

AMS 595: Fundamentals of Computing: Part II

Lecture 5: Scripts and Modules; Debugging and Testing

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Python Scripts

- Python scripts have suffix “.py”
- Scripts can use any control flow, contain function definitions, and its own docstring
- You can create and edit Python scripts using
 - ▶ any text editor with syntax highlighting (e.g., [vi](#) or [emacs](#) on UNIX),
 - ▶ IDE environment (such as [Spyder](#) or [PyCharm](#)), or
 - ▶ an online editor (e.g., [Jupyter notebook](#))
- You can run Python script in different ways
 - ▶ In IPython: `%run test.py`
 - ▶ In UNIX shell or Windows command prompt: `python test.py`
 - ▶ To run script as standalone program:
 - ★ set the file's executable bit using “`chmod a+x test.py`”
 - ★ make the first line

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
```
- Practice
 - ▶ Copy and paste [this code](#) into editor, save it, and run it in Linux shell
 - ▶ For quick start with editors, see these cheat sheets: [vi](#) and [emacs](#)

Interaction with UNIX Shell

- Standalone scripts may take command-line arguments via `sys.argv`
 - ▶ `sys.argv` is a list of strings
 - ▶ `sys.argv[0]` is command name
- To prompt user to type at runtime, use
`input(' message ')`
- Use `sys.exit(code)` to return error code back to UNIX system
- Practice
 - ▶ Copy and paste [the code](#) into an editor and save it as `test_argv.py`
 - ▶ Set its executable bit, run it in Linux shell using command
`./test_argv.py 123 abc def "abc def"`
 - ▶ Run UNIX command “`echo $?`” to see error code
- For quick start with Linux, see [this cheat sheet](#)

Python Modules

- Objects can be organized into modules
 - ▶ Objects can be variables, functions, and classes (later)
 - ▶ Modules improve *modularity* for better organization of large programs
 - ▶ Modules improve *reusability* of codes
- Python modules are similarly to scripts, but can be imported by other codes
- A module has its own namespace, and needs to be imported
- Note: Modules are cached
 - ▶ If you modify a module and re-import it in the old session, you will get the old one
 - ▶ To reload module in Python3, run
 - ★ `import importlib`
 - ★ `importlib.reload(demo)`
- Practice:
 - ▶ Copy and paste [this code](#) into an editor and save it as `demo.py`
 - ▶ In IPython, try commands `import demo`; `demo?`; `dir(demo)`; `demo.print_a()`; `demo.print_b()`

Scripts or Modules?

- Rule of thumb
 - ▶ Sets of instructions that are called several times should be written inside functions for better code reusability
 - ▶ Functions (or other bits of code) that are called from several scripts should be written inside a module, so that only the module is imported in the different scripts (do not copy-and-paste your functions in the different scripts!)
- A module can also be a script itself
 - ▶ Put statements other than variable/function/class definitions within block enclosed with

```
if __name__ == '__main__':
```
 - ▶ It is particularly useful to embed test scripts for the module in the file
- Practice:
 - ▶ Copy and paste [this code](#) into an editor and save it as demo2.py
 - ▶ Try `import demo` and `%run demo2` in IPython

Interactive Debugger

- Command-line debugger: [pdb](#), similar to gdb for C/C++

- ▶ Start up in command-line:

```
python -m pdb test.py <args>
```

- ▶ Useful commands:

- ★ run, next, step, break

- ★ where, up, down

- ★ p <expression>, display <expression>

- ▶ Another common use is to insert the statements

```
import pdb; pdb.set_trace()
```

to Python code where you want to break into pdb

- Use [Spyder](#) to debug, which has integrated GUI support for pdb

- ▶ Use menu items to specify command-line arguments
- ▶ Double-click on line number to set breakpoints
- ▶ Use icons to use run/debug, next, step, etc.
- ▶ Use variable explorer to inspect or change variables

Search Path and Directories of Modules

- When import statement is executed, modules are searched in:
 - ▶ installation-dependent default path (e.g., /usr/lib/python)
 - ▶ list of directories specified by environment variable PYTHONPATH
- List of directories searched by Python is given by `sys.path` variable
- To modify search path:
 - ▶ In UNIX, add following to `~/.bashrc` (assuming you use bash)

```
export PYTHONPATH=$PYTHONPATH:/user/defined/path
```
 - ▶ or append path to `sys.path` variable within Python script

```
import sys
new_path = '/home/username/user_defined_modules'
if new_path not in sys.path:
    sys.path.append(new_path)
```
- Modules can also be organized into a *package*
 - ▶ Package is a directory containing `__init__.py` file
 - ▶ Package can have subpackages (subdirectories with `__init__.py` file)
 - ▶ For example, `numpy`, `scipy`, `scipy.ndimage` are all packages