Comparing Optimization and Estimation Techniques for Low-Thrust Spacecraft Rendezvous

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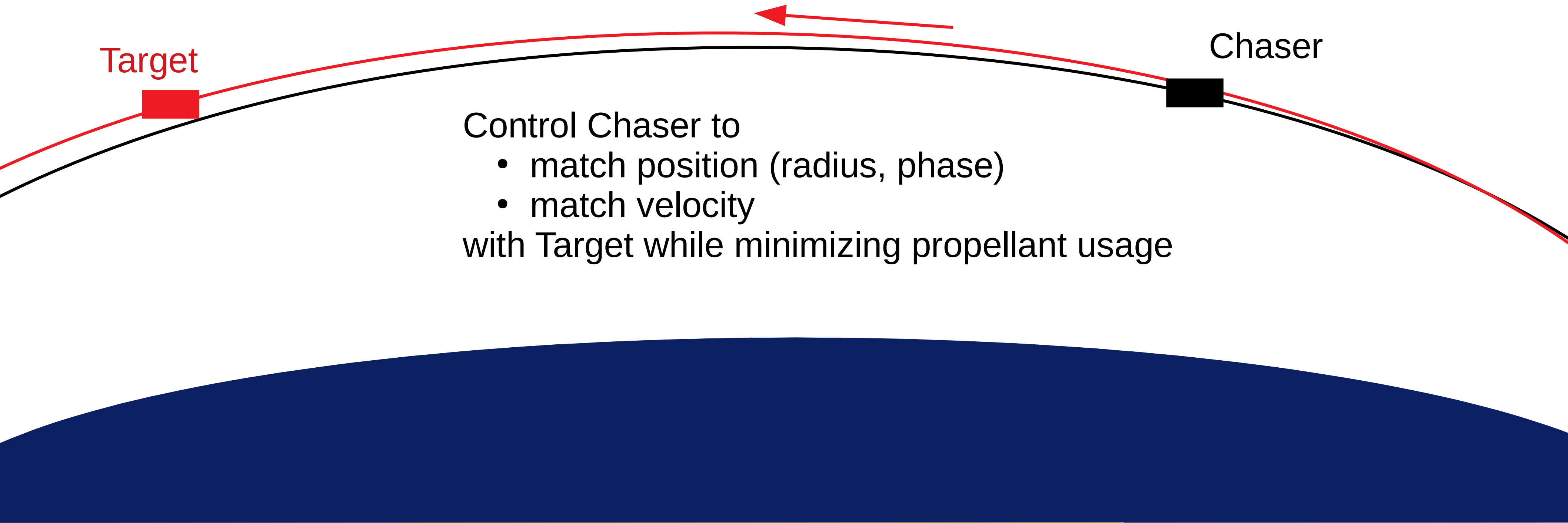
AAE 568 Course Project, Purdue University

Problem Motivation

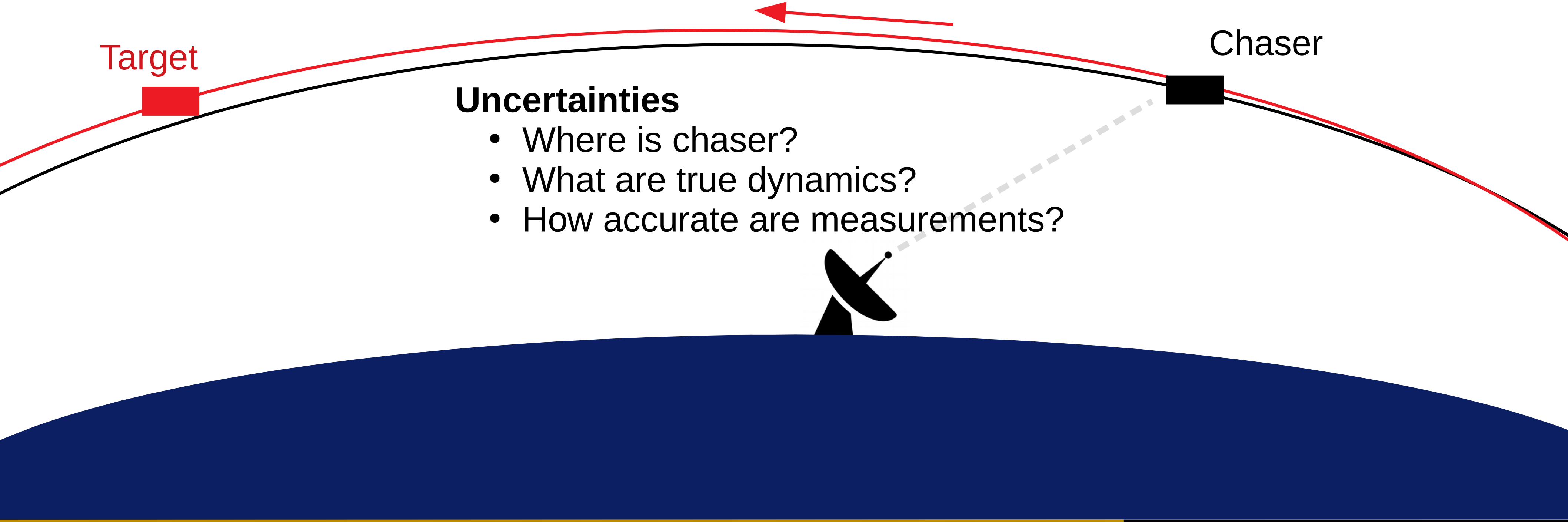


Control Chaser to

- match position (radius, phase)
- match velocity

with Target while minimizing propellant usage

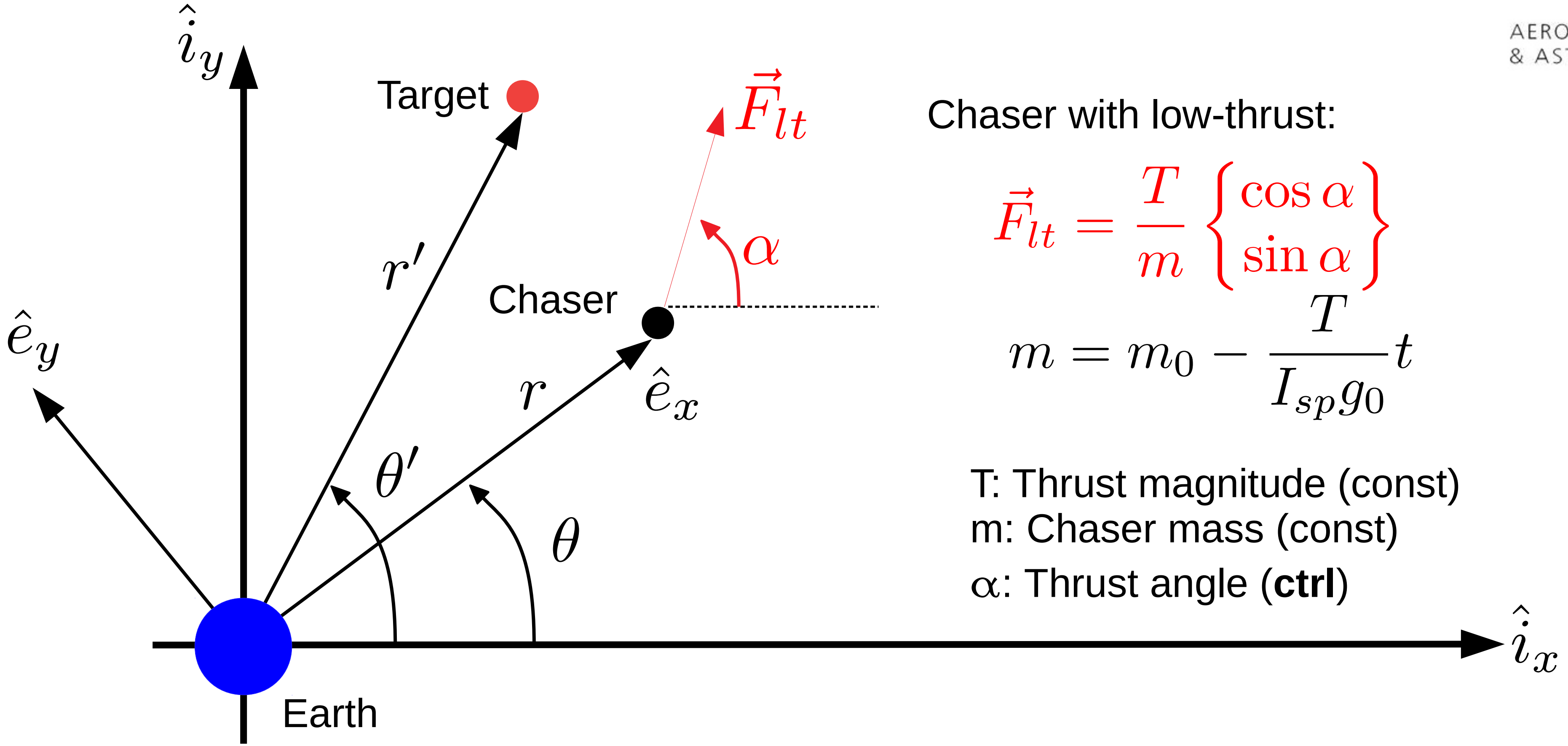
Problem Motivation, Cont’d



Uncertainties

- Where is chaser?
- What are true dynamics?
- How accurate are measurements?

Low-Thrust Control



Chaser with low-thrust:

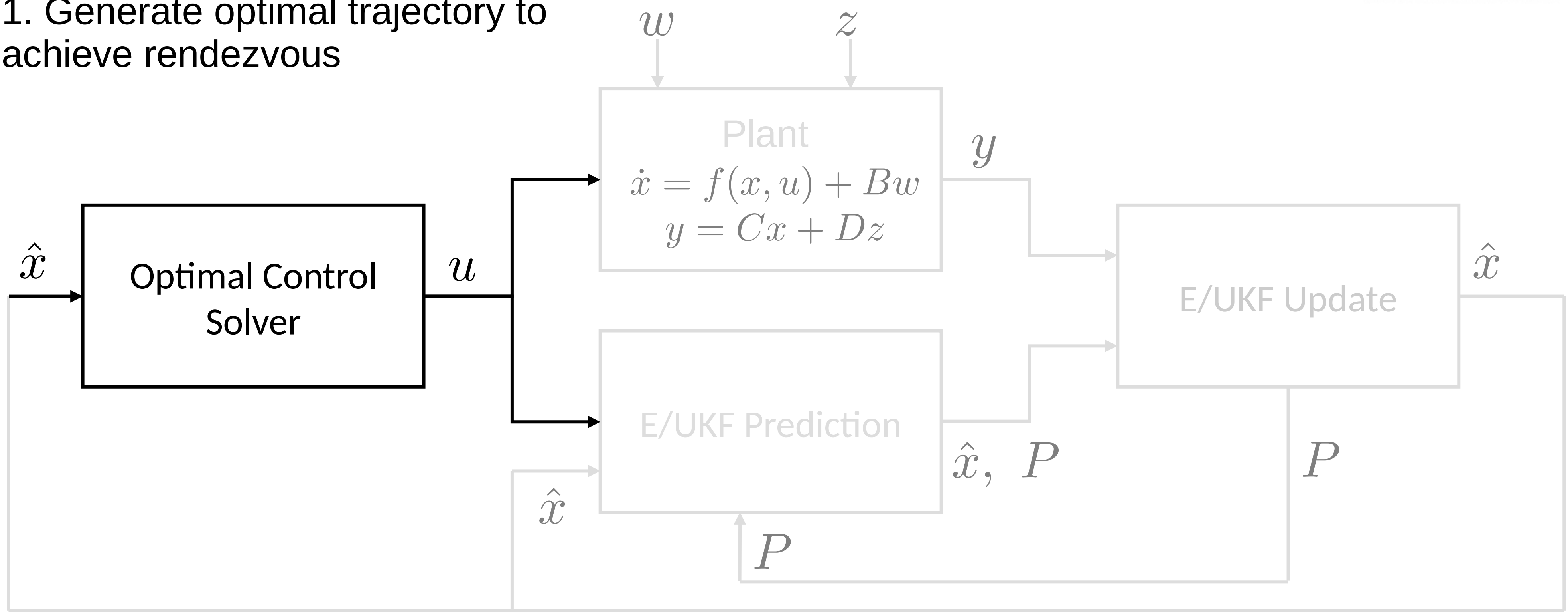
$$\vec{F}_{lt} = \frac{T}{m}\begin{Bmatrix}\cos\alpha \\ \sin\alpha\end{Bmatrix}$$

$$m = m_0 - \frac{T}{I_{sp}g_0}t$$

T: Thrust magnitude (const)
m: Chaser mass (const)
α: Thrust angle (**ctrl**)

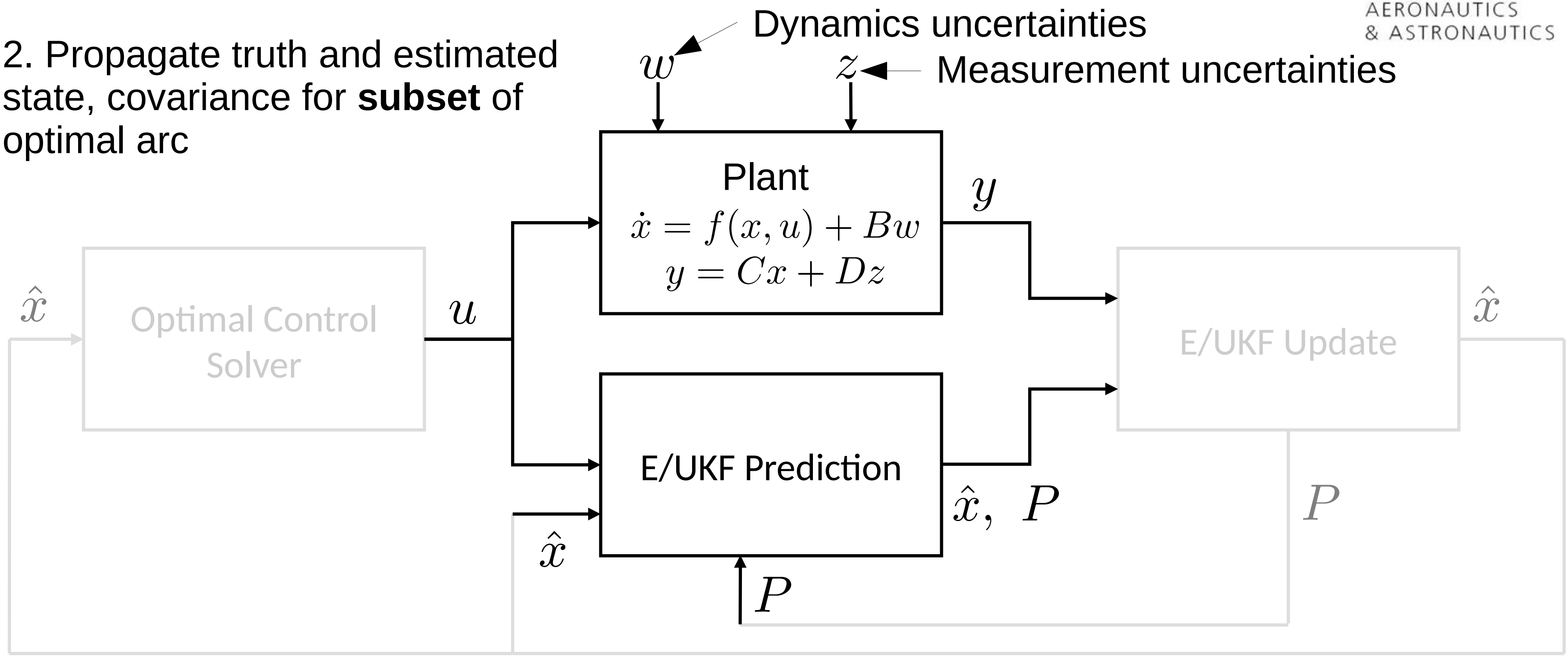
Problem Overview

1. Generate optimal trajectory to achieve rendezvous



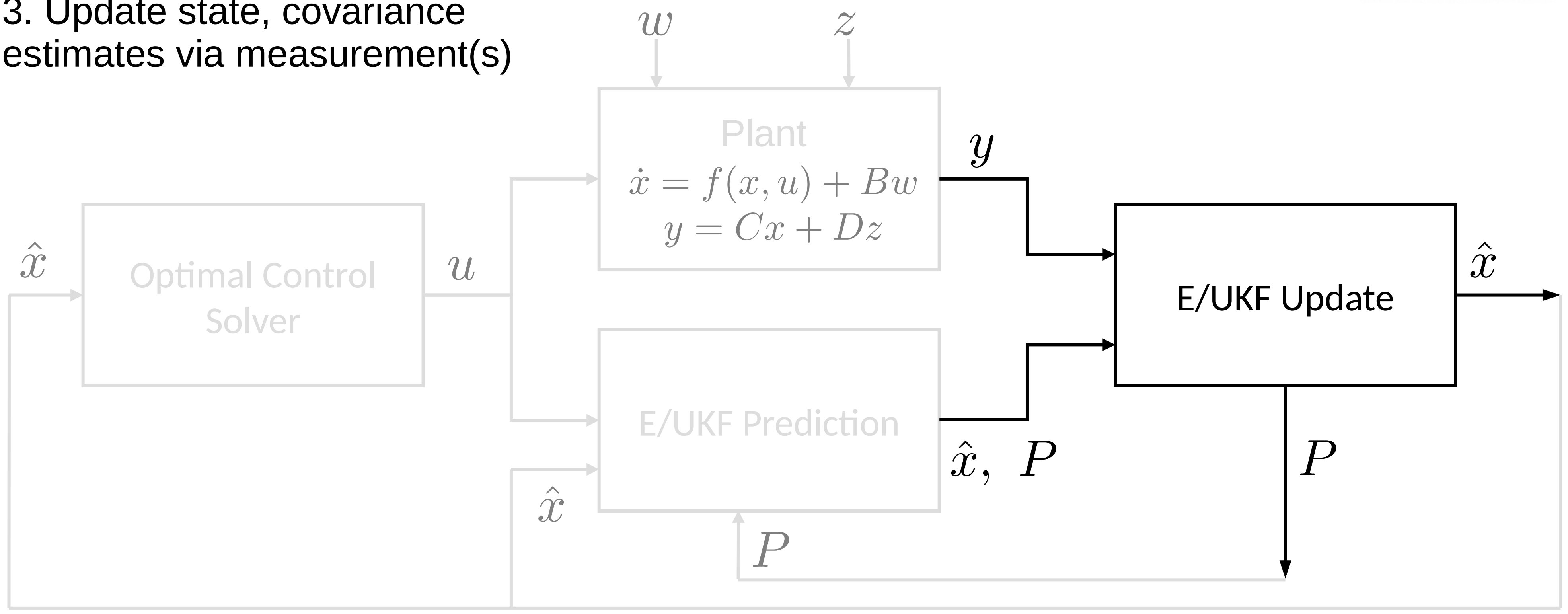
Problem Overview

2. Propagate truth and estimated state, covariance for **subset** of optimal arc



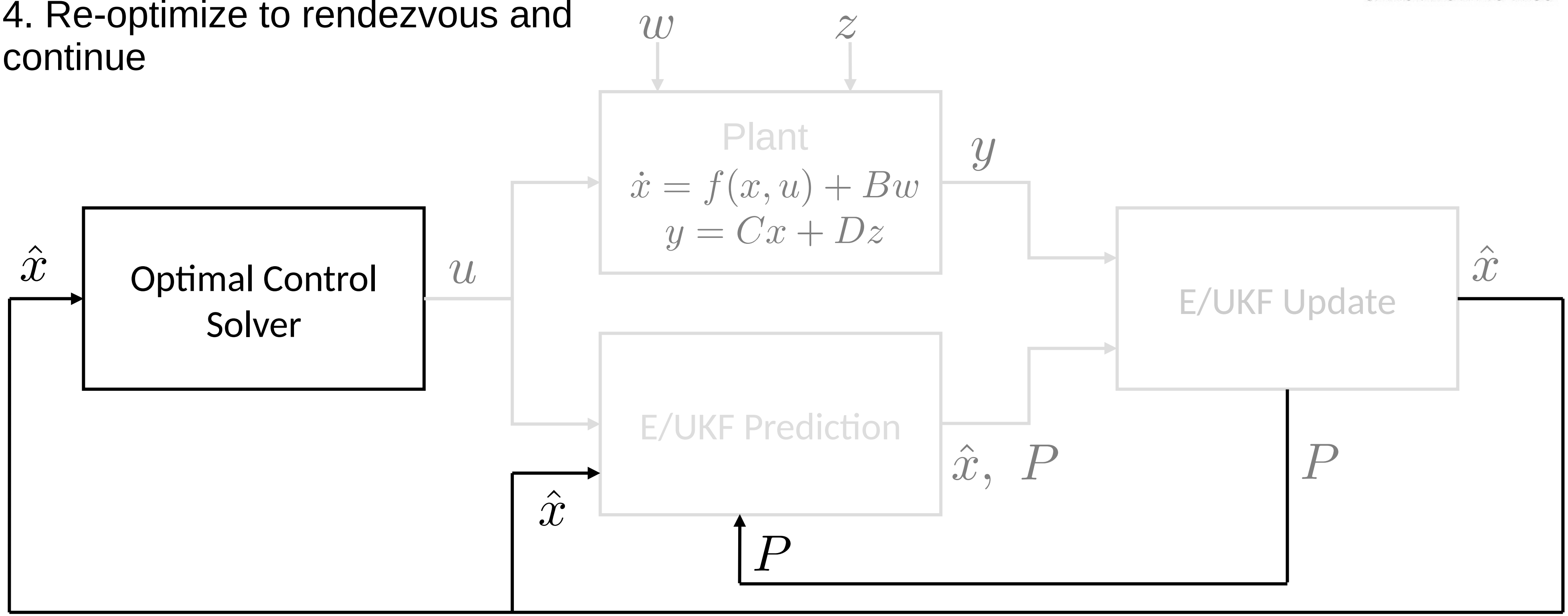
Problem Overview

3. Update state, covariance estimates via measurement(s)



Problem Overview

4. Re-optimize to rendezvous and continue



Optimization Problem Definition

Goal: minimize propellant usage = maximize m_f = minimize t_f

$$\min_{\alpha} \; J = t_f$$

Subject to:

$$\dot{\vec{x}} = \begin{Bmatrix} \dot{r} \\ \dot{\theta} \\ r\dot{\theta}^2 - \frac{\mu}{r^2} + \frac{T}{m}\left(C_\alpha C_\theta + S_\alpha S_\theta\right) \\ -2\frac{\dot{r}\dot{\theta}}{r} + \frac{T}{mr}\left(S_\alpha C_\theta - C_\alpha S_\theta\right) \end{Bmatrix} \qquad \vec{x}(t_f) = \begin{Bmatrix} r' \\ \theta_0' + \dot{\theta}' t \\ \dot{r}_0' \\ \dot{\theta}_0' \end{Bmatrix}$$

$$\vec{x}(t_0) = \begin{Bmatrix} r_0 & \theta_0 & \dot{r}_0 & \dot{\theta}_0 \end{Bmatrix}^T, \qquad t_0 = 0 \qquad\qquad t_f = \text{free}$$

Indirect Optimization

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Direct Optimization

Model dynamics by piecewise 3rd-degree polynomials (control constant along segments)

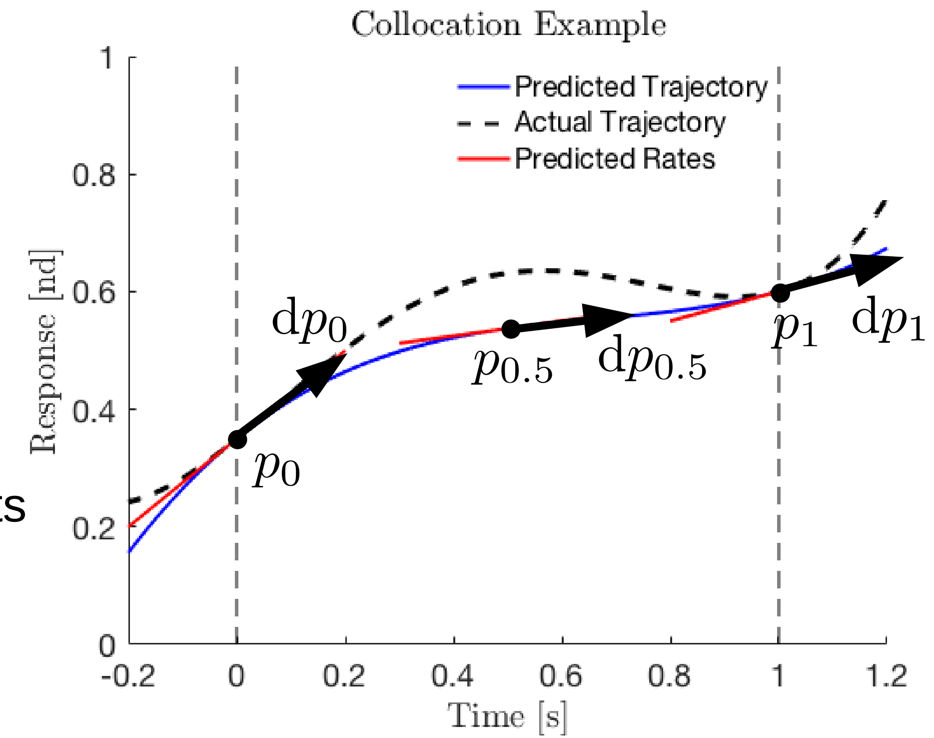
$$\tilde{p}_{0.5} = \frac{1}{2}(p_0 + p_1) + \frac{t_f(\mathrm{d}p_0 - \mathrm{d}p_1)}{8(N-1)}$$

$$\mathrm{d}\tilde{p}_{0.5} = -\frac{3(N-1)(p_0 - p_1)}{2t_f} - \frac{1(\mathrm{d}p_0 + \mathrm{d}p_1)}{4}$$

$$\mathrm{d}p_{0.5} = f(t, \tilde{p}_{0.5})$$

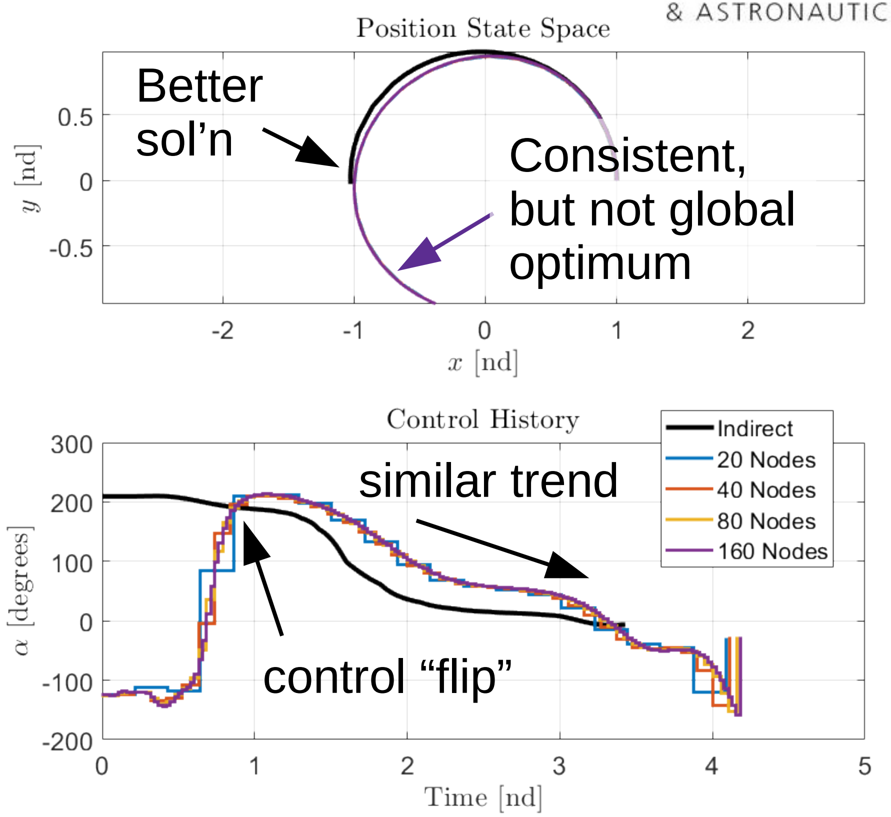
Constraint: $\mathrm{d}p_{0.5} - \mathrm{d}\tilde{p}_{0.5} = 0\ \forall$ polynomial midpoints

Driven by Sequential Quadratic Programming (SQP from MATLAB's *fmincon*)



Indirect vs. Direct Optimization

	Direct	Indirect
Pros	• No variational calculus • Easy to make initial guess (no costates) • Easy to find a potential (suboptimal) solution	• Root-solver is simpler • Solution guaranteed locally optimal • Convincing global optimum with engineering judgement
Cons	• Unsure if solution is optimal, or even real • Numerical optimizer is more complicated	• Initial guess hard to make • Sensitive to initial guess



Estimation Problem Definition

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Extended Kalman Filter

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Unscented Kalman Filter

Waqar

Estimation Method Comparison

Waqar

Example: Indirect + EKF Results

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Contributions

Andrew: Dynamics derivation, integration of components into mission loop

Michael: Direct optimization implementation, optimizer comparison

Collin: EKF implementation, indirect optimization implementation

Waqar: UKF implementation, estimator comparison

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