

Subject: MTH 448/563 welcome!
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Date: 01/29/2017 04:25 PM
To: undisclosed-recipients;;

Dear students in MTH 448/563 Data-Oriented Computing for Mathematicians,

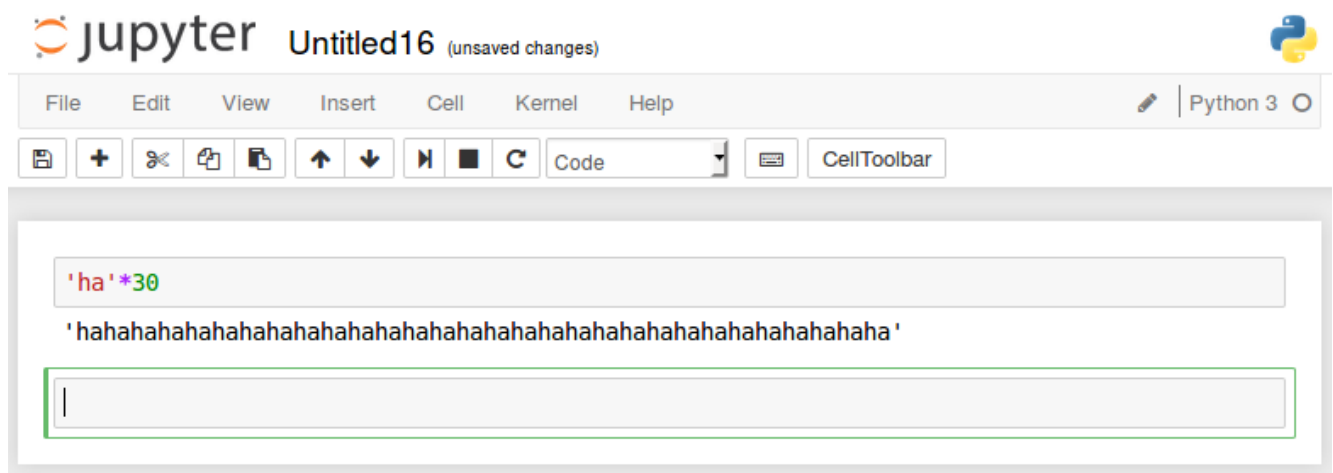
Welcome!
Some important notes about the course follow.

1. Laptop

As you are probably aware, this is a hands-on lab-style course.
You will need to **bring a laptop to class every day**.
If you do not have a laptop, contact me ASAP to discuss your options.

2. Python

Our primary software tool will be Python (3.5).
I recommend that everyone - before Tuesday - install the (free) Anaconda distribution of Python, which includes a very complete collection of useful libraries.
After you have installed Anaconda, make sure it's working by starting up the Jupyter notebook, and trying something like this:



3. Operating system

In order to automate various repetitive tasks, we will be learning about and using the *bash* command shell, which is standard on Linux and Mac computers, but not on Windows. Windows users are strongly urged to install Ubuntu Linux (16.04 or 16.10) on their machine in one of the three possible ways described below.

Regardless of operating system, please make sure you have at least a **basic functional Python programming environment** in place **when you show up to class on Tuesday**. If you have any difficulties, I should be in my office available to help tomorrow, Monday, from 5-6pm.

I'm really looking forward to seeing you Tuesday and being your instructor in Data-Oriented Computing!

John Ringland

Linux for Windows users:

A very important first step for Options 1 & 2 is be to back up all your valued data on an external medium such as flash drive(s) - maybe in duplicate for extra safety.

Option 1 (not recommended unless you've been on the verge of doing it for a while):
Wipe Windows off your machine and install Ubuntu instead.
This takes literally less than 15 minutes. Your Windows OS will be gone.

Option 2
Shrink your Windows partition and, in the space you create, install Ubuntu as a second operating system.
You'll select which one you want each time you boot your computer. Best of both worlds.
More steps than Option 1.

Option 3 (no committment required)
Install VirtualBox (free download) and install Ubuntu on the VirtualBox virtual machine.
This way Ubuntu will be running inside Windows. It is just like installing any other program in Windows. The downside is that performance may be sluggish, especially on older hardware.