

Math 2280 - Lecture 24

Dylan Zwick

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If we think back to calculus II we'll remember that one of the most important things we learned about in the second half of the course were Taylor series. A Taylor series is a way of expressing a function as an "infinite polynomial". The Taylor series (or in the cases below the Maclaurin series, which is just the Taylor series expanded around the point $x = 0$) for some common functions are:

$$\sin x = x - \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^5}{5!} - \frac{x^7}{7!} + \cdots$$

$$\cos x = 1 - \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} - \frac{x^6}{6!} + \cdots$$

$$e^x = 1 + x + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} + \cdots$$

We're going to use this formulation of an exponential function to define what it means to take a "matrix exponential", which is a matrix-valued function of the form:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}}$$

where \mathbf{A} is a constant square matrix. Now, it may be that you've never seen this before, and it's not immediately clear what this means. How do you take something to a matrix power? Well, the way that we define this exponential is in terms of an infinite series:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}} = I + \mathbf{A} + \frac{\mathbf{A}^2}{2!} + \frac{\mathbf{A}^3}{3!} + \cdots$$

Now, we'll say that the rigor police are off the beat here and we won't go through a proof that this series always converges, but it's true that this series always converges to some constant matrix, where we view convergence of a series of matrices in terms of convergence of their individual entries.

We're going to see that matrix exponentials have quite a bit to do with finding solutions to first-order linear homogeneous systems with constant coefficients.

This lecture corresponds with section 5.5 of the textbook. The assigned problems for this section are:

Section 5.5 - 1, 7, 9, 18, 24

Fundamental Matrices for Systems of ODEs

To review, a solution to a system of ODEs satisfies the relation:

$$\mathbf{x}' = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x}.$$

If we have n *linearly independent* solutions $\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_n$ then *any* solution to our system can be written in the form:

$$\mathbf{x} = c_1\mathbf{x}_1 + c_2\mathbf{x}_2 + \cdots + c_n\mathbf{x}_n.$$

From these linearly independent solutions we can construct a matrix $\Phi(t)$:

$$\Phi(t) = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{x}_1 & \mathbf{x}_2 & \cdots & \mathbf{x}_n \end{pmatrix}$$

which is called a *fundamental matrix* for the system defined by the constant matrix \mathbf{A} . Now, our statement that we can write any solution \mathbf{x} as a linear combination of our linearly independent solutions can be written in matrix form as:

$$\mathbf{x} = \Phi(t)\mathbf{c}$$

where \mathbf{c} is a constant vector given by:

$$\mathbf{c} = \begin{pmatrix} c_1 \\ \vdots \\ c_n \end{pmatrix}.$$

This fundamental matrix $\Phi(t)$ is not unique, and if $\Psi(t)$ is another fundamental matrix then we have:

$$\Psi(t) = \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 & \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_2 & \cdots & \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_n \end{pmatrix},$$

where the $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i$ are linearly independent solutions to our system of ODEs. Now, each of these solutions can in turn be represented as a linear combination of our original \mathbf{x}_i :

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 &= c_{11}\mathbf{x}_1 + c_{12}\mathbf{x}_2 + \cdots + c_{1n}\mathbf{x}_n \\ \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_2 &= c_{21}\mathbf{x}_1 + c_{22}\mathbf{x}_2 + \cdots + c_{2n}\mathbf{x}_n \\ &\vdots \\ \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_n &= c_{n1}\mathbf{x}_1 + c_{n2}\mathbf{x}_2 + \cdots + c_{nn}\mathbf{x}_n \end{aligned}$$

or, in matrix terminology:

$$\Psi(t) = \Phi(t)\mathbf{C}$$

where

$$\mathbf{C} = \begin{pmatrix} c_{11} & c_{12} & \cdots & c_{1n} \\ c_{21} & c_{22} & \cdots & c_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ c_{n1} & c_{n2} & \cdots & c_{nn} \end{pmatrix}.$$

If we have an initial condition:

$$\mathbf{x}(0) = \mathbf{x}_0$$

then we get for our solution:

$$\mathbf{x}_0 = \Psi(0)\mathbf{c}$$

where \mathbf{c} is a constant vector given by:

$$\mathbf{c} = \Psi(0)^{-1}\mathbf{x}_0$$

and we note that $\Psi(0)^{-1}$ makes sense as $\Psi(t)$ is nonsingular for all t by definition.

Combining these results we get:

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = \Psi(t)\Psi(0)^{-1}\mathbf{x}_0.$$

Example - Find a fundamental matrix for the system below, and then find a solution satisfying the given initial conditions.

$$\mathbf{x}' = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & -1 \\ -4 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x}$$

with initial condition

$$\mathbf{x}(0) = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Solution - To find a fundamental matrix, we need to find two linearly independent solutions to the system. We can get these using the eigenvalue methods from section 5.2. The characteristic equation for our matrix is:

$$\begin{vmatrix} 2 - \lambda & -1 \\ -4 & 2 - \lambda \end{vmatrix} = (2 - \lambda)^2 - 4 = \lambda(\lambda - 4).$$

So, we have two eigenvalues $\lambda = \{0, 4\}$. For these two eigenvalues we get the eigenvectors below.

For $\lambda = 0$ we have:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & -1 \\ -4 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

This gives us an eigenvector:

$$\mathbf{v}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}.$$

For $\lambda = 4$ we have:

$$\begin{pmatrix} -2 & -1 \\ -4 & -2 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

which gives us the eigenvector:

$$\mathbf{v}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix}.$$

From this we get the fundamental matrix:

$$\Phi(t) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & e^{4t} \\ 2 & -2e^{4t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

The initial value of this fundamental matrix is:

$$\Phi(0) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 2 & -2 \end{pmatrix},$$

which has inverse:

$$\Phi(0)^{-1} = \frac{1}{-4} \begin{pmatrix} -2 & -1 \\ -2 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{4} \\ \frac{1}{2} & -\frac{1}{4} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Using this we get the initial constant vector:

$$\mathbf{c} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{4} \\ \frac{1}{2} & -\frac{1}{4} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} \\ \frac{5}{4} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Using this we get the final solution:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}(t) &= \Phi(t)\Phi(0)^{-1}\mathbf{x}_0 = \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & e^{4t} \\ 2 & -2e^{4t} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} \\ \frac{5}{4} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} + \frac{5}{4}e^{4t} \\ \frac{3}{2} - \frac{5}{2}e^{4t} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{3}{4} \\ \frac{3}{2} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{5}{4} \\ -\frac{5}{2} \end{pmatrix} e^{4t}. \end{aligned}$$

Now, this may seem like a more difficult way of figuring out the same solutions we'd figured out using other methods and, well, that's because it is. However, the major advantage to this method is that it makes it very easy to switch around our initial conditions. Once we've found $\Phi(t)$ and $\Phi(0)^{-1}$, it becomes very easy to find the solution for any given initial conditions \mathbf{x}_0 just using the relation $\mathbf{x}(t) = \Phi(t)\Phi(0)^{-1}\mathbf{x}_0$.

Matrix Exponentials and ODEs

Right about now you might be asking why we discussed matrix exponentials at the beginning of this lecture. We haven't used them yet. Well, now is when we're going to talk about them, and we'll see they are intimately connected to fundamental matrices.

First, let's go over some important properties of matrix exponentials.

If \mathbf{A} is a diagonal matrix:

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & c \end{pmatrix}$$

then if we exponentiate this matrix we get:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}} = \begin{pmatrix} e^a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & e^b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & e^c \end{pmatrix}.$$

Of course the same idea works, *mutatis mutandis*, for a diagonal matrix of any size.

Also, if two matrices commute, so $\mathbf{AB} = \mathbf{BA}$, then:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}+\mathbf{B}} = e^{\mathbf{A}}e^{\mathbf{B}}.$$

Note this is *not* necessarily true if \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} do not commute.

Finally, if we have the matrix exponential:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}t} = \mathbf{I} + \mathbf{A}t + \frac{\mathbf{A}^2}{2!}t^2 + \frac{\mathbf{A}^3}{3!}t^3 + \dots$$

then we can differentiate these term by term¹ and we get:

$$\frac{de^{\mathbf{A}t}}{dt} = \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{A}^2t + \frac{\mathbf{A}^3}{2!}t^2 + \dots = \mathbf{A}e^{\mathbf{A}t}.$$

Well, this is *very* interesting. What this is saying is that the matrix $e^{\mathbf{A}t}$ satisfies the matrix differential equation:

$$\mathbf{X}' = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}$$

where \mathbf{X} is a square matrix the same size as \mathbf{A} , and each column of \mathbf{x} satisfies $\mathbf{x}'_i = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x}_i$. Now, as $e^{\mathbf{A}t}$ is nonsingular, each of its columns must be linearly independent, and so $e^{\mathbf{A}t}$ is a fundamental matrix for \mathbf{A} !

If we note finally that $e^{\mathbf{A}0} = \mathbf{I} = \mathbf{I}^{-1}$ then we get the relation:

¹Again, just trust me, the rigor police are off duty here...

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = e^{\mathbf{A}t} \mathbf{x}_0.$$

where $\mathbf{x}(t)$ is a solution to the system of ODEs:

$$\mathbf{x}'(t) = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x}(t)$$

with initial condition:

$$\mathbf{x}(0) = \mathbf{x}_0.$$

Note this is *very* similar to the solution of the differential equation:

$$x' = x.$$

Example - Solve the system of differential equations:

$$\mathbf{x}' = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 2 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x}$$

with initial conditions:

$$\mathbf{x}(0) = \begin{pmatrix} 19 \\ 29 \\ 39 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Solution - To solve this we note that:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 2 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

where we call the first matrix in the sum on the right **B** and the second matrix **C**.

Now, we note that:

$$\mathbf{C}^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 18 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

and

$$\mathbf{C}^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

This is an example of a matrix that is *nilpotent*. A matrix **M** is nilpotent if $\mathbf{M}^k = \mathbf{0}$ for some positive integer k . Calculating the matrix exponentials of nilpotent matrices is very easy. It's kind of like calculating Taylor series for polynomials.

Now,

$$e^{\mathbf{C}t} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} t + \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 18 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} t^2.$$

And so

$$e^{\mathbf{C}t} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 3t & 4t + 9t^2 \\ 0 & 1 & 6t \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

while for our matrix **B** the matrix exponential is just:

$$e^{\mathbf{B}t} = \begin{pmatrix} e^{2t} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{2t} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & e^{2t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

So, given that $\mathbf{BC} = \mathbf{CB}$ (which is very important for this example) we get:

$$e^{\mathbf{A}t} = e^{\mathbf{B}t}e^{\mathbf{C}t} = \begin{pmatrix} e^{2t} & 3te^{2t} & (4t + 9t^2)e^{2t} \\ 0 & e^{2t} & 6te^{2t} \\ 0 & 0 & e^{2t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Therefore, the solution to our differential equation is:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x}(t) = e^{\mathbf{A}t}\mathbf{x}_0 &= \begin{pmatrix} e^{2t} & 3te^{2t} & (4t + 9t^2)e^{2t} \\ 0 & e^{2t} & 6te^{2t} \\ 0 & 0 & e^{2t} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 19 \\ 29 \\ 39 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 19 + 243t + 351t^2 \\ 29 + 234t \\ 39 \end{pmatrix} e^{2t}. \end{aligned}$$

Notes on Homework Problems

For problems 5.5.1 and 5.5.7 you're asked to find a fundamental matrix for the system, and then solve the system with the given initial values. The major part of these problems is solving the given system of differential equations, which you can do using the methods of sections 5.2 and (possibly) 5.4.

For problems 5.5.9 and 5.5.18 you'll want to first find a fundamental matrix $\Phi(t)$ for the system like you did in the first two problems, and then find $e^{\mathbf{A}t}$ using the relation $e^{\mathbf{A}t} = \Phi(t)\Phi(0)^{-1}$.

In problem 5.5.24 you want to calculate the matrix exponential using the definition, which isn't too bad given the matrix A is nilpotent. Don't worry, you won't have to take too many products of 3×3 matrices before A^k is zero!