MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

> Arvind Suresh

Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

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Dec 11, 2024

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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

1 What is AI, anyway?

2 What is ML?

3 What is a NN?

4 Learning objectives

5 Course structure

6 Why enroll?

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML

What is a

NN?

objective

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

 Modern AI's like ChatGPT are based on so called Large Language Models (LLMs).

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

VA/I--- :- -

Learning

Course

Why enroll

- Modern Al's like ChatGPT are based on so called Large Language Models (LLMs).
- These are very sophisticated programs— given an input ("prompt"), they generate an output (a textual response, image, and so on).

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

objective

structure

Why enroll

- Modern Al's like ChatGPT are based on so called Large Language Models (LLMs).
- These are very sophisticated programs— given an input ("prompt"), they generate an output (a textual response, image, and so on).
- For text, output is generated word-by-word:
 The model is trained to generate the most likely word next, given the words that have come before.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

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- Thus, LLM's are in the business of making predictions.

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll?

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- For text, output is generated word-by-word:
 The model is trained to generate the most likely word next, given the words that have come before.
- Thus, LLM's are in the business of making *predictions*.
- So, at its core, modern AI falls within the framework of machine learning (ML).

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Outline

What is A anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course

Why enroll?

Conclusion

• **Given**: a *dataset* (matrix):

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin-

What is Al anyway?

What is ML?

Learning

objectives

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- **Given**: a dataset (matrix):
 - \circ Some columns X_1, \ldots, X_m are features/predictors.

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Outlin-

What is Al anyway?

What is ML?

. . . .

Learning

Course

Why enroll

- **Given**: a dataset (matrix):
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 - One column *Y* is the *target variable*.

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Outline

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

. . . .

Learning

Course

Why enroll

- **Given**: a dataset (matrix):
 - Some columns X_1, \ldots, X_m are features/predictors.
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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

• **Given**: a *dataset* (matrix):

- Some columns $X_1, ..., X_m$ are features/predictors.
- One column *Y* is the *target variable*.
- Each row is a *data point* (features and target).
- **Believe**: the target can be predicted from the features, i.e. there is a "one true function" *F* such that

$$Y = F(X_1, \dots, X_m) +$$
(noise).

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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objective

Course structure

Why enroll

Conclusion

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• Goal: Learn F...

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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

objective

Course structure

Why enroll

Conclusion

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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course structure

Why enroll?

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- Model: A class of functions that we belive might approximate F (e.g. linear, polynomial, logistic).

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outline

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course structure

Why enroll?

Conclusion

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- Goal: Learn F... i.e. find a good approximation to F.
- Model: A class of functions that we belive might approximate F (e.g. linear, polynomial, logistic).
- Training: Fit the model to the given data to get the best approximation to F within our class.

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Outlin-

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

. . . .

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusior

Choosing a model amounts to choosing a type of "formula" for our approximation of F.

Example (Linear models)

• Goal: Predict house prices (Y) from square footage (X).

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Suresl

Outlin-

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

Choosing a model amounts to choosing a type of "formula" for our approximation of F.

- Goal: Predict house prices (Y) from square footage (X).
- Belief: Y = mX + b + (noise).

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Outlin-

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

Choosing a model amounts to choosing a type of "formula" for our approximation of F.

- Goal: Predict house prices (Y) from square footage (X).
- Belief: Y = mX + b + (noise).
- Model parameters: *m* and *b*.

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

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Choosing a model amounts to choosing a type of "formula" for our approximation of F.

- **Goal**: Predict house prices (Y) from square footage (X).
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- **Training**: Find the values of *m* and *b* that best fit the data.

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course structure

Why enroll

Conclusion

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- Goal: Predict house prices (Y) from square footage (X).
- Belief: Y = mX + b + (noise).
- Model parameters: *m* and *b*.
- Training: Find the values of m and b that best fit the data.
 Get the best approximation to F among all linear functions:

$$f(X) = \hat{m}X + \hat{b}.$$

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objective

Course structure

Why enroll

Conclusion

Choosing a model amounts to choosing a type of "formula" for our approximation of F.

Example (Linear models)

- **Goal**: Predict house prices (*Y*) from square footage (*X*).
- Belief: Y = mX + b + (noise).
- Model parameters: *m* and *b*.
- Training: Find the values of m and b that best fit the data.
 Get the best approximation to F among all linear functions:

$$f(X) = \hat{m}X + \hat{b}.$$

• **Prediction**: Given a house with a certain square footage x, predict the house price to be $y = f(x) = \hat{m}x + \hat{b}$.

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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is MI?

What is a

NN?

objective

structure

Why enroll

Conclusion

 A flexible class of ML models that combine linear and non-linear functions in *layers*:

Input layer → *Hidden layers* → *Output layer*

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Outlin-

What is Al, anyway?

What is MI?

What is a

NN? Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion



 A flexible class of ML models that combine linear and non-linear functions in *layers*:

$$Input\ layer \longrightarrow Hidden\ layers \longrightarrow Output\ layer$$

 Inspired by biology— the data flow in a NN is similar to how neurons transmit info by electric impulses.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin-

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

NN?

Course

Why enroll?

Conclusion



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$$Input\ layer \longrightarrow Hidden\ layers \longrightarrow Output\ layer$$

- Inspired by biology— the data flow in a NN is similar to how neurons transmit info by electric impulses.
- The model parameters are called *weights*; they are trained using a process called *backpropagation*.

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Outline

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

NN?

Course structure

Why enroll?

Conclusion



 A flexible class of ML models that combine linear and non-linear functions in *layers*:

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- Inspired by biology— the data flow in a NN is similar to how neurons transmit info by electric impulses.
- The model parameters are called *weights*; they are trained using a process called *backpropagation*.
- LLMs like ChatGPT are based on neural networks with billions of weights!



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Outline

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML

What is a

Learning

NN?

objectives

Why enroll

Conclusion

There are two reasons, one theoretical, one computational.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

NN?

objectives

Conclusion

There are two reasons, one theoretical, one computational.

• (Theoretical): They are *universal approximators*, which means that *any* real-world function *F* can (in principle) be closely approximated by a NN.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

NN?

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

There are two reasons, one theoretical, one computational.

- (Theoretical): They are *universal approximators*, which means that *any* real-world function *F* can (in principle) be closely approximated by a NN.
- (Computational): They are *scalable*, which means that they can be trained on large datasets with many features.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

NN?

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

There are two reasons, one theoretical, one computational.

- (Theoretical): They are *universal approximators*, which means that *any* real-world function *F* can (in principle) be closely approximated by a NN.
- (Computational): They are *scalable*, which means that they can be trained on large datasets with many features.
 - Highly optimized hardware (GPUs) and software (e.g. PyTorch) allow for large-scale parallel computations.

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Outlin

What is Al anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

• Gain experience in the research method (asking questions and hunting for answers).

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

.....

Learning

objectives Course

Why enroll

- Gain experience in the research method (asking questions and hunting for answers).
- Develop a solid mathematical foundation to approach problems related to NNs: linear algebra, probability and statistics, gradient descent (vector calculus).

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

......

Learning

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- Gain experience in the research method (asking questions and hunting for answers).
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MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin-

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

.....

What is a

Learning objectives

Course structure

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- Learn to build and implement simple NNs using libraries like PyTorch.
- Learn how to evaluate NN's (model optimization, regularization, and hyperparameter tuning).
- Demonstrate your learning by completing a final project.

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Outlin

What is Al anyway?

What is ML?

. . . .

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

• Motivation: Develop math concepts by asking natural questions about datasets.

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

10/h - t - - -

Learning

Course

structure
Why enroll

- Motivation: Develop math concepts by asking natural questions about datasets.
- In-class: Learn key concepts → engage with the material via hands-on coding exercises (Jupyter notebooks).

MATH 392: Intro to Neural Networks

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course structure

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

structure
Why enroll

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

structure
Why enroll

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll?

Conclusion

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- Assignments: 4-5 Mini-projects implemented in Python using industry-standard packages, and one final project.
- **GitHub**: Maintain a repository containing mini-projects and final project.
- Research-spirit: Heavy emphasis on asking interesting questions and collaborating with peers on projects.

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Outline

What is AI anyway?

What is ML?

Learning

objective

Course

Why enroll?

Conclusion

 You are interested in AI and would like a self-contained introduction covering the basics.

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

۱۸/L-+ :- -

Learning

Course

Why enroll?

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Outlin-

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning objectives

Course structure

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Outlin

What is AI, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course structure

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- You enjoy courses that blend theory (from math) with practice (coding).
- You are a math major looking to fill the "Application Course" credit.

Closing remarks

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Outlin

What is Al, anyway?

What is ML?

What is a

Learning

Course

Why enroll

Conclusion

I hope you will consider enrolling in MATH 392!

Please feel free to reach out to me at arvindsuresh@arizona.edu if you have any questions about the course, or simply want to chat about neural networks (or anything else mathematical, for that matter).

Thank you for your time!!