Introduction to Python and its unit testing framework

Instructions

These are self evaluation exercises. If you know no python then work through these exercises and it will prepare yourself for the lab.

Lab Goals

There are two goals in this lab: The first goal is to get a little experience programming Python, and the second goal is to learn how to use Python’s unit testing framework. This lab should be easy and is designed as preparation for the next lab. If you get stuck you should look at the Python tutorial at http://docs.python.org/tutorial/ or at the extensive documentation at http://docs.python.org/. If you have had some experience with Python then this lab should be very easy. Hopefully if you have had no experience with Python, then this lab will help to get you started for the next lab.

Note on Python versions

Python is a changing language. Python 3.0 is in places very different from early versions of Python. For various reasons, older versions of Python are in use on the Unix terminals. But all of the code presented in this lab should work for any version of Python later than 2.4. Note therefore that on the terminal servers, writing just ‘python’ will invoke Python 2.3, while ‘python2’ will invoke the latest version, Python 2.7.

Python Unit Testing Mechanics

We will split our code up into two files code.py and testcode.py. In your favourite text editor, create the following skeleton for testcode.py

```python
import code
import unittest

class TestCode(unittest.TestCase):
```
```python
def test_simple(self):
    self.assertEqual(code.return_zero(), 0)

if __name__ == '__main__':
    unittest.main()
```

and the following for code.py

```python
def return_zero():
    return 0
```

Note that in Python, _indentations matter_. So for example the `def test_simple(self)` function is a part of the TestCode class _because it has a deeper indentation_. Likewise, the `self.assertEqual test is part of the test_simple function_. In Python, levels of indentations are used instead of the enclosing brackets you may be used to from many other languages. Take care to use _either spaces or tabs for indentations_. Never use both in the same file.

Now at the command line, or using your favourite IDE, do

```
hamberg> python2 testcode.py

Ran 1 test in 0.000s

OK
```

What happened here? We have defined a rather silly function that returns 0. We assert that the code also returns 0 using the `self.assertEqual` function in `testcode.py`.

### 1 Task

Python like C++ and Java uses `==` for comparison. So for example `1 == 2` is _False_ while `1 == 1` is _True_. Rewrite the above test to use `self.assertTrue`. Note that you need a version of Python greater than or equal to 2.4 to use `assertTrue`. As mentioned, on the department Unix terminals you can use the command line:

```
hamberg> python2 testcode.py
```

to invoke the latest installed version of Python 2.

### Functions and arguments

Python functions can take arguments. For example we can write the function `double(x)` (insert this into `code.py`):

```python
def double(x):
    return 2*x
```
we can then write some unit tests (in testcode.py):

```python
import code
import unittest

class TestCode(unittest.TestCase):
    def test_simple(self):
        self.assertEqual(code.return_zero(), 0)
    def test_double(self):
        self.assertEqual(code.double(2), 4)
        self.assertEqual(code.double(4), 8)
        self.assertEqual(code.double(0), 0)
        self.assertEqual(code.double(-2), -4)

if __name__ == '__main__':
    unittest.main()
```

and run them as usual with python2 testcode.py. Note that each test function starts with test. Note again that indentation is important. From now on only the new test functions will be given. It is up to you to add them to testcode.py and make sure that you have the correct indentation.

2 Task

Now write a new function triple in code.py and write a similar set of tests as seen above. You function triple should triple its argument.

Making Decisions

Python like any other language has if statements. For example the function:

```python
def if1(x):
    if x==0:
        return 'zero'
    if x>0:
        return 'positive'
    if x<0:
        return 'negative'
```

returns a string. This can be tested using the following test cases.

```python
def test_if1(self):
    self.assertEqual(code.if1(0), 'zero')
    self.assertEqual(code.if1(1), 'positive')
    self.assertEqual(code.if1(-1), 'negative')
```
3 Task

Type the code in and run the tests to make sure that it all works. Python uses `elif` as an abbreviation of `else if`. Write a new version of `if1` called `if2` that uses two `elif` instead of the corresponding `if` statements. You have to work out which ones you change. It should pass the tests:

```python
def test_if2(self):
    self.assertEqual(code.if2(0), 'zero')
    self.assertEqual(code.if2(1), 'positive')
    self.assertEqual(code.if2(-1), 'negative')
```

For loops

We met the range statement in the lecture. This rather boring function just returns the same integer that it is given by a rather roundabout route.

```python
def loop1(x):
    result = 0
    for n in range(1, x + 1):
        result = result + 1
    return result
```

as witnessed by the test cases:

```python
def test_loop1(self):
    self.assertEqual(code.loop1(0), 0)
    self.assertEqual(code.loop1(19), 19)
```

4 Task

Write a function `loop_sum(x)` which sums the integers 1, 2, up to `x`. It should pass the test cases:

```python
def test_loop_sum(self):
    self.assertEqual(code.loop_sum(0), 0)
    self.assertEqual(code.loop_sum(1), 1)
    self.assertEqual(code.loop_sum(2), 3)
    self.assertEqual(code.loop_sum(100), 5050)
```

Use a for loop!

Python Strings

Python has a rich set of string handling methods (look at [http://docs.python.org/library/string.html](http://docs.python.org/library/string.html)). In your second lab you will use the method `split`. For example:
>>> '1,2,3,4'.split(',')
['1', '2', '3', '4']

To concatenate strings you can use +

>>> 'hello ' + ' goodbye'
'hello goodbye'

### 5 Task

As you can see split returns a list strings. Python has a built in join method. You job is to write your own. It should pass the tests:

```python
def test_myjoin(self):
    split1 = '1,2,3,4'.split(',')
    self.assertEqual(code.myjoin(split1, ','), '1,2,3,4')
    self.assertEqual(
        code.myjoin('Hello and goodbye'.split('and'), 'and'),
        'Hello and goodbye')
```

The following code will not work:

```python
def myjoin(lst, sep):
    rstring = ''
    for i in lst:
        rstring = rstring + i + sep
    return rstring
```

Run the test and find out. The code nearly works. The loop for i in l iterates over every item in the list. The following hints might help:

- Given a list `lst` to get the list minus the last item use:
  
  ```python
  lstminus_last = lst[0:len(lst)-1]
  ```

- To access the last item in a list you can use `lst[len(lst)-1]`.

### Conclusion

This lab has only briefly scratched the surface of Python. Before the next lab you are strongly encouraged to go through one of the many Python tutorials on the web.