

Algebra Homework #5

1. Let R be a principal ideal domain, and let

$$M = R/(d_1) \oplus R/(d_2) \oplus \cdots \oplus R/(d_m)$$

for some elements $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_m \in R$. For each prime $p \in R$ and each integer $n \geq 1$, show that $p^{n-1}M/p^nM$ is a vector space over the field $k = R/(p)$, of dimension equal to the number of indices $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$ for which $p^n \mid d_i$.

Now suppose that d_1, d_2, \dots, d_m is a sequence of non-units in R such that $d_1 \mid d_2 \mid \cdots \mid d_m$, and that $d'_1, d'_2, \dots, d'_{m'}$ is another such sequence. Show that if

$$R/(d_1) \oplus R/(d_2) \oplus \cdots \oplus R/(d_m) \cong R/(d'_1) \oplus R/(d'_2) \oplus \cdots \oplus R/(d'_{m'}),$$

then $m = m'$ and d_i and d'_i are associates for all $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$.

■

2. Express each of the following as a direct sum of cyclic modules.

- The quotient of \mathbb{Z}^2 by the \mathbb{Z} -submodule spanned by the vector $\begin{pmatrix} 18 \\ 30 \end{pmatrix}$.
- The quotient of $\mathbb{Z}[i]^3$ by the $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ -submodule spanned by the vectors $\begin{pmatrix} 2+2i \\ 8+6i \\ 6 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\begin{pmatrix} 1+i \\ 7+3i \\ 3-3i \end{pmatrix}$.
- The quotient of $\mathbb{Q}[x]^2$ by the $\mathbb{Q}[x]$ -submodule spanned by the vectors $\begin{pmatrix} x^2-1 \\ x^3-x^2 \end{pmatrix}$, $\begin{pmatrix} x^3+x^2-2x \\ x^4-2x^2+x \end{pmatrix}$ and $\begin{pmatrix} x^4+x^3-x^2-1 \\ x^5-x^3 \end{pmatrix}$.

I will outline the general procedure for how we decompose M a finitely generated module over a PID R into it's direct sum of cyclic modules.

Since M is finitely generated, say by n generators, then we have a surjection from the free module R^n into M , $f : R^n \twoheadrightarrow M$. Moreover, $\ker(f)$ is also finitely generated as a submodule of a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring (since R is a PID). Let $m := \text{rank } \ker(f)$ and then, by similar reasoning, we have another map given by the composition $g : R^m \twoheadrightarrow \ker f \hookrightarrow R^n$. Moreover, by the first isomorphism theorem of modules, we have that $M \cong R^n / \text{im}(g) = \text{coker}(g)$. And so, if we determine the $\text{coker}(g)$ we have a representation of M .

Since $g : R^m \rightarrow R^n$ we can represent it by a $m \times n$ matrix A . Then, if we put A into Smith Normal Form (SNF) (which amounts to representing the same transformation under a change of basis of R^m and R^n) then we can write $M \cong \langle e_1, \dots, e_n \rangle / \langle d_1 e_1, \dots, d_k e_k \rangle$ where d_i are the Smith Normal Form entries, and where $k \leq n$.

With this procedure outlined, let me now actually answer the given questions lol.

- We have $M = \mathbb{Z}^2 / \langle (18, 30) \rangle$ and the surjection $f : \mathbb{Z}^2 \twoheadrightarrow M$ via the quotient map. Moreover, manifestly, we have $\ker(f) = \langle (18, 30) \rangle$ and so we have a map $g : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}^2$ via $g(a) = a \cdot (18, 30)$. We can represent g as the 2×1 matrix $A = [18, 30]^T$. Let us now put A into Smith Normal Form. The SNF of A is of the form $[d_1, 0]^T$ and we have that generally the first Smith factor d_1 is the greatest common divisor of all the entries of A . That is $A \sim [\gcd(18, 30), 0]^T = [6, 0]^T$. And now we can write our

decomposition

$$M \cong \frac{\langle e_1, e_2 \rangle}{\langle 6e_1 \rangle} \cong \mathbb{Z}/6\mathbb{Z} \oplus \mathbb{Z}.$$

- Following in a similar fashion to part (a), we have a surjective map $f : \mathbb{Z}[i]^3 \twoheadrightarrow M$ given by the quotient map. We have $\ker f \cong \langle (2 + 2i, 8 + 6i, 6), (1 + i, 7 + 3i, 3 - 3i) \rangle$ and then the matrix representing $g : \mathbb{Z}[i]^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}[i]^3$ is given by

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 2 + 2i & 1 + i \\ 8 + 6i & 7 + 3i \\ 6 & 3 - 3i \end{bmatrix}.$$

Whose SNF will be of the form

$$A \sim \begin{bmatrix} d_1 & 0 \\ 0 & d_2 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Once, again we can compute $d_1 = \gcd(1 + i, 2 + 2i, 8 + 6i, 7 + 3i, 6, 3 - 3i)$. Notice that $1 + i$ is a Gaussian Prime (it has norm 2, and so it is straightforward to verify by enumeration of elements with smaller norm that it has no divisors other than 1 and itself). And so, if $1 + i$ divides every element in A then $d_1 = 1 + i$ otherwise $d_1 = 1$.

It turns out that $1 + i$ divides every element in A . I will only outline how I attempted to divide one element by $1 + i$, because I am curious if there's a better method. But I will not write out the details of every check. Consider $7 + 3i$, we want to know if there's some Gaussian integer a such that $a(1 + i) = 7 + 3i$. Notice that $\|1 + i\| = 2$ and $\|7 + 3i\| = 58$. And so any such $a = x + yi$ must satisfy $\|a\| = 29$. Enumerating all the squares up to 100 gives us that we must have $\|x\| = 4$ and $\|y\| = 25$ or vice versa. Then, checking the four possibilities for x, y gives $7 + 3i = (1 + i) \cdot (5 - 2i)$. And so, $1 + i$ is a divisor of $7 + 3i$. Using a similar method gives that $1 + i$ is a divisor of every element in A and so $d_1 = 1 + i$.

Now to compute d_2 we have that the 2nd invariant factor of A , given by the gcd of all the 2×2 minors of A , is equal to $d_1 d_2$. Computing all the 2×2 minors of A gives

$$d_2 = \gcd(-24i, 6 - 6i, 6 + 6i).$$

Given the computations I already did for d_1 , it is easy to write down a unique (up to units) factorization of each of the elements

$$6 + 6i = 6(1 + i) = 3(1 + i)^2(1 - i)$$

$$6 - 6i = 6(1 - i) = 3(1 - i)^2(1 + i)$$

$$-24i = -12(1 + i)^2,$$

And then we can inspect that $d_2 = 1 + i$. Quick question, I noticed that we can also write $-24i = 12(1 - i)(-1 + i)$, which would then imply that the gcd of these elements is $(1 - i)$. Although, of course, $1 + i = i(1 - i)$, and so is the gcd only unique up to units? (I suppose even in \mathbb{Z} it is true that the gcd is unique only up to ± 1 .)

To summarize, the SNF of A is given by

$$A \sim \begin{bmatrix} 1 + i & 0 \\ 0 & 1 + i \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

And hence, our decomposition of M is given by

$$M \cong \frac{\langle e_1, e_2, e_3 \rangle}{\langle (1 + i)e_1, (1 + i)e_2 \rangle} \cong \mathbb{Z}[i]/(1 + i) \oplus \mathbb{Z}[i]/(1 + i) \oplus \mathbb{Z}[i].$$

Question for self, how can we tell that each of these factors is in fact cyclic? Is $\mathbb{Z}[i]/(1 + i) \cong \mathbb{Z}$?

come back and do part 3 later

■

3. Show that if R is a principal ideal domain, then any submodule of R^n is isomorphic to R^m for some $m \leq n$.

Let $M \leq R^n$ be an R -submodule of R^n . Recall that submodules of finitely generated modules over Noetherian rings are again finitely generated. And so M is finitely generated, with generators x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k , say. Moreover M , as a finitely generated module over a PID can then be decomposed into a direct product of cyclic modules.

Since M is finitely generated, we have a surjective map R -linear map $R^k \twoheadrightarrow M$ via $e_i \mapsto x_i$. Moreover, we have a composition

$$R^k \twoheadrightarrow^\sigma M \xrightarrow{\iota} R^n,$$

which can be represented in terms of a $k \times n$ matrix A . We claim that $M \cong \text{im}(A)$. First note that since ι is an injection, we have $M \cong \text{im}(\iota)$. Now, since σ is a surjection we have, for all $a \in R^k$ $(\iota \circ \sigma)(a) = \iota(m) = m \in R^n$. That is, we can identify $(\iota \circ \sigma)(a)$ with an element of M , for all $a \in R^k$.

Notice that if $A \sim A'$ then $\text{im}(A) \cong \text{im}(A')$, since A and A' represent the same R -linear transformation under some change of basis on R^k and R^n . In particular we can put A into Smith Normal Form

$$A \sim \begin{bmatrix} d_1 & & & \\ & d_2 & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & d_{\min(k,n)} \\ & \dots & & & \end{bmatrix}$$

Note, since $M \leq R^n$ we have that $n \geq k$. But notice, when A is in Smith normal form then we manifestly have that the columns of A are linearly independent. That is, $A : R^k \rightarrow R^n$ is an injective transformation. The only way for this to be true is if $\sigma : R^k \rightarrow M$ is also an injective transformation. But then σ is a bijective R -linear transformation, and so we have shown that $M \cong R^k$. In other words, that M is a free R -module.

■

4. (Aluffi Exercise VI.7.3) Show that two 3×3 matrices are similar if and only if they have the same characteristic and minimal polynomials. Is this true for 4×4 matrices?

note, only partially completed Suppose we have two matrices A, B over a field (so that $k[x]$ is a PID) have the same characteristic and minimal polynomials. To show that $A \sim B$ we can show that they have the same rational canonical forms. Recall that the rational canonical form of a matrix is of the form

$$\begin{bmatrix} C_{f_1} & & \\ & C_{f_2} & \\ & & C_{f_3} \end{bmatrix},$$

where the C_{f_i} are companion matrices to the f_i . And the f_i are the invariant factors for the cyclic decomposition of the finitely generated $k[x]$ -module induced by the k -linear transformation A , say. That is, we can show that $A \sim B$ if we can show that they have the same invariant polynomials. In generality, since A and B are 3×3 matrices, let us say that their characteristic polynomials are of degree 3. Let f_1, f_2, f_3 be the invariant factors for A and let g_1, g_2, g_3 be the invariant factors for B , where $f_1|f_2|f_3$ and $g_1|g_2|g_3$.

Recall from Aluffi that the characteristic and minimal polynomials are related to the invariant factors by $P_A = f_1 f_2 f_3$ and, since the minimal polynomial is defined to be the minimal degree polynomial dividing P_A , $m_A = f_1$.

Since $m_A = m_B$ we have $f_1 = g_1 := k$. Since k is in particular an integral domain we then have $k(f_2 f_3 - g_2 g_3) = 0$, and since $k \neq 0$, $f_2 f_3 = g_2 g_3$. **Now how, from here, do we show that $f_2 = g_2$ and $f_3 = g_3$? probably also need to discuss the cases of the different degrees also. I think the lower degree cases are more straightforward**

The following is the if direction. On the other hand, suppose that $A \sim B$. Then $A = CBC^{-1}$ for some invertible matrix $C \in GL_3(k)$. Note that conjugation by an invertible matrix amounts to a change of basis of the original transformation. Then CBC^{-1} has the same eigenvalues as B counted with multiplicity (although, it's eigenvectors must change under this change of basis). And so, since the characteristic polynomial of a linear

transformation is determined by its eigenvalues with multiplicity, $A = CBC^{-1}$ has the same characteristic polynomial as B .

Now we claim that A and B also have the same minimal polynomial. *i think i might need to think about their jordan normal forms to understand this one*

■

5. Determine the rational canonical form of the matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} -3 & 4 & 5 \\ 10 & -6 & -10 \\ -10 & 8 & 12 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Using the result of problem 4, we can find the rational canonical form of this matrix by finding its characteristic and minimal polynomial. By inspecting the characteristic and minimal polynomials of a 3×3 matrix in rational canonical form, we will have that the characteristic polynomial $P_\alpha(\lambda) = f_1 \cdots f_m$ where f_i are the invariant factors of A . Recall that these satisfy $f_1 | f_2 | \cdots | f_m$. Moreover, the minimal polynomial $m_\alpha(\lambda) = f_m$. Note, that alternatively, we can find the rational canonical form of A by putting $A - xI$ into Smith Normal Form.

We use $P_\alpha(\lambda) = \det(A - \lambda I)$ to compute the characteristic polynomial. After using some row and column operations we find that

$$P_\alpha(\lambda) = (\lambda + 1)(\lambda - 2)^2.$$

Recall that the minimal polynomial is the smallest degree polynomial f such that $f(A) = 0$. By the Cayley-Hamilton theorem we have that $P_\alpha(A) = 0$ and so we can find $m_\alpha(A)$ by enumerating each of the polynomials which divide P_α , by combining each of the factors that we have above. Notice that no degree 1 divisor of P_α vanishes on A , and so M_α must be degree two or greater. Inspecting the possibilities, one will find that $(\lambda + 1)(\lambda - 2)$ vanishes on $\lambda = A$. And so

$$m_\alpha(\lambda) = (\lambda + 1)(\lambda - 2).$$

Then we have $f_m(x) = (x + 1)(x - 2)$. By enumerating the divisors of f_m and by recalling that $P_\alpha(\lambda) = f_1 \cdots f_m = (\lambda + 1)(\lambda - 2)^2$ we find that we must in fact have $m = 2$ and $f_1 = \lambda - 2$. To summarize, our invariant factors are

$$f_1(x) = x - 2 \quad f_2(x) = (x + 1)(x - 2) = x^2 - x - 2$$

These factors have companion matrices

$$C_{f_1} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \end{bmatrix} \quad C_{f_2} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

And overall the rational canonical form of A is

$$A \sim \begin{bmatrix} 2 & & \\ & 0 & 2 \\ & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

■

6. Let f be a monic polynomial of degree $n \geq 1$ over a field K , and let $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ denote the roots of f (with multiplicity, and possibly after extending the field K). In terms of $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$, what are the eigenvalues of C_f ? What about C_f^2 ? What about $C_f^3 + 2C_f + 3I_n$?

Determine the monic polynomial whose roots are the squares of the roots of $x^3 + 4x + 5$.

Given the roots of a polynomial we genreally can write

$$f(x) = c(x - \alpha_1) \cdots (x - \alpha_n).$$

However, since f is monic, expanding the linear terms will give that $c = 1$. To write the companion matrix of f we need f in the form $a_0 + a_1x + \cdots + a_{n-1}x^{n-1} + x^n$. Expanding the terms gives us

$$f = x^n + \binom{\alpha}{1}x^{n-1} + \binom{\alpha}{2}x^{n-1} + \cdots + \binom{\alpha}{n-1}x + \binom{\alpha}{n},$$

where $\binom{\alpha}{k}$ means sum all the k -subsets of $\{\alpha_i\}$. I.e. $\binom{\alpha}{k} := \sum_{I \subseteq \{\alpha_i\}, |I|=k} \prod_{i \in I} \alpha_i$. Now we can write the companion matrix C_f as

$$C_f = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & -\binom{\alpha}{n} \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & -\binom{\alpha}{n-1} \\ & & \vdots & & \\ 0 & \cdots & 1 & -\binom{\alpha}{1} \end{bmatrix}.$$

From here, one can show, (and should probably prove by using something like induction) that the characteristic polynomial of C_f is given by

$$P_\alpha(\lambda) = \lambda^n + \binom{\alpha}{1}\lambda^{n-1} + \binom{\alpha}{2}\lambda^{n-1} + \cdots + \binom{\alpha}{n-1}\lambda + \binom{\alpha}{n} = (\lambda - \alpha_1) \cdots (\lambda - \alpha_n).$$

Recalling that the eigenvalues of a matrix A are given by the roots of its characteristic polynomial, we manifestly have that if f has roots $\{\alpha_i\}$ then C_f has eigenvalues $\{\alpha_i\}$.

Now, we can determine the eigenvalues of C_f^2 from first principles. If an $n \times n$ matrix A has λ as an eigenvalue that means there's some $v \in R^n$ such that $Av = \lambda v$. It immediately follows that

$$A^2v = A(Av) = A(\lambda v) = \lambda(Av) = \lambda^2v.$$

That is, we have $v \in R^n$ such that $A^2v = \lambda^2v$ and so λ^2 is an eigenvalue of A . In particular then, the eigenvalues of C_f are $\{\alpha_i^2\}$.

Using similar reasoning, since α_i is eigenvalue of C_f , there exists some $v_{\alpha_i} \in K^n$ such that $C_f v = \alpha_i v$. Now consider

$$(C_f^3 + 2C_f + 3I_n)v_{\alpha_i} = (\alpha_i^3 + 2\alpha_i + 3)v_{\alpha_i},$$

This holds for all α_i and so the eigenvalues of $C_f^3 + 2C_f + 3I_n$ are the values in $\{\alpha_i^3 + 2\alpha_i + 3\}$

Let $g(x) = x^3 + 4x + 5 \in K[x]$. From the above, we have that C_g has eigenvalues the roots of g and C_g^2 are eigenvalues the the squares of the roots of g . We have

$$C_g^2 = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & -5 \\ 1 & 0 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & -5 \\ 1 & 0 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & -5 & 0 \\ 0 & -4 & -5 \\ 1 & 0 & -4 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Now if we can write C_g^2 in the usual companion matrix form, we could immediately read the desired monic polynomial from the entries. Recall that change of basis on the domain and codomain of a matrix does not change its characteristic polynomial, and so also preserves its eigenvalues. That is, we may conjugate C_g^2 by invertible matrices to change its form. Let us put C_g^2 into rational canonical form. We have the characteristic polynomial of C_g^2 is given by

$$\text{char}_{C_g^2}(\lambda) = \lambda^3 + 8\lambda^2 + 16\lambda - 25 = (\lambda - 1)(\lambda^2 + 9\lambda + 25).$$

Recall also that the this characteristic polynomial is equal to the product of the invariant factors of C_g^2 . By plugging C_g^2 into each of the factors, we find that the minimal polynomial is equal to the characteristic polynomial. Then we have a single invariant factor for C_g^2 given by the characteristic polynomial above and then we can write C_g^2 in rational canonical form as

$$C_g^2 \sim \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 25 \\ 1 & 0 & -16 \\ 0 & 1 & -8 \end{bmatrix},$$

and so we can deduce that the following polynomial, which has roots eigenvalues of C_g^2 which are the squares of the roots of the original polynomial, is

$$\tilde{g}(x) = x^3 + 8x^2 + 16x - 25.$$

■

7. Let p be a prime number. How many conjugacy classes are there in $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$?
[Hint: rational canonical form]

Recall that the conjugacy classes of $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$ are those matrices which are related to each other by conjugation. That is, the classes of similar matrices over $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$. Recall that every similarity class of matrices has a unique rational canonical form. And so, if we can enumerate the different possible rational canonical forms we will have found the number of conjugacy classes $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$.

Recall that the rational canonical form of a matrix is of the form

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} C_{f_1} & & & \\ & C_{f_2} & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & C_{f_k} \end{bmatrix},$$

where the C_{f_i} are the companion matrices of the invariant factors f_i . Recall that the invariant factors satisfy $f_1 | f_2 | \dots | f_k$. And so, we have cases given by increasing integer partitions of 4, which will correspond to the possible degrees of the f_i : 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 3, 4. This follows a degree n polynomial has an $n \times n$ companion matrix and we have A is 4×4 .

1,1,1,1: Let us start with the case where we have four invariant factors, all of which are degree 1. Since each f_i is degree 1 and monic, it follows that we must in fact have $f_1 = f_2 = f_3 = f_4 =: f = x + a_0$. In this case A takes the form

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} -a_0 & & & \\ & -a_0 & & \\ & & -a_0 & \\ & & & -a_0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

In principle, we have one such distinct rational canonical form matrix for each element of \mathbb{F}_p . However, A should be an element of $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$ we should restrict to those A which are invertible. In particular, we have $\det(A) = (a_0)^4$ which is zero exactly when $a_0 = 0$ since \mathbb{F}_p is in particular an integral domain. And so we have $p - 1$ such rational canonical matrices of the above form.

1,1,2: We have three invariant factors $f_1|f_2|f_3$. However, since $f_1|f_2$ and both are monic, we must have $f_1 = f_2 = x + a_0$. Moreover, since $f_2|f_3$ we have $f_3 = (x + a_0)(x + b_0) = x^2 + (a_0 + b_0)x + a_0b_0$. Then rational canonical form matrix is given by

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} -a_0 & & & \\ & -a_0 & & \\ & & 0 & -a_0b_0 \\ & & 1 & -(a_0 + b_0) \end{bmatrix}.$$

In principle we have p choices for a_0 and p choices for b_0 , but we should restrict our choices to those which give invertible A . We have $\det A = (-a_0)(-a_0)(a_0b_0) = -(a_0)^3b_0$. And so we should exclude those choices with $a_0 = 0$ or $b_0 = 0$. This gives $(p-1)(p-1)$ rational canonical matrices of this form.

2,2: We consider two invariant factors f_1, f_2 each of degree two. Since $f_1|f_2$ and both are monic and of equal degree, we have $f_1 = f_2 := f = x^2 + a_1x + a_0$. We then have

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & -a_0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & -a_1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -a_0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -a_1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Now we exclude those A which are non-invertible. We have $\det(A) = (a_0)^2$, and so we need to exclude the choices with $a_0 = 0$. Thus, we have $p(p-1)$ rational canonical matrices of this form.

1,3: We have two invariant factors f_1, f_3 degree 1 and degree 3 respectively and with $f_1|f_3$. If we write $f_1 = x + a_0$ then we must have $f_3 = (x + a_0)(x^2 + b_1x + b_0) = x^3 + (b_1 + a_0)x^2 + (b_0 + b_1a_0)x + a_0b_0$. Then our rational canonical form in this case is given by

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} -a_0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -a_0b_0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & -(b_0 + b_1a_0) \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -(b_1 + a_0) \end{bmatrix},$$

this matrix has determinant $\det(A) = (a_0)^2 b_0$. And so, we need to restrict our choices to $a_0 \neq 0$ and $b_0 \neq 0$. This gives **at most** $p(p-1)^2$ possible such rational canonical forms. **(we should double check how much degeneracy there is in these choices.)**

4: Lastly, we consider a single invariant factor $f = x^4 + a_3x^3 + b_2x^2 + b_1x + b_0$ which has companion matrix

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & -a_0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & -a_1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & -a_2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -a_3 \end{bmatrix}.$$

This matrix has determinant $\det(A) = a_0$. And so we should restrict our choices to $a_0 \neq 0$. This leaves us with $(p-1)p^3$ different such matrices A . Each one of these choices manifestly gives different matrices, and so we get exactly $(p-1)p^3$ different rational canonical matrices of this form.

Overall, counting up all the cases gives us **less than or equal to**

$$p-1 + (p-1)^2 + p(p-1) + p(p-1)^2 + (p-1)p^3$$

distinct conjugacy classes in $GL_4(\mathbb{F}_p)$.

■

8. Show that if f is a monic polynomial of degree ≥ 1 over a field K , then $f(C_f) = 0$. Deduce that if A is any square matrix over K with characteristic polynomial p , then $p(A) = 0$ (the Cayley–Hamilton Theorem).

prove the first part

Recall that matrices which are similar have the same characteristic polynomials. That is, A has the same characteristic polynomial to the rational canonical form matrix of A , call it B . Recall that B is block diagonal with its blocks being companion matrices of the invariant factors of A . Each of the blocks C_{f_i} have characteristic polynomial f_i and so we have recovered the fact $P_A(\lambda) = f_1 \cdots f_m$. Write

$$B = \begin{bmatrix} C_{f_1} & & & \\ & C_{f_2} & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & C_{f_m} \end{bmatrix}.$$

Then, by the first part of the problem, we have

$$f_1(B) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{0} & & & \\ & C_{f_2} & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & C_{f_m} \end{bmatrix} \quad f_2(B) = \begin{bmatrix} C_{f_1} & & & \\ & \mathbf{0} & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & C_{f_m} \end{bmatrix} \quad \cdots \quad f_m(B) = \begin{bmatrix} C_{f_1} & & & \\ & C_{f_2} & & \\ & & \dots & \\ & & & \mathbf{0} \end{bmatrix}.$$

And then it follows that $p(B) = f_1(B) \cdots f_m(B) = 0$. Now, since $A \sim B$ we have that $A = CBC^{-1}$ for some invertible square matrix C . Then we have

$$p(A) = p(CBC^{-1}) = Cp(B)C^{-1} = 0,$$

and so, A vanishes on its characteristic polynomial. by inspecting a few cases, I'm pretty sure the second equality is true, but we should probably prove it. I think it should be somewhat easy to do by writing $p = \sum a_i x^i$. ■