

**Differential Equations - SM212**  
**Final Exam Review Notes**

1. Classification

- Order
- Linearity:  $a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = f(x)$ , where dependent variable  $y$  and its derivatives have no nonlinear operations (e.g., squaring) performed on them,
- Separable
- Autonomous

2. Graphical approximations to the solution to a first order ODE

- Direction fields and isoclines
- Autonomous DEs
  - $y' = f(y)$ ,
  - Find critical points and sketch phase portrait
  - Types of equilibria
    - (a) stable - attractor
    - (b) unstable - repellor

3. Numerical methods for  $y' = f(x, y)$

- Euler's method

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$$y_{new} = y_{old} + hf(x_{old}, y_{old}), \quad x_{new} = x_{old} + h$$

or

$$y_{n+1} = y_n + hf(x_n, y_n), \quad x_{n+1} = x_n + h$$

- successive “tangent line”/linear approximation using slope =  $y' = f(x, y)$

- Improved Euler's method

- If  $y_{new}^* = y_{old} + hf(x_{old}, y_{old})$  then

$$y_{new} = y_{old} + \frac{h}{2}[f(x_{old}, y_{old}) + f(x_{new}, y_{new}^*)], \quad x_{new} = x_{old} + h$$

- successive *averaged* “tangent line” /linear approximation using slope =  $y' = f(x, y)$

#### 4. First Order Methods of Solution

- Separation of Variables  $y' = f(x)/g(y) \implies \int g(y) dy = \int f(x) dx$
- Integrating Factor
  - $y' + p(x)y = q(x)$
  - $\mu = e^{\int p(x) dx}$
  - $\mu y' + p(x)\mu y = (\mu y)' = \mu f(x)$
  -

$$y = \frac{\int \mu f(x) dx + C}{\mu}$$

#### 5. Applications

- Exponential Growth/Decay
  - General  $y' = Ay, y(0) = y_0 \implies y = y_0 e^{At}$
  - Radioactive Decay  $m(t) = m_0 (\frac{1}{2})^{t/t_{1/2}}$
- Heating/Cooling
 

$T' = k \cdot (T - T_{room})$ , where  $T = T(t)$  is the temperature of the object and  $T_{room}$  (which can depend on  $t$ ) is temperature of the room (or environment or medium)
- Mixing  $A' = F_{in}C_{in} - F_{out} \frac{A}{\text{Tank}(t)}$ , where  $F_{in/out}$  is the flow rate of the solution flowing in/out,  $C_{in}$  is the concentration of the solution pouring in,  $\text{Tank}(t)$  is the volume of solution in the tank and time  $t$ , and  $A = A(t)$  is the amount (mass) of solute.
- Falling Body  $mv' + kv = mg$ , where  $k \geq 0$  is the coefficient of air resistance.
- Circuits
  - RL  $L \frac{di}{dt} + Ri = e(t)$ , solve for  $i = i(t)$
  - RC  $R \frac{dq}{dt} + \frac{1}{C}q = e(t)$ , solve for  $q = q(t)$

#### 6. Higher Order DE Underlying Theory

- $n^{\text{th}}$  Order Differential Equation

Initial Value Problem, subject to  $n$  initial conditions

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = f(x),$$

Initial Conditions:  $y(x_0) = y_0, y'(x_0) = y_1, \dots, y^{(n-1)}(x_0) = y_{n-1}$ .

- $n^{\text{th}}$  Order Homogeneous Differential Equation

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = 0.$$

- There are exactly  $n$  fundamental solutions,  $y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n$
- Fundamental solutions are linearly independent
- General solution:  $y = c_1y_1 + \dots + c_ny_n$ , for arbitrary constants (sometimes called “parameters”)  $c_1, \dots, c_n$

- $n^{\text{th}}$  order non-homogeneous differential equation

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = f(x),$$

General solution:  $y = y_h + y_p$ , where

- $y_h$  is a solution to

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = 0,$$

- $y_p$  is any solution to

$$a_n(x)y^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1(x)y' + a_0(x)y = f(x).$$

## 7. Methods of Solution for Second Order Linear Differential Equations

- Homogeneous with Constant Coefficients

- Factor characteristic polynomial (sometimes called the *auxiliary equation*)
- Roots,  $r_i$ , yield members of Fundamental Set  $y_k = e^{r_k x}$
- For roots repeated  $k$  times,  $y_1 = e^{rx}, y_2 = xe^{rx}, y_3 = x^2e^{rx}, \dots, y_k = x^{k-1}e^{rx}$ ,

- For complex conjugate roots,  $r = \alpha + i\beta$ ,  $y_1 = e^{\alpha x} \cos(\beta x)$ ,  $y_2 = e^{\alpha x} \sin(\beta x)$ .
- Non-homogeneous with Constant Coefficients (undetermined coefficients and annihilators)

These methods only applies to the non-homogeneous constant coefficient ODEs

$$a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = f(x)$$

where the “forcing function”  $f(x)$  is “elementary”. More precisely,  $f(x)$  must be a sum of terms which are a product of polynomials, exponentials, sin’s and/or cos’s.

*Undetermined coefficients:*

- First find  $y_h$ , the solution to the homogeneous equation
- Next find the repeated derivatives of the forcing  $f(x)$ , writing down all the individual terms separately, removing constant factors which might be multiplying such terms. By the hypothesis on  $f(x)$ , only a finite number of such functions can arise.
- “Guess” for  $y_p$  a linear combination of such functions. The coefficients in this linear combination are the “undetermined coefficients”. Multiply by  $x$  those terms which “agree” with any terms in  $y_h$ .
- Plug  $y_p$  into the ODE and solve for the undetermined coefficients
- $y = y_h + y_p$
- Solve for the “parameters”  $c_1, \dots, c_n$  if you are given ICs.

*Annihilator method:* Write

$$a_n y^{(n)} + a_{n-1} y^{(n-1)} + \dots + a_1 y' + a_0 y = f(x)$$

symbolically as  $L(y) = f(x)$ .

- Find the Annihilator of  $f(x)$  - the differential operator  $L_0$  of smallest degree such that  $L_0(f(x)) = 0$ .
- Multiply annihilators for sums of functions
- Find  $y_h$  - the solution to  $L(y) = 0$ .

- Find solutions of  $L_0(L(y)) = 0$ .
  - \* identify terms which comprise  $y_h$
  - \* remaining terms comprise  $y_p$
  - \*  $y = y_h + y_p$
- Use  $L(y) = f(x)$  to solve for coefficients in  $y_p$
- Solve for “parameters” of  $y_h$  using initial conditions, if given.

## 8. Applications

- Free Undamped Motion

$$mx'' + kx = 0$$

if  $\omega = \sqrt{k/m}$  then

$$x(t) = c_1 \cos(\omega t) + c_2 \sin(\omega t) = A \sin(\omega t + \phi)$$

- $\omega$  = angular speed
- $P = 2\pi/\omega$  = period
- $f = 1/P$  = frequency
- $\phi = 2 \tan^{-1}(\frac{c_1}{c_2+A})$  = phase angle
- $A = \sqrt{c_1^2 + c_2^2}$  = amplitude

- Free Damped Motion

$$mx'' + bx' + kx = 0$$

Roots  $r_1, r_2$  of  $mD^2 + bD + k = 0$ :

- real, distinct  $\implies$  over-damped,  $x = c_1 e^{r_1 t} + c_2 e^{r_2 t}$ ,
- repeated root  $r = r_1 = r_2 \implies$  critically damped,  $x = c_1 e^{rt} + c_2 t e^{rt}$ ,
- complex conjugate roots  $r_1 = \alpha + i\beta, r_2 = \alpha - i\beta \implies$  under-damped  $x = c_1 e^{\alpha t} \cos(\omega t) + c_2 e^{\alpha t} \sin(\omega t)$

- Forced Motion

$mx'' + bx' + kx = f(t)$ , where  $f(t)$  is the external force acting on the spring-mass system.

Roots  $r_1, r_2$  of  $mD^2 + bD + k = 0$

- Solve as other non-homogeneous equations: write solution as  $x = x_h + x_p$ , where

- \*  $x_h$  is *transient term*
- \*  $x_p$  is *steady state term*
- Undamped forced motion will resonate if “forced natural frequency” equals “natural frequency”. In other words, if  $f(t) = f_0 \sin(\gamma t)$  or  $f(t) = f_0 \cos(\gamma t)$ , for some  $\gamma$ , the *resonance* occurs if and only if  $\gamma = \sqrt{k/m}$  (assuming  $b = 0$ ).
- RLC Electric Circuit

$$Lq'' + Rq' + \frac{1}{C}q = e(t)$$

where  $e(t)$  is the battery or EMF.

- Solve using same method as Forced Damped Motion
- Don't forget that  $i = q'$
- If you write solution as  $q = q_h + q_p$ , where
  - \*  $q_h$  is the *transient charge*
  - \*  $q_p$  is the *steady state charge*

## 9. Laplace transforms

- The Laplace Transform converts a constant-coefficient linear differential equation in the independent variable  $t$  to an algebraic equation in independent variable  $s$ .
- The Laplace Transform is an integral transform.  
Know the definition and be familiar with the Laplace Transforms of the common functions (polynomials, sines, cosines, exponentials).
- Properties of the Laplace Transform:
  - Translation theorem 1:  $\mathcal{L}[e^{at}f(t)](s) = F(s - a)$
  - Translation theorem 2:  $\mathcal{L}[f(t - a)u(t - a)](s) = e^{-as}F(s)$   
Think of  $u(t - a)$  as a mathematical switch, which turns ON at  $t = a$
  - Derivative theorem 1:  $\mathcal{L}[f'(t)](s) = sF(s) - f(0)$ , and similar formulas for  $f''(t)$ ,  $f'''(t)$ , ...
  - Derivative theorem 2:  $\mathcal{L}[tf(t)](s) = -F'(s)$ , and similar formulas for  $t^2f(t)$ ,  $t^3f(t)$ , ...

- DO NOT get confused and take the products of the Laplace Transforms!
- Use Laplace transforms to solve initial value problems
  - \* Take Laplace Transform of entire problem
  - \* . Solve for Laplace Transform of dependent variable
  - \* Take Inverse Laplace Transform for solution to IVP
- Convolution theorem (the Laplace transform of the convolution is the product of the Laplace transforms)
  - \* Know the definition of the convolution
  - \* Can use the convolution theorem to solve second order linear ODEs with constant coefficients

$$ay' + by' + cy = f(t), \quad y(0) = y'(0) = 0,$$

$$y(t) = (h * f)(t),$$

where  $f(t)$  is the forcing function and

$$h(t) = \mathcal{L}^{-1}\left[\frac{1}{as^2 + bs + c}\right](t)$$

is called the *impulse response function*.

## 10. Matrix operations

- Basics

- Augmented Matrix represents a system of equations. For example, the  $2 \times 2$  linear system in standard form (with all the unknowns on the left hand side and the remaining known quantities on the right hand side)

$$\begin{cases} ax + by = r_1 \\ cx + dy = r_2 \end{cases}$$

can be represented as its “ $2 \times 3$  matrix of coefficients”

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} a & b & r_1 \\ c & d & r_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

- In *row reduced echelon form* (rref), the above is reduced to a much “sparser” matrix,  $\text{rref}(A)$ , which represents the matrix of coefficients of a much simpler linear system.
- Eigenvalues and eigenvectors. The *eigenvalue equation* forms the definition:  $A\vec{v} = \lambda\vec{v}$ . This means  $\vec{v}$  is an eigenvector of  $A$  with eigenvalue  $\lambda$ . An  $n \times n$  matrix has  $n$  eigenvalues, counted according to multiplicity: they are the roots of the characteristic polynomial  $p(\lambda) = \det(A - \lambda I)$ .
- Application of rref to systems of linear ordinary differential equations with constant coefficients.
  - Take the Laplace transform of all the equations and put it in standard form.
  - Compute the row reduced echelon form of its augmented matrix.
  - Solve for the Laplace transforms of the dependent variables.
  - Take inverse Laplace transforms to solve the system of ODEs.
- Application of eigenvalues and eigenvectors to systems of linear ordinary differential equations with constant coefficients.
  - Put the systems in matrix form:  $\vec{X}' = A\vec{X}$ , where  $\vec{X} = \vec{X}(t)$  is the vector of  $n$  unknown functions (the dependent variables of the system) and  $A$  is an  $n \times n$  matrix of constants.
  - Compute the eigenvalues  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$ , and their corresponding eigenvectors  $\vec{v}_1, \dots, \vec{v}_n$ .
  - If all the eigenvalues are distinct, the solution is

$$\vec{X} = c_1\vec{v}_1e^{\lambda_1t} + \dots + c_n\vec{v}_ne^{\lambda_nt},$$

for arbitrary constants (or “parameters”)  $c_1, \dots, c_n$ .

- If there are initial conditions, solve for the  $c_1, \dots, c_n$ .
- Applications
  - Electrical Networks.  
Determine System of independent ODEs using Kirchoffs Laws for current Loops and nodes.
  - Lanchester’s equations



If the  $X$ -men are battling the  $Y$ -men in a simple conventional battle then

$$\begin{cases} x' = -Ay \\ y' = -Bx \end{cases}$$

can be used to model the number  $x = x(t)$  of  $X$ -men at time  $t$  and the number  $y = y(t)$  of  $Y$ -men at time  $t$ .

- Numerical methods
  - Eulers method for systems

$$\begin{aligned} y_1' &= f_1(x, y_1, y_2), & y_1(a) &= c_1, \\ y_2' &= f_2(x, y_1, y_2), & y_2(a) &= c_2. \end{aligned}$$

Use

$$\begin{aligned} y_{1,new} &= y_{1,old} + hf_1(x_{1,old}, y_{1,old}, y_{2,old}), \\ y_{2,new} &= y_{2,old} + hf_2(x_{1,old}, y_{1,old}, y_{2,old}), \end{aligned}$$

and  $x_{new} = x_{old} + h$ .

For a 2nd order ODE,

$$y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y = f(x), \quad y(a) = c_1, \quad y'(a) = c_2,$$

do the following:

- \* write 2nd Order ODE as a system of two 1st order DEs.  
Using  $y_1 = y$  and  $y_2 = y'$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} y_1' &= y_2, & y_1(a) &= c_1, \\ y_2' &= f(x) - q(x)y_1 - p(x)y_2, & y_2(a) &= c_2. \end{aligned}$$

- \* Apply Euler's method for systems as above.

## 11. Fourier Series

Represents “any” function on an interval  $(-L, L)$  centered at the origin as a convergent series of orthogonal functions.

$$f(x) \sim \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[ a_n \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) + b_n \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) \right],$$

where

$$a_n = \frac{1}{L} \int_{-L}^L f(x) \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) dx,$$

$$b_n = \frac{1}{L} \int_{-L}^L f(x) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) dx.$$

## 12. Half-Range Fourier Series

Represents a function defined on an interval  $(0, L)$ .

- Fourier Cosine Series

Also used as Fourier series for EVEN functions.

To have a cosine series you must be given two things: (1) a “period”  $P = 2L$ , (2) a function  $f(x)$  defined on the interval of length  $L$ ,  $0 < x < L$ .

$$f(x) \sim \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right),$$

where

$$a_n = \frac{2}{L} \int_0^L \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) f(x) dx.$$

- Fourier Sine Series

Also used as Fourier series for ODD functions

To have a sine series you must be given two things: (1) a “period”  $P = 2L$ , (2) a function  $f(x)$  defined on the interval of length  $L$ ,  $0 < x < L$ .

$$f(x) \sim \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right),$$

where

$$b_n = \frac{2}{L} \int_0^L \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) f(x) dx.$$

13. Separation of variables for 1st and 2nd order linear homogeneous PDEs

$$a_1u_{xx} + a_2u_{xy} + a_3u_{yy} + a_4U_x + a_5U_y + a_6u = 0, \quad u = u(x, y),$$

where the coefficients  $a_i$  could depend on  $x$  or  $y$ .

Typical examples:

- advection equation

$$u_x + cu_t = 0$$

- heat equation

$$ku_{xx} = u_t$$

- wave equation

$$\alpha^2u_{xx} = u_{tt}$$

14. Heat equation

$$\begin{cases} k \frac{\partial^2 u(x,t)}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial u(x,t)}{\partial t} \\ u(x, 0) = f(x). \end{cases}$$

Here  $u(x, t)$  denotes the temperature at a point  $x$  on the wire at time  $t$ , so  $f(x)$  is the wire's initial temperature.

- zero ends

$$\begin{cases} k \frac{\partial^2 u(x,t)}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial u(x,t)}{\partial t} \\ u(x, 0) = f(x), \\ u(0, t) = u(L, t) = 0. \end{cases}$$

- Find the sine series of  $f(x)$ :

$$f(x) \sim \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n(f) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right),$$

- The solution is

$$u(x, t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n(f) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) \exp\left(-k\left(\frac{n\pi}{L}\right)^2 t\right).$$

- insulated ends

$$\begin{cases} k \frac{\partial^2 u(x,t)}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial u(x,t)}{\partial t} \\ u(x, 0) = f(x), \\ u_x(0, t) = u_x(L, t) = 0. \end{cases}$$

- Find the cosine series of  $f(x)$ :

$$f(x) \sim \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n(f) \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right),$$

- The solution is

$$u(x, t) = \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n(f) \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) \exp\left(-k\left(\frac{n\pi}{L}\right)^2 t\right).$$

## 15. Wave equation

The wave equation with zero ends boundary conditions models the motion of a (perfectly elastic) guitar string of length  $L$ :

$$\begin{cases} \frac{\partial^2 w(x,t)}{\partial x^2} = a^2 \frac{\partial^2 w(x,t)}{\partial t^2} \\ w(0, t) = w(L, t) = 0. \end{cases}$$

Here  $w(x, t)$  denotes the displacement from rest of a point  $x$  on the string at time  $t$ . The initial displacement  $f(x)$  and initial velocity  $g(x)$  at specified by the equations

$$w(x, 0) = f(x), \quad w_t(x, 0) = g(x).$$

- Find the sine series of  $f(x)$  and  $g(x)$ :

$$f(x) \sim \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n(f) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right), \quad g(x) \sim \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n(g) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right).$$

- The solution is

$$w(x, t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left( b_n(f) \cos\left(\frac{n\pi t}{aL}\right) + \frac{aL b_n(g)}{n\pi} \sin\left(\frac{n\pi t}{aL}\right) \right) \sin\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right).$$