

Problem (Problem 1): Let F be a field, $a(x) = x^n + \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a_k x^k \in F[x]$ a nonconstant monic polynomial, and let $A = C_{a(x)}$ be its companion matrix. Prove by direct computation that $\text{SNF}(xI - A) = \text{diag}(1, \dots, 1, a(x))$.

Solution: We observe that

$$xI - A = \begin{pmatrix} x & 0 & \cdots & 0 & a_0 \\ -1 & x & \cdots & 0 & a_1 \\ 0 & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & -1 & x + a_{n-1} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Focusing on the bottom 2 rows, we use the following reduction method

$$\begin{pmatrix} x & a_{n-2} \\ -1 & x + a_{n-1} \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{R_{n-1} \leftarrow xR_n + R_{n-1}} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & x^2 + a_{n-1}x + a_{n-2} \\ -1 & x + a_{n-1} \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{C_n \leftarrow (x + a_{n-1})C_{n-1} + C_n} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & x^2 + a_{n-1}x + a_{n-2} \\ -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Inductively repeating this reduction method, we say at step i that we perform the following two operations consecutively

- $R_{n-i} \leftarrow xR_{n-i+1} + R_{n-i}$;
- $C_{n-i+1} \leftarrow (x^i + a_{n-1}x^{i-1} + \cdots + a_{n-i})C_{n-i} + C_{n-i+1}$

Upon completion of this process at step n , we obtain a matrix consisting entirely of -1 along the subdiagonal and $a(x)$ in position $(1, n)$. Next, we perform the following procedure as i ranges from 1 to $n - 1$.

- $R_i \leftarrow (-1)R_{i+1} + R_i$;
- $R_{i+1} \leftarrow R_i + R_{i+1}$.

This gives a matrix with 1 along the diagonal and $a(x)$ along column n . Then, upon performing the operation

- $R_i \leftarrow (-1)R_n + R_i$

for each $1 \leq i \leq n - 1$, we obtain our desired diagonal matrix in Smith normal form, where we have $\text{diag}(1, \dots, 1, a(x))$.

Problem (Problem 2): Prove that the constant term in the characteristic polynomial of the $n \times n$ matrix A is $(-1)^n \det(A)$, and that the coefficient of x^{n-1} is the negative of the sum of the diagonal entries of A . Prove that $\det(A)$ is the product of the eigenvalues of A and that the trace of A is the sum of the eigenvalues of A .

Solution: We start by showing that this holds for a companion matrix, $A = C_{a(x)}$. Note that in our computation showing that $\text{SNF}(xI - A) = \text{diag}(1, 1, \dots, a(x))$, we exclusively used row and column operations (and employed no flips); as a result, it follows that the characteristic polynomial of a companion matrix for $a(x)$ is exactly $a(x)$. Then, we observe that

$$\begin{aligned} a_0 &= \chi_A(0) \\ &= \det(-A) \\ &= \det((-I)A) \\ &= \det(-I) \det(A) \\ &= (-1)^n \det(A), \end{aligned}$$

and that the coefficient on the x^{n-1} is equal to a_{n-1} , or $-(-a_{n-1})$, which is the trace of the companion matrix.

In the general case, we observe that A is similar to a matrix in rational canonical form,

$$A \sim \text{diag}(A_1, \dots, A_r),$$

and has

$$\chi_A(x) = \chi_{A_1}(x) \cdots \chi_{A_r}(x),$$

where we use the fact that characteristic polynomials are invariant under similarity transformation, so that

$$\begin{aligned} \chi_A(0) &= \chi_{A_1}(0) \cdots \chi_{A_r}(0) \\ &= a_{0,1} \cdots a_{0,r} \\ &= (-1)^{n_1} \det(A_1) \cdots (-1)^{n_r} \det(A_r) \\ &= (-1)^n \det(A_1) \cdots \det(A_r) \\ &= (-1)^n \det(A), \end{aligned}$$

where we let n_i denote the dimension of the specific companion matrix A_i . Additionally, we observe that the coefficient on the $n-1$ degree term on $\chi_A(x)$ is given summing the coefficient of an n_i-1 degree term with the n_j degree terms for all $j \neq i$. In particular, this means that we get

$$\begin{aligned} a_{n-1} &= \sum_{i=1}^r a_{n_i-1} \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^r -\text{Tr}(A_i) \\ &= -\text{Tr}(A). \end{aligned}$$

From basic properties of polynomials, we know that the constant term of a polynomial of degree n is equal to $(-1)^n$ multiplied by the product of the roots, while the coefficient on the degree $n-1$ term is equal to -1 multiplied by the sum of the roots. In particular, applying this to the characteristic polynomial, we get that the trace is the sum of the eigenvalues of A and the determinant is the product of the eigenvalues.

Problem (Problem 3): Determine the number of possible RCFs of 8×8 matrices over \mathbb{Q} with $\chi_A(x) = x^8 - x^4$.

Solution: Factoring over \mathbb{Q} , we have that

$$\chi_A(x) = x^4(x^2 + 1)(x - 1)(x + 1).$$

In order to determine the possible rational canonical forms, we need to determine the possible invariant factors, $a_1(x)|a_2(x)|\cdots|a_d(x)$, subject to the constraint that $a_d(x) = \mu_A(x)$ has the same roots as $\chi_A(x)$. In particular, we must have that $\mu_A(x)$ can only be one of the following, where we observe that we cannot have $x^2 + 1$ anywhere in the invariant factor decomposition outside of the minimal polynomial since it has multiplicity 1:

- $p_1(x) = x(x^2 + 1)(x - 1)(x + 1)$;
- $p_1(x) = x^2(x^2 + 1)(x - 1)(x + 1)$;
- $p_2(x) = x^3(x^2 + 1)(x - 1)(x + 1)$;
- $p_4(x) = x^4(x^2 + 1)(x - 1)(x + 1)$.

We find that the possible decompositions are thus

$$\begin{aligned} A_1 &= [x, x, x, p_1(x)] \\ A_2 &= [1, x, x^2, p_1(x)] \\ A_3 &= [1, 1, x^3, p_1(x)] \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
B_1 &= [x, x, p_2(x)] \\
B_2 &= [1, x^2, p_2(x)] \\
C &= [1, x, p_3(x)] \\
D &= [p_4(x)].
\end{aligned}$$

Problem (Problem 4): Prove that two 3×3 matrices over some field F are similar if and only if they have the same minimal and characteristic polynomials. Give an example showing this does not hold for 4×4 matrices.

Solution: Suppose A and B are 3×3 matrices with characteristic polynomial $\chi(x)$ and minimal polynomial $\mu(x)$. The characteristic polynomial has degree 3, so we may consider the degree(s) of the minimal polynomial.

If $\mu(x)$ has degree 1, then it is of the form $\mu(x) = x - a$; this is a prime in $F[x]$, and since the degree of the characteristic polynomial is 3 and all the invariant factors must divide $\mu(x)$, it follows that A and B have invariant factors given by

$$a_i(x) = [(x - a), (x - a), (x - a)],$$

so since they have the same invariant factors, they have the same rational canonical form and are thus similar.

If $\mu(x)$ has degree 2, then the lower 2×2 submatrix of both A and B are equal, and both of them admit invariant factors given by

$$a_i(x) = \left[\frac{\chi(x)}{\mu(x)}, \mu(x) \right].$$

Finally, if $\mu(x)$ has degree 3, then both A and B admit the same rational canonical form as both of them have the invariant factor $\mu(x)$.

As a counter-example in the 4×4 case, consider the matrices with minimal polynomial $\mu(x) = (x - 1)^2$ and characteristic polynomial $\chi(x) = (x - 1)^4$. These matrices have invariant factor decompositions

$$\begin{aligned}
a_i(x) &= [(x - 1), (x - 1), (x - 1)^2] \\
b_i(x) &= [(x - 1)^2, (x - 1)^2],
\end{aligned}$$

admitting rational canonical forms

$$\begin{aligned}
A &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & & & \\ & 1 & & \\ & & 1 & \\ & & & -2 \end{pmatrix} \\
B &= \begin{pmatrix} & 1 & & \\ 1 & -2 & & \\ & & & 1 \\ & & 1 & -2 \end{pmatrix}.
\end{aligned}$$

Since these rational canonical forms differ, these matrices are necessarily not similar.

Problem (Problem 5): Find the number of distinct conjugacy classes in the group $\text{GL}_3(\mathbb{F}_2)$, where \mathbb{F}_2 is the field with two elements, and specify one element in each conjugacy class.

Solution: We start by finding all the polynomials of degree 3 (representing all the possible characteristic polynomials) over \mathbb{F}_2 as follows:

- (i) x^3 ;

- (ii) $x^3 + 1 = (x + 1)(x^2 + x + 1)$;
- (iii) $x^3 + x = x(x + 1)^2$;
- (iv) $x^3 + x^2 = x^2(x + 1)$;
- (v) $x^3 + x + 1$;
- (vi) $x^3 + x^2 + 1$;
- (vii) $x^3 + x^2 + x = x(x^2 + x + 1)$;
- (viii) $x^3 + x^2 + x + 1 = (x + 1)^3$.

Before we start the process of listing the conjugacy classes, we start by observing that if $x|\chi(x)$, then the matrix admits an eigenvalue of 0, so $x|\mu(x)$. In this scenario, we observe that such matrices cannot be invertible, so we may disregard these cases.

We start with the cases of the irreducible polynomials in this list:

$$(C1) \ [x^3 + x + 1] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix};$$

$$(C2) \ [x^3 + x^2 + 1] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Next, we observe that the invariant factors for (ii) must divide either $(x + 1)$ or $(x^2 + x + 1)$, but since both of these are irreducible in $\mathbb{F}_2[x]$, and their product is of degree 3, it follows that the minimal polynomial is equal to $(x + 1)(x^2 + x + 1)$, meaning that we get the following rational canonical form:

$$(C3) \ [x^3 + 1] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

The remaining case is that of (viii). This admits three different invariant factor decompositions, admitting three different minimal polynomials:

$$(C4) \ [x + 1, x + 1, x + 1] = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix};$$

$$(C4) \ [x + 1, (x + 1)^2] = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix};$$

$$(C5) \ [(x + 1)^3] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Therefore, these are representatives of the distinct conjugacy classes in $\text{GL}_3(\mathbb{F}_2)$.

Problem (Problem 6): Prove that there is no matrix $A \in \text{Mat}_{10}(\mathbb{Q})$ satisfying $A^4 = -I$.

Solution: We observe that equivalently, we have that $A^4 + I = 0$, so that $\mu_A(x)|x^4 + 1$. Since $x^4 + 1$ is irreducible, it follows that $\mu_A(x) = x^4 + 1$, and that the invariant factors of A must divide $x^4 + 1$. Yet, this means that the invariant factors of A must be equal to $x^4 + 1$. This yields a contradiction since the product of the invariant factors of A is equal to the characteristic polynomial of A , which has degree 10, but 4 does not divide 10.

Problem (Problem 7): Prove that the matrices

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$B = \begin{pmatrix} 5 & 2 & -8 & -8 \\ -6 & -3 & 8 & 8 \\ -3 & -1 & 3 & 4 \\ 3 & 1 & -4 & -5 \end{pmatrix}$$

both have characteristic polynomial $(x - 3)(x + 1)^3$. Determine whether they are similar and determine the Jordan canonical form for each matrix.

Solution: We observe that

$$xI - A = \begin{pmatrix} x & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & x & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & x & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$xI - B = \begin{pmatrix} x-5 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ 6 & x+3 & -8 & -8 \\ 3 & 1 & x-3 & -4 \\ -3 & -1 & 4 & x+5 \end{pmatrix}$$

To resolve these determinants, we use the elementary row and column operations. First, we start with the case of $xI - A$, giving

$$\begin{pmatrix} x & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & x & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & x & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{R_2 \leftarrow -R_1 + R_2} \begin{pmatrix} x & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -x-1 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & -1 & x & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{C_1 \leftarrow -C_2 + C_1} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & x & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_2 \leftarrow 2R_1 + R_2} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & x-1 & -2 & -2 \\ 0 & -1 & x & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_2 \leftarrow -R_3 + R_2} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & x & -x-2 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & x & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_2 \leftarrow -R_4 + R_2} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & x+1 & -x-1 & -x-1 \\ 0 & -1 & x & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{C_3 \leftarrow C_2 + C_3} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & x+1 & 0 & -x-1 \\ 0 & -1 & x-1 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -2 & x \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{C_4 \leftarrow C_2 + C_4} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -1 & -2 & -2 \\ 0 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & x-1 & -2 \\ 0 & -1 & -2 & x-1 \end{pmatrix},$$

from which we see that we get the characteristic polynomial $(x-3)(x+1)^3$.

Similarly, reducing $xI - B$ gives

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{pmatrix} x-5 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ 6 & x+3 & -8 & -8 \\ 3 & 1 & x-3 & -4 \\ -3 & -1 & 4 & x+5 \end{pmatrix} &\xrightarrow{R_2 \leftarrow R_1 + R_2} \begin{pmatrix} x-5 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ x+1 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 3 & 1 & x-3 & -4 \\ -3 & -1 & 4 & x+5 \end{pmatrix} \\ &\xrightarrow{C_2 \leftarrow -3C_2 + C_1} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & x-3 & -4 \\ 0 & -1 & 4 & x+5 \end{pmatrix} \\ &\xrightarrow{R_4 \leftarrow R_3 + R_4} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & x-3 & -4 \\ 0 & 0 & x+1 & x+1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &\xrightarrow{C_3 \leftarrow -C_4 + C_3} \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -2 & 0 & 8 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & x+1 & -4 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & x+1 \end{pmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, by using the cofactor expansion along the bottom row, we find that the characteristic polynomial is equal to

$$\begin{aligned} \det(xI - B) &= (x+1) \det \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -2 & 0 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & x+1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= (x+1)^2 \det \begin{pmatrix} x+1 & -2 \\ -2x-2 & x+1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= (x+1)^2 ((x+1)^2 - 4x - 4) \\ &= (x+1)^2 (x^2 - 2x - 3) \\ &= (x+1)^3 (x-3). \end{aligned}$$

Now, computing multiplicities, we observe that

$$\begin{aligned} (-1)I - A &= \begin{pmatrix} -1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & -1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \\ (-1)I - B &= \begin{pmatrix} -6 & -2 & 8 & 8 \\ 6 & 2 & -8 & -8 \\ 3 & 1 & -4 & -4 \\ -3 & -1 & 4 & 4 \end{pmatrix}, \end{aligned}$$

meaning that the dimensions of the kernels of both $(-1)I - A$ and $(-1)I - B$ are three. In particular, this means that the geometric multiplicity and algebraic multiplicity of both A and B are identical, meaning they

are diagonalizable and thus admit identical Jordan canonical forms

$$J = \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Problem (Problem 8): Show that the following matrices are similar in $\text{Mat}_p(\mathbb{F}_p)$

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Solution: We observe that the matrix A is in rational canonical form, and in particular, it is the companion matrix for the polynomial

$$a(x) = x^p - 1.$$

Note then that this means the minimal polynomial of A is also $\mu(x) = x^p - 1$ since the minimal polynomial is the largest invariant factor of A , which is equal to $a(x)$ since A is a companion matrix. Note that by the Frobenius endomorphism, we have that $\mu(x) = (x - 1)^p$, meaning that the multiplicity in $\mu(x)$ of the eigenvalue 1 is equal to p . This means there is one Jordan block in the Jordan canonical form of A , giving that A and B are similar.

Problem (Problem 9): Let V be an n -dimensional vector space over F , and let $T: V \rightarrow V$ be a nilpotent F -linear map. Prove that $T^n = 0$ in two different ways:

- (a) using JCF;
- (b) without using JCF or RCF, but instead looking at the sequence of kernels $\ker(T^k)$.

Solution:

- (a) We let m be the smallest index such that $T^m = 0$. If $m \leq n$, then we are done. We will show now that if $m \geq n$, then $m = n$. Letting $\mu_T(x)$ denote the minimal polynomial for T , we observe that $\mu_T(x) | x^m$ by definition. Since x is prime, it follows that $\mu_T(x)$ must be of the form x^k for some $k \geq 0$ as $F[x]$ is a PID. Yet, since the minimal polynomial is the smallest degree polynomial satisfying $\mu_T(T) = 0$, and we assume that m is the smallest such index satisfying this criterion, it follows that $\mu_T(x) = x^m$. Finally, since we know that, since the degree of x in the expression for $\mu_T(x)$ denotes the size of the largest Jordan block with eigenvalue 0, we cannot have that $\mu_T(x)$ has a Jordan block with eigenvalue 0 of size larger than n , and since $m \geq n$, it follows that we must have $m = n$ and $T^n = 0$.