

PSC 202

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ANALYSIS INTRODUCTION**

# OVERVIEW TODAY

- **What is this class about?**
- **How is this class useful?**
- **What are the class policies?**

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- **What is this class about?**
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# WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

- Goal of political science: We want to understand the (political) world around us
  - What is happening?
  - Why are things happening the way they do?
  - What are some examples of questions you have about how the political world works and why it works the way it does?

# WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

- Ok, but lots of people try to explain what is happening (and why) in politics
- What is different about the way political scientists do it?

# WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

- Ok, but lots of people try to explain what is happening (and why) in politics
- What is different about the way political scientists do it?
- Political scientists use a scientific approach to study politics
  - They follow a research process

# THIS CLASS

- A deep dive into the research process
  - How do we find answers to the research questions we have?
  - Step-by-step walk through research process

# RESEARCH PROCESS

- Developing a research question, proposing an answer
  - Can we really study politics scientifically?
  - What kinds of research questions do political scientists ask?
  - What is a good research question?
  - What is already known about a research question?
  - How do we propose an answer to the research question?

# RESEARCH PROCESS

- **Measuring what we need to answer the research question**
  - **How do we define concepts that we need to answer our research question?**
    - e.g. When is a country a democracy?
  - **How do we measure these concepts?**
    - e.g. How do we measure how democratic a country is?
  - **How do we connect our research question to our data?**

# RESEARCH PROCESS

- Answering the research question
  - Develop a research strategy that can help us answer our question
    - Do we study one country? Compare two countries? Do we study all countries?
  - Data analysis
    - Qualitative approaches, statistical data analysis

**BUT...**

- I'm not good at math!

# NOT VERY GOOD AT MATH

ZEUGNIS DER ALLGEMEINEN HOCHSCHULREIFE			
Vor- und Zuname, Geburtsdatum, Geburtsort sowie Name der Schule			
Simon Weschle			
II. LEISTUNGEN IN DER ABITURPRÜFUNG			
Prüfungsfach	Punktzahlen in einfacher Wertung		Note
	schriftl.	mündl.	
Leistungskurse (LF)			
1. Englisch	10	12	gut
2. Mathematik	06	--	ausreichend

- 0-15 points
- Less than 4: fail
- “ausreichend” = just about enough to pass

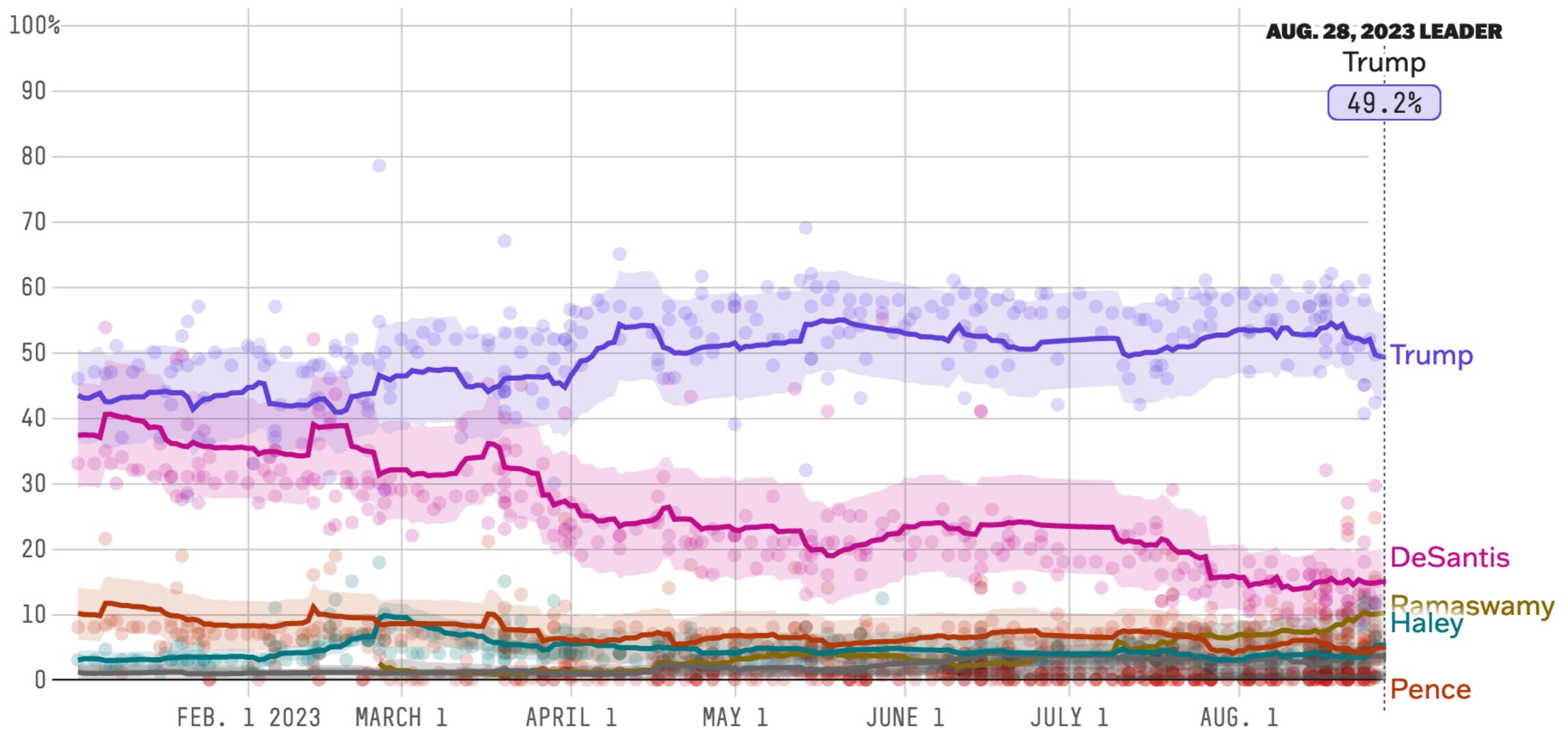
# OVERVIEW TODAY

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# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

## Who's ahead in the national polls?

Updating average for each Republican candidate in 2024 primary polls, accounting for each poll's recency, sample size, methodology and house effects.



- Data analysis is everywhere

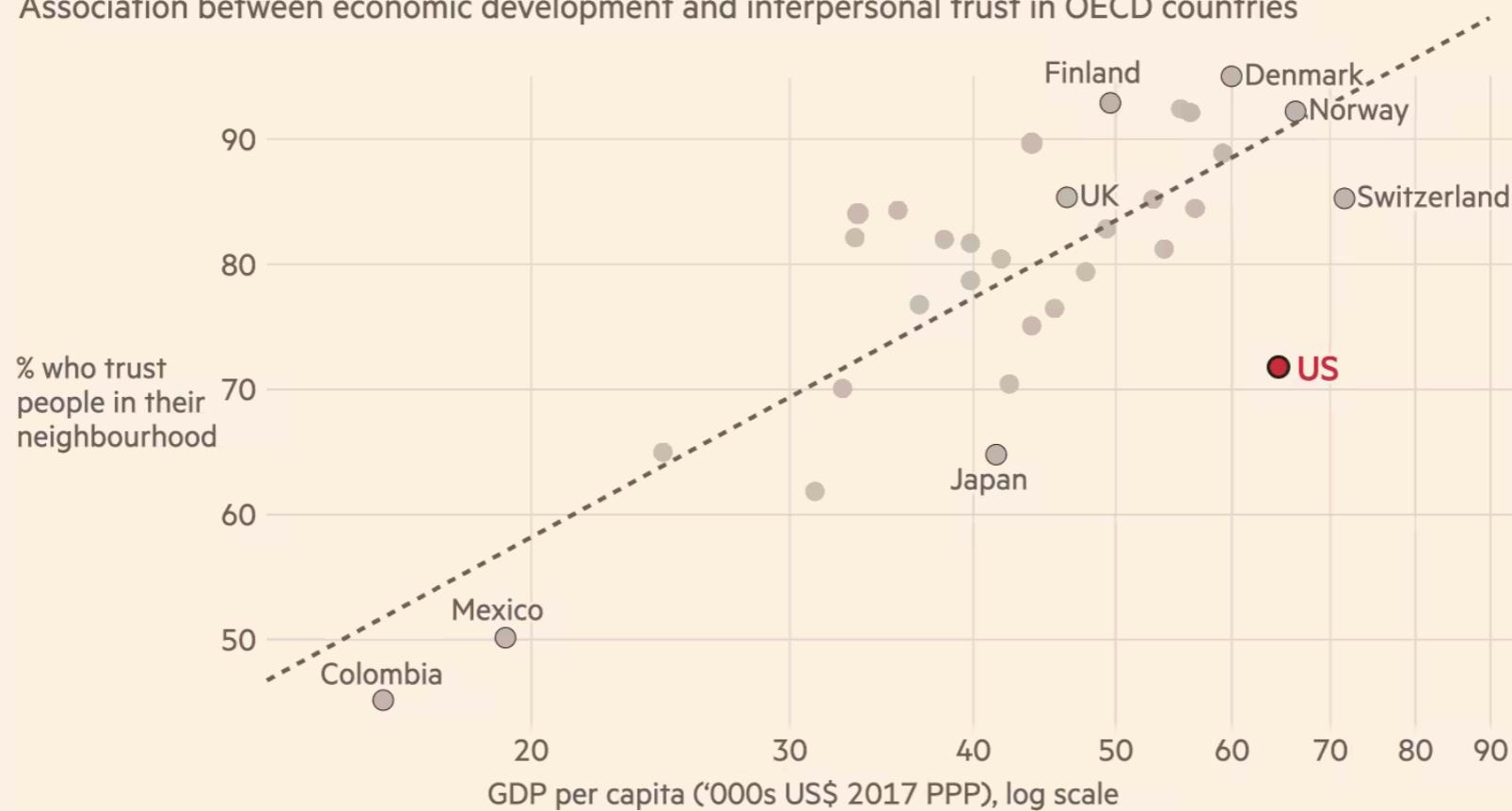
# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

Opinion Data Points

## Collapsing social trust is driving American gun violence

Levels of interpersonal trust in the US are far lower than what we would expect given its level of socio-economic development

Association between economic development and interpersonal trust in OECD countries



Sources: FT analysis of World Values Survey and IMF World Economic Outlook

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

© FT

- Data analysis is everywhere

# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

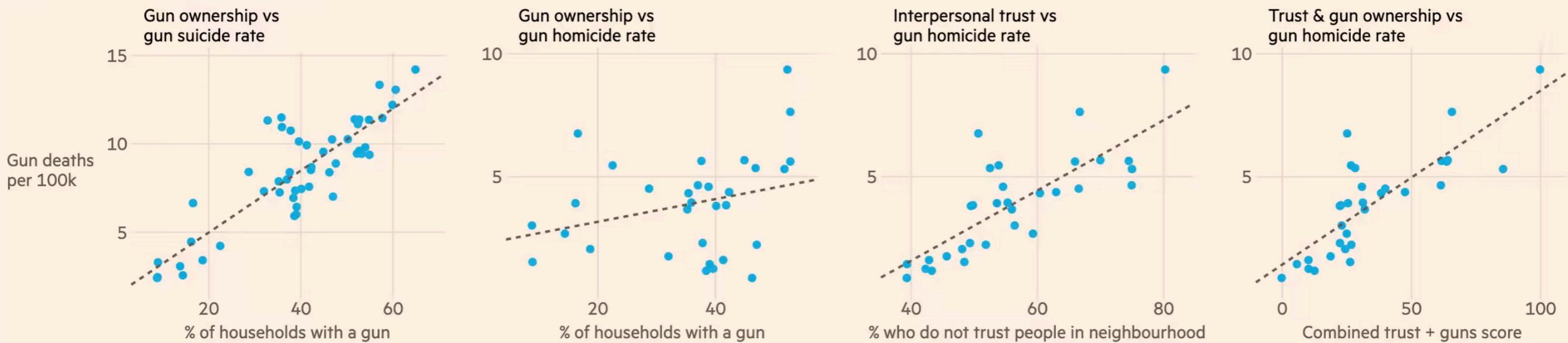
Opinion Data Points

## Collapsing social trust is driving American gun violence

Gun ownership alone explains almost all variation in gun suicide rates, but both guns and levels of interpersonal trust are needed to explain homicides

Selected comparisons of gun deaths to possible explanatory factors

Each point represents one US state



Source: FT analysis of World Values Survey, Rand Corporation and IHME Global Burden of Disease

FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

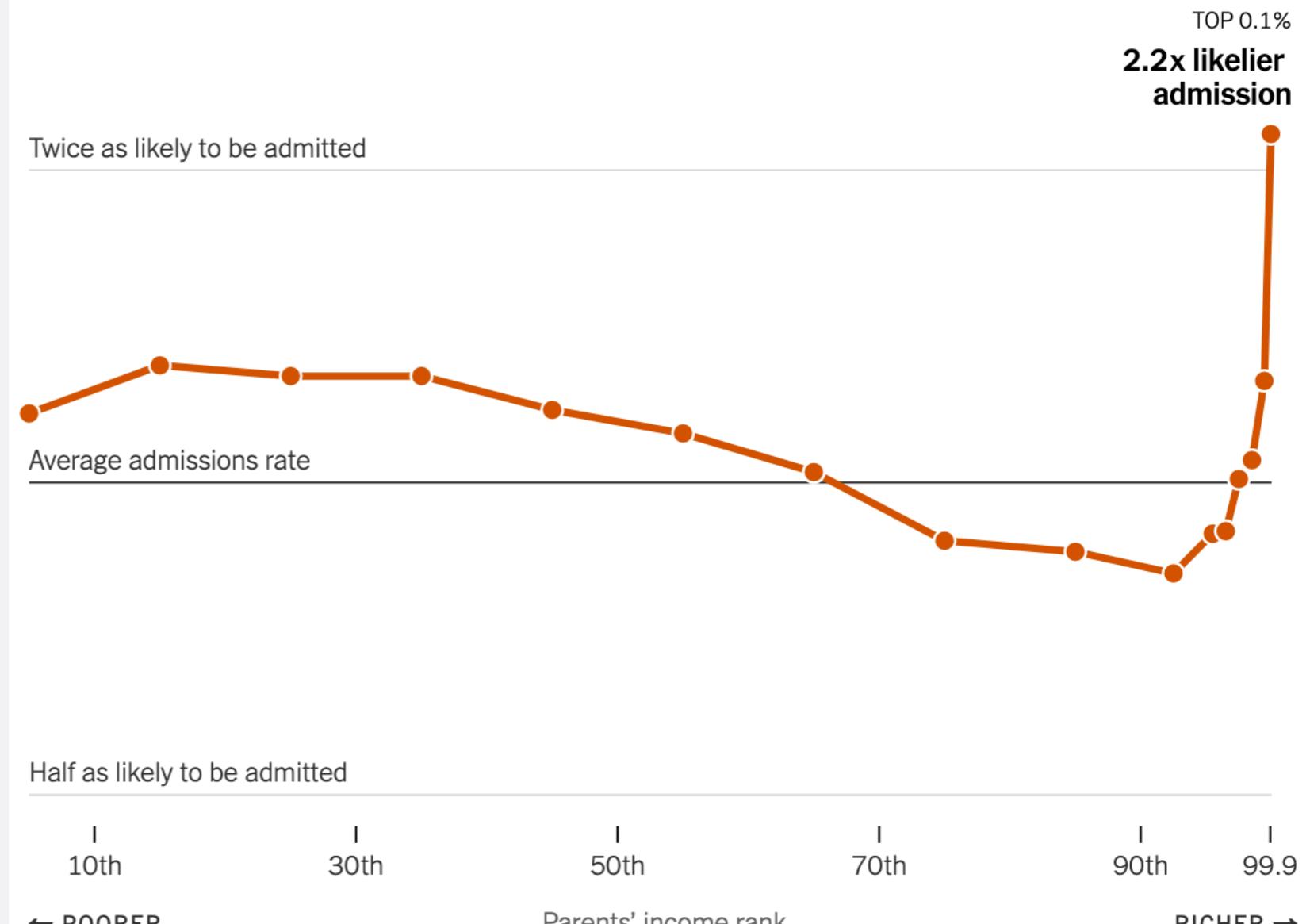
© FT

- Data analysis is everywhere

# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

## Study of Elite College Admissions Data Suggests Being Very Rich Is Its Own Qualification

Admissions rate at elite colleges among students with the same test scores

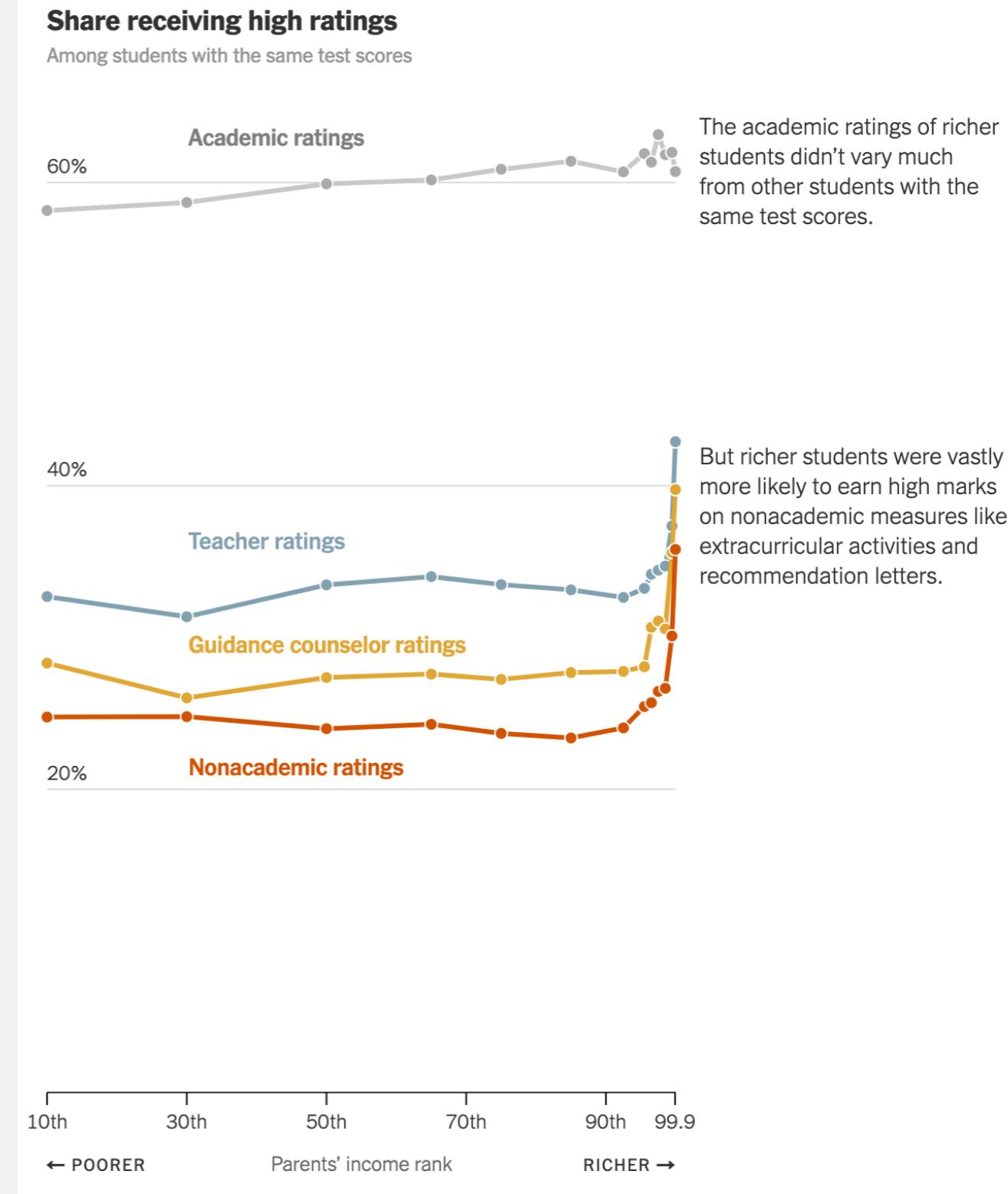


Data is from at least three of the dozen top colleges where the researchers had access to detailed admissions records.

- Data analysis is everywhere

# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

**Study of Elite College Admissions Data Suggests Being Very Rich Is Its Own Qualification**



- Data analysis is everywhere

# DATA ANALYSIS AND LIFE

## New research suggests that french fries may be linked to depression

By Taylor Nicloli, CNN

Published 3:01 PM EDT, Mon April 24, 2023



Jack Andersen/Stone RF/Getty Images

Fried foods may have a negative impact on mental health, a new study found.

- Data analysis is everywhere

# HOW IS THIS CLASS USEFUL?

- Helps you pick apart bad arguments that are not backed up by good evidence

New research suggests that french fries may be linked to depression

By Taylor Nicoll, CNN  
Published 3:01 PM EDT, Mon April 24, 2023



Jack Andersen/Stone RF/Getty Images

Fried foods may have a negative impact on mental health, a new study found.

- And make good arguments backed up by evidence

# HOW IS THIS CLASS USEFUL?

POLITICS

## Biden is ‘old,’ Trump is ‘corrupt’: AP-NORC poll has ominous signs for both in possible 2024 rematch

The poll of 1,165 adults was conducted Aug. 10-14, 2023, using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.8 percentage points.

- Helps you understand everyday debates better

# HOW IS THIS CLASS USEFUL?

Table 1  
Dependent variable: average corruption in 1994–1998

	(1) OLS	(2) OLS (LDCs only)	(3) TSLS	(4) OLS	(5) OLS (LDCs only)	(6) OLS	(7) TSLS
Constant	2.560 (10.508)	2.614 (10.516)	3.392 (5.003)	1.945 (1.721)	1.506 (1.260)	2.946 (2.180)	4.139 (1.867)
PRESS	-0.017 (-6.350)	-0.015 (-4.789)	-0.028 (-3.266)	-0.017 (-4.023)	-0.015 (-3.501)	-0.020 (-4.439)	-0.037 (-1.926)
BUREAU	0.220 (2.893)	0.254 (2.708)	0.221 (2.310)	0.200 (2.058)	0.128 (1.220)	0.089 (0.942)	0.073 (0.663)
RULE	0.265 (3.482)	0.146 (1.624)	0.143 (1.527)	0.259 (2.583)	0.068 (0.607)	0.154 (1.530)	0.044 (0.251)
log(GDP)			0.104 (0.681)	0.226 (1.358)		0.107 (0.538)	0.127 (0.523)
HUMCAP			-0.043 (-1.007)	-0.085 (-1.562)		-0.052 (-1.058)	-0.064 (-1.088)
TRADE			0.002 (1.103)	0.004 (2.091)		0.003 (1.358)	0.003 (1.367)
BLACK			0.001 (1.882)	0.001 (1.288)		0.001 (1.350)	0.001 (0.730)
ETHNIC			-0.246 (-0.690)	-0.053 (-0.154)		-0.457 (-1.170)	-0.410 (-1.021)
AFRICA						-0.142 (-0.521)	-0.102 (-0.252)
LATIN						-0.563 (-2.298)	-0.857 (-2.530)
OECD						0.419 (0.983)	0.075 (0.150)
Observations	125	93	104	68	47	68	68
Adjusted $R^2$	0.67	0.38	0.67	0.74	0.38	0.77	0.72

*t* Statistics in parentheses; White-corrected standard errors; political rights as instrument in Columns (3) and (7).

- Helps you in other PSC/Maxwell classes

# HOW IS THIS CLASS USEFUL?



- Helps you get a job...

# HOW IS THIS CLASS USEFUL?

## ROTC Alumnus Will Join the U.S. Space Force

After commissioning the U.S. Air Force through Syracuse University's ROTC program, 2nd Lt. Daniel Egert is putting satellites and people into orbit.

Egert is applying analytical and statistical skills he learned as an undergraduate student in political science at Syracuse University. “Pulling in information, looking at what’s happening so I can report what people need to know, it has been huge,” he says. Before graduating, Egert wasn’t sure how he would use what he learned in a course on quantitative methods for the social sciences. “I remember thinking, ‘Oh, is this a vocational program? It’s kind of silly.’ But no, it’s been indispensable.”

- <https://www.syracuse.edu/stories/rotc-alumnus-space-force/>

# NOT IN THIS CLASS...

- Not an introduction to political science
  - Instead: How to do political science research
  - If you picked this class because you want to try out political science and see what it's about and whether you like it, try:
    - PSC 121: American National Government and Politics
    - PSC 123: Comparative Politics
    - PSC 124: International Relations
    - PSC 125: Political Theory

# OVERVIEW TODAY

- **What is this class about?**
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- **What are the class policies?**

# CLASS WEBSITE

- **<http://www.simonweschle.com/psc202>**
- The website has the continuously updated class schedule
- Lists all readings and assignments
- Please check the page **EVERY WEEK**

# CLASS WEBSITE

## PSC 202: Introduction to Political Analysis

### CLASS INFORMATION

Monday and Wednesday, 3:45 - 4:40, Lyman Hall 132

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Below is a continuously updated class schedule. It contains information on what topics we are covering as well as on the readings and assignments. Please check this site EVERY WEEK.

#### Week 1

- Monday (8/28): Introduction to the Course
  - Reading: Syllabus for PSC 202
- <http://www.simonweschle.com/psc202>

# STUDENT HOURS

- Mondays 1:00-3:00
  - Can chose in person (332 Eggers) or Zoom (info on syllabus)
  - Or by appointment (email me)
  - Your chance to talk to me about course material, college in general, or just to chat

# TALK TO ME

- If you experience any hardship that interferes with your academics, please get in touch with me
  - I'll work with you. I can almost always help in some way (or I know someone who can help)
  - You do not have to reveal personal details to me

# TALK TO ME

- Please talk to me as early as possible about any issues or questions
  - There's always something that can be done
  - Talk to me as early as possible, harder to do something after the fact
  - If you ask yourself whether you should talk to me, talk to me

# TEXTBOOK

- Pollock, Philip H. and Barry C. Edwards. 2020. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 6th Edition. CQ Press.
  - Orange Inclusive Access through Blackboard. Automatically enrolled, costs \$42.35 to rent e-book for 180 days
  - Can opt out until September 11, 11.59PM and purchase it elsewhere
  - Other readings on Blackboard

# TEXTBOOK

PSC.202.M100.FALL23.Intro to Political Analysis 11091.1241 Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access Edit Mode is: ON

Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access

Build Content Assessments Tools Partner Content

Announcements

Info, Slides, etc.

Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access

Non-Textbook Readings

Assignments

Tools

Orange Inclusive Access

A screenshot of a learning management system interface. The top navigation bar shows the course code "PSC.202.M100.FALL23.Intro to Political Analysis 11091.1241", the title "Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access", and an "Edit Mode is: ON" button. Below the navigation is a sidebar with course navigation items: Announcements, Info, Slides, etc., Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access (highlighted with a red arrow), Non-Textbook Readings, Assignments, and Tools. The main content area displays the "Textbook: Orange Inclusive Access" section, which includes a file icon and the text "Orange Inclusive Access". The interface has a clean, modern design with a light gray background and dark blue header elements.

# GRADES

- 10%: Class Participation
  - Quizzes (covers lecture and readings). Posted after lecture and due before next lecture
  - Other varied things
- 45%: 3 Exams
  - Oct 4, Nov 8, Dec 11
- 20%: (Roughly) weekly problem sets
  - Posted Fridays (after section), due Friday week after

# GRADES

- **5%:** Final problem set
  - Longer problem set that pulls together material from whole class
  - due during finals period
- **20%:** Section
  - Attendance and participation

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Will be regular part of our lives
- We'll use it to support and enhance our work
- But: You need a basic understanding of the task at hand
  - Otherwise you won't know how to ask the right questions to the AI
  - You won't know when it tells you things that are wrong
- College (and this class) is all about getting a basic understanding of things
  - Using AI to do your assignments is convenient in the short run, but to your detriment in long run

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- We read ~100 problem sets every week
- We know what an AI answer sounds like
- We can also compare what you write in your problem sets to what you write in your exams
- I reserve the right to call you into my office to quiz you about the content of your problem sets

# SECTIONS

- **Hands-on experience with research process**
- **TAs**
  - **Aysenur Deger**
  - **Xiaoxia Huang**

# SCHEDULING STUFF

- No class on Wednesday
- No sections on Friday
  - Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, Los Angeles
- No class next Monday
  - Labor Day
- Next class: Next week Wednesday
- Sections start next week Friday

# SYLLABUS

- **For all kinds of details, read the syllabus**
  - **Read the parts “Main Things to Know” and “More Details on Important Things”**
  - **No really, read them carefully...**
  - **You do not need to read the several pages of legalese that the university makes me put on the syllabus**