Instructions for installing and learning Python

**1. Installing python**

There are many ways you can install Python and the libraries required for this class, depending on your system and experience with command-line tools. **We will be using Python 2.7!** There is python 3.x, but many packages are not supported in that version, and others are not supported in older versions of python.

The easiest is to use the Enthought distribution (<http://www.enthought.com/products/epd.php>), which has nearly all of the packages required for the class

Another is to install python (<http://www.python.org/getit/>), and then install pip (a package installer; Mac: <http://www.pidby.com/2009/07/installing-pip-and-ipython-on-mac.html>; Windows: <http://stackoverflow.com/questions/4750806/how-to-install-pip-on-windows>)

From there you need to be sure you have all of the packages required for the class. To test a package, simply start python (you’ll see this prompt: >>>) and type import [*package name*]. If it does not give you an error, you have the package installed.

Packages:

* numpy
* scipy
* matplotlib
* pandas
* mechanize
* beautifulsoup
* python-twitter
* boto
* json

**2. Learning the basics**

Once installation of Python and the associated packages is complete, go through Chapters 2-4 in Dive Into Python, a free online tutorial

<http://www.diveintopython.net/toc/index.html>

**3. Practice the basics**

When ready, try your hand at CheckIO, a game for learning Python

<http://www.checkio.org/>