

Math 211

Lecture #12

October 5, 2000

Solving Systems of Equations

- We want to find a way to find the solution set of any system.
- We will build towards the method by looking at a series of examples.

Example

$$x + y = 3$$

$$2x - 3y = 1$$

Solve the first equation for x and substitute into second equation. We get the system

$$x + y = 3$$

$$-5y = -5$$

- The two systems have the same solutions.
- The second is very easy to solve.

return

Example (continued)

$$x + y = 3$$

$$2x - 3y = 1$$

Add -2 times the first equation to the second equation. We get the system

$$x + y = 3$$

$$-5y = -5$$

- Solve by backsolving: $y = 1$, then $x = 2$.

back

Example — Matrix Notation

$$\begin{array}{l} x + y = 3 \\ 2x - 3y = 1 \end{array} \quad \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 2 & -3 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Form the augmented matrix

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 3 \\ 2 & -3 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Each row in M contains all of the information about one of the equations in the system.

Example (continued)

$$\begin{array}{l} x + y = 3 \\ 2x - 3y = 1 \end{array} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 3 \\ 2 & -3 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Add -2 times the first row to the second row, eliminating a coefficient.

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & -5 & -5 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{array}{l} x + y = 3 \\ -5y = -5 \end{array}$$

- Backsolve.

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Method of Solution

- Write down the augmented matrix.
- Eliminate as many coefficients as possible.
 - ◊ This is not well defined yet.
- Write down the simplified system.
- Solve the simplified system by backsolving.

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Example

$$\begin{array}{l} x + y - z = 3 \\ 2x - 3y + 4z = 1 \end{array} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 3 \\ 2 & -3 & 4 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Add -2 times the first row to the second row, eliminating a coefficient.

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 3 \\ 0 & -5 & 6 & -5 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{array}{l} x + y - z = 3 \\ -5y + 6z = -5 \end{array}$$

- Backsolve

return

Example (continued)

$$\begin{array}{l} x + y - z = 3 \\ -5y + 6z = -5 \end{array}$$

- z is a free variable. Set $z = t$.
- Solve for $y = 1 + 6t/5$.
- Solve for

$$x = 3 - y + z = 3 - (1 + 6t/5) + t = 2 - t/5$$

back

Example (continued)

Solutions are the vectors

$$\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 - t/5 \\ 1 + 6t/5 \\ t \end{pmatrix} \\ = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + t \begin{pmatrix} -1/5 \\ 6/5 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- The solution set is a line in \mathbf{R}^3 .

Elimination

We only use operations on the equations which will lead to systems of equations with the same solutions.

- Add a multiple of one equation to another.
- Interchange two equations.
- Multiply an equation by a non-zero number.

[return](#)

Elimination (continued)

The corresponding operations on the rows of the augmented matrix are called row operations.

- Add a multiple of one row to another.
- Interchange two rows.
- Multiply a row by a non-zero number.

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The Goal of Elimination

- How simple can we make it?

$$\begin{pmatrix} P & * & * & * & * & * & * & * \\ 0 & P & * & * & * & * & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & P & * & * & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & P & * & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & P & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & P \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- P is a nonzero number, $*$ is any number.

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Row Echelon Form

- The pivot of a row is the first non-zero element from the left.
- A matrix is in row echelon form if every pivot lies strictly to the right of those in rows above.

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Reduced Row Echelon Form

- All pivots are equal to 1 and all other entries in a pivot column are 0.

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & * & 0 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & * & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

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Example

$$\begin{aligned} 3x_2 - 4x_3 &= -7 \\ -x_1 + 2x_2 &= -3 \\ 3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 &= 2 \end{aligned} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & -4 & -7 \\ -1 & 2 & 0 & -3 \\ 3 & 2 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$

Elimination

$$\begin{pmatrix} -1 & 2 & 0 & -3 \\ 0 & 3 & -4 & -7 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{aligned} -x_1 + 2x_2 &= -3 \\ 3x_2 - 4x_3 &= -7 \\ x_3 &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

Backsolve: $x_3 = 1$, $x_2 = -1$, and $x_1 = 1$.

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 5 & -1 \\ 1 & 2 & -3 & 8 \\ 3 & 6 & 7 & 6 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{b} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ -12 \\ -16 \end{pmatrix}$$

System $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$

The augmented matrix is

$$M = [A, \mathbf{b}]$$

Elimination using MATLAB.

Example (After elimination)

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 5 & -1 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & -8 & 9 & -10 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- There are pivots in columns 1 & 3. These are pivot columns. The corresponding variables x_1 and x_3 are called pivot variables.
- The other columns are called free columns. The corresponding variables x_2 and x_4 are called free variables.

Example (Backsolving)

$$x_1 + 2x_2 + 5x_3 - x_4 = -2$$

$$-8x_3 + 9x_4 = -10$$

- The free variables may be assigned arbitrary values: $x_2 = s$ and $x_4 = t$.

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Example (Backsolving)

- Solve for the pivot variables.

$$x_3 = (10 + 9x_4)/8 = 5/4 + 9t/8$$

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 &= -2 - x_2 - 5x_3 + x_4 \\ &= -2 - s - 5(5/4 + 9t/8) + t \\ &= -33/4 - s - 37t/8 \end{aligned}$$

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Example (Solution Set)

- The solutions are

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} -33/4 \\ 0 \\ 5/4 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + s \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + t \begin{pmatrix} -37/8 \\ 0 \\ 9/8 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- The solution set is a plane in \mathbf{R}^4 .

Method of Solution for $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$

- Use the augmented matrix $M = [A, \mathbf{b}]$.
- Eliminate as many coefficients as possible.
 - ◊ Row operations \Rightarrow row echelon form.
- Write down the simplified system.
- Backsolve.
 - ◊ Assign arbitrary values to the free variables.
 - ◊ Solve for the pivot variables.

back

Consistent Systems

- A system is consistent if and only if the simplified version (after elimination) is consistent.
- This is true if and only if the last column (after elimination) does not contain a pivot.

Homogeneous Systems

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} -5 & -4 & -2 \\ -6 & -6 & -2 \\ 30 & 27 & 11 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} -5 & -4 & -2 & 0 \\ -6 & -6 & -2 & 0 \\ 30 & 27 & 11 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- During elimination the column of zeros is unchanged.
- It is unnecessary to augment a homogenous system.

Structure of the Solution Set

Theorem: Let \mathbf{x}_p be a particular solution to $A\mathbf{x}_p = \mathbf{b}$.

1. If $A\mathbf{x}_h = \mathbf{0}$ then $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}_p + \mathbf{x}_h$ also satisfies $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$.
 2. If $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$, then there is a vector \mathbf{x}_h such that $A\mathbf{x}_h = \mathbf{0}$ and $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}_p + \mathbf{x}_h$.
- Solution set for $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$ is known if we know one particular solution \mathbf{x}_p and the solution set for the homogeneous system $A\mathbf{x}_h = \mathbf{0}$.