

MTH 553: Lecture # 9

Cliff Sun

February 9, 2026

Lecture Span

- Non homogenous wave equationm (NHWE)

Duhamel's Principle

Here, we solve the NHWE with homogenous initial conditions. Assume $f \in C^1(\mathbb{R} \times [0, \infty))$ where $x \in \mathbb{R}$ and $t \in [0, \infty)$. Let $Z(x, t; s)$ solve the problem (for each $s \in [0, t)$)

$$\begin{aligned}Z_{tt} - c^2 Z_{xx} &= 0 \\Z(x, 0; s) &= 0 \\Z_t(x, 0; s) &= f(x, s)\end{aligned}$$

Here, s is a fixed time. Therefore, $f(x, s)$ is the initial velocity, is the original driving force related to the NHWE. Then let

$$z(x, t) = \int_0^t Z(x, t - s; s) ds$$

Here, this is the sum of responses of impulses at time $s \in [0, t]$. Here, this is a general initial condition where we can set of which f we can use as the initial condition. Here, the s encodes which initial condition we are choosing. We claim that z solves our NHWE.

Proof. We can solve for Z with d'Alembert. Here,

$$Z(x, t; s) = \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} f(\xi, s) d\xi \quad (1)$$

Then, we use the fundamental theorem of Calculus:

$$\begin{aligned}z_t &= \int_0^t Z_t(x, t - s; s) ds + \underbrace{Z(x, t - t; t)}_{=0} \\z_{tt} &= \int_0^t Z_{tt}(x, t - s; s) ds + \underbrace{Z_t(x, t - t; t)}_{=f(x, t)} \\&= c^2 z_{xx}(x, t) + f(x, t)\end{aligned}$$

This line was because

$$Z_{tt} = c^2 Z_{xx} \implies z_{tt} = c^2 z_{xx} \quad (2)$$

And we now check the initial conditions, clearly

$$z(x, 0; s) = 0 \quad (3)$$

$$z_t(x, 0; s) = 0 \quad (4)$$

□

IBVP for NHWE on an interval

$$\begin{aligned}u_{tt} - c^2 u_{xx} &= f(x, t) \\ u(x, 0) &= g_1(x) \\ u_t(x, 0) &= h_1(x)\end{aligned}$$

Here, the boundary conditions are

$$\begin{aligned}au(0, t) - bu_x(0, t) &= \alpha(t) \\ c^*u(l, t) + du_x(l, t) &= \beta(t)\end{aligned}$$

Where a, b, c^*, d are all constants with

$$\begin{aligned}|a| + |b| &> 0 \\ |c^*| + |d| &> 0\end{aligned}$$

Step 1, we reduce to homogenous boundary conditions. Find any function $B(x, t)$ that satisfies the boundary conditions. E.g.

$$B(x, t) = \frac{(x-L)^2}{aL^2 + 2bL}\alpha(t) + \frac{x^2}{c^*L^2 + 2dL}\beta(t) \quad (5)$$

Decompose this problem, $u = v + B$ where B solves boundary conditions and v solves the problem. Then $v = u - B$, where

$$v_{tt} - c^2 v_{xx} = f_2(x, t) = f_1(x, t) - B_{tt} + c^2 B_{xx}$$

With initial conditions

$$\begin{aligned}v(x, 0) &= g_2(x) = g_1(x) - B(x, 0) \\ v_t(x, 0) &= h_2(x) = h_1(x) - B_t(x, 0)\end{aligned}$$

And boundary conditions

$$\begin{aligned}av(0, t) - bv_x(0, t) &= 0 \\ c^*v(L, t) + dv_x(L, t) &= 0\end{aligned}$$

Step 2, decompose $v = w + z$ where w satisfies the non homogenous initial conditions and z satisfies the non homogenous wave equation. Then

System 2a

$$\begin{aligned}z_{tt} - c^2 z_{xx} &= f_2(x, t) \\ z(x, 0) &= 0 \\ z_t(x, 0) &= 0\end{aligned}$$

With boundary conditions

$$\begin{aligned}az(0, t) - bz_x(0, t) &= 0 \\ c^*z(L, t) + dz_x(L, t) &= 0\end{aligned}$$

Moreover, we can find the governing equations of w :

System 2b

$$\begin{aligned}
 w_{tt} - c^2 w_{xx} &= 0 \\
 z(x, 0) &= g_2 \\
 z_t(x, 0) &= h_2
 \end{aligned}$$

With boundary conditions

$$\begin{aligned}
 az(0, t) - bz_x(0, t) &= 0 \\
 c^* z(L, t) + dz_x(L, t) &= 0
 \end{aligned}$$

Step 3a: Solve (2a) using (2b). For all $s \leq 0$. That is, find $Z(x, t; s)$

$$\begin{aligned}
 Z_{tt} - c^2 Z_{xx} &= 0 \\
 Z(x, 0; s) &= 0 \\
 Z_t(x, 0; s) &= f_2(x, s)
 \end{aligned}$$

Along with boundary conditions

$$\begin{aligned}
 aZ(0, t; s) - bZ_x(0, t; s) &= 0 \\
 c^* Z(L, t; s) + dZ_x(L, t; s) &= 0
 \end{aligned}$$

Proof. Find Z by using solution for (2b). □

Step 3b: solve (3b) by Fourier Series. Decompose one more time to reduce to have either the initial condition with $g_2 = 0$ or initial condition with $h_2 = 0$. First assume $g_2 = 0$. Let

$$w(x, t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} [a_n \sin(\lambda_n x) + b_n \cos(\lambda_n x)] \sin(\lambda_n ct) \quad (6)$$

Ignore convergence issues. lmao