Unit 1

Basic Numerical Concepts & First Applications

...in general

- MATLAB...
 - ... is an interactive program to perform calculations
 - ... uses a high level programming language
 - ...is highly tuned for vector operations
 - ...can be operated via a user-friendly interface:

| 000 | tur a la constantia | | | | MATLAB R20 |)12b | | | | | | | - | N.M. |
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primary command window

MATLAB can perform the following calculations...

| + | addition, | e.g. 2.5+3.1 |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| - | subtraction, | e.g. 3.7-1.6 |
| * | multiplication, | e.g. 5.1*8.2 |
| / | division, | e.g. 7.3/3.2 |
| ۸ | power, | e.g. 3.1^2.5 (=3.1 ^{2.5}) |
| | | |

...following the elementary arithmetic rules

- MATLAB has a library of functions (e.g. sin(), log(), tan(), ...), but allows for user-defined functions, too
- MATLAB comes with an in-built help system:

>> help name

...where *name* is the function you like to know more about.

> exercise:

```
•try >> help help
•try >> help sin
•try >> help exp
```

• Note: whenever you are uncertain about anything in MATLAB, use help to find out about it!

...as a calculator

> exercise:

 use MATLAB as a calculator to perform the following calculations (in the command window).. >> 4+5/12 >> (4+5)/12 >> 100000000+1 >> 100000000-1 >>1.278e-2+0.23 >>1.5^5.8 >> -2^2 >>(-2)^2 >>2*pi >>103^2.4+4*3.7e-2-1.2/4^1.2 >> ... is MATLAB always obeying the correct rules? understand the results you obtain • try to find examples where the answer is "wrong", i.e. not what you expected! • Note: 3.7e-2 is a shortcut for 3.7 x 10⁻²

> exercise:

• use help to find out which mathematical functions (e.g. sin(), asin(), sqrt(), ...) are available in MATLAB

> exercise:

| log ₃ (108) | exp(log(9)) | $\sin(a\sin(0.7))$ | $\tan(0.7) - \frac{\sin(0.7)}{\cos(0.7)}$ |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| $3 - \frac{3 \times 5^{1.5}}{\left(5 - \frac{4}{3}\right)}$ | $3^{2^{*(4-\frac{1}{3})}}$ | $\sqrt{e^{-2^*34}} - \pi^* \ln(3.5)$ | $\sin(\pi/2) * \cos(2.4 * 10^{-3})$ |

> exercise:

• how to increase the accuracy of your calculations? try >> help format

• perform some more calculations switching between various formats, e.g.

switch on >> format long and try 100000000+1 again

variables

MATLAB can store numbers in variables



you can choose whatever name you prefer for variables: ALWAYS USE MEANINGFUL VARIABLE NAMES!

> exercise:

• repeat your previous calculations utilizing variables this time...

> exercise:

• why is >> 4=a not working?

```
useful commands
```

```
>> clear variable
>> clear all
>> who
>> clc (try help on them, i.e. help clear)
```

> exercise:

- are there any predefined variables in MATLAB?
- what happens when you use MATLAB's variables as your own?
- how can you recover MATLAB's values?

complex variables

MATLAB can also store complex numbers in variables

```
>> c=4.5+14.75i
>> d=complex(4.5,14.75)
>> real(c)
>> imag(c)
```

> exercise:

MATLAB

define various complex variablesperform mathematical operations with those complex variables

vectors

MATLAB can store multiple numbers as a vector:

- "[]" generates a vector and
- ", " or "; " separates its elements (coma creates row vector, semi-colon creates column vector)

>> a = [1.3, 5.7, 3.3, 2.8, sqrt(9.67), 0.67, 4.23]
>> b = [3, 4, 2]
>> c = [3; -4; 2]
>> d = [15, 73, 65]
>> e = [d, b]

■ a vector is a consecutive row/column of variables that all have the same name, e.g. "a"



• the individual elements of the vector can be obtained by properly "indexing" the vector name

```
>> a(1)
ans = 1.3
>> a(4)
ans = 2.8
Note: the index of a vector is always an integer number!!
```

• the number of elements of a vector are obtained with length()

```
>> length(a)
```

the last element of a vector can be easily accessed in two different ways:

```
>> a(length(a))
>> a(end)
```

- you can easily add elements to an existing vector, e.g. add 5 as the new last element: >> a = [a, 5]
- you can also remove any element from a vector, e.g. completely remove element at position i
 >> a(i)=[]

vectors

Unit 1

> exercise:

```
• define various vectors, e.g.
      >> a = [15.7, sin(0.7), exp(-1.5), 2*pi]
      >> b = [2/3, a, 104.7]
      >> c = [9.5; 7.14; \cos(0.23)]
      >> d = [\tan(0), -3.5, 15.4*2.9]
• perform several mathematical operations on them, e.g.
      >> 2*a
      >> a-pi
      >> c/2-2.3*d
      >> sin(5.34*d)
      >> sort(c)
      >> norm(a)
      >> max(b)
      >> min(d)
      >> sum(a)
      >> ...
```

you can also define vectors for accessing certain elements of another vector

```
>> a = [1.3, 5.7, 3.3, 2.8, sqrt(9.67), 0.67, 4.23]
>> i = [3, 4, 2]
>> a(i)
```

• Note: the index of a vector is always an integer number!

• <u>Note</u>: MATLAB favours the use of vectors and hence we will use such index vectors very often!

MATLAB also allows the definition of text vectors (called 'strings')

>> s = ['text 1']
>> c = ['text 2']
>> t = [s, 'together with ', c]

you can also access individual elements of a string

>> s(3),t(15)

you can 'add' strings together

>> newstring = strcat(s,c)

and you can convert numbers to strings (which can be useful when generating legends!)

>> n = num2str(5.78)



vectors

MATLAB distinguishes between column and row vectors

>> a = [1, 5, 10]
>> b = [1; 5; 10]
>> transpose(a)
>> a'

(row vector) (column vector)

exercise:

perform several mathematical operations on row and column vectors
are there new operations possible that previously were not allowed?

MATLAB distinguishes between *mathematical* and *numerical* vector products:

| >> a * b | is a mathematical vector multiplication | (result = either scalar or matrix) |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|
| >> a .* b | is a component-wise multiplication | (result = vector) |



➤ exercise:

- try various possibilities and understand the results
- when is it possible to perform a*b and when not?

vectors

MATLAB

• Advise!

```
inner vector product: dot(a,b)
outer vector product: cross(a,b) vs. component-wise multiplication: a.*b
```

MATLAB also performs component-wise division and powers:



> exercise:

perform several component-wise divisions and powers of row and column vectors
are there new operations possible that previously were not allowed?

• Note: a/b (without the 'dot') is a special matrix operation to be explained later!

vectors

MATLAB can generate vectors containing equally spaced values, option 1: ":" (colon operator)

>> a = [0:2:10]
>> b = [0.5:0.1:1.2]
>> c = [1:3:10]
>> help colon
>> help length

> exercise:

- generate a vector running from 100 down to 0 in steps of 2
- extract every 10th element of that vector (in one command only!)
- calculate the product of all those 10th elements (hint: help prod)
- Advice: sometimes it is more convenient to generate an index vector:



> exercise:

- repeat the previous exercise using an index vector
- generate an index vector that accesses every element but the first and last
- Note: you might have done the previous exercise already like this, then there is no need to repeat it again...

 \succ exercise:

• MATLAB can generate vectors containing equally spaced values, option 2: linspace()

```
>> x = linspace(xmin, xmax, N)
>> ...
>> help linspace
```

MATLAB uses vectors like variables in functions

| >> 2 | >> x = linspace(0, 2*pi, 75) | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------|--|---------------|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | => x | 0 | | | | 2pi | | | | | |
| | | | | (75 elements) | | | | | | | |
| >> 7 | >> y = sin(x) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | => y | sin(0) | | | | sin(2pi) | | | | | |
| | | | | (75 elements) | | | | | | | |
| ise: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| is there a difference between sin (x) and sin (x')? why do we need to write x.^3.5 and not x^3.5? | | | | | | | | | | | |

• Note: linspace() is a very useful function that will be frequently used throughout the course!

• there is also a function in MATLAB that generates logarithmically spaced vectors: logspace()

```
>> x = logspace(log10(xmin), log10(xmax), N)
>> ...
>> help logspace not relevant for exams...
>> x = logspace(log10(1), log10(100), 75)
>> y = x.^3.5
```

plotting

MATLAB can plot vectors for you

>> x = linspace(0,2*pi,100)
>> y = sin(x)
>> plot(x,y)

• plot () is plotting a point (dot, cross, ...) for each and every pair of variables stored in the two vectors



Notes:

- both vector must have the same lengths (otherwise there are obviously no pairs)
- the first vector will be used as x-axis, the second as y-axis
- plot () connects the points with a line (unless you specify this differently)
- plot () takes various additional arguments to specify line-style and line-colour

>> plot(x, sin(x), 'y+')

• there are various commands to add legends, labels, etc.

```
>> legend('sine curve')
>> title('MATLAB course example')
>> xlabel('angle [rad]')
>> ylabel('sin(angle)')
```

> exercise:

- use help to learn more about plot ()
- plot sin (x) where the x-axis is the angle in degrees and label the plot correctly
- plot various other mathematical functions, e.g. e^x , $log_3(x)$, $5x^3$, cos(x) / sin(x), ...

> exercise:

- generate a plot that shows $f(x)=x^{3.5}$ for 20 points on the intervall x=[1,100] using linspace ()
- add to the same plot $f(x)=x^{3.5}$ on the same intervall, but now using <code>logspace()</code>
- what is the difference between using linspace() and logspace()?

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MATLAB

plotting

 you can save the plot in various formats to disk by using 'Save As...' the 'File' menu from the figure window:

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| | >> plot(x,sin(x)) f _x >> | Save Save As Generate Code Import Data | 962 | b 0 0 d 0 d - |
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| | | | | piot(x,sin(x)) clc |
| Details | ^ | | | <pre>plot(x,sin(x))</pre> |

as mentioned before, power-laws are very common in physics and best plotted on a logarithmic scale

```
>> x = logspace(log10(1),log10(1000),100)
>> plot(log10(x),log10(x.^3),'o')
>> loglog(x,x.^3,'+')
```

exercise:



plotting

figure(n) generates a new window #n for a plot, e.g.

```
>> x = linspace(0,2*pi,100);
>> figure(1)
>> plot(x,sin(x))
>> figure(2)
>> plot(x,cos(x))
```

close(n) closes window #n again.

• hold on/off allows to use multiple plot () commands in a sequence for the same figure, e.g.

```
>> x = linspace(0,2*pi,100);
>> plot(x,sin(x))
>> hold on
>> plot(x,cos(x))
>> hold off
```

- axis controls the axis scaling and appearance
- xlim, ylim, and zlim set (or even retrieve) the axis limits
- grid places a grid on top of an existing plot
- subplot() (followed by plot()) generates multiple plot windows in one figure window, e.g.

>> x = linspace(0,2*pi,100);
>> subplot(1,2,1), plot(x,sin(x))
>> subplot(1,2,2), plot(x,cos(x))

where the first argument is the total number of rows, the second the total number of columns and the third the identifier of the actual subplot

■ plot3 (x, y, z) connects the points (x,y,z) in a 3D plot, e.g.

>> t = linspace(0,8*pi,100);
>> plot3(cos(t), sin(t), t)

■ experimental data with error bars is best plotted with errorbar(x,y,e), e.g.

```
>> x = linspace(0,8*pi,100);
>> y = sin(x);
>> e = randn(1,length(x)); we assign random error values using MATLAB's randn() function (more later!)
>> errorbar(x,y,e)
```

> exercise:

repeat the exercise with the errorbars assigning 0.1 as the error for every single point

MATLAB reads and executes multiple commands from a given file with extension * .m

\succ exercise:

• write a script that plots sin(x) and cos(x) in one figure window next to each other hint: use figure () and subplot ()

- causes a script to wait until you press any key (can be useful for debugging...) pause
- % is used for placing comments into the script

structures the script into blocks (also very useful for debugging your script!) ∎ 응응



scripts

numerical derivatives

Numerical Derivatives – arbitrary functions

Given two data vectors x() and f() we aim at determining the derivative

$$f'(x) = \mathrm{d}f/\mathrm{d}x$$



Note:

- the function in this example is tabulated in an array at N=6 points, i.e. i=1:6
- the derivative can only be tabulated in an array at *M*=*N*-1 points, i.e. *j*=1:5
- the derivative will be given at the midpoints $xmid_i = a + (i-0.5) dx$
- the midpoint can also be calculated as $xmid_i = (x_{i+1}+x_i)/2$

exercise: (solution on next page...)

• numerically differentiate the function $f(x)=x^2+5x$, defined on interval [a,b] with a=1.5 and b=15.6

• hints:

- define two new vectors df and dx to then calculate f_deriv = df./dx
- \bullet remember the usage of index vectors to access x () and f ()
- \bullet remember that the length of df, dx, and <code>f_deriv</code> will be N-1
- remember that the derivative f'(x) will be given at the midpoints

> exercise:

• numerically differentiate the function $x(t)=5\sin(t)\cos^2(t)$ on interval [a,b] with $a=-\pi/4$ and $b=3\pi/4$

Numerical Derivatives – how to realise the project

- define interval [a,b]
- choose number of sampling points ${\cal N}$
- generate vector \vec{x} where $x_i \in [a,b], \forall i \in N$
- generate vector \vec{f} where $f_i = f(x_i), \forall i \in N$
- calculate vector $d\vec{x}$ where $dx_i = x_{i+1} x_i, \forall i \in N-1$
- calculate vector $d\vec{f}$ where $df_i = f_{i+1} f_i, \forall i \in N-1$
- calculate vector \vec{f}^{deriv} where $f_i^{deriv} = df_i/dx_i, \forall i \in N-1$
- calculate vector \vec{x}^{mid} where $x_i^{mid} = (x_{i+1} + x_i)/2, \forall i \in N-1$
- plot the pairs $(x_i^{mid}, f_i^{deriv}), \forall i \in N-1$
- plot analytical derivative at \vec{x}^{mid}

1. algorithm

numerical derivatives

(independent of programming language!)

"translation"

```
% parameters
a = 1.5;
b = 15.6;
N = 10;
% the function
x = linspace(a,b,N);
f = x.^{2+5}.*x;
% the derivative
il = 1:N-1;
ir = 2:N;
dx = x(ir) - x(il);
df = f(ir) - f(il);
fderiv = df./dx;
xmid = (x(ir)+x(il))./2;
% plot numerical derivative
plot(xmid,fderiv,'r'), hold on
% and compare to analytical result
```

plot(xmid,2.*xmid+5,'bo')

2. program (depends on programming language!)

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numerical integration

Numerical Integration

Given two data vectors $x\left(\right)\,$ and $f\left(\right)\,$ we aim at determining the integral



mid-point integration:

$$I_{num}^{mid} \approx \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \frac{f(x_i) + f(x_{i+1})}{2} dx_i$$

f(x), averaged f value

Numerical Integration

➤ exercise:

- write a script that evaluates the integral of cos(x) between two angles $0 < a < b < 2\pi$.
- use all three options to numerically evaluate the integral.
- compare those three options against each other.
- which methods gives the best results and why?
- what happens when you in-/decrease the number of sampling points N?

• hints:

- remember sum()
- to access the vector ${\rm y}$ () generate an index vector ${\rm i}$ ()
- $\ \cdot \ the difference between consecutive elements of a vector is best calculated with diff()$

>> dx = diff(x)

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Unit 1

MATLAB

Numerical Integration

Given two data vectors ${\tt x}$ () and ${\tt f}$ () we aim at constructing the antiderivative

$$y(x) = \int_{a}^{x} f(s) ds$$

MATLAB has an in-built function helping to solve for antiderivatives of functions: cumsum()

>> y=cumsum(x) generates a vector y() with the elements: $y(i) = \sum_{j=1}^{l} x(j) \quad \forall i \in [1, \text{length}(x)]$





• cumsum() can be used to numerically construct the antiderivative:



➤ exercise:

• write a script integratecos.m that calculates the antiderivative of cos(x) on an interval $x \in [a,b]$ $g(x) = \int_{a}^{x} cos(s) ds$ • use the formula I_{num}^{mid} together with cumsum () and compare the results to the analytical solution.

Note:

- when using cumsum() like described above, you get the anti-derivative at the points $x_2,...,x_N$
- if you want the anti-derivative at all points x_i , you can add a 0 as the first element to the vector: >> y = [0, cumsum()];
- ${\tt y}$ () now contains the same number of points as ${\tt x}$ () where the first element is correctly 0

application – study of function

We want to study the function

 $f(x) = -5x^2\sin(x) + e^{x/2}\sqrt{x}$

and its (anti-)derivative on the interval $[x_1, x_2]$.

➤ exercise:

• write a script with the name **function.m** in which you calculate and plot f(x) on the interval $x_1=3$, $x_2=10$ using N=200 points.

> exercise:

• calculate the numerical derivative of f(x) inside your script and plot the numerical derivative into the same figure using a line with a different colour.

> exercise:

• write a script-function **antiderivative.m** that returns the numerically determined antiderivative for a function provided in a vector f(); the values of the anti-derivative should be given at the same values x() as the function f(). The function should work as follows:

function [antideriv] = antiderivative(f, x)
% x(): vector containing the values of the independent variable x_i

% f () : vector containing the function values $f(x_i)$

% antideriv(): vector containing the value of the anti-derivative at all x_i

• use that function to calculate (and plot into the same figure) the anti-derivative

$$f(x) = \int \frac{df}{dx} dx$$

of your numerically obtained df/dx

• Note: your final plot should look like this



application – law of gravity

Cannonball Fever

We intend to calculate and plot the flight path of a cannon ball



• the solution to the equations of motions for the cannonball is:

- $\vec{r}(t) = \vec{r}_0 + \vec{v}_0 t + \frac{1}{2}\vec{g}t^2$ $\vec{v}(t) = \vec{v}_0 + \vec{g}t$ $= \text{an initial position} \quad \vec{r}_0$ $= \text{an initial velocity} \quad \vec{v}_0 = v_0 \begin{pmatrix} \cos \alpha \\ \sin \alpha \end{pmatrix}$ $= \text{an initial angle} \quad \alpha$
- the value of the acceleration \vec{g} felt by any object on the surface of the earth

$$\vec{g} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \ km/s^2 \\ -9.81 \ km/s^2 \end{pmatrix}$$

application – law of gravity

Cannonball Fever

We intend to calculate and plot the flight path of a cannon ball

> exercise:

• using the analytial solution (see previous page), plot the cannonball trajectory using a time intervall $t \in [0, -2v_{\gamma,0}/g_{\gamma}]$.

• plot x(t) and y(t) into a different figure.

• using the analytical solution for the velocityies, verify energy conservation:

$$E(t) = \frac{1}{2}mv^{2}(t) - mgy(t) = const.$$

> exercise:

• use your MATLAB vectors for x(t) & y(t) to obtain their numerical derivatives, i.e. $v_x(t) \& v_y(t)$

- compare the numerical velocities to the analytical ones by plotting them in the same figure.
- use your numerical vectors for velocities and positions to verify energy conservation again.

> exercise:

- use the numerical velocities to obtain the accelerations, too.
- compare the numerical accelerations against the analytical solution $a_x = 0$, $a_y = -g_y$
- *hint*: you may have to use ones ()

➤ exercise:

- place your cannon on the Moon and calculate the flight path
- compare the flight paths on Earth and Moon

> Note: use your favourite values for x_0, y_0, v_0, m , and α , but all different from zero.

application – trajectories

trajectory of two particles

Consider two particles with the following parametrized trajectories:

particle #1:particle #2:
$$x_a = v \cdot t$$
 $x_b = v \cdot t - D \cdot \tanh\left(\frac{v \cdot t}{D}\right)$ $y_a = 0$ $y_b = D \cdot \sec h\left(\frac{v \cdot t}{D}\right)$

> exercise:

• write a script that calculates the position, velocity, and acceleration; velocities and accelerations have to be calculated numerically!

> exercise:

• plot the trajectories into one figure, the absolute value of the velocities in a second figure, and the absolute value of the acceleration in a third figure; use v=0.5m/s, D=5.0m, $t_j=50$ s.

> exercise:

• calculate and plot the distance traversed by both particles as a function of time. This distance is calculated by either of the following two integrals:

$$d(t) = \int_{0}^{t} |d\vec{r}| = \int_{0}^{t} |\vec{v}(t')| dt'$$

harmonic oscillator

• a harmonic oscillator obeys a 2nd order ordinary differential equation:

$$\frac{d^2x}{dt^2} = -\frac{k}{m}x$$

...which describes the motion of a mass *m* which, displaced from its equilibrium position, experiences a restoring force proportional to the displacement *x*, i.e. F = -kx (Hooke's law).

• the initial conditions x_0 and v_0 need to specified as follows

$$x_{0} = x(t = 0)$$
$$v_{0} = v(t = 0) = \frac{dx}{dt}\Big|_{t=0}$$

• the solution for the velocity is given by

$$v(t) = A\omega_0 \cos(\omega_0 t + \varphi)$$
 with

$$\omega_0 = \sqrt{\frac{k}{m}}$$
$$A = \sqrt{x_0^2 + \left(\frac{v_0}{\omega_0}\right)^2}$$
$$\varphi = \arctan\left(\omega_0 \frac{x_0}{v_0}\right)$$

> exercises:

- plot v(t) for $t_0=0$ s, $x_0=1.2$ m, $v_0=3.7$ m/s, k=1.5kg/s², m=1.4kg • numerically obtain $x(t) = x_0 + \int_{t_0}^{t} v(s) ds$ and plot it into the same figure • numerically obtain a(t) = dv/dt and plot it into the same figure
- plot the analytical *x*(*t*) and *a*(*t*) into the same figure, too

application – harmonic oscillator

Duef Alexander Kr



application – galaxy observations

MATLAB

Tully-Fisher relation in Astronomy

It has been observed that the more luminous a galaxy is the faster it rotates!



 $L_{\rm galaxy1}$



 $L_{\sf galaxy2}$

 $v_{galaxy1}$

 $v_{galaxy2}$

| | M31 | M33 | M81 | NGC2403 | NGC4236 | IC 2574 | NGC 2366 | NGC 5585 | NGC 5204 | Ho IV |
|---|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| v | 546 | 242 | 530 | 306 | 202 | 126 | 129 | 214 | 151 | 110 |
| М | -20.96 | -18.66 | -20.01 | -19.17 | -17.53 | -16.69 | -16.34 | -18.05 | -17.78 | -16.35 |

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original data from Tully & Fisher (1977)

➤ exercises:

- plot the data in an appropriate way
- try to determine the exponent p of the power-law $L \propto v^p$
- is there a way to sort the data prior to plotting?
- **Note**: the absolute magnitude M relates to the luminosity like $M \propto -\log_{10}(L)$

summary

| mathematical/numerical operations | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------|-----------------|----------|------------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|--|
| + | - | * | | / | ^ | .* | ./ | .^ | | | |
| | | | i | n-built | functions | 5 | | | | | |
| sqrt() | log() | log10(| log10() | | log10() | | sin()/asi n() | cos()/ac os() | tan()/ata n() | rem() | |
| floor() | ceil() | complex | ×() | real() | img() | sign() | abs() | | | | |
| in-built variables | | | | | | | | | | | |
| pi | eps inf | | | nan | i | ans | | | | | |
| vector operations | | | | | | | | | | | |
| = | : | () | () [] | | linspace() | length() | diff() | sum() | | | |
| max() | min() | prod() | prod() cumsum() | | | | | | | | |
| | | inte | erac | ctive/sc | ript com | mands | | | | | |
| ; | , | % | | clear | clc | home | pause | who | | | |
| help | format | close | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| plotting | | | | | | | | | | | |
| figure | close | plot | | subplot | hold | legend | xlabel | ylabel | | | |
| axis | is xlim ylim | | | grid | errorbar | plot3 | text | | | | |
| | | • | ad | vanced | comman | ds | | | | | |
| logspace | loglog | semilo | gx | semilogy | fplot | | | | | | |

please familiarize yourself with all of these commands, functions, variables, etc., even if they have not been discussed in class:

from now on you must know how to use them all!

summary

- you further need to know the following...
 - dealing with vectors
 - generating vectors using ":" as well as linspace()
 - vectors as arguments of functions, e.g. sin(x)
 - selecting and modifying individual elements of a vector
 - writing and executing scripts
 - calculating a numerical derivative
 - calculating a numerical integral
 - plotting functions (of one variable)
 - using plot(), subplot(), hold
 - adjusting and polishing a figure, e.g. axis, grid, ...