Computer Exercise 2: R

The computer language R is a powerful tool for doing scientific computation. Although R was designed as a statistical tool, it also functions very well as a general platform for scientific computation. It is in this latter capacity that we will mostly use it in our class.

The purpose of this second computer exercise is to get you up to speed as quickly as possible on R. Although genuine expertise will take some time to develop, you can develop functional proficiency by working through a tutorial. Many tutorials are available on-line, but some focus more on statistics than on scientific computing. The tutorial by Karline Soetaert strikes a nice balance between statistical applications and general purpose numerical work.

The assignment: The assignment for this week is to work through the first three chapters of Soetaert’s tutorial. The tutorial is available on-line, and is linked to on the class webpage. The tutorial includes several practice exercises. I want you to do exercise 1 in section 2.4 (page 7) and exercises 1 and 2 in section 3.8 (page 15.) Submit your answers in the form of a list of the R commands you used to answer the questions (hint: use the “history” tab to get a record of what you did.)

The due date for this assignment is Friday, February 10.