

Chem237: Lecture 18

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5/16/18

1 Note

I have just transcribed the lecture notes, no thought has gone in yet. We need to sit down and analyze this. 9-17-19

2 PDEs

Partial Differential Equations (PDEs) can have ∞ dimensionality, the problems usually involve boundary conditions with an arbitrary function. So you usually need to know the function and its derivative, and the value of the function and the value of the function's derivative at the boundary to solve.

Consider a second order PDE (the wave equation with constant coefficient c)

$$\frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} U - c^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} U = 0 \quad (1)$$

We can give some initial conditions like

$$\begin{aligned} U(x, t = 0) &= \phi(x) \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial t} U(x, t = 0) &= \psi(x) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

This PDE is linear and separable, it is the easiest case to solve. As we will see, given a certain set of boundary conditions we may not actually get a useful solution (for example: could get a solution being an infinite sum we can't solve).

One way to approach this problem is to guess a solution (standard approach in PDEs). If we assume the

$$U(x, t) = [f(x - ct) + g(x + ct)] \quad (3)$$

We need to satisfy the initial conditions

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x} U = -cf'(x) + cg'(x) = \psi(x) \quad (4)$$

$$\int dx \frac{dU}{dx} \Rightarrow f(x) - g(x) = \frac{-1}{c} \int^x dy \psi(y) \quad (5)$$

Where the lower bound is undefined, because $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ are defined up to a constant we do not know the lower bound.

So second order PDE, infinite solution space, need to specify boundary conditions.

$$\begin{aligned} \int f(x) - g(x) &= -\frac{1}{2} \int^x dy \psi(y) \\ -cf'(x) + cg'(x) &= \psi(x) \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Solving these two equations simultaneously gives the general solution to the 2D problem.

$$U(x, t) = \frac{1}{2} [\phi(x - ct) + \phi(x + ct)] + \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} dy \psi(y) \quad (7)$$

This can be easily generalized to the 3D case, $U(x, y, z, t)$

$$\frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} U - c^2 \Delta U = 0 \quad (8)$$

3 Diffusion Equation