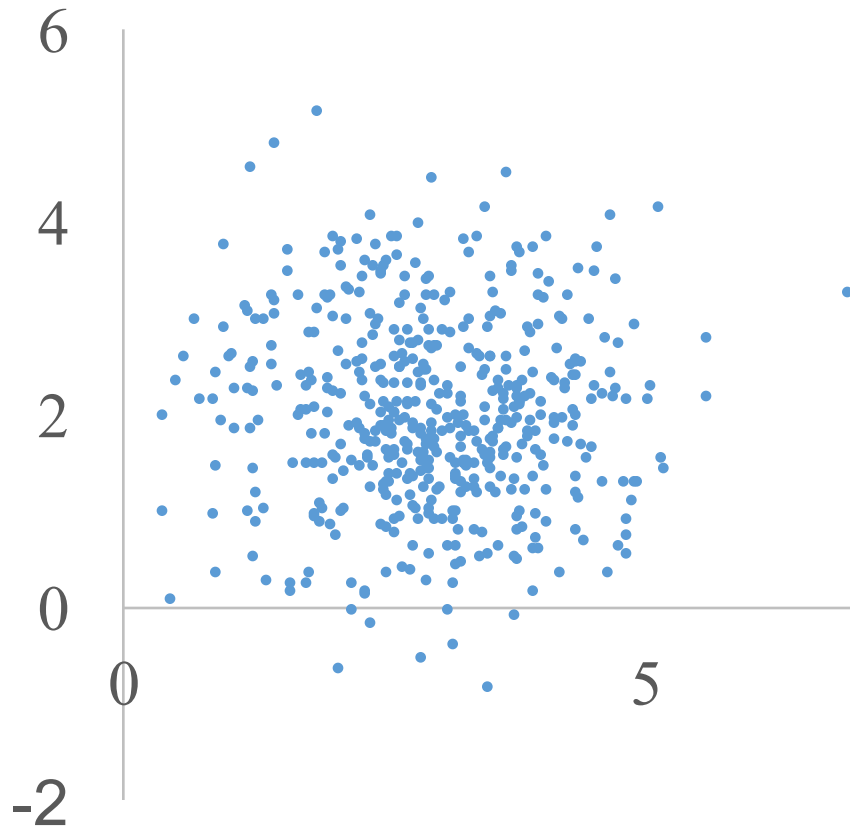
Gene1	Gene2	Gene3	Gene4	Gene5	Trait
0.71	0.29	0.89	0.82	0.76	0.83
0.17	0.02	0.89	0.02	0.94	0.85
0.01	0.63	0.76	0.38	0.82	0.03
0.19	0.95	0.63	0.89	0.94	0.32
0.46	0.96	0.36	0.12	0.50	0.10
0.48	0.51	0.45	0.16	0.40	0.53
0.20	0.77	0.27	0.23	0.90	0.67
0.49	0.24	0.77	0.37	0.29	0.71
0.59	0.95	0.38	0.42	0.72	0.25
0.43	0.66	0.57	0.03	0.15	0.24
0.32	0.42	0.25	0.12	0.79	0.98
0.77	0.31	0.66	0.78	0.68	0.77
0.46	0.59	0.38	0.99	0.71	0.37
0.97	0.66	0.05	0.99	0.36	0.18
0.50	0.66	0.35	0.41	0.62	0.08
0.70	0.85	0.98	0.29	0.59	0.38
...					
0.78	0.09	0.69	0.41	0.82	0.76



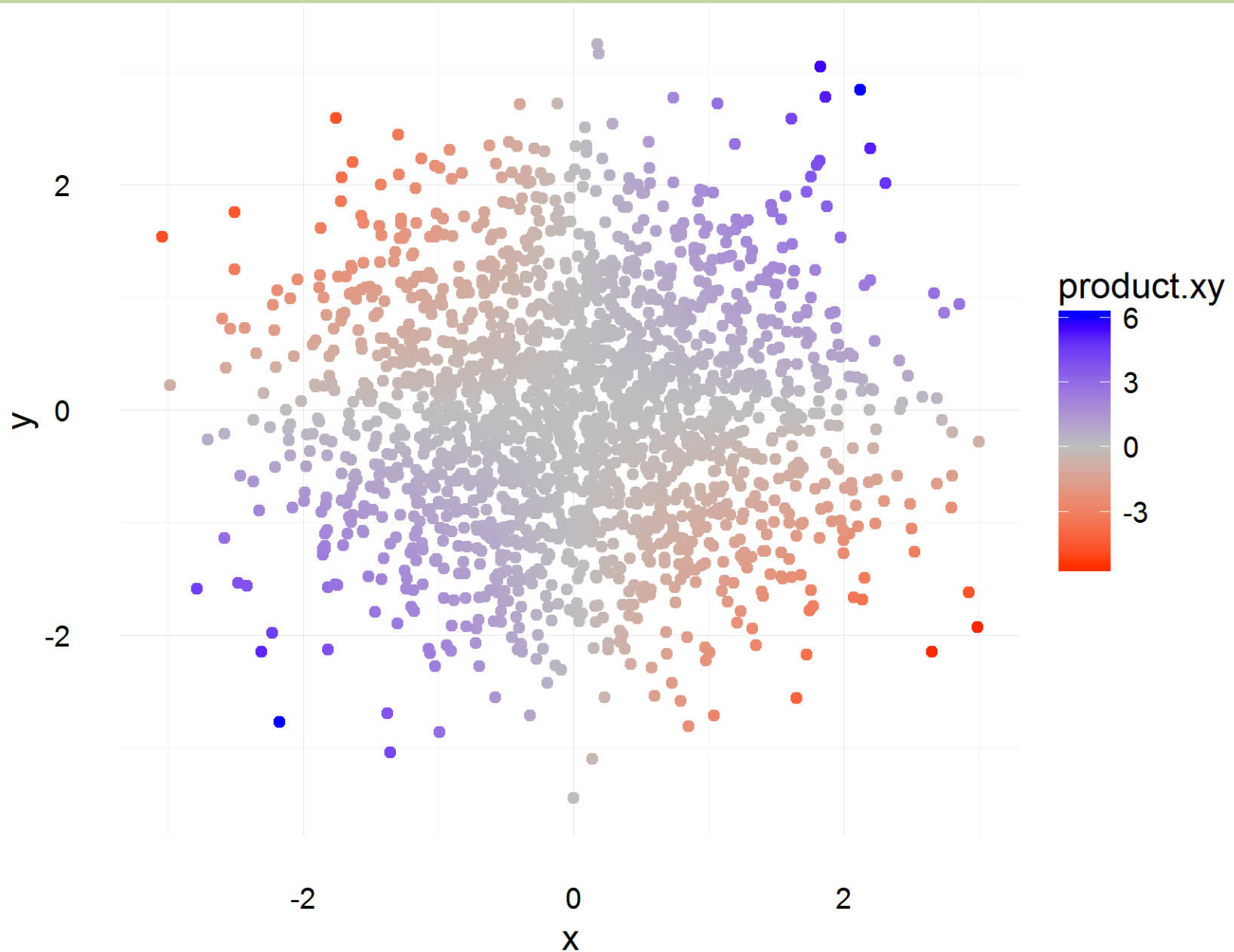
# Spot The Difference



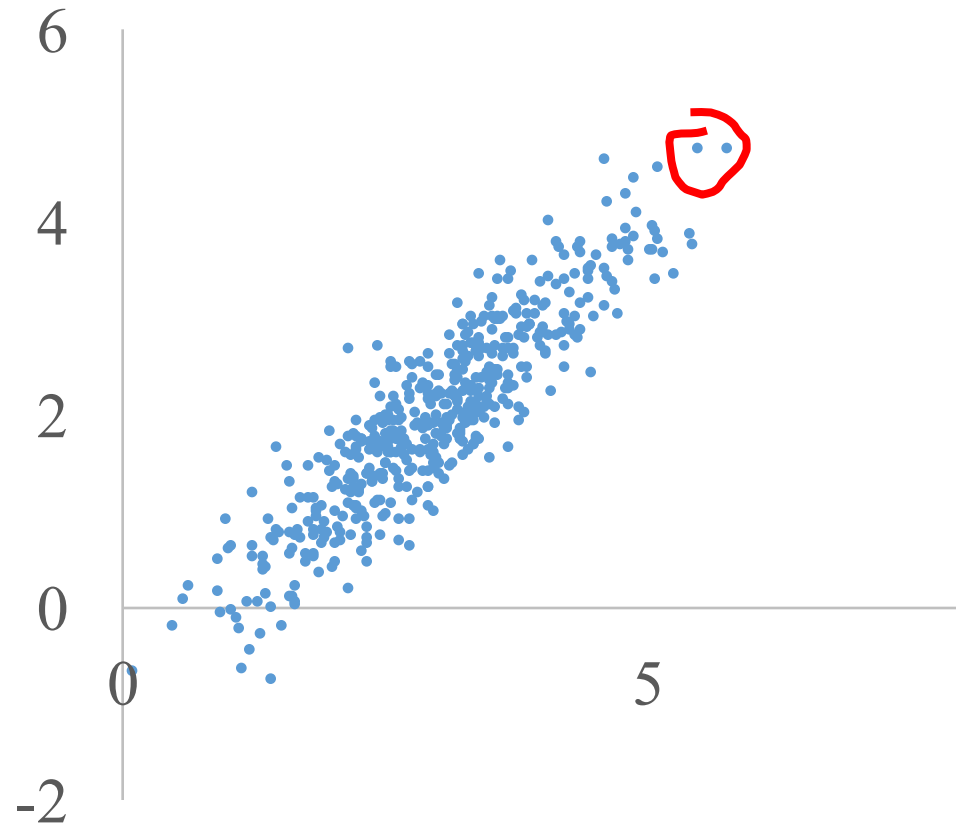
# Spot The Difference



# Understanding Covariance



# Vary Together

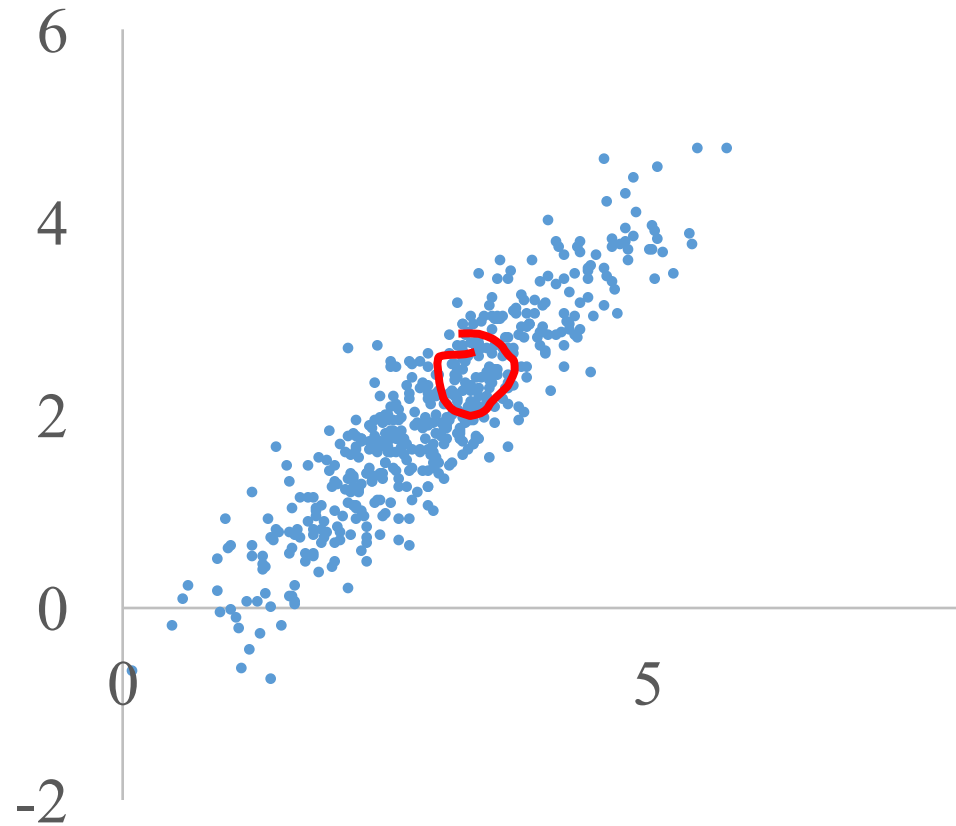


$$x - E[x] = 3$$

$$y - E[y] = 2.6$$

$$(x - E[x])(y - E[y]) = 7.8$$

# Vary Together

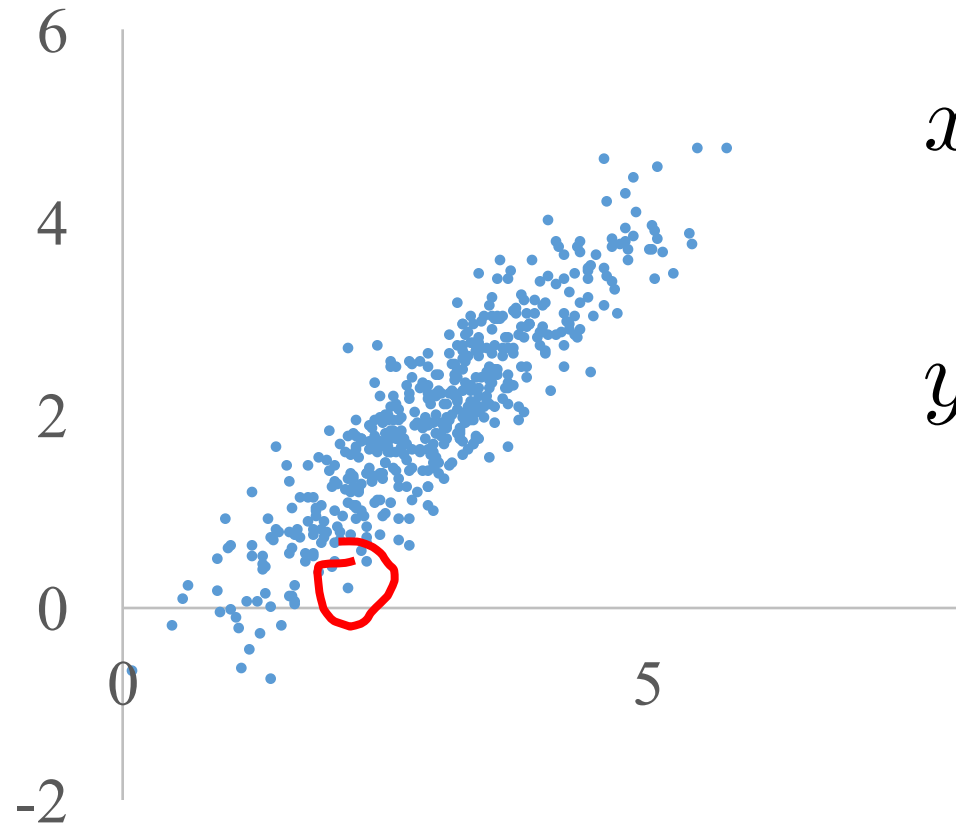


$$x - E[x] \approx 0$$

$$y - E[y] \approx 0$$

$$(x - E[x])(y - E[y]) = 0$$

# Vary Together



$$x - E[x] = -1.1$$

$$y - E[y] = -2.8$$

$$(x - E[x])(y - E[y]) \approx 3.1$$

# The Dance of the Covariance

- Say  $X$  and  $Y$  are arbitrary random variables
- Covariance of  $X$  and  $Y$ :

$$\text{Cov}(X, Y) = E[(X - E[X])(Y - E[Y])]$$

x	y	$(x - E[X])(y - E[Y])p(x,y)$
Above mean	Above mean	Positive
Bellow mean	Bellow mean	Positive
Bellow mean	Above mean	Negative
Above mean	Bellow mean	Negative

# The Dance of the Covariance

- Say  $X$  and  $Y$  are arbitrary random variables
- Covariance of  $X$  and  $Y$ :

$$\text{Cov}(X, Y) = E[(X - E[X])(Y - E[Y])]$$

- Equivalently:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Cov}(X, Y) &= E[XY - E[X]Y - XE[Y] + E[Y]E[X]] \\ &= E[XY] - E[X]E[Y] - E[X]E[Y] + E[X]E[Y] \\ &= E[XY] - E[X]E[Y]\end{aligned}$$

- $X$  and  $Y$  independent,  $E[XY] = E[X]E[Y] \rightarrow \text{Cov}(X, Y) = 0$
- But  $\text{Cov}(X, Y) = 0$  does **not** imply  $X$  and  $Y$  independent!

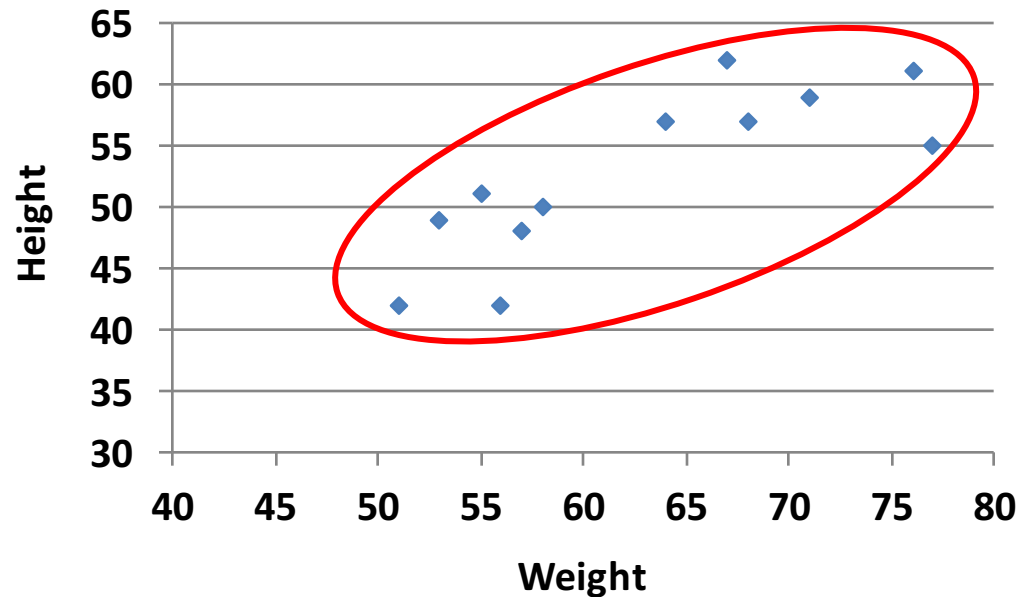


# Covariance and Data

- Consider the following data:

Weight	Height	Weight * Height
64	57	3648
71	59	4189
53	49	2597
67	62	4154
55	51	2805
58	50	2900
77	55	4235
57	48	2736
56	42	2352
51	42	2142
76	61	4636
68	57	3876

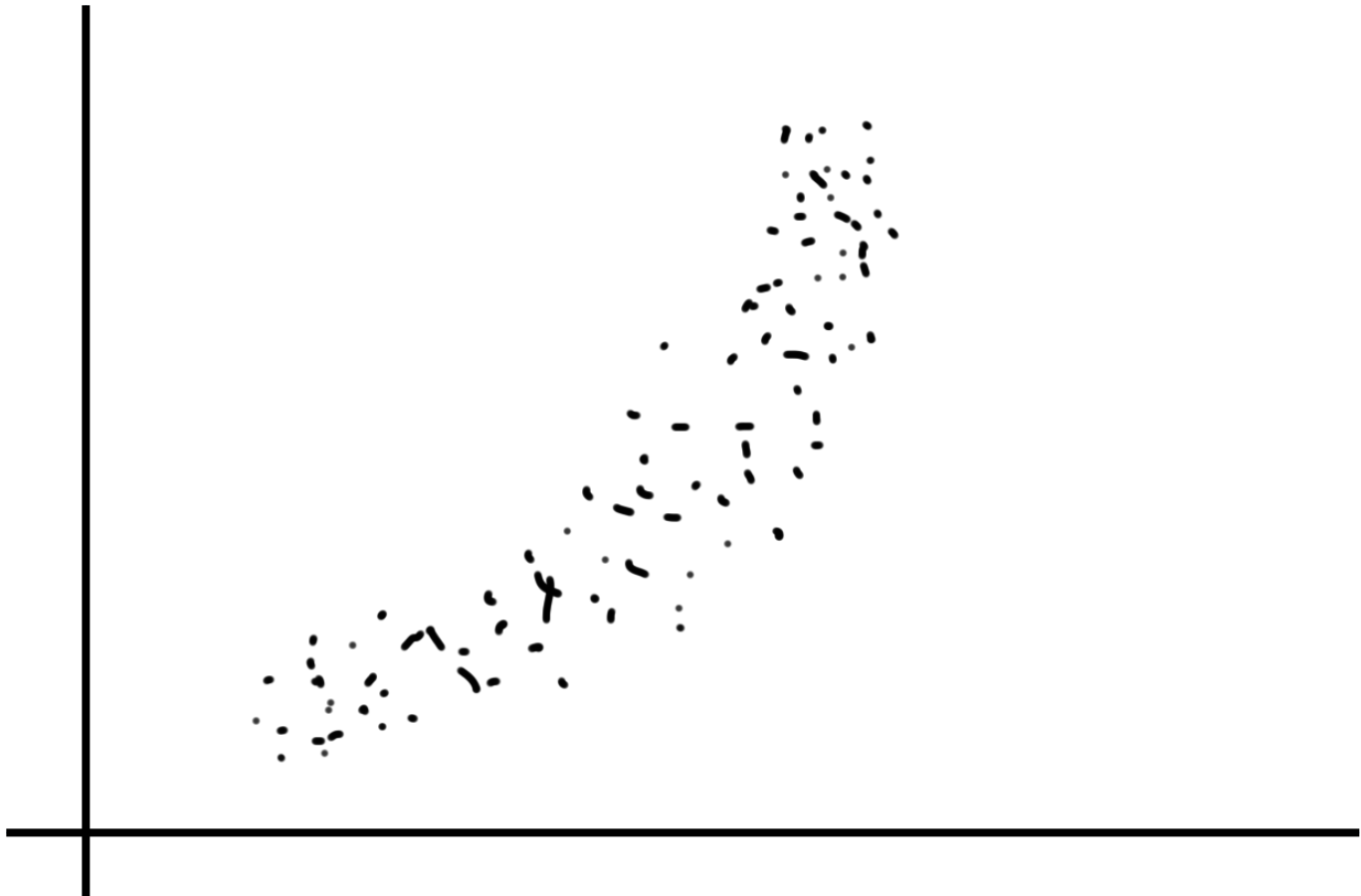
$$\begin{aligned} E[W] &= 62.75 \\ E[H] &= 52.75 \\ E[W*H] &= 3355.83 \end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}(W, H) &= E[W*H] - E[W]E[H] \\ &= 3355.83 - (62.75)(52.75) \\ &= 45.77 \end{aligned}$$

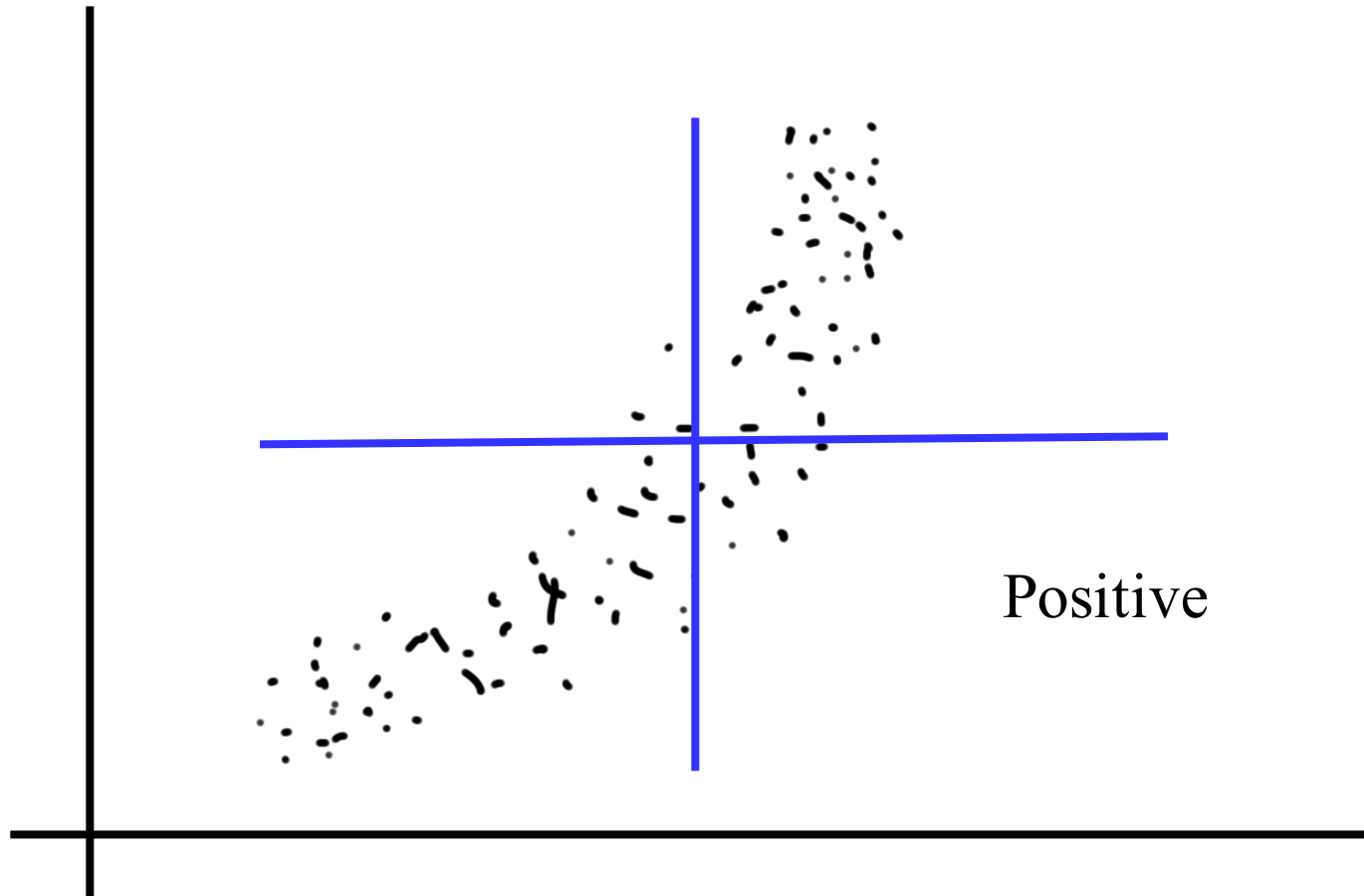
# Covariance

Socratic: (a) positive, (b) negative, (c) zero



# Covariance

Socrative: (a) positive, (b) negative, (c) zero



# Independence and Covariance

- X and Y are random variables with PMF:

$\begin{array}{c} Y \\ \backslash X \end{array}$	-1	0	1	$p_Y(y)$
0	1/3	0	1/3	2/3
1	0	1/3	0	1/3
$p_X(x)$	1/3	1/3	1/3	1

$$Y = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } X \neq 0 \\ 1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

- $E[X] = -1(1/3) + 0(1/3) + 1(1/3) = 0$
- $E[Y] = 0(2/3) + 1(1/3) = 1/3$
- Since  $XY = 0$ ,  $E[XY] = 0$
- $\text{Cov}(X, Y) = E[XY] - E[X]E[Y] = 0 - 0 = 0$
- But, X and Y are clearly dependent!

# Example of Covariance

- Consider rolling a 6-sided die
  - Let indicator variable  $X = 1$  if roll is 1, 2, 3, or 4
  - Let indicator variable  $Y = 1$  if roll is 3, 4, 5, or 6
- What is  $\text{Cov}(X, Y)$ ?
  - $E[X] = 2/3$  and  $E[Y] = 2/3$
  - $$E[XY] = \sum_x \sum_y xy p(x, y)$$
$$= (0 * 0) + (0 * 1/3) + (0 * 1/3) + (1 * 1/3) = 1/3$$
  - $\text{Cov}(X, Y) = E[XY] - E[X]E[Y] = 1/3 - 4/9 = -1/9$
  - Consider:  $P(X = 1) = 2/3$  and  $P(X = 1 \mid Y = 1) = 1/2$ 
    - Observing  $Y = 1$  makes  $X = 1$  less likely

# Properties of Covariance

- Say  $X$  and  $Y$  are arbitrary random variables
  - $\text{Cov}(X, Y) = \text{Cov}(Y, X)$
  - $\text{Cov}(X, X) = E[X^2] - E[X]E[X] = \text{Var}(X)$
  - $\text{Cov}(aX + b, Y) = a\text{Cov}(X, Y)$
- Covariance of sums of random variables
  - $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$  and  $Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_m$  are random variables
  - $$\text{Cov}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i, \sum_{j=1}^m Y_j\right) = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m \text{Cov}(X_i, Y_j)$$

# Do Indicators Covary?

- Let  $I_A$  and  $I_B$  be indicators for events A and B

$$I_A = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } A \text{ occurs} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$I_B = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } B \text{ occurs} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

- $E[I_A] = P(A), \quad E[I_B] = P(B), \quad E[I_A I_B] = P(AB)$
- $\text{Cov}(I_A, I_B) = E[I_A I_B] - E[I_A] E[I_B]$   
 $= P(AB) - P(A)P(B)$   
 $= P(A | B)P(B) - P(A)P(B)$   
 $= P(B)[P(A | B) - P(A)]$
- $\text{Cov}(I_A, I_B)$  determined by  $P(A | B) - P(A)$
- $P(A | B) > P(A) \Rightarrow \rho(I_A, I_B) > 0$
- $P(A | B) = P(A) \Rightarrow \rho(I_A, I_B) = 0 \quad (\text{and } \text{Cov}(I_A, I_B) = 0)$
- $P(A | B) < P(A) \Rightarrow \rho(I_A, I_B) < 0$

# Correlation

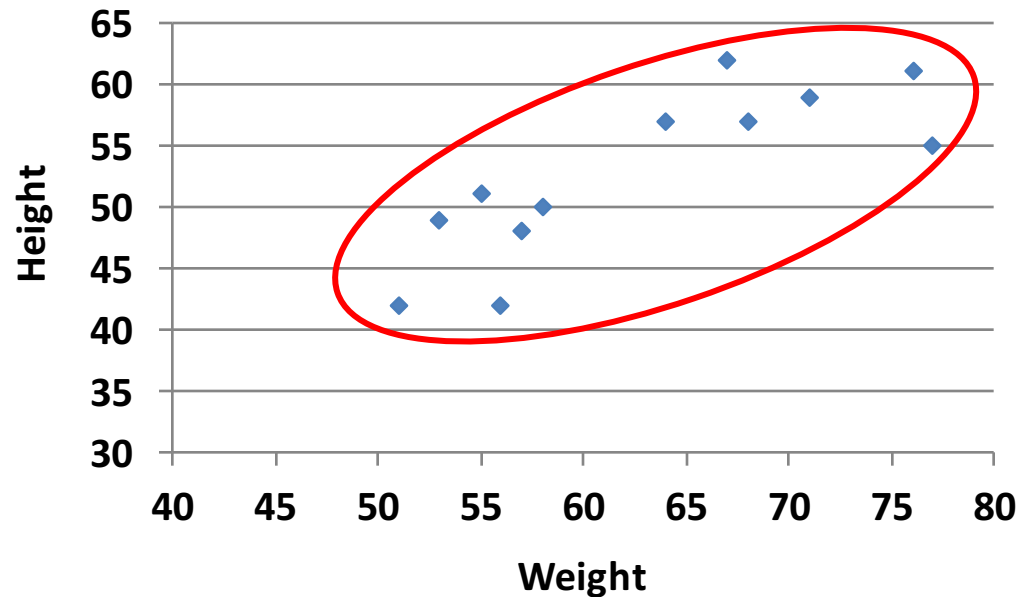


# What is Wrong With This?

- Consider the following data:

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$$\begin{array}{lll} E[W] & E[H] & E[W*H] \\ = 62.75 & = 52.75 & = 3355.83 \end{array}$$



$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}(W, H) &= E[W*H] - E[W]E[H] \\ &= 3355.83 - (62.75)(52.75) \\ &= 45.77 \end{aligned}$$

Chris Piech

Secure [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cauchy-Schwarz\\_inequali...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cauchy-Schwarz_inequali...)

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# Cauchy–Schwarz inequality

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In [mathematics](#), the **Cauchy–Schwarz inequality**, also known as the **Cauchy–Bunyakovsky–Schwarz inequality**, is a useful [inequality](#) encountered in many different settings, such as [linear algebra](#), [analysis](#), [probability theory](#), [vector algebra](#) and other areas. It is considered to be one of the most important inequalities in all of mathematics.<sup>[1]</sup> It has a number of generalizations, among them [Hölder's inequality](#).

The inequality for sums was published by [Augustin-Louis Cauchy](#) (1821), while the corresponding inequality for integrals was first proved by [Viktor Bunyakovsky](#) (1859). The modern proof of the integral inequality was given by [Hermann Amandus Schwarz](#) (1888).<sup>[1]</sup>

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  - 3.1 [R<sup>2</sup> \(ordinary two-dimensional space\)](#)
  - 3.2 [R<sup>n</sup> \(n-dimensional Euclidean space\)](#)
  - 3.3 [L<sup>2</sup>](#)

$$-\text{Std}(X)\text{Std}(Y) \leq \text{Cov}(X, Y) \leq \text{Std}(X)\text{Std}(Y)$$

# Viva La Correlación

- Say  $X$  and  $Y$  are arbitrary random variables

- Correlation of  $X$  and  $Y$ , denoted  $\rho(X, Y)$ :

$$\rho(X, Y) = \frac{\text{Cov}(X, Y)}{\sqrt{\text{Var}(X)\text{Var}(Y)}}$$

- Note:  $-1 \leq \rho(X, Y) \leq 1$
- Correlation measures linearity between  $X$  and  $Y$
- $\rho(X, Y) = 1 \Rightarrow Y = aX + b$  where  $a = \sigma_y/\sigma_x$
- $\rho(X, Y) = -1 \Rightarrow Y = aX + b$  where  $a = -\sigma_y/\sigma_x$
- $\rho(X, Y) = 0 \Rightarrow$  absence of linear relationship
  - But,  $X$  and  $Y$  can still be related in some other way!
- If  $\rho(X, Y) = 0$ , we say  $X$  and  $Y$  are “uncorrelated”
  - Note: Independence implies uncorrelated, but **not** vice versa!

# Viva La Correlación

- Say  $X$  and  $Y$  are arbitrary random variables
  - Correlation of  $X$  and  $Y$ , denoted  $\rho(X, Y)$ :

$$\rho(X, Y) = \frac{\text{Cov}(X, Y)}{\sqrt{\text{Var}(X)\text{Var}(Y)}}$$

- Say  $Y = cX$ . Correlation should be 1.

If we have time

# Covariance and the Multinomial

- Computing  $\text{Cov}(X_i, X_j)$

- Indicator  $I_i(k) = 1$  if trial  $k$  has outcome  $i$ , 0 otherwise

$$E[I_i(k)] = p_i \qquad X_i = \sum_{k=1}^n I_i(k) \qquad X_j = \sum_{k=1}^n I_j(k)$$

- $\text{Cov}(X_i, X_j) = \sum_{a=1}^n \sum_{b=1}^n \text{Cov}(I_i(b), I_j(a))$
- When  $a \neq b$ , trial  $a$  and  $b$  independent:  $\text{Cov}(I_i(b), I_j(a)) = 0$
- When  $a = b$ :  $\text{Cov}(I_i(b), I_j(a)) = E[I_i(a)I_j(a)] - E[I_i(a)]E[I_j(a)]$
- Since trial  $a$  cannot have outcome  $i$  and  $j$ :  $E[I_i(a)I_j(a)] = 0$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cov}(X_i, X_j) &= \sum_{a=b=1}^n \text{Cov}(I_i(b), I_j(a)) = \sum_{a=1}^n (-E[I_i(a)]E[I_j(a)]) \\ &= \sum_{a=1}^n (-p_i p_j) = -n p_i p_j \quad \Rightarrow X_i \text{ and } X_j \text{ negatively correlated} \end{aligned}$$

# Multinomials All Around

- Multinomial distributions:
  - Count of strings hashed into buckets in hash table
  - Number of server requests across machines in cluster
  - Distribution of words/tokens in an email
  - Etc.
- When  $m$  (# outcomes) is large,  $p_i$  is small
  - For equally likely outcomes:  $p_i = 1/m$

$$\text{Cov}(X_i, X_j) = -np_i p_j = -\frac{n}{m^2}$$

- Large  $m \Rightarrow X_i$  and  $X_j$  very mildly negatively correlated
- Poisson paradigm applicable

Que te vayas bien