Stanford CME 241 Winter 2026 - Assignment 0
due Sunday, January 11th @ 11:59 PM

1. Make sure you have access to the course Canvas and Ed Discussion pages (email Catherine Chen if you do not)

2. Install/Setup LaTeX/Markdown for technical writing and Python 3 for coding (optionally Jupyter, if you prefer working with .ipynb instead of plain .py).

3. *Fork* the Code Repo associated with the RLForFinanceBook and get set up to write code (for future assignments) that uses classes/functions from this code repo, see below. Choose your favorite IDE or text editor.

4. Create clearly-named directories for assignments and the course project for the Course Assistant (Catherine Chen) to review and grade - each team of up to 3 (who submits together) should send Catherine their forked repo URL and *git push* their work by the due dates (to their forked repo).[1]

5. **Optionally**, you can create the same virtual environment I use and replicate my dependencies with the following instructions:

   - After forking the repo on your laptop, create a virtual environment with the following shell command (from the RL-book directory):

     ```
     $ python3 -m venv .venv
     ```

   - Then, each time you're working on this project, make sure to activate the venv with the following shell command (again, from the RL-book directory):

     ```
     $ source .venv/bin/activate
     ```

   - Once the venv is activated, you should see a (.venv) in your shell prompt
   - Now you can use pip to install dependencies inside the venv, for example:

     ```
     (.venv) $ pip install matplotlib
     ```

   - Initially, you can install every Python package you need to work this git repo with the following shell command (again, from the RL-book directory):

     ```
     (.venv) $ pip install -r requirements.txt
     ```

   - To work with the appropriate file paths of the Python files in this repo from the RL-book directory, execute the following command from the RL-book directory (this creates a package):

     ```
     (.venv) $ pip install -e .
     ```

   - To make sure you are all good, verify with the following command from the RL-book directory:

     ```
     (.venv) $ python -m unittest discover
     ```

     If all is good, you should see an "OK" on the last line of the output upon running this command.
   - Some installations (e.g. Python 3.10) may run into build errors. Please check Ed for updated requirements.txt files or contact the Course Assistant if failures continue.

[1] We expect teams formed for assignments to remain consistent throughout the quarter. If issues arise, let us know.