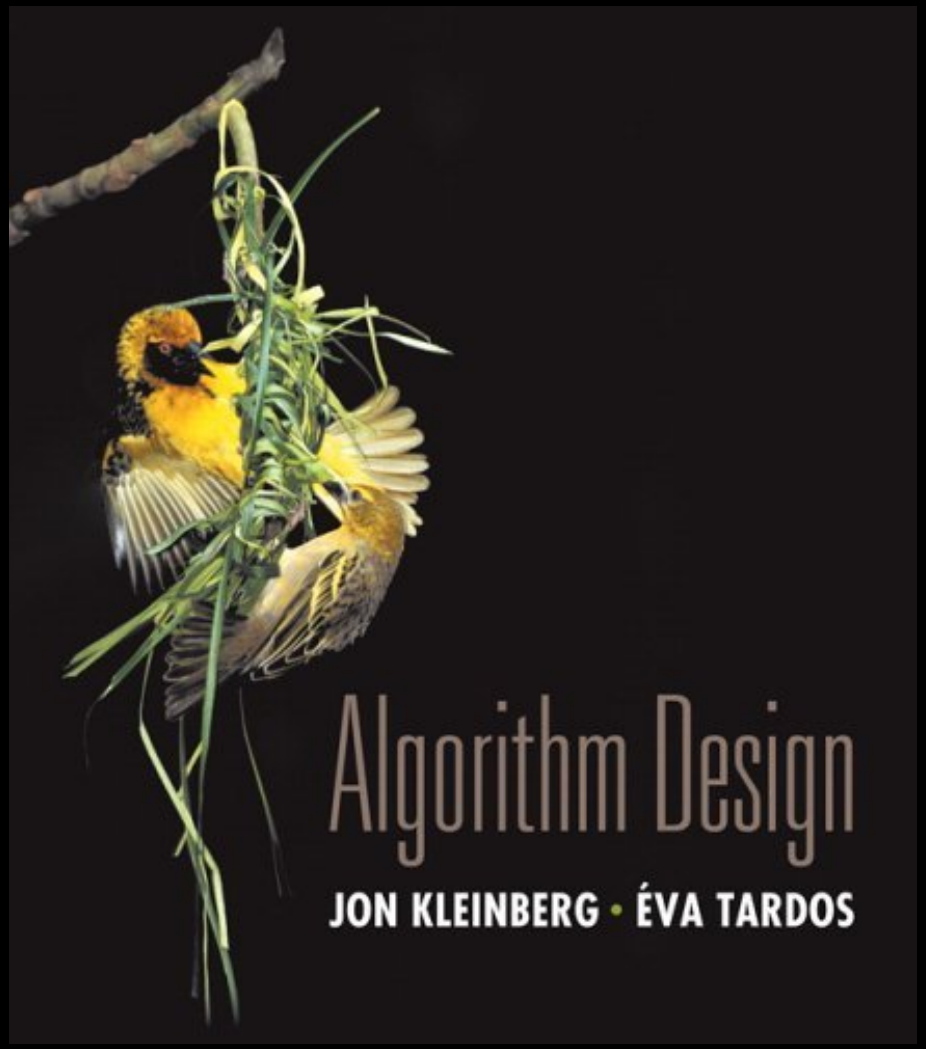

Chapter 1

Stable Matching

1.1 A First Problem: Stable Matching

Matching Residents to Hospitals

Goal. Given a set of preferences among hospitals and medical school students, design a self-reinforcing admissions process.

Unstable pair: applicant x and hospital y are unstable if:

- x prefers y to its assigned hospital.
- y prefers x to one of its admitted students.

Stable assignment. Assignment with no unstable pairs.

Stable Matching Problem

Goal. Given n men and n women, find a "suitable" matching.

- Participants rate members of opposite sex.
- Each man lists women in order of preference from best to worst.
- Each woman lists men in order of preference from best to worst.

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Perfect matching: everyone is matched.

- Each man gets exactly one woman.
- Each woman gets exactly one man.

Stability: no incentive for some pair of participants to undermine assignment by joint action.

- In matching M, an unmatched pair m-w is unstable if man m and woman w prefer each other to current partners.
- Unstable pair m-w could each improve by joint action.

Stable matching: perfect matching with no unstable pairs.

Stable matching problem. Given the preference lists of n men and n women, find a stable matching if one exists.

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-C, Y-B, Z-A stable?

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-C, Y-B, Z-A stable?

A. No. Bertha and Xavier are unstable pair.

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Stable Matching Problem

Q. Is assignment X-A, Y-B, Z-C stable?

A. Yes.

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

favorite ↓ least favorite ↓

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

Propose-And-Reject Algorithm

Propose-and-reject algorithm. [Gale-Shapley 1962] Intuitive method that guarantees to find a stable matching.

GALE-SHAPLEY (preference lists for men and women)

```
Initialize S to empty matching.
while some man m is unmatched and hasn't proposed to every
woman do
    w ← first woman on m's list to whom m has not yet proposed.
    if w is unmatched then
        Add pair m – w to matching S.
    else if w prefers m to her current partner m' then
        Remove pair m' – w from matching S.
        Add pair m – w to matching S.
    else
        w rejects m.
    end if
end while
return stable matching S.
```

Proof of Correctness: Termination

Observation 1. Men propose to women in decreasing order of preference.

Observation 2. Once a woman is matched, she never becomes unmatched; she only "trades up."

Claim. Algorithm terminates after at most n^2 iterations of while loop.
Pf. Each time through the while loop a man proposes to a new woman. There are only n^2 possible proposals. ▪

Proof of Correctness: Perfection

Claim. All men and women get matched.

Pf. (by contradiction)

- Suppose, for sake of contradiction, that Zeus is not matched upon termination of algorithm.
- Then some woman, say Amy, is not matched upon termination.
- By Observation 2, Amy was never proposed to.
- But, Zeus proposes to everyone, since he ends up unmatched. ▪

Proof of Correctness: Stability

Claim. No unstable pairs.

Pf. (by contradiction)

- Suppose A-Z is an unstable pair: each prefers each other to partner in Gale-Shapley matching S*.

men propose in decreasing order of preference ↙

S*

Amy-Yancey
Bertha-Zeus
. . .

- Case 1: Z never proposed to A.
  - ⇒ Z prefers his GS partner to A.
  - ⇒ A-Z is stable.

- Case 2: Z proposed to A.
  - ⇒ A rejected Z (right away or later)
  - ⇒ A prefers her GS partner to Z.
  - ⇒ A-Z is stable.

← women only trade up

- In either case A-Z is stable, a contradiction. ▪

Understanding the Solution

Q. For a given problem instance, there may be several stable matchings. Do all executions of Gale-Shapley yield the same stable matching? If so, which one?

An instance with two stable matchings.

- A-X, B-Y, C-Z.
- A-Y, B-X, C-Z.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	A	B	C
Yancey	B	A	C
Zeus	A	B	C

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Y	X	Z
Bertha	X	Y	Z
Clare	X	Y	Z

Understanding the Solution

Def. Woman w is a valid partner of man m if there exists some stable matching in which they are matched.

Man-optimal assignment. Each man receives best valid partner.

Claim. All executions of GS yield man-optimal assignment, which is a stable matching!

Man Optimality

Claim. GS matching S* is man-optimal.

Pf. (by contradiction)

- Suppose some man is paired with someone other than best partner.
  Men propose in decreasing order of preference ⇒ some man is rejected by valid partner.
- Let Y be first such man, and let A be first valid woman that rejects him.
- Let S be a stable matching where A and Y are matched.
- When Y is rejected, A forms engagement with a man, say Z, whom she prefers to Y.
- Let B be Z's partner in S.
- Z not rejected by any valid partner at the point when Y is rejected by A.
  Thus, Z prefers A to B.
- But A prefers Z to Y.
- Thus A-Z is unstable in S. ▪

S

Amy-Yancey
Bertha-Zeus
. . .

since this is first rejection by a valid partner

Stable Matching Summary

Stable matching problem. Given preference profiles of n men and n women, find a stable matching.

Gale-Shapley algorithm. Finds a stable matching in $O(n^2)$ time.

Man-optimality. In version of GS where men propose, each man receives best valid partner.

Q. Does man-optimality come at the expense of the women?

Woman Pessimality

Woman-pessimal assignment. Each woman receives worst valid partner.

Claim. GS finds woman-pessimal stable matching S*.

Pf.

- Suppose A-Z matched in S*, but Z is not worst valid partner for A.
- There exists stable matching S in which A is paired with a man, say Y, whom she likes less than Z.
- Let B be Z's partner in S.
- Z prefers A to B. ← man-optimality
- Thus, A-Z is an unstable in S. ▪

S

Amy-Yancey
Bertha-Zeus
. . .

Deceit?

Q. Can there be an incentive to misrepresent your preference list?

- Assume you know men's propose-and-reject algorithm.
- Assume preference lists of all other participants are known.

Fact. No, for any man; yes, for some women.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Xavier	Amy	Bertha	Clare
Yancey	Bertha	Amy	Clare
Zeus	Amy	Bertha	Clare

Men's Preference Profile

	1st	2nd	3rd
Amy	Yancey	Xavier	Zeus
Bertha	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus
Clare	Xavier	Yancey	Zeus

Women's Preference Profile

If Amy lies ``I prefer Zeus to Xavier", GS will return {A-Y,B-X,C-Z}!

2012 Nobel Prize in Economics

Lloyd Shapley. Stable matching theory and Gale-Shapley algorithm.

Alvin Roth. Applied Gale-Shapley to matching new doctors with hospitals, students with schools, and organ donors with patients.

Homework

- Read Chapter 1 of the textbook.
- Exercises 1, 2, 4 & 5 in Chapter 1.