

Ecological Analytics with R

Location: Harvard Forest, Fisher Museum

Instructor: Matthew Lau (<http://people.fas.harvard.edu/~matthewklau>)

Goal: Students will learn how to use the R programming language for ecological analyses and gain experience:

- Managing analytical aspects of a project
- Inputting, manipulating and exporting data
- Statistical functions
- Plotting data patterns
- Coding and software best practices
- Getting more help, experience and practice

Although statistics will be introduced very briefly, this will not be a statistics class.

Pre-requisites: experience with using basic computer software

Required Materials: laptop or access to some computing device

No laptop? You can borrow a Harvard Forest laptop (contact Manisha Patel)

Class Schedule

June 1 (Monday)

7:45-8PM: brief intro to ecological analyses.

- Why program?
- Brief introduction to project management
- Connect to syllabus and course materials

June 2 (Tuesday)

Before Class

- Connect to Harvard Forest wireless
- Install R on your computer: <http://lib.stat.cmu.edu/R/CRAN/>*
- Download the example project: <https://github.com/HarvardForest/myProject/archive/master.zip>

9-10AM: Analytics and programming basics

- Analytics project framework
- Operations
- Objects
- Functions
- Scripting and annotation (Save Our Source!)
- Setting the working directory

Post-Class Challenge

- What's the area of a square with a side = 10 cm?
- What's the circumference of a circle with diameter 10 cm?

****June 4 (Thursday)***

9-10AM: Data, Data and more Data! - Entering data by hand - Manipulating vectors (sorting, ordering) - Manipulating matrices (sorting, appending) - Inputting data (read.csv, read.table) - Advanced data = lists

Post-Class Challenge

- How does a circle's circumference change as its diameter changes?
- Find a cool equation and play with it in R (e.g. $E=mc^2$)!

June 9 (Tuesday)

9-10AM: Analysis

- Overview of data visualization
- Calculating basic statistics (mean and variance)
- Writing your own functions (se: input, process, output)
- What are packages? (e.g., *ggplot*)
- Barplot with error bars

Post-Class Challenge

- Create a plot of how a circle's circumference changes as its diameter changes.

June 16 (Tuesday)

9-10AM: Best Practices and Some Advanced Topics

- Organizing code
- Getting data from the HF archives
- Loops and applies
- Versioning with github
- Simulating data (runif and rnorm)
- Data and software ethics
- Data provenance
- The Hackathon

Post-Class Challenge

- Find and analyze an HF dataset

Readings and Resources

- R Cheat Sheet – <http://cran.r-project.org/doc/contrib/Short-refcard.pdf>
- Version Control – <https://help.github.com/articles/good-resources-for-learning-git-and-github>
- Code for America – <https://www.codeforamerica.org>
- Learning Statistics
- *Primer of Ecological Statistics* by Ellison and Gotelli
- *The Ecological Detective* by Hillborn and Mangel