Week Seven Reading Notes

Welcome to Week 7! Those of you who struggled with the lectures on object-oriented programming will likely be pleasantly surprised with this week's lectures on plotting and simulations. The contents are important, but presented at a style matching the first part of the course (that is to say, in a *functional programming* style).

The materials in weeks 1 through 6 focused on new ideas in the Python programming language. At this point, you've now learned pretty much all the basics of Python programming (and programming in general!) The topics in the remainder of this course will be computer science topics. You may find this shift in focus a bit jarring, but keep in mind that 6.00x's official title is "Introduction to **Computer Science** and Programming".

In the following weeks you will be exposed to many different Computer Science topics. Think of this section of the course as a survey – many different ideas will be explored, giving you a taste of what CS is all about. And at the conclusion of this course, you may have a good idea of what other edX courses you might be interested in – Stats? Computer graphics? AI? – because you've been exposed to these ideas in 6.00x and will be prepared to dive further into a specific topic.

Be aware that Lecture Sequence 12 contains a video segment and some exercises on parameter passing in Python. It is a bit of a tangent and not directly related to the material on plotting. It is included because it is important to understand that calls to some of the procedures have optional parameters. Further you will be seeing the ideas of parameter passing and default keywords in videos from here on out. You will also see default keywords when you read the Pylab documentation, so we wanted to include these exercises so that you would not be unduly confused by these concepts.

Later this week, there will be some extra, optional assignments (to be found in the Wiki) to explore the data set that we, the Spring 2013 6.00x class, have generated concerning our favorite things. First things first, though. Listen to the lectures and work on the exercises and problem set. Then, we can have some fun exploring our favorite things.

To those who have made it this far in the course: congratulations! Now it is time to see what can be done with your shiny new Python programming skills.

-Larry Rudolph