1 Setting up for AM121/ES121

Welcome! The tasks in this assignment will set you up for the course. You will not be graded for this assignment. We will start with Piazza, which is one of the most important resources in this course for keeping you informed and on track.

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Setup Task 1

Start using Piazza.

1. Go to the AM121/ES121 class page on Piazza at www.piazza.com/harvard/fall2015/am121es121. Register with your Harvard email (@fas or @college). Take the Piazza tour. Familiarize yourself with how to make posts (named, anonymous, or private), and browse the tag labels that you should use to identify the concept, assignment, quiz, lecture, or section note that you have a question or comment about.

2. Now you will learn how to make a post on the AM121/ES121 Piazza board. Click “New Post”. You may now choose to “Post a Question” (if you want to ask other students or the TFs or Professor a question) or “Post a Note” (if you have an important comment on the course or course materials, or you found an relevant article online that you want to share). Before you write your note, click “Formatting”, and read through the post formatting options. Note in particular that you can write LaTeX code into your posts! Make sure, however, never to share your answers to problem sets or your code with other students on Piazza. Everyone will see your post unless you make it “private” to course staff.

You’re ready to post your first question or note! Write up something very short - share with the class an interesting Optimization article, or ask the course staff and other students some relevant question such as “Why did you decide to take AM121/ES121?”. Now, label your post with the relevant “tag”. Drag the “pset0” tag onto your question or note. Look at the other tags to see if there is another that also describes your post. For example if your question is about office hours, tag your post with “office_hrs”. If you posted an interesting Optimization article, tag your post with “interesting”. You should always tag your posts so the course staff and other students can easily find and respond to your posts.

The course staff will respond to your question or note next time one of us checks Piazza. Other students may also respond, unless you make your post “private” i.e. share it only with instructors. Please make your posts public if they are relevant to all students - i.e. if other students might have the same question you have, make your post public! Note that when you make a post private, it is shared with all course staff only. If you have a personal emergency or need to contact course staff very urgently about a serious issue, please email a TF or the Professor rather than using Piazza.
3. Now you will make a comment on someone else’s post in Piazza. Look through other students’ posts, either by clicking on a post in the left sidebar, or by clicking a tag such as “pset0” at the top of the page to find a post that has used this tag. This is another chance to experiment! “Like” someone’s post by clicking “Good question” (if it really is). Start a followup discussion and reply with your answer. Test out some \LaTeX code by using the math environment symbols; for example, the code $$(\sum_{i=1}^5 x_i)+y$$ will produce $$(\sum_{i=1}^5 x_i) + y$$ as output.

End Task 1

Please also take note of the anonymous feedback form on the course website. Feel free to use this to provide any comments or suggestions to the course staff at any time.

Setup Task 2

Setup AMPL on your computer. Follow the Piazza posts to set up AMPL and the corresponding optimization solvers on your computer. You will need to use AMPL for assignment 1. It is convenient but not necessary to get AMPL to run from any directory of your computer.

End Task 2

Setup Task 3

Complete the online sectioning form. An online sectioning form will become available soon; we will give you a link to this on Piazza. Please ensure you submit it by Friday, September 11! Section assignments will be published soon after that.

End Task 3

Turning in your assignment

All of the problem sets in AM121/ES121 will have a “Final task” that summarizes what you should submit to the course staff. Follow the directions below to submit your first assignment.

Final Task 4

You must finish tasks 1 and 2 by 5:00 PM, Tuesday, September 8, 2015 and task 3 by Friday, September 11, 2015.

End Task 4