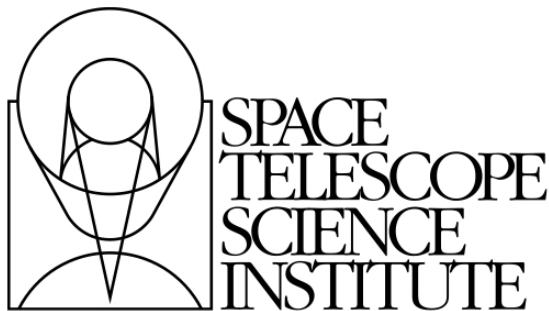

Version 4.0
September 2013

Using Python for Astronomical Data Analysis

This is an unofficial document for internal RIAB training purposes only.



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Revision History

Version	Date	Editor and Contributors
5.0	June 2014	Katie GOSMEYER, Heather GUNNING, Matthew BOURQUE
4.0	September 2013	Justin ELY, Thompson LEBLANC
3.0	January 2012	Rachel ANDERSON
2.0	October 2009	Sami-Matias NIEMI
1.0	September 2008	Alex VIANA

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Basic Python Concepts

1.1 Introduction

Python is a free, open-source, high level interpreted scripting language, similar to PERL. However, Python is also a high-level object-oriented programming language, much like C++, Java, and Ruby.

The intention of this tutorial is to provide the Python basics to understand how to perform simple astronomical data analysis.

We will discuss how to write and run Python scripts in Chapter 6. Until then we will use python interactively, which is best for learning python and for checking your code as you write it.

1.1.1 A Few Notes on Python

- Python is case sensitive. This turns out not to be that difficult as Python is almost always written in lowercase.
- Python does not have ‘BEGIN’ and ‘END’ statements. It does however depend on indents. It is best practice to indent with four spaces.

- Comments in code are useful to help you remember what is going on, but also so that others know what you are doing. In Python, comments begin with the # symbol. Multi-line comments can be nested in three quotes.
- The line continuation symbol ‘\’ can be used to spread a command out over multiple lines. This is not necessary inside parenthesis, brackets, or curly brackets as Python will wait for the closing symbol before assuming the end of the line.
- Python indices start with zero.

1.2 Environment and Set Up

1.2.1 SSB Environment

There are three different versions of the SSB (Science Software Branch) environments available at the institute. They are:

- SSBREL – Updated as needed, standard publicly available release.
- SSBX – Updated weekly, a testing environment. Holds latest bug fixes and updates. Institute only release.
- SSBDEV – Updated daily. Development updates intended for instrument teams to test bug fixes and upgrades. Institute only release.

Note that the version of Python related modules depend on the SSB environment, especially if you are using NFS mounts. To switch to a particular version, type one of the following into your terminal:

```
>> ur_setup common ssbrel  
>> ur_setup common ssbx  
>> ur_setup common ssbdev
```

1.2.2 Interactive Python Environment

You will need to choose an interactive Python environment. There are two popular options.

- Python:
To start the Python interactive environment, just type ‘python’ at the prompt in your terminal.
- iPython:
To use the iPython interactive environment, type ‘ipython’ instead. The advantage of iPython is that besides Python code, you are also able to execute UNIX commands such as ‘ls’ and ‘cp’. Furthermore, you can also log your session. To start the log, type ‘%logstart’ in your iPython shell. This will start logging into a default file named ipython.log.py. The log-file follows a formatting convention of iPython and may not, on a first glance, look readable. However, iPython knows how to repeat the commands in your log-file when ran.
 - iPython Notebook:
iPython Notebook can be called in the terminal by adding ‘notebook’ after ipython. The notebook is an interactive web based interface. It combines code, text, math, plots, and rich media into a single document with all the functionality of ipython.

To exit either, type ‘exit()’. Only once do we use the shell command ‘cp’, for which you would need to use iPython (or just do it in the UNIX shell). Otherwise either environment would work.

1.3 Built-In Data Types

The principal built-in types of Python are numerics, sequences, mappings, files, classes, instances and exceptions. Other data types are available through importing modules (Example: the datetime module).

There are four distinct numeric types in Python: plain integers, long integers, floating point numbers, and complex numbers. In addition, Booleans are a subtype of plain integers. Python fully supports mixed arithmetic: when a binary arithmetic operator has operands of different numeric types, the operand with the “smaller” type is widened to that of the other. Example:

```
python> a = 2.0
python> b = 3
python> a * b
```

Any Python object can be tested for truth value with *in*, *if* or *while* condition or as an operand of the Boolean operations. Python supports a vast number of truth values, but for simplicity I recommend using *True* and *False*. General Boolean operations *or*, *and*, and *not* are also supported. Comparison operations are supported by all objects. They all have the same priority, which is higher than that of the Boolean operations. In Python, comparisons are done with

characters e.g. <, >=, ==, != (not like in IDL, where comparisons are done with shortened keywords e.g. *eq*).

Examples of some of the most common data types are below.

- **File:**

```
python> infile = open('PythonTraining.pdf')
python> infile.name
python> infile.readline()
python> infile.close()
```

- **Integer:**

```
python> a = 1
python> a == 1
python> a.denominator
```

- **Float:**

```
python> a = 2.0
```

- **String:**

```
python> a = 'three'
python> infile = 'infile.fits'
python> outfile = infile.replace('.fits', '_DidWork.fits')
python> 'Outfile: ', outfile
```

- **Tuple:** An immutable list; elements can be of any data type.

```
python> a = (1, 2, 3)
python> a = (1, 2.0, 'three')
```

- **List:** A mutable list; elements can be of any data type.

```
python> a = [1, 2, 3]
python> b = [1, 2.0, 'three']
python> mylist = []
python> mylist.append(3)
python> print mylist
python> mylist = [1, 2, 3, 4]
python> len(mylist)
python> yourlist = [5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
python> mylist + yourlist
python> mylist.append(yourlist)
python> print mylist
```

Notice that appending a list just adds one more element to 'mylist', and this element is of type list (remember, an element in a list can be of any type).

- Dictionary: A mapping which stores objects by a ‘key’ and not position. Below we show an example of a dictionary, and a dictionary of dictionaries. We could also create a dictionary of lists.

```
python> a = {1:'one', 2:'two', 3:'three'}
python> galaxy_dict = {}
python> galaxy_dict
python> galaxy_dict['M31'] = {'RA':'00 42 44.33',
...      'DEC':'+41 16 07.5', 'Vmag':3.44, 'nickname':'Andromeda'}
python> galaxy_dict
python> galaxy_dict['M104'] = {'RA':'12 39 59.43185',
...      'DEC': '-11 37 22.9954', 'Vmag':3.44, 'nickname':'Sombrero'}
python> galaxy_dict.keys()
python> galaxy_dict['M31'].keys()
python> galaxy_dict['M31']['Vmag']
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 1 :

Create a dictionary with strings as the keys.

1.4 Objects, Instances, Attributes, Functions, and Methods,

Python is an object oriented programming language and before we go any further, it is important to note the differences and uses of objects, instances, attributes, functions, and methods.

- Objects:
Data carriers that also carry functions and attributes that work on that data. In Section 1.3, integers, floats, lists, tuples, and dictionaries are all objects.
- Instance:
In Section 1.3 when we said `galaxy_dict = {}` we created an instance of a dictionary, *galaxy_dict*, while *infile* is an instance of a *file*.
- Attributes:
denominator is an attribute of an instance of a Python integer. Therefore in Section 1.3 we used `a.denominator`. Attributes do not have the ‘()’ like functions do. Also in Section 1.3 we used the file attribute name when we said `infile.name`.
- Functions:
A function is a named piece of code that performs an operation and has open and closed

parenthesis at the end (sometimes with variables inside). `len()` is a function, and in Section 1.3 we pass it the list, *mylist*.

- **Methods:**

A method is a function attached to an object that then has access to all other methods and attributes of that object. Therefore we usually do not have to pass as much information to methods, and methods are easier to read. All methods are functions, but not all functions are methods. For example, in Section 1.3, after we created the instance *mylist*, we append a number to that list using the method `append()` with the line `mylist.append(3)`. In Section 1.3 we also used the methods `readline()` and `close()` which belong to the file class.

Notice that we use dot notation to call an attribute or a method of a particular instance. As we will see in Section 1.7, dot notation will also be used to call a method or a function from a particular module.

1.5 Double Underscore

In Python you will notice certain names beginning and ending with double underscores. These names are used for attributes and methods that are used or created by the interpreter (for a discussion on the definition of attributes and methods see Section 1.4). Examples include:

- `__file__` : an attribute automatically created by the interpreter
- `__add__` : an attribute with special meaning to the interpreter
- `__init__` : a method implicitly called by the interpreter, defined by the programmer

We will see examples of a few of these in Chapter 6.

1.6 Common Built-In Functions and Statements

For a complete list of Python built-in modules, see <http://docs.python.org/library/index.html>, also listed in Chapter 8. Below we provide descriptions of some of the most useful functions and statements.

1.6.1 print function

USE

The print function performs formatted output.

EXAMPLES

```
python> a = 3
python> print a
python> b = 2
python> print a + b
python> print a / b
python> b = 2.
python> print a / b
python> c = 'hi'
python> print c + ' there'
python> print 'I brought home {} flowers for \
...    ${} and all she said was {}'.format(a,b+0.5,c)
```

This last statement is a bit more complicated. The '{}' symbol says to insert a variable from one of the arguments we give at the end. In the brackets we could specify data type, or which variable (0, 1, or 2), but we left it as default, which just takes the next argument in line. Notice the float does not print out exactly as we want. We would rather it say \$2.50. Try this:

```
python> print 'I brought home {} flowers for ${:.2f} and all \
...she said was {}'.format(a, b+0.5, c)
```

In this last example the 'f' stands for 'float', and the '.2' says to include two decimal places. For more information see:

<http://docs.python.org/library/string.html#formatstrings>.

EXERCISES

Exercise 2 :

Print out your own creative sentence.

1.6.2 help() function

USE

The help() function gives the user information on many aspects of the current Python session. Type 'q' to quit.

EXAMPLES

```
python> a = 3
python> help(a)
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 3 :

Type 'help()' and explore the options.

1.6.3 range() function

USE

The `range()` function creates a list starting at zero of the length you give it. You may also pass the start, stop, and the step you want to use (default of the step is 1).

EXAMPLES

```
python> range(4)
python> range(2, 8, 2)
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar functions in NumPy (Chapter 2) are `numpy.linspace`.

1.6.4 dir() function

USE

The `dir()` function returns the methods and attributes of an object.

EXAMPLES

```
python> a = range(10)
python> dir(a)
```

1.6.5 len() function

USE

The `len()` function returns the number of elements contained in an expression or variable.

EXAMPLES

```
python> a = range(11)
python> len(a)
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar functions in NumPy (Chapter 2) are `numpy.shape`, `numpy.size`.

1.6.6 for loop

USE

The `for` statement is used to execute one or more statements repeatedly, while incrementing or decrementing a variable with each repetition, until a condition is met.

EXAMPLES

```
python> a = range(11)
python> for x in a: print x
python> c = ['2005', '2006', '2007']
python> for x in c: print x + '-01'
python> b = [x*2 for x in a] #Create a list in one line
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar statements are `if...elif...else`, `while`.

EXERCISES

Exercise 4 :

Create a vector with 10 values equal to the square of the index.

Exercise 5 :

Create the following sequence using a `for` statement: 2001-01-01, 2001-02-01, 2001-03-01, 2001-04-01.

1.6.7 xrange() function

USE

The `xrange()` function is similar to `range()` except that it does not create a new list (saving on memory) but instead acts as a generator of numbers starting at zero up to the stop value you pass

it. You may also pass the start, stop, and the step you want to use (default of the step is 1). This is used in iterations.

EXAMPLES

```
python> for x in xrange(3): print x, x ** 2
```

Within a function, the `for` statement has the following simple structure:

```
python> for x in xrange(1, 7):  
...     a = x * 3.  
...     print a
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar statements are `range`.

Notice that we use `range()` when we use the actual list created, but `xrange()` when we just need an iterator.

1.6.8 try ... except statement

USE

The `try ... except` statement is used as an error handler. It will try whatever we put in the `try` block, but if whatever you assign as the ‘error’ occurs, it will go to the `except` block.

EXAMPLES

Try this code below. Notice the error message you get.

```
python> a = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]  
python> for i in xrange(len(a)):  
...     a[i + 1] = 100 + a[i]  
...     print a[i], a[i + 1]
```

To solve this problem, we put it in a `try ... except` statement:

```
python> a = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]  
python> for i in xrange(len(a)):  
...     try:  
...         a[i + 1] = 100 + a[i]
```



```
...         print a[i], a[i + 1]
...     except IndexError:
...         print 'This index does not work: ', i + 1
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 6 :

Imagine a situation where your code passes a function a variable, and that variable might be zero. The only problem is that this function divides by that variable.

Write a simple loop which calculates $1/n$, where n is what is passed. What happens if $n = 0$? Write an error handling for this loop (hint: use try ... except statement with `ZeroDivisionError`).

1.7 Importing Modules, and Common Functions

Python's built-in functions are limited. The diversity of Python's abilities come when we import modules. The following syntax can be used:

```
python> import <module>
python> from <module> import <function_in_module>
python> import <module> as <short_name>
```

1.7.1 math.sqrt() function

USE

If we want to take the square root of a number, we could use the function `sqrt()` in the module `math`. The following is two examples of how to do this:

EXAMPLES

```
python> import math
python> math.sqrt(100)
```

Notice we did not need the `.py` extension. If we do not need any other `math` module, and we know we will not name a variable `sqrt` and overwrite the function, we can do this:

```
python> from math import sqrt
python> sqrt(100)
```

1.7.2 glob.glob() function

USE

The `glob.glob()` function searches for files that match the given path-name. The path-name you give is a string similar to the search strings used for the UNIX/Linux 'ls'.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import glob
python> glob.glob('*')
python> glob.glob('*.pdf')
python> datadir = '/Users/username/data/' #insert a usable path
python> glob.glob(datadir + 'MIR*12-03*ref??.fits')
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 7 :

Search for a set of files on your desktop.

1.7.3 random.random() function

USE

The `random.random()` function returns a random floating point number in the range [0.0, 1.0).

EXAMPLES

```
python> import random
python> random.random()
python> print 'My random number between 2 and 8: ', \
...      2 + (8-2) * random.random()
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar statements are `random.uniform()`, `random.gaus()`.

1.7.4 re.search() function

USE

The `re` module is for 'Regular Expression' operations. It is used to work with strings, including sophisticated pattern matching, as in the case of `re.search()`.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import re
python> m = re.search('(?!<=_)\d+', 'MIRI_2011.fits')
python> m.group(0)
```

In the above example we are looking for digits following an underscore, ‘_’. The ‘\d’ is for digit, and the ‘+’ is for one or more. The ‘(?!<= ...)’ matches if the position in the string is preceded by ‘...’.

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar statements are `re.match()`.

1.7.5 `os.getcwd()` and `os.chdir()` functions

USE

The `os` module is for ‘Operating System’ operations. Examples include `os.getcwd()` which returns the current working directory and `os.chdir()` which changes the current working directory.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import os
python> datadir = '/Users/username/data/' #insert a usable path
python> mydir = os.getcwd()
python> if (mydir != datadir): os.chdir(datadir)
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar statements are `os.open()`, `os.close()`.

1.7.6 `sys.exit()` function

USE

The `sys` module is for system-specific parameters and functions. It provides a way to interact with the interpreter. `sys.exit()` is different than `exit()` in that it will honor try statements and you can intercept the exit attempt.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import sys
python> for i in xrange(10):
...     if i <= 5:
```

```
...         continue
...     else:
...         sys.exit('We do not need a number above 5.')
```

2

NumPy and Data Arrays

2.1 The Uses of NumPy

NumPy is a Python module which adds support for large, multi-dimensional arrays and matrices, along with a large library of high-level mathematical functions to operate on these arrays. NumPy addresses the problems of speed in interpreting languages by providing multi-dimensional arrays and lots of functions and operators that operate on arrays. Any algorithm that can be expressed primarily as operations on arrays and matrices can run almost as fast as the equivalent C code.

2.1.1 NumPy's array vs. Python's built-in list

NumPy introduces new data types, but the most popular, versatile, and useful one is the array. This is similar to arrays in IDL. There are several reasons why you would want to use a NumPy array over Python's built-in list.

- NumPy, PyLab, SciPy, PyFITS and other modules' functions often work with NumPy arrays.

- Every item in a NumPy array is of the same data type. This means there is less information to keep track of which makes array computations faster.
- NumPy arrays act as vectors and therefore we can do things such as element-wise addition and multiplication.

To convert a list to an array, use `numpy.array()`.

2.1.2 `numpy.array()` function

USE

The `numpy.array()` function converts a list to a NumPy array.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import numpy as np
python> a = [1,2,3,4]          #a python built in list
python> b = np.array(a)        #converted to a NumPy array
python> print a
python> print b
python> indx = [1,2]
python> print b[indx]
python> print b[1:3]           #prints elements 1 to 2, NOT 1 to 3.
python> print b[:3], b[3:]    #prints up to the 3rd element, \
...    and then everything after the 3rd element.
python> print b[-1],b[-2]
python> print b[::-1]          #reverses the array.
python> c = np.array([[1,2,3,4,5],[6,7,8,9,10]])
python> print c
python> print c[1,3]           #indices for a multi-dimensional array
python> print c[1][3]          #this is slower than the previous as it \
...    creates a new array, $c[1]$, and then subscripts that array.
python> print c[1,:]           #print the first element in the first \
...    dimension, but all in the second dimension
python> print c[:,1]
```

Notice when we print lists and arrays that the elements in lists are separated by commas while the elements in arrays are only separated by spaces.

EXERCISES

Exercise 8 :

Create a list a and a NumPy array b . Multiply each by 2 and explain what happens. Now add 2 to each array. Again, explain the result.

Exercise 9 :

Create a third list c . Add c to both a and b . Explain the result.

2.2 What a NumPy array really is and a word of caution

A final note about NumPy arrays is that an array is actually an object which points to a block of memory. For example, in the above exercise we created an array b . Try the following:

```
python> d = b
```

Now we just created a second array, d . Instead of using up twice the memory space, d is just a pointer to the memory b also points to (remember, we copied an array, and an array is a pointer). Again, try the following:

```
python> d[2] = 999
python> print d
python> print b
```

Notice what happened to b . While it saves on memory space, programmers have to be careful. If you know you will want to change one array and not the other, the correct function to use is `numpy.copy()`.

2.2.1 `numpy.copy()` function

USE

The `numpy.copy()` function copies the contents of the memory space the array points to.

EXAMPLES

Try the code below and notice the difference in the results from a simple $d = b$ assignment.

```
python> import numpy as np
python> a = np.array([1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7])
python> b = a.copy()
python> b[2] = 999
python> print b
```

```
python> print a
python> a.size
python> a.shape
```

2.3 Other Common NumPy Functions

2.3.1 `numpy.arange()` function

USE

The `numpy.arange()` function creates an integer array from zero to the ‘stop’ parameter given, with a step size of one. The ‘start’ and ‘step’ can also be specified. By setting the parameter ‘dtype’ we can change the data type of the array (i.e. to float).

EXAMPLES

```
python> import numpy as np
python> np.arange(10)
python> 1 + np.arange(10, dtype=float) * 4
python> np.arange(1, 40, 4, dtype=float)
```

SEE ALSO

A similar function for lists is `range()`.

EXERCISES

Exercise 10 :

Create the sequence 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, ... 1.4 using `numpy.arange()`. Hint: As noted in the NumPy documentation for `numpy.arange()`, it is best to use integer step sizes.

Exercise 11 :

Create the sequence -3.2, -3.0, -2.8, ... -1.0 using `numpy.arange()`. See above hint.

2.3.2 `numpy.empty()` function

USE

The `numpy.empty()` function creates a float array of the specified dimensions. Each element of the array is whatever was left in that memory space, therefore it is fast but useful only if you know you will assign each element a meaningful value.

EXAMPLES


```
python> import numpy as np
python> np.empty(10)    #pass an argument, which is the dimensions
python> np.empty((3,4)) #here it is 2D, so the dimensions \
...     we pass is a tuple
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar functions are `numpy.zeros()`, `numpy.ones()`.

2.3.3 `numpy.where()` function

USE

The `numpy.where()` function returns an array (or a tuple of arrays) of the indices where the condition is *True*. Otherwise, if you specify substitute values, it will return an array of the same shape as the original with the first value substituted where the condition is *True*, and the second value substituted where the condition is *False*.

EXAMPLES

```
python> import numpy as np
python> a = np.arange(11, dtype=float) + 1
python> b = np.where(a >= 8.)
python> print b
python> a[b]
python> a = np.array([1,2,3,1,2,1,1,1,1,4])
python> b = np.where(a == 1, 1,0)
python> print b
```

If we do not need the indices from `numpy.where()` then we can just use creative indexing for the same effect.

```
python> a > 5
python> a[a>5]
```

SEE ALSO

Other useful similar functions are `numpy.any()`, `numpy.all()`, `numpy.nonzero()`, `numpy.choose()`.

EXERCISES

Exercise 12 :

Create a random real 10-element array with numbers between 0 and 1. Select those with counts lower than 0.5.

Handling FITS files and ASCII data tables using Astropy

Astropy is a python library for astronomy developed by professional astronomers and software developers from around the world, some of which work here at STScI in the Science Software Branch. It is under continuous development and is quickly becoming a powerful library, especially for handling FITS files and ASCII tables. Visit the website listed in Chapter 8 for more information and useful documentation.

The `astropy.io.fits` module provides an interface to FITS formatted files under the Python scripting language. `astropy.io.fits` data structures are a subclass of NumPy arrays, which means that they can use NumPy arrays' methods and attributes. The `astropy.io.ascii` module provides flexible and easy-to-use methods for reading and writing ASCII data tables. In the following sections, we will explore these two modules.

3.1 Opening, Reading, and Closing a FITS File

As an example, we will use data from the *WFC3* instrument located here:

```
/user/gunning/Python_Training/icft01crq_fit.fits
```

Please copy this file to your working directory.

Below we show an example of opening a FITS file, getting the data and the header, closing the file, printing out the shape of the data using `numpy.shape`, printing out header values, and finally making changes to the data.

```
python> from astropy.io import fits
python> infile = 'icft01crq_raw.fits'
python> fits.info(infile)
python> hdulist = fits.open(infile)
python> hdr = hdulist[0].header # Get the primary header
python> data = hdulist[1].data # Get the data from the 1st extension
python> data.shape
python> print hdr
python> hdr['FLSHCORR']
python> hdr['FLSHCORR'] = 'PERFORM'
python> hdr['FLSHCORR']
python> print data[-2:] # Print the last two lines.
python> data[-1:][0][0] = 0
python> print data[-1]
```

Notice that *hdr* behaves like a dictionary. We did some bad things to this file, but let's save it anyway to a new file.

```
python> outfile = 'mybad.fits'
python> fits.writeto(outfile, data, hdr)
python> print 'Saved FITS file to: {}'.format(outfile)
```

Alternatively, if we want to modify the original file directly, we can do the following:

```
python> fits.update(infile, data, 1)
```

As a word of caution, note that `astropy.io.fits` reads in FITS images as (rows, cols) or (y, x), not (x, y). This is often a 'gotcha' for users who are indexing specific areas of the array.

3.2 `fits.getval()` and `fits.setval()` functions

If you are familiar with IRAF/PyRAF, you are probably familiar with IRAF's `hedit` function, which allows you to add, delete, and modify keywords in a FITS header.

First, let's take a look of our example file's header using `imheader` in PyRAF. In PyRAF navigate to the folder where your `icft01crq_raw.fits` file is located, and try the following:

```
--> imheader icft01crq_raw.fits[0] l+ | page
```

We see that there is a 'DARKFILE' keyword, and it is set to 'iref\$y2j13512i_drk.fits.' Say we wanted to recalibrate this file using a different 'DARKFILE'. The value of this keyword can be changed using `hedit`, as shown here:

```
--> hedit icft01crq_raw.fits[0] DARKFILE 'iref$y2p1831ci_drk.fits' \
...      verify=no update=yes
```

In the above example we made sure the 'update' parameter was set to 'yes.' We can check that our edit was successful by using `imheader` again and checking the value of the 'DARKFILE' keyword:

```
--> imheader icft01crq_raw.fits[0] l+ | page
```

Using Python, there is a simple way to do this with `astropy.io.fits` using `fits.getval()` and `fits.setval()`, shown in the example below.

```
python> from astropy.io import fits
python> infile = 'icft01crq_raw.fits[0]'
python> key = 'DARKFILE'
python> fits.getval(infile, key, 0)
python> fits.setval(infile, key, value='iref$y2j13512i_drk.fits', ext=0)
python> fits.getval(infile, key, 0)
```

Now our FITS file is back to its 'initial' state. No harm done.

3.3 Reading and Writing ASCII Data Files

The `astropy.io.ascii` module provides two robust methods, `ascii.read()` and `ascii.write()`, for reading and writing multi-column delimited data tables, respectively.

3.3.1 astropy.io.ascii.read() function

USE

The `astropy.io.ascii.read()` function reads in a table of data from a specified file and returns an `astropy.Table` object.

As an example, we will use these files:

```
/user/gunning/Python_Training/flux_vs_time_A.dat  
/user/gunning/Python_Training/flux_vs_time_C.dat
```

These data are used to plot the flux versus time for a standard star and serves as a monitor of the WFC3/UVIS photometric stability for amps A and C, respectively. In this section, we will read in the data, and in chapter 4, we will use it to produce the plots.

EXAMPLES

```
python> from astropy.io import ascii  
python> infile = 'flux_vs_time_A.dat'  
python> data = ascii.read('flux_vs_time_A.dat',  
                        names=['MJD', 'Flux_diff', 'Flux_err', 'Flux_linear_fit'])  
python> print data  
python> print data['MJD']  
python> print data['MJD', 'Flux_diff']  
python> print data['Flux_diff'] * 10  
python> pos_flux = data['Flux_diff'] > 0  
python> print data[pos_flux]
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 13 :

Try reading in the data from 'flux_vs_time_C.dat' using `ascii.read()`

3.3.2 astropy.io.ascii.write() function

USE

Similar to `ascii.read()`, the `astropy.io.ascii.write()` function writes a table of data to a specified file. For fun, let's try taking the MJDs from 'flux_vs_time_A.dat', normalizing them to the first observation date, and writing the new table to a new text file:

EXAMPLES

```
python> from astropy.io import ascii
```

```
python> infile = 'flux_vs_time_A.dat'
python> data = ascii.read('flux_vs_time_A.dat',
                        names=['MJD', 'Flux_diff', 'Flux_err', 'Flux_linear_fit'])
python> first_date = min(data['MJD'])
python> data['MJD'] = data['MJD'] - first_date
python> print data
python> ascii.write(data, 'flux_vs_time_A_mjdnorm.dat')
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 14 :

Try making a MJD-normalized text file for the 'flux_vs_time_C.dat' data using `ascii.write()`

Plotting with PyPlot

4.1 matplotlib.pyplot

Matplotlib and its PyPlot environment is a versatile Python plotting library which produces publication quality figures in a variety of hard-copy formats such as EPS, PDF, and PNG. With PyPlot you can generate scatter and line plots, histograms, power spectra, bar charts, error-charts, pie charts, and many more with just a few lines of code. For the power user, you have full control of line styles, font properties, axes properties, and so on. For useful examples of astronomy plots that can be generated with PyPlot, see Leonardo Ubeda's astroplotlib library at <http://astroplotlib.stsci.edu/>

4.2 Create a Simple Scatter Plot

We'll start by making a simple scatter plot, demonstrating some of the PyPlot options, and saving our plot in a PDF format.

First, we need to read in some data, as we learned in Chapter 3, using the two files 'flux_vs_time_A.dat' and 'flux_vs_time_C.dat' found in /user/gunning/Python_Training/.

```
python> from astropy.io import ascii
python> data_A = ascii.read('flux_vs_time_A.dat', names=['Time', \
... 'Flux_diff', 'Flux_err', 'Flux_linear_fit'])
python> data_C = ascii.read('flux_vs_time_C.dat', names=['Time', \
... 'Flux_diff', 'Flux_err', 'Flux_linear_fit'])
```

The time is in Modified Julian Date (MJD) and the remaining columns are flux percent differences and are dimensionless.

Now we will import PyPlot and make our first plot, using a *figure* object...

```
python> import matplotlib.pyplot as pyplot
python> figure, ax = pyplot.subplots()
```

Now we can begin to plot into the *figure* object, via the *ax* axis created in the previous step. Each subsequent call to the inherited *ax.plot* method will update the overall plot. The next two calls plot the two sets of flux differences as scatter plots in blue and red, respectively.

```
python> ax.scatter(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], c='blue')
python> ax.scatter(data_C['Time'], data_C['Flux_diff'], c='red')
python> figure.show()
```

The *figure.show()* command displays our changes onto the *figure* object.

We should add axis labels...

```
python> ax.set_xlabel('Time [MJD]', fontsize=20)
python> ax.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=20)
python> figure.show()
```

Finally let's save the figure. We can save as a PDF, PNG, TIFF, and other file types; we need only to type the appropriate extension.

```
python> figure.savefig('flux_vs_time_1.pdf')
```

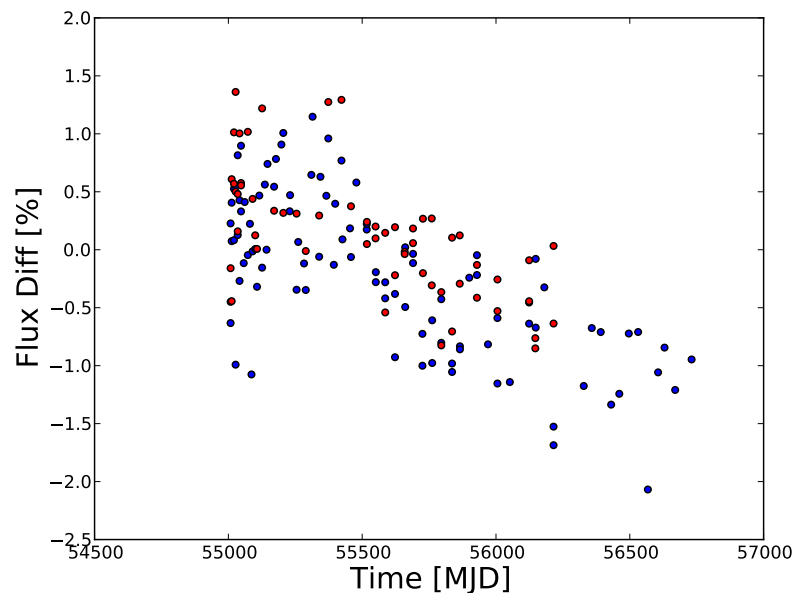


FIGURE 4.1: Our first plot.

4.3 Markers, Lines, and Legends

We have a plot! But we are not yet finished. PyPlot has many, many options available for you to customize your plot. We'll demonstrate just a few for markers, lines, and legends.

We can play with the marker type (*marker*), size (*s*), and transparency (*alpha*) of our of scatter plots' points. We first need to clear the *axis* object with the *ax.clear()* command.

```
python> ax.clear()
python> ax.scatter(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], \
...   c='blue', marker='x', s=30, alpha=0.75)
python> ax.scatter(data_C['Time'], data_C['Flux_diff'], \
...   c='red', marker='d', s=30, alpha=0.75)
python> ax.set_xlabel('Time [MJD]', fontsize=20)
python> ax.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=20)
python> figure.show()
```

The plot would be cleaner if we added a legend.

```
python> ax.clear()
```

```
python> ax.scatter(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], \
...   c='blue', marker='x', s=25, alpha=0.75, label='Amp A')
python> ax.scatter(data_C['Time'], data_C['Flux_diff'], \
...   c='red', marker='d', s=25, alpha=0.75, label='Amp C')
python> ax.set_xlabel('Time [MJD]', fontsize=20)
python> ax.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=20)
python> ax.legend(loc='best', scatterpoints=1)
python> figure.show()
```

The `ax.legend(loc='best')` command will try to find the least busy section of your plot and stick the legend there.

Next let's plot lines with the linear fits from our data:

```
python> ax.plot(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_linear_fit'], \
...   c='blue', ls='-.', linewidth=2, label='Amp A Fit')
python> ax.plot(data_C['Time'], data_C['Flux_linear_fit'], \
...   c='red', ls=':', linewidth=2, label='Amp C Fit')
python> ax.legend(loc='best', scatterpoints=1)
python> figure.show()
```

Notice the `ls` option is how we select our line type. Suppose we want to denote the 0.0 flux difference with a dashed line and the MJD date 56250.0 with a green line:

```
python> ax.axhline(0.0, color='k', ls='--', linewidth=1)
python> ax.axvline(56250.0, color='green', ls='-', linewidth=2)
python> figure.show()
```

We now have a personalized plot! (It doesn't have to be pretty.) Let's save it.

```
python> figure.savefig('flux_vs_time_2.pdf')
```

Other options can be found on the Matplotlib PyPlot site listed in Chapter 8.

For different color names, see http://www.w3schools.com/html/html_colornames.asp

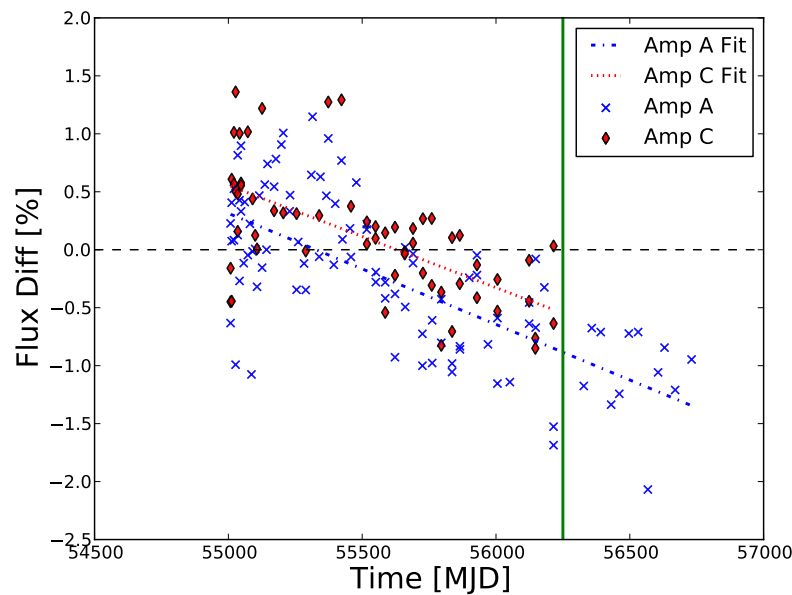


FIGURE 4.2: Our customized plot.

4.4 Error Bars

We have columns giving our error in flux percent difference. We can display them on our plot as error bars using the *errorbar* function:

```
python> ax.clear()
python> ax.scatter(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], \
... c='blue', s=10)
python> ax.errorbar(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], \
... yerr=data_A['Flux_err'], c='k', marker=None, ls='None')
python> figure.show()
```

4.5 Display Year-Month-Day Dates as Tick Labels

MJD is a convenient format for plotting time. But who thinks in MJD? Let's convert MJD to year-month-day and display them on the x-axis. In Python this is a little tricky. We will show one way to do it; you may be able to find a better way.

Let's continue working on the plot we began in the Error Bars section. We first need to import

Time from *astropy*, and then save into a list the MJD dates that are currently displayed as tick labels (converting them into floats as we do so).

```
python> from astropy.time import Time
python> time_MJD = [float(item.get_text()) \
... for item in ax.get_xticklabels()]
```

We next need to convert the MJD date list into a *Time* object.

```
python> time_convert = Time(time_MJD, format='mjd', scale='utc')
```

Now we can convert the MJD dates into year-month-day dates. Because the conversion also includes minutes and seconds, which we do not want in this example, we will use the *split()* method to extract just the year-month-days and append them into a new list.

```
python> time_ymd_long = time_convert.iso
python> time_ymd_short = []
python> for date in time_ymd_long:
...     time_ymd_short.append(date.split(' ')[0])
```

Finally we can display our new tick labels on the x-axis and save the figure.

```
python> ax.set_xticklabels(time_ymd_short)
python> ax.set_xlabel('Time', fontsize=20)
python> ax.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=20)
python> figure.show()
python> figure.savefig('flux_vs_time_3.pdf')
```

See <http://astropy.readthedocs.org/en/latest/time/> for more examples.

4.6 Display Plots Side-by-Side

As with most plotting matters in Python, there's more than one way to display multiple plots on the same figure. We will demonstrate making a simple 2×1 multiple plot with just the *subplot()* method.

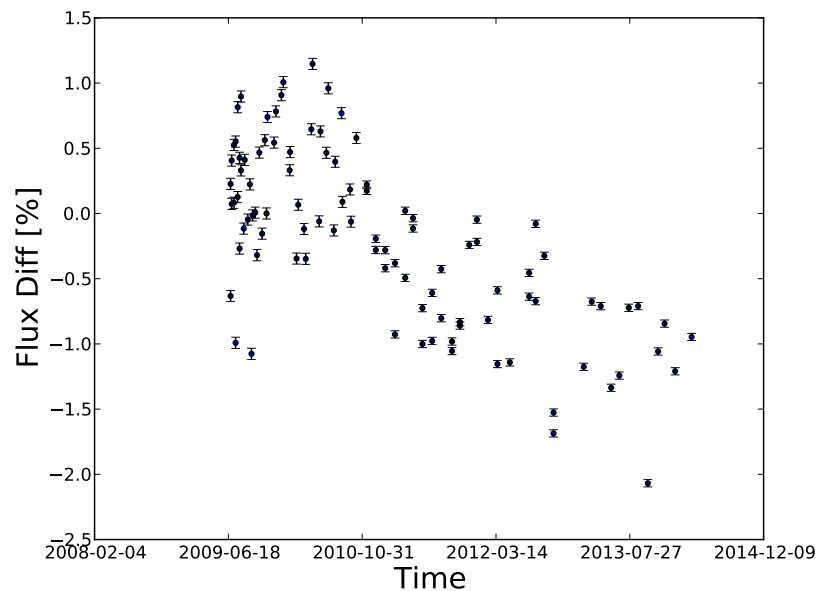


FIGURE 4.3: Our error bar plot with x-axis tick labels converted from MJD to year-month-day.

Let's make a new figure, resizing it to 10×10 inches so we can better see our plots. Then we'll place the first plot at position 211. The first number (2) denotes how many plots are to be placed vertically; the second number (1) denotes how many plots are to be placed horizontally; and the third number (1) denotes where the current plot is to be placed in this grid (in this case, the first position).

```
python> figure = pyplot.figure(figsize = (10,10))
python> ax1 = pyplot.subplot(211, title='Amp A')
python> ax1.scatter(data_A['Time'], data_A['Flux_diff'], c='blue')
```

We can make the top plot's x-axis invisible...

```
python> pyplot.setp(ax1.get_xticklabels(), visible=False)
```

We next place the second plot at position 212. We use the *sharex* and *sharey* options to force the second plot's axes to match the first's.

```
python> ax2 = pyplot.subplot(212, title='Amp C', sharex=ax1, sharey=ax1)
python> ax2.scatter(data_C['Time'], data_C['Flux_diff'], c='red')
```

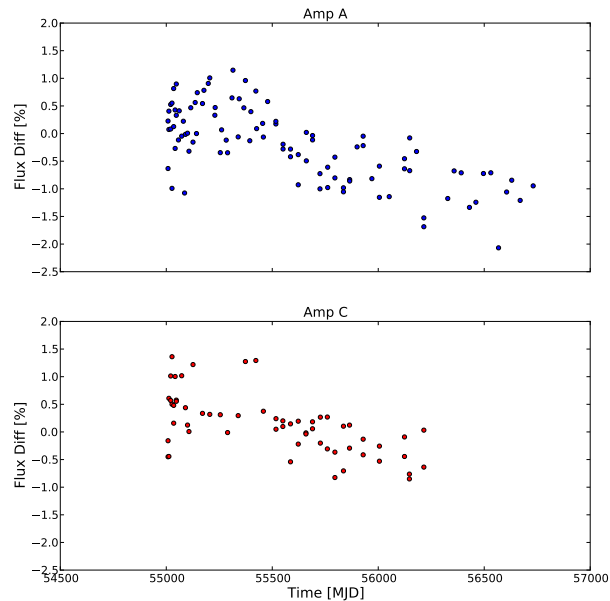


FIGURE 4.4: Our 2×1 multiple plot.

We'll finish by setting the x and y axes labels and saving the figure.

```
python> ax1.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=15)
python> ax2.set_ylabel('Flux Diff [%]', fontsize=15)
python> ax2.set_xlabel('Time [MJD]', fontsize=15)
python> figure.show()
python> figure.savefig('flux_vs_time_4.pdf')
```

4.7 Display a FITS Image

Copy the FITS file 'ibsa01fpq_fit.fits' from /user/gunning/Python_Training/ to your current working directory. It is a WFC3/IR image of a corner of the galaxy M51.

We will use astropy's *fits* package to open the file, as we learned in Chapter 3, and extract the image data from the SCI extension.

```
python> import astropy.io.fits as fits
```



```
python> image = fits.open('ibsa01fpqflt.fits')
python> sci_data = image['sci'].data
python> pyplot.clf()
python> pyplot.gray()
python> pyplot.imshow(sci_data, vmin=0, vmax=60)
python> image.close()
```

How does that look? Mess with the *vmin* and *vmax* to see if you can improve the scaling. The *pyplot.gray()* command sets the plot to greyscale. Take a look at the plot without it.

We can add labels:

```
python> pyplot.title('M51', fontsize=20)
python> pyplot.xlabel('x pixels', fontsize=15)
python> pyplot.ylabel('y pixels', fontsize=15)
```

Before saving, we can try annotating features in our image. In this example, we point to a star near pixel coordinates (640, 810) with an arrow.

```
python> pyplot.annotate('star', xy=(640,810), xytext=(520,770), \
... color='white', arrowprops=dict(facecolor='white'), width=3.5)
python> pyplot.savefig('M51.pdf')
```

For more plotting options with Matplotlib and PyPlot, check out the matplotlib.org link listed in Chapter 8. Notice that there is a link to NumPy on this page, as well as links to screen-shots, thumbnails, and examples.

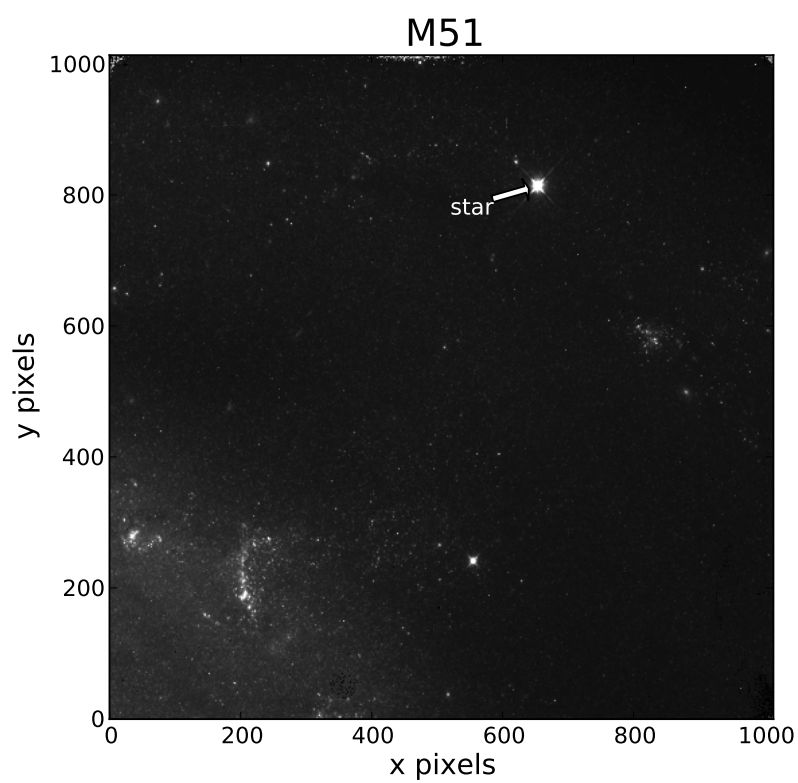


FIGURE 4.5: A corner of the galaxy M51, displayed in greyscale using *pyplot.imshow()*.

5

IPython Notebook

5.1 Getting Started

IPython Notebook is an interactive web-based tool which combines code execution, mathematics, and rich media output.

You can find a plethora of information at <http://ipython.org/ipython-doc/dev/notebook/index.html>

Let's get started. The data needed for this chapter can be found in `/user/gunning/Python_Training/`.

To open a notebook window, open a terminal and initiate Ureka:

```
>> ur_setup common ssbx
>> ipython notebook
```

Opening the notebook this way will create a new tab in your browser. All subsequent interactions will now be through the browser and the terminal will be running the server that the browser interacts with.

IPython Notebook will look for notebook files (`.ipynb`) in the directory where you started the notebook in. Once in the notebook window, to execute a cell you must hit `shift+enter`.

5.2 Plotting Inline

A unique feature that the notebook has is the ability to plot inline.

You can initiate inline plotting two ways.

From the terminal:

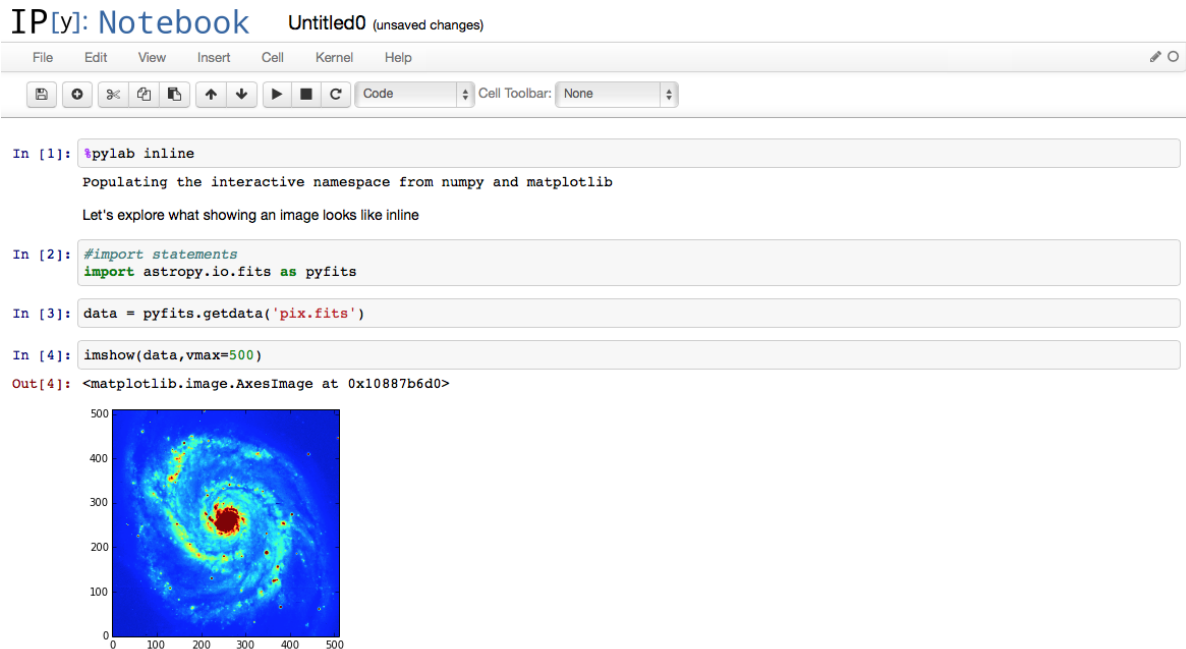
```
>> ur_setup common ssbx
>> ipython notebook --pylab inline
```

From the notebook window:

```
python> %pylab inline
```

Without telling the notebook to plot inline, plots will pop up in a separate window just as they normally would plotting in the python terminal.

5.3 Notebook Examples



IP[y]: Notebook Untitled0 (autosaved)

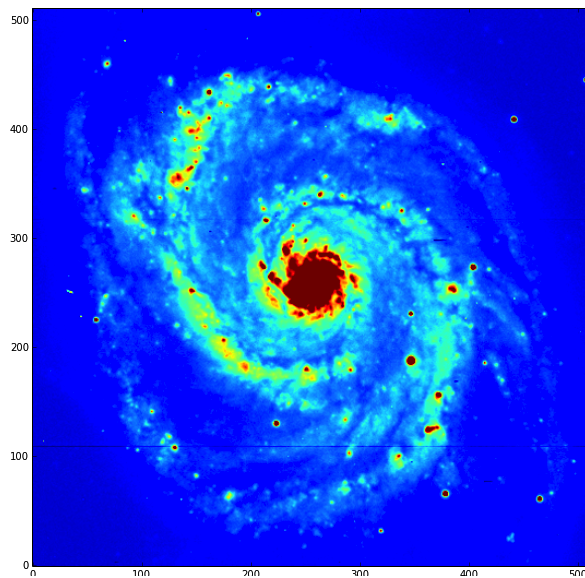
File Edit View Insert Cell Kernel Help

Code Cell Toolbar: None

You can change the size of the inline image with figsize

```
In [7]: figsize(10,10)
        imshow(data,vmax=500)
```

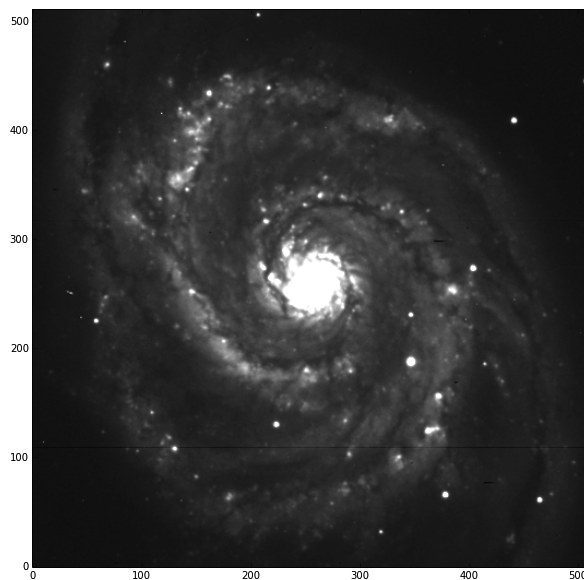
```
Out[7]: <matplotlib.image.AxesImage at 0x10a0f3a10>
```



You can also change the colors of displayed images using colormaps.

```
In [9]: imshow(data,vmax=500,cmap=cm.gray)
```

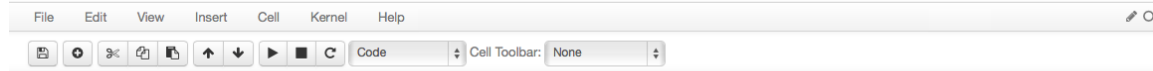
```
Out[9]: <matplotlib.image.AxesImage at 0x10a0d6790>
```



Since figsize was set not attributed to a specific plot or image, it will apply to subsequent cells.

IP[y]: Notebook

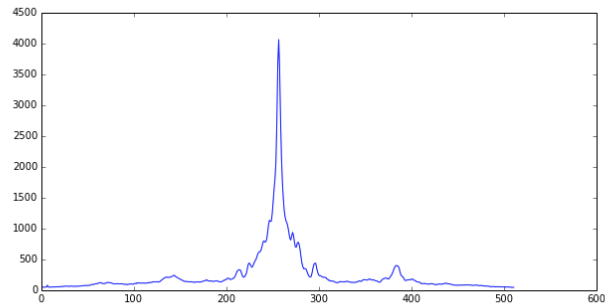
Untitled0 (autosaved)



```
In [16]: figsize(10,5)
```

```
In [17]: plot(data[256])
```

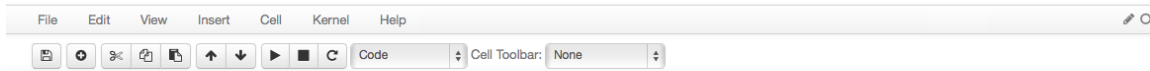
```
Out[17]: [<matplotlib.lines.Line2D at 0x10a132a10>]
```



This is a basic line plot of the 256th row in the image

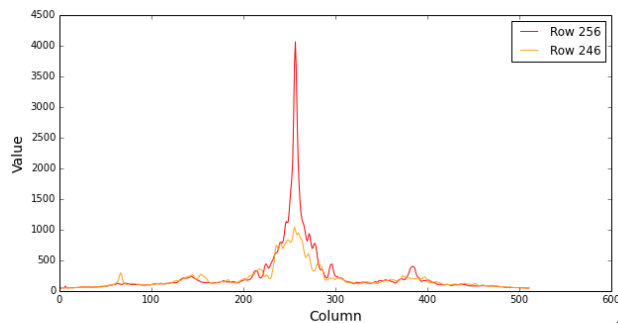
IP[y]: Notebook

Untitled0 (autosaved)



```
In [20]: plot(data[256],color='red',label='Row 256')
         plot(data[246],color='orange',label='Row 246')
         xlabel('Column',fontsize=14)
         ylabel('Value',fontsize=14)
         legend()
```

```
Out[20]: <matplotlib.legend.Legend at 0x101ccc650>
```



A bit fancier of a figure, but still quite basic. All the functionality of IPython works in the notebook as well.

```
In [22]: #sum of all the values in data
         data.sum()
```

```
Out[22]: 28394234
```

```
In [23]: #max value in data
         data.max()
```

```
Out[23]: 19936
```

if you type data. then hit tab in a cell it will give you options for data.

6

Python Scripts and Functions

Make a directory where you will keep all of your scripts. You will also need to choose a text editor, such as Emacs, TextWrangler, NEdit, or others. You will be using this to edit your scripts.

6.1 MyFirstScript.py

Create a file called MyFirstScript.py in your script directory, and open it in your favorite editor. Comments in scripts are very important, not just to help you remember what exactly you were thinking, but to help others as well should they ever use your code. Therefore, to start off on the right foot, let's create a special header called a docstring that looks something like this:

```
' ' '
ABOUT:
This is a program that takes this and plots that.

DEPENDS:
Python 2.7.3

AUTHOR:
```

```
M.E. MySelf for STScI, 2011
```

```
HISTORY:
```

```
2011: Trial program.
```

```
USE:
```

```
python MyFirstScript.py
', ', '
```

For the header we show three apostrophes to comment out multiple lines of text. Next thing we will want to have is all of our imports.

```
import numpy as np
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

Now we are ready! Now let's add the following lines, which will use the data file 'Gordon2005_Fig16.txt' (which can be found in /user/gunning/Python_Training) and reproduce the plot from Figure 16 of Gordon, K. D., et al. 2005, PASP, 117, 503 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/10.1086/429309.pdf>):

```
infile = 'Gordon2005_Fig16.txt'
outfile = 'fig16_log.pdf'

slope, ran_slope_unc, corr_slope_unc, \textbackslash
    both_slope_unc, eqn_slope_unc = np.loadtxt(infile,
        usecols=(0, 1, 2, 3, 4), unpack=True)

figure, ax = plt.subplots()

ax.loglog(slope, ran_slope_unc, ls='--', lw=3, color='b',
    label='Random Unc.')
ax.loglog(slope, corr_slope_unc, ls=':', lw=3, color='r',
    label='Correlated Unc.')
ax.loglog(slope, both_slope_unc, ls='-', lw=3, color='g',
    label='Both')
ax.loglog(slope, eqn_slope_unc, ls='-.', lw=3, color='m',
    label='Equation')

ax.set_xlabel('Slope [e-/s]')
ax.set_ylabel('Slope Uncertainty [e-/s]')
```



```
ax.legend(loc='best')
figure.show()

figure.savefig(outfile)
figure.clf()
```

Notice that we listed any variables (or things we might want to change later) at the top of the program, such as *outfile* and *infile*. Also, since we do not have to type the variables over and over, I decided to use the more descriptive names. This will also help if I do not work on this script for awhile and then later come back to it. Now our program is ready to execute.

6.1.1 Executing Python Scripts

There are a few ways to run a Python program. One is to type from your terminal:

```
>> python MyFirstScript.py
```

Or, if you are already inside the Python interactive environment, just type:

```
python> import MyFirstScript
```

For the last example, if you want to re-run the script, type:

```
python> reload(MyFirstScript)
```

Another way is to make the program executable and then type:

```
>> MyFirstScript.py
```

This is nice. You do not have to type ‘python’, you can run it from anywhere, and you do not have to be in the Python interactive environment. However, we must first do two things.

1. To tell your computer which shell or interpreter should be used for executing this file, at the very top of your file add:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
```

2. You will need to make your script executable. In the terminal, type:

```
>> chmod a+x MyFirstScript.py
```

To be able to call your script from anywhere on your computer, add your script directory to your executable path by opening your startup script file (such as *.cshrc* for tc shell or *.bashrc* for

bash shell, or more generally, `.mysetenv` or `.setenv`) and adding the line (with the correct path substituted in):

```
setenv PATH ./my/script/directory:${PATH}
```

Next, in your terminal execute the command:

```
>> source .cshrc
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 15 :

Write your script `MyFirstScript.py` and execute it.

6.2 Adding Functions

`MyFirstScript.py` is short and easy to read. However, we can imagine a case where we have such a large program and many repeated tasks that it will become difficult. For example, if we want to create the y-intercept uncertainty plot as well as the slope uncertainty plot we can either repeat several lines of our program (and if we change one copy remember to change the other), or we can create a plotting function and just call that function twice. The general format of declaring a function and then using it is shown below.

```
#!/usr/bin/env python

# Header

def mkplot(data):
    # Make plot here
    return

if __name__=='__main__':
    data = SomeFunctionThatGetsData()
    mkplot(data)
    print 'Now I have a beautiful plot!'
```

Notice the line `if __name__=='__main__':`. It is often useful to start the main program with this statement. In this way you can make the file usable as a script as well as an import-able module, because the code that parses the command line only runs if the module is executed as the 'main' file, i.e. '`MyFirstScript.py`'. In this way, from another program (or a Python prompt) we could call

```
from MyFirstScript import mkplot.
```

Let's modify our program to look like this:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python

#Header

__author__ = 'M.E. MySelf'
__version__ = 0.2

import numpy as np
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

def mkplot(outfile,xx,yy1,yy2,yy3,yy4,ylab='Slope Unc. [e-/s]'):
    figure, ax = plt.subplots()

    ax.set_xlabel('Slope [e-/s]')
    ax.set_ylabel('Slope Uncertainty [e-/s]')
    ax.plot(xx, yy1, ls='--', color='b', label='Random Unc.')
    ax.plot(xx, yy2, ls=':', color='r', label='Correlated Unc.')
    ax.plot(xx, yy3, ls='-', color='g', label='Both')
    ax.plot(xx, yy4, ls='-.', color='m', label='Equation')
    ax.legend(loc='best')
    figure.show()

    figure.savefig(outfile)
    figure.clf()
    print 'Saved file to: ',outfile
    return

if __name__=='__main__':
    infile = 'Gordon2005_Fig16.txt'
    slope_outfile = 'fig16_slope.pdf'
    yint_outfile = 'fig16_yint.pdf'

    slope, ran_slope_unc, corr_slope_unc, both_slope_unc, \
        eqn_slope_unc, ran_yint_unc, corr_yint_unc, \
        both_yint_unc, eqn_yint_unc = np.loadtxt(infile,
            unpack=True)
    mkplot(slope_outfile, slope, ran_slope_unc, corr_slope_unc,
```

```

        both_slope_unc, eqn_slope_unc)
    mkplot(yint_outfile, slope, ran_yint_unc, corr_yint_unc,
           both_yint_unc, eqn_yint_unc,
           ylab='Y-Intercept Unc. [e-]')

```

I also added `__author__ = 'M.E. MySelf'` and `__version__ = 0.2`. These lines are not necessary, but they mean I can do the following:

```

python> import MyFirstScript
python> MyFirstScript.__version__
python> MyFirstScript.__author__

```

EXERCISES

Exercise 16 :

What version of NumPy are you using? Does NumPy list an author?

Notice in the definition of our `mkplot` function that we give the variable `'ylab'` a default value. Now we only have to assign a y-axis label when we do not want the default (i.e. the y-intercept case). Finally, `mkplot` is a function, but not a module.

6.3 Passing Arguments on the Command Line and *argparse*

What if we wanted to run this program, but for other input files? A simple solution would be to just open up our script and edit the file name. However, a more user friendly method would be to allow it to be entered on the command line. *argparse* is a module that makes this process easy. Look at the use of *argparse* in the code below. This code can be run in the following ways:

```

>> MyFirstScript.py
>> MyFirstScript.py --help
>> MyFirstScript.py -f Gordon2005_Fig16.txt
>> MyFirstScript.py --file Gordon2005_Fig16.txt

```

For more information, check out the link <http://docs.python.org/dev/library/argparse.html>

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
```

```

#Header

__author__ = 'M.E. MySelf'
__version__ = 0.2

import numpy as np
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import argparse

def mkplot(outfile,xx,yy1,yy2,yy3,yy4,ylab='Slope Unc. [e-/s]'):
    figure, ax = plt.subplots()

    ax.set_xlabel('Slope [e-/s]')
    ax.set_ylabel('Slope Uncertainty [e-/s]')
    ax.plot(xx, yy1, ls='--', color='b', label='Randon Unc.')
    ax.plot(xx, yy2, ls=':', color='r', label='Correlated Unc.')
    ax.plot(xx, yy3, ls='-', color='g', label='Both')
    ax.plot(xx, yy4, ls='-.', color='m', label='Equation')
    ax.legend(loc='best')
    figure.show()

    figure.savefig(outfile)
    figure.clf()
    print 'Saved file to: ',outfile
    return

if __name__=='__main__':

    parser = argparse.ArgumentParser(description='Make a plot.')
    parser.add_argument('-f','--file', default='Gordon2005_Fig16.txt',
        type=str, help='Input file.')
    options = parser.parse_args()

    infile = options.file
    slope_outfile = 'fig16_slope.pdf'
    yint_outfile = 'fig16_yint.pdf'

    slope, ran_slope_unc, corr_slope_unc, both_slope_unc, \
        eqn_slope_unc, ran_yint_unc, corr_yint_unc, \
        both_yint_unc, eqn_yint_unc = np.loadtxt(infile,
            unpack=True)

```

```
mkplot(slope_outfile, slope, ran_slope_unc, corr_slope_unc,
       both_slope_unc, eqn_slope_unc)
mkplot(yint_outfile, slope, ran_yint_unc, corr_yint_unc,
       both_yint_unc, eqn_yint_unc,
       ylab='Y-Intercept Unc. [e-]')
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 17 :

Write your script `MyFirstScript.py` and execute it using all of the examples above. See what happens if you enter something that is not allowed. Edit your `mkplot` function so that it is more versatile.

6.4 Error Handling and `pdb.set_trace()`

Debugging can be a difficult and long process, but the `pdb` module can help. `pdb` is the Python debugger. There are many ways to use it, but a common method is with `pdb.set_trace()`. To debug your code using this function, import `pdb` and insert the line `pdb.set_trace()` into your code before the part you are unsure about. Execute the program. Once the interpreter reaches the `pdb.set_trace()` mark, it will allow you to interact with the code and print variables as they are defined. Common `pdb.set_trace()` commands include:

- (n)ext: continue to the next line
- (l)ist: list a few steps
- (b)reak: give line and file to break at
- (s)tep: moves into deeper calls (i.e. a function in NumPy, or our function `mkplot`).
- (c)ontinue: continue the program like normal.

EXERCISES

Exercise 18 :

Add `import pdb` to your list of imports in your `MyFirstScript.py` file. Insert the line `pdb.set_trace()`. Execute your code and step through the program, print out variables to make sure they are what they are supposed to be, and step into your `mkplot` function. Let the program continue.

7.1 PyRAF Introduction

PyRAF calls IRAF tasks from Python. One of the main motivations for creating PyRAF is to create a version of IRAF that is compatible with a programming language other than CL. CL has many short comings which are more and more apparent in more complicated programs.

PyRAF has its own interactive PyRAF session. To start it, just type ‘pyraf’ in a terminal. This should look familiar to you if you know IRAF. Type ‘.exit’ to exit. The remaining part of this chapter will have you import PyRAF into Python unless otherwise stated.

7.2 A PyRAF Example with `iraf.daofind()`

Again, create a file in your script directory, and open it in your favorite editor. Add your header. For your ‘ABOUT’ section, we will be creating a script showing how python can be used to execute IRAF/PyRAF tasks. We will use some JWST/MIRI data, `n9vf01hfq_ima.fits`, which can be found in `/user/gunning/Python_Training/`.

Import the PyRAF module and from within that module import the IRAF instance. The code for

importing these functions looks like this:

```
#Load the packages we need
import pyraf
from pyraf import iraf
from iraf import noao, digiphot, daophot
```

As you can infer ‘iraf’ is something that lives inside of ‘pyraf’. For example, if you want to run `phot` on some files you need to create a list of coordinates. To do this we will use `daofind`. Since `daofind` is an `iraf` module, we execute it using dot notation, like this:

```
iraf.daofind(parameter1,parameter2,parameter3)
```

The parameters for a PyRAF task executed in the python environment are the same as they would be in the PyRAF environment. Pull up a PyRAF window and open the help file to see what the parameters for `iraf.daofind()` are. Now are going to run `iraf.daofind()` on the file `n9vf01hfq_ima.fits`.

```
#Run daofind on one image
iraf.daofind(image='n9vf01hfq_ima.fits[1]')
```

The ‘[1]’ is for extension ‘1’. You should be prompted for several parameters, just hit ‘enter’ to go through the defaults. Type ‘ls’ in the directory where you ran this – there should now be a file called `n9vf01hfq_ima.fits1.coo.1`. In PyRAF open up the file and look at the output, then compare this with the image on DS9. Did `iraf.daofind()` do a good job? You can facilitate this process with the `tvmark` task.

```
>> pyraf
pyraf> images
pyraf> !ds9 &
pyraf> display n9vf01hfq_ima.fits[1] 1
```

The last ‘1’ is for which DS9 frame to display in.

```
pyraf> tv
pyraf> tvmark 1 n9vf01hfq_ima.fits1.coo.1
```

We can see that we did not do too well, but let’s ignore that for now and work on our program.

Go ahead and run this program again, and you will see that it will create a second file called `n9vf01hfq_ima.fits1.coo.2`. What if we did not want so many files and instead wanted to always write to `n9vf01hfq_ima.fits1.coo.1`? IRAF might have a problem overwriting this file, so a simple solution would be to remove it. For this we will need to import `os`. Furthermore, if we don't want to have to press 'enter' at the prompt, we can add to our program the extra parameters it is looking for. Finally, let's write this program so that we can run the process on multiple files. For that we will import `glob`.

Here is what we have:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
# HEADER

#Load the packages we need
import pyraf, os, glob
from pyraf import iraf
from iraf import noao, digiphot

#Generate a list of all the fits files
file_list = glob.glob('*_ima.fits')
print file_list

#Loops though all the .fits files
for file in file_list:
    #Test for old files, and remove them if they exist
    file_query = os.access(file + '1.coo.1', os.R_OK)
    if file_query == True:
        os.remove(file + '1.coo.1')
    #Run daofind on one image
    iraf.daofind(
        image = file + '[1]',
        interactive = 'no',
        verify = 'no')
```

EXERCISES

Exercise 19:

Write your script that uses `iraf.daofind()`.

Anytime you change the default settings to a PyRAF command it is a good idea to change them back. You can do this with the `iraf.unlearn()` command as shown below.

```
pyraf> iraf.daofind.unlearn()
```

```
pyraf> iraf.unlearn('daofind')
```

8

Resources

8.1 Useful Links

Below is a list of links to be used as a reference.

- <http://docs.python.org/>
- <http://legacy.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0008/>
- <http://www.astropy.org/>
- <http://wiki.python.org/moin/HowTo/Sorting>
- <http://ipython.scipy.org/moin/Documentation>
- <http://matplotlib.sourceforge.net/>
- http://www.scipy.org/Numpy_Example_List_With_Doc
- <http://docs.scipy.org/doc/>
- <http://www.scipy.org/Cookbook>

The following links are for further training and building of your Python skills.

- <http://stdas.stsci.edu/perry/pydatatut.pdf>
- http://www.scipy.org/Additional_Documentation/Astronomy_Tutorial?action=show
- <http://python4astronomers.github.com/>
- <http://code.google.com/edu/languages/google-python-class/>
- <http://learnpythonthehardway.org/book/>
- <http://www.pythonchallenge.com/>

8.2 Mailing Lists

These python themed STScI e-mail lists are available through the Outlook Web App (OWA):

- pylunch: A mailing list for a lunch group that presents and discusses python related material.
- python-interested: A mailing list usually used to discuss bugs, fixes, and how to do some outrageous tasks that astronomers come up with.