```
# lines is a list of plt.Line2D instances
plt.legend(lines[:2], ['first', 'second']);
```

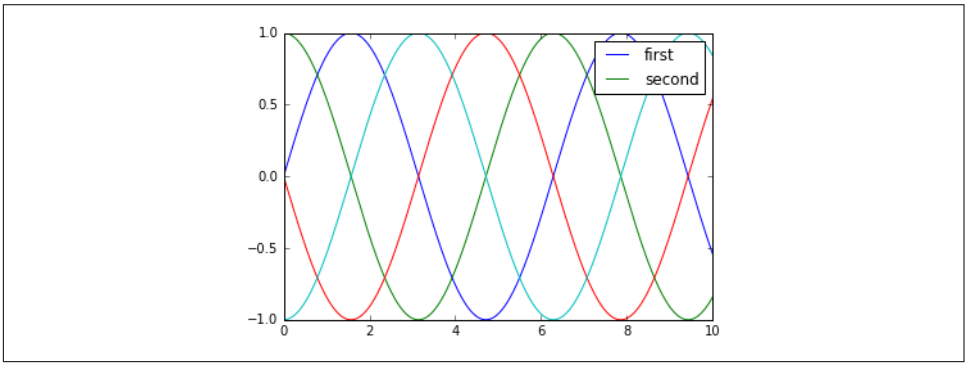

Figure 4-45. Customization of legend elements

I generally find in practice that it is clearer to use the first method, applying labels to the plot elements you'd like to show on the legend (Figure 4-46):

```
In[8]: plt.plot(x, y[:, 0], label='first')
       plt.plot(x, y[:, 1], label='second')
       plt.plot(x, y[:, 2:])
       plt.legend(framealpha=1, frameon=True);
```

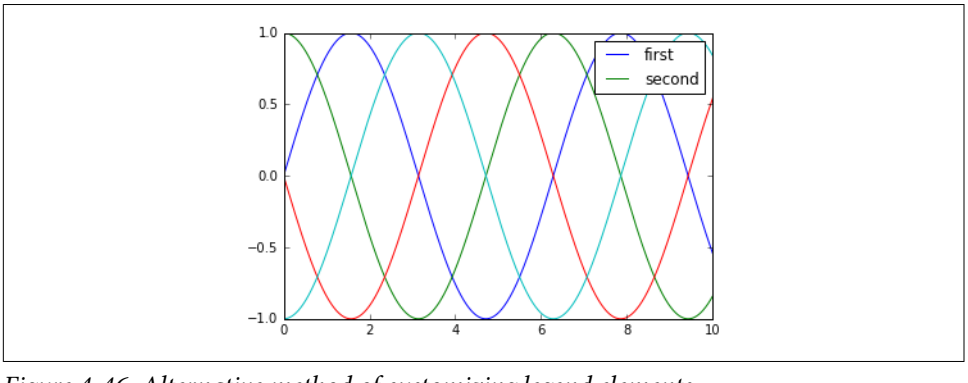

Figure 4-46. Alternative method of customizing legend elements

Notice that by default, the legend ignores all elements without a `label` attribute set.

Legend for Size of Points

Sometimes the legend defaults are not sufficient for the given visualization. For example, perhaps you're using the size of points to mark certain features of the data, and want to create a legend reflecting this. Here is an example where we'll use the size of points to indicate populations of California cities. We'd like a legend that specifies the

scale of the sizes of the points, and we'll accomplish this by plotting some labeled data with no entries (Figure 4-47):

```
In[9]: import pandas as pd
       cities = pd.read_csv('data/california_cities.csv')

       # Extract the data we're interested in
       lat, lon = cities['latd'], cities['longd']
       population, area = cities['population_total'], cities['area_total_km2']

       # Scatter the points, using size and color but no label
       plt.scatter(lon, lat, label=None,
                   c=np.log10(population), cmap='viridis',
                   s=area, linewidth=0, alpha=0.5)
       plt.axis(aspect='equal')
       plt.xlabel('longitude')
       plt.ylabel('latitude')
       plt.colorbar(label='log$_{10}$(population)')
       plt.clim(3, 7)

       # Here we create a legend:
       # we'll plot empty lists with the desired size and label
       for area in [100, 300, 500]:
           plt.scatter([], [], c='k', alpha=0.3, s=area,
                       label=str(area) + ' km$^2$')
       plt.legend(scatterpoints=1, frameon=False,
                  labelspacing=1, title='City Area')

       plt.title('California Cities: Area and Population');
```

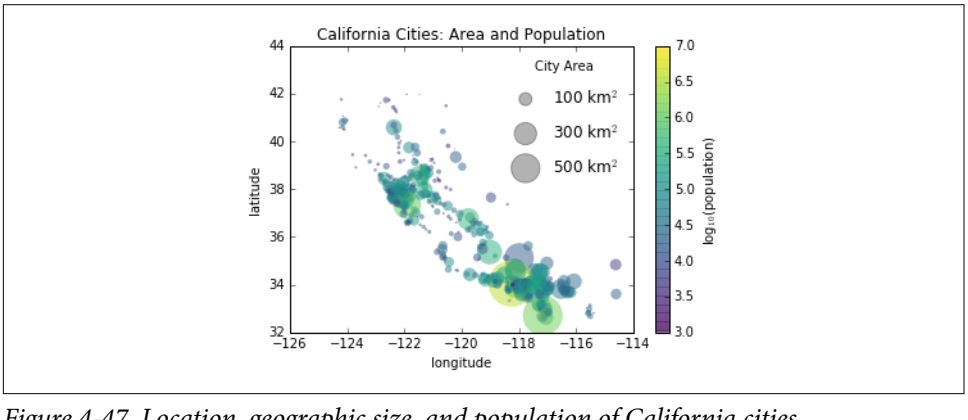

Figure 4-47. Location, geographic size, and population of California cities

The legend will always reference some object that is on the plot, so if we'd like to display a particular shape we need to plot it. In this case, the objects we want (gray circles) are not on the plot, so we fake them by plotting empty lists. Notice too that the legend only lists plot elements that have a label specified.

By plotting empty lists, we create labeled plot objects that are picked up by the legend, and now our legend tells us some useful information. This strategy can be useful for creating more sophisticated visualizations.

Finally, note that for geographic data like this, it would be clearer if we could show state boundaries or other map-specific elements. For this, an excellent choice of tool is Matplotlib's Basemap add-on toolkit, which we'll explore in "Geographic Data with Basemap" on page 298.

Multiple Legends

Sometimes when designing a plot you'd like to add multiple legends to the same axes. Unfortunately, Matplotlib does not make this easy: via the standard `legend` interface, it is only possible to create a single legend for the entire plot. If you try to create a second legend using `plt.legend()` or `ax.legend()`, it will simply override the first one. We can work around this by creating a new legend artist from scratch, and then using the lower-level `ax.add_artist()` method to manually add the second artist to the plot (Figure 4-48):

```
In[10]: fig, ax = plt.subplots()

        lines = []
        styles = ['-', '--', '-.', ':']
        x = np.linspace(0, 10, 1000)

        for i in range(4):
            lines += ax.plot(x, np.sin(x - i * np.pi / 2),
                             styles[i], color='black')
        ax.axis('equal')

        # specify the lines and labels of the first legend
        ax.legend(lines[:2], ['line A', 'line B'],
                  loc='upper right', frameon=False)

        # Create the second legend and add the artist manually.
        from matplotlib.legend import Legend
        leg = Legend(ax, lines[2:], ['line C', 'line D'],
                     loc='lower right', frameon=False)
        ax.add_artist(leg);
```