

Note: Preview of slides from (CalayHamiltonTheorem.tex) by Qirui Li (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6042-1291>). For educational and non-commercial use only. Any unlawful use will be prosecuted.

© 2025 Qirui Li Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. You may modify, share, or adapt with proper attribution, for non-commercial educational use only, and must include the license link: <https://github.com/honeymath/Linear-Algebra-Slides/blob/main/LICENSE>
Full license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Annihilating polynomial of matrices

Let A be an $n \times n$ matrix, it is an element in the set

$$\mathbb{R}^{n \times n} := \{ M : M \text{ is an } n \times n \text{ matrix} \}$$

which is $n \times n$ dimensiona. Therefore, the following $n^2 + 1$ elements

$$I = A^0, A = A^1, A^2, A^3, \dots, A^{n^2}$$

must be **linearly dependent**, and therefore gives some non-zero coefficients

$$c_0 + c_1 A + c_2 A^2 + \dots + c^{n^2} A^{n^2} = 0.$$

This implies that there exists a polynomial

$$f(t) = c_0 + c_1 t + c_2 t^2 + \dots + c^{n^2} t^{n^2} = 0.$$

with $f(A) = 0$.

Annihilating polynomial of matrices

Definition 1

A polynomial $f(t)$ with $f(A) = 0$ is called an **annihilating polynomial** of an $n \times n$ matrix A .

Annihilating polynomial of matrices

Exercise. Try to find an annihilating polynomial of the matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

We calculate

$$A^0 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad A^1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \quad A^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 7 & 10 \\ 15 & 22 \end{pmatrix}$$

We saw that $A^2 - 5A - 2I = 0$. Is there any other possible method to find the polynomial $x^2 - 5x - 2$ other than solving equations?

Determinant and polynomial

Definition 2

For any $n \times n$ matrix A , the formula

$$\det(tI - A)$$

gives a polynomial of t . Call this **the characteristic polynomial** of A .

Theorem 1

(Caley Hamilton Theorem) For any $n \times n$ matrix A , the characteristic polynomial $\det(tI - A)$ is an annihilating polynomial of it.

False proof $\det(tI - A)|_{t=A} = \det(AI - A) = \det 0 = 0$

Instead, we should expand $\det(tI - A)$ first before plug in the matrix A .

Determinant and polynomial

Let t be a variable.

Why $\det(tI - A)$ is a polynomial?

Determinant and polynomial

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} t-1 & 3 & 4 \\ 1 & t-2 & 3 \\ 1 & 1 & t-1 \end{pmatrix}$$

have at least 3 position with t variables.

Expand it by a column, then for each determinant there have at most 2 position with t variables.

$$(t-1)\det \begin{pmatrix} \textcircled{1} & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & t-2 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & t-1 \end{pmatrix} + 1\det \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ \textcircled{1} & t-2 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & t-1 \end{pmatrix} + 1\det \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & t-2 & 3 \\ \textcircled{1} & 1 & t-1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Expanding a column containing variable t reduces the number of variables inside determinant.

Determinant and polynomial

Exercise. Find the characteristic polynomial of

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\det(tI - A) = \det \begin{pmatrix} t-1 & -2 \\ -3 & t-4 \end{pmatrix} = (t-1)(t-4) - (-2)(-3) = t^2 - 5t - 2.$$

Polynomial division

Then why do we have

Theorem 2

(Cayley Hamilton Theorem) For any $n \times n$ matrix A , the characteristic polynomial $\det(tI - A)$ is an annihilating polynomial of it.

False proof $\det(tI - A)|_{t=A} = \det(AI - A) = \det 0 = 0$ (You are only allowed to plug in numbers when writing this)



In scalar coefficient polynomial, you are allowed to plug in matrices.
In matrix coefficient polynomial, you can only plug in scalars!

Never plug in matrix to matrix coefficient polynomials!

About the False proof

For example,

$$\det(tI_2) = \det \begin{pmatrix} t & 0 \\ 0 & t \end{pmatrix} = t^2$$

How do you plug in a matrix $t = B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$?

Is that $\det(BI_2)$??

Is that

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} B & 0 \\ 0 & B \end{pmatrix} = \det \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 3 & 4 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}?$$

The above is closer, but it is not B^2 , it is equal to $\det B^2$

You can only first calculate out the polynomial before plug that in.

Polynomial division

Example. When simplifying fractions,

$$\frac{t^3 + 2}{t - 1}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} t-1 \overline{) \begin{array}{r} t^3 \\ t^3 - t^2 \\ \hline t^2 \\ t^2 - t \\ \hline t \\ t - 1 \\ \hline 3 \end{array}} \end{array}$$

$$\frac{t^3 + 2}{t - 1} = t^2 + t + 1 + \frac{3}{t - 1}$$

3 is the value of plugging $t = 1$ to $t^3 + 2$

Polynomial division

$$\begin{aligned} \Leftrightarrow \quad \frac{t^3 + 2}{t - 1} &= t^2 + t + 1 + \frac{3}{t - 1} \\ t^3 + 2 &= \underbrace{(t - 1)(t^2 + t + 1)}_{\text{This part vanishes when } t=1} + 3 \end{aligned}$$

Polynomial division

Instead of plugging matrix to determinant. We first calculate out determinant, and then apply polynomial division.

For example

$$\det(tI - A) = \det \begin{pmatrix} t-1 & -2 \\ -3 & t-4 \end{pmatrix} = t^2 - 5t - 2$$

$$\begin{array}{r} t - A \quad \begin{array}{r} \textcolor{red}{t} \qquad \qquad \textcolor{red}{+(A-5)} \\ \hline t^2 \quad -5t \quad -2 \\ t^2 \quad -At \\ \hline (A-5)t \quad -2 \\ (A-5)t \quad A^2 - 5A \\ \hline \textcolor{blue}{A^2 - 5A + 2} \end{array} \end{array}$$

The **remainder** is exactly we plug in $t = A$ to the polynomial.

$$\frac{t^2 - 5t - 2}{t - A} = \textcolor{red}{t} + \textcolor{red}{(A-5)} + \frac{\textcolor{blue}{A^2 - 5A + 2}}{t - A}$$

Polynomial division

We already have

$$\frac{t^2 - 5t - 2}{t - A} = t + (A - 5) + \frac{A^2 - 5A + 2}{t - A}$$

Is that possible to have another decomposition??

$$\frac{t^2 - 5t - 2}{t - A} = Bt + C + \frac{D}{t - A}$$

Polynomial division

No, the polynomial division is uniquely determined, say, once

$$t + (A - 5) + \frac{A^2 - 5A + 2}{t - A} = Et^2 + Bt + C + \frac{D}{t - A}$$

Then $E = 0$, $B = I_2$, $C = (A - 5)$ and $D = A^2 - 5A + 2$.

$$\frac{t^2 - 5t - 2}{t - A} = t + (A - 5) + \frac{A^2 - 5A + 2}{t - A}$$

Theorem 3

Let C_{-1}, C_0, \dots, C_n and D_{-1}, D_0, \dots, D_n be matrices that satisfying the following expression

$$\begin{aligned} & C_n t^n + C_{n-1} t^{n-1} + \dots C_0 + C_{-1}(t - A)^{-1} \\ &= D_n t^n + D_{n-1} t^{n-1} + \dots D_0 + D_{-1}(t - A)^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

Then $C_i = D_i$.

Proof: Dividing both side by t^n , we have

$$\begin{aligned} & C_n + \frac{C_{n-1}}{t} + \dots + \frac{C_0}{t^n} + \frac{C_{-1}(I - \frac{A}{t})^{-1}}{t^{n+1}} \\ &= D_n + \frac{D_{n-1}}{t} + \dots + \frac{D_0}{t^n} + \frac{D_{-1}(I - \frac{A}{t})^{-1}}{t^{n+1}} \end{aligned}$$

Comparing this equality at limit $t \rightarrow \infty$, we have $C_n = D_n$.

Going back to the proof of Cayley Hamilton theorem, letting

$$f(t) := \det(tI - A).$$

on one hand, we may decompose the polynomial generally

$$\frac{\det(tI - A)}{tI - A} = \frac{f(t)}{tI - A} = B_k t^k + \dots + B_0 + \frac{f(A)}{tI - A}$$

Polynomial division

However, we have the adjugate formula.

$$(tI - A)^*(tI - A) = \det(tI - A)I,$$

which gives us another decomposition

$$\frac{\det(tI - A)}{tI - A} = (tI - A)^*$$

We claim that $(tI - A)^*$ MUST BE a polynomial!

$$(tI - A)^* = C_m t^m + \dots + C_0 \quad \text{for some } C_i.$$

Once we done this, then by comparing coefficients,

$$\begin{aligned} & C_m t^m + \dots + C_0 \\ &= B_k t^k + \dots + B_0 + \frac{f(A)}{tI - A} \end{aligned}$$

we obtain $f(A) = 0$, the Cayley–Hamilton theorem.

Polynomial division

So why $(tI - A)$ is a polynomial?

Illustrate idea with an example: $A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

Think about how you find $(tI - A)^*$

$$\underbrace{\begin{pmatrix} t-1 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & t-1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & t-1 \end{pmatrix}}_{(tI-A)^*} = \begin{pmatrix} (t-1)^2 & 0 & t-1 \\ 0 & t^2-2t & 0 \\ t-1 & 0 & (t-1)^2 \end{pmatrix}$$

Polynomial division

Therefore, we may always write $(tI - A)^*$ as matrix polynomial of t .

$$\begin{pmatrix} (t-1)^2 & 0 & t-1 \\ 0 & t^2-2t & 0 \\ t-1 & 0 & (t-1)^2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} t^2-2t+1 & 0 & t-1 \\ 0 & t^2-2t & 0 \\ t-1 & 0 & t^2-2t+1 \end{pmatrix}$$
$$= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} t^2 + \begin{pmatrix} -2 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & -2 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & -2 \end{pmatrix} t + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Multilinear expansion of determinant

Having proved that the characteristic polynomial $f(t) = \det(tI - A)$ is annihilating polynomial $f(A) = 0$, we want methods for calculating $\det(tI - A)$.

Multilinear expansion of determinant

Determinant can be expanded once on one column

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} v + w & u \end{pmatrix} = \det \begin{pmatrix} v & u \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} w & u \end{pmatrix}$$

Multilinear expansion of determinant

If wanna expand in two columns, we expand one by one

$$\begin{aligned}\det \begin{pmatrix} v + w & u + k \end{pmatrix} \\&= \det \begin{pmatrix} v & u + k \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} w & u + k \end{pmatrix} \\&= \det \begin{pmatrix} v & u \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} v & k \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} w & u \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} w & k \end{pmatrix}\end{aligned}$$

That is, to expand determinant from multiple columns, we add up all possible combinations of choosing a summand inside each factor.

Multilinear expansion of determinant

This applies to the calculation of characteristic polynomial.

Let e_1, \dots, e_n be natural basis and let $A = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & \dots & v_n \end{pmatrix}$

$$\det(tI - A) = \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 - v_1 & te_2 - v_2 & \dots & te_n - v_n \end{pmatrix}$$

Multilinear expansion of determinant

Example of expansion $\det(tI_3 - A)$ for 3×3 matrix.

$$\begin{aligned} & \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 - v_1 & te_2 - v_2 & te_3 - v_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \\ & \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 & te_2 & te_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ &+ \det \begin{pmatrix} -v_1 & te_2 & te_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 & -v_2 & te_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 & te_2 & -v_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ & \det \begin{pmatrix} -v_1 & te_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 & -v_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} -v_1 & -v_2 & te_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ &+ \det \begin{pmatrix} -v_1 & -v_2 & -v_3 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

Multilinear expansion of determinant

We may factor out the sign and t

$$\begin{aligned} & \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 - v_1 & te_2 - v_2 & te_3 - v_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \\ & \det \begin{pmatrix} te_1 & te_2 & te_3 \end{pmatrix} t^3 \\ & - \left(\det \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & e_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} e_1 & v_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} e_1 & e_2 & v_3 \end{pmatrix} \right) t^2 \\ & + \left(\det \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & e_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} e_1 & v_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} + \det \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & v_2 & e_3 \end{pmatrix} \right) t \\ & - \left(\det \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \end{pmatrix} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Multiplinear expansion of determinant

If

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & v_2 & v_3 & v_4 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} * & * & * & * \\ * & * & * & * \\ * & * & * & * \\ * & * & * & * \end{pmatrix}$$

as an example, then,

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} e_1 & v_2 & e_3 & v_4 \end{pmatrix} = \det \begin{pmatrix} 1 & * & 0 & * \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \\ 0 & * & 1 & * \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \end{pmatrix} = \det \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \end{pmatrix}$$

Strategy of calculating such determinant

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & * & 0 & * \end{pmatrix} = \det \begin{pmatrix} * & * \\ * & * \end{pmatrix}$$

This submatrix has its diagonal lies in the same diagonal of original matrix.

Multiplinear expansion of determinant

Definition 3

A principle minor of size k is the **determinant** of a $k \times k$ submatrix, whose diagonal coincide with the diagonal of its father.

Location of submatrices for principal minor of size 2 of a 3×3 matrix.

$$\begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix} \quad \begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix} \quad \begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix}$$

Location of submatrices for principal minor of size 1 of a 3×3 matrix.

$$\begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix} \quad \begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix} \quad \begin{pmatrix} * & * & * \\ * & * & * \\ * & * & * \end{pmatrix}$$

Theorem 4

The characteristic polynomial of $n \times n$ matrix A has formula

$$\det(tI - A) = t^n - a_1 t^{n-1} + a_2 t^{n-2} - \dots + (-1)^n a_n$$

where a_i is the **sum** of principal minors of size i . In particular $a_1 = \text{tr}(A)$ and $a_n = \det(A)$

Multilinear expansion of determinant

Excercise. Calculate the charcteristic polynomial for the following matrices

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

Lagrange interpolation polynomial

Exercise. Suppose $f(x) = x - c$. Given that $f(2) = 0$, determine the number c .

Excercise. Let $f(x)=(x-a)(x-b)$. Determine the value of a, b such that

$$f(3) = 0 \quad f(9) = 0$$

Lagrange interpolation polynomial

Exercise. Consider the following exercises

Suppose

$$f(x) = \frac{(x-2)(x-5)(x-7)(x-9)}{(11-2)(11-5)(11-7)(11-9)}.$$

Please calculate the value of $f(x)$ to fill into the following value table

$x =$	$f(x) =$
2	
5	
7	
9	
11	

Lagrange interpolation polynomial

Using the idea from previous exercise. Please write down a polynomial $f(x)$ such that

$$f(2) = f(3) = f(5) = f(8) = 0, \quad f(10) = 1.$$

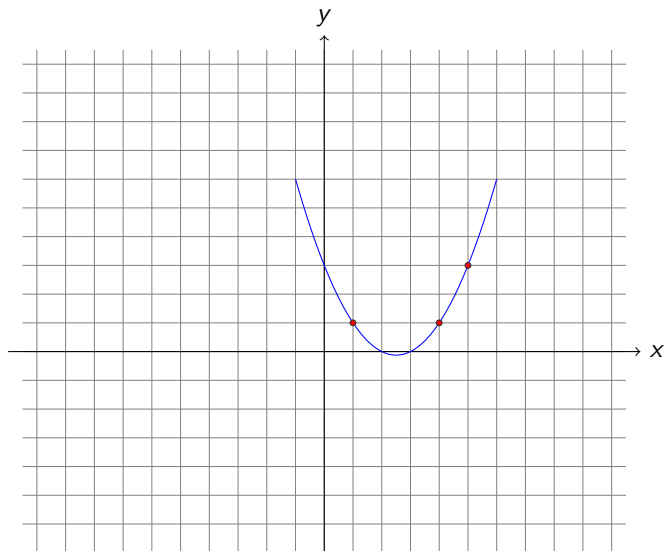
Lagrange interpolation polynomial

Write down polynomials $f_2(x)$, $f_3(x)$, $f_5(x)$, $f_7(x)$ with the following value table

$x =$	$f_1(x) =$	$f_4(x) =$	$f_5(x) =$
1	1	0	0
4	0	1	0
5	0	0	1

Lagrange interpolation polynomial

Try to determine a polynomial with its graph passing through the following points



Lagrange interpolation polynomial

We are trying to find $g(x)$ with $g(1) = 1, g(4) = 1, g(5) = 3$.

$x =$	$f_1(x) =$	$f_4(x) =$	$f_5(x) =$	$g(x) =$
1	1	0	0	1
4	0	1	0	1
5	0	0	1	3

and suppose that

$$g(x) = a_1 \cdot f_1(x) + a_4 \cdot f_4(x) + a_5 \cdot f_5(x).$$

Determine the value of a_1, a_4, a_5 .

$x =$	$f_1(x) =$	$f_4(x) =$	$f_5(x) =$	$a_1 \cdot f_1(x) + a_4 \cdot f_4(x) + a_5 \cdot f_5(x) =$
1	1	0	0	a_1
4	0	1	0	a_4
5	0	0	1	a_5

Lemma 1

Let $g(t)$ be an arbitrary polynomial, let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be distinct numbers. Let f_{x_1}, \dots, f_{x_n} be interpolation polynomials satisfying

$$f_{x_i}(x_j) = \begin{cases} 1 & x_i = x_j \\ 0 & x_i \neq x_j. \end{cases}$$

Then the polynomial

$$h(t) := g(t) - g(x_1)f_{x_1}(t) - g(x_2)f_{x_2}(t) - \dots - g(x_n)f_{x_n}(t)$$

satisfies $h(x_1) = h(x_2) = \dots = h(x_n) = 0$.

Lemma 2

If $h(x)$ is a polynomial satisfying $h(x_1) = h(x_2) = \dots = h(x_n) = 0$ for distinct inputs $x_i \neq x_j$ for $i \neq j$, then $h(x)$ is divisible by $(x - x_1)\dots(x - x_n)$ in the sense that

$$h(t) = Q(t)(t - x_1)\dots(t - x_n)$$

for some polynomial Q .

Lagrange Interpolation

Explanation of the proof:

$$\frac{h(t)}{t - x_1} = \text{Some polynomial} + \frac{h(x_1)}{t - x_1}$$

Therefore

$$h(x_1) = 0 \quad \implies \quad \frac{h(t)}{t - x_1} \text{ is a polynomial.}$$

Just write

$$h_2(t) = \frac{h(t)}{t - x_1},$$

then $h_2(x_2) = \dots = h_2(x_n) = 0$. Use the method again and again, we know

$$\frac{h(t)}{(t - x_1)(t - x_2) \cdots (t - x_n)}$$

is a polynomial.

Theorem 5

Let $g(t)$ be arbitrary polynomials, given distinct points x_1, \dots, x_n and a choice of interpolation polynomials $f_{x_1}(t), \dots, f_{x_n}(t)$ with $f_{x_j}(x_i) = 0$ for $i \neq j$ and $f_{x_i}(x_i) = 1$ for any $1 \leq i \leq n$, we can write

$$g(t) = Q(t)(t - x_1) \cdots (t - x_n) + g(x_1)f_{x_1}(t) + \cdots + g(x_n)f_{x_n}(t)$$

Lagrange Interpolation Theorem

Exercise. Write down an interpolation of t^5 at point $t = 1$ and $t = 2$.

Solution. First we pick interpolation polynomials.

$t =$	$2 - t$	$t - 1$	t^5
1	1	0	1
2	0	1	32

Then we can write

$$t^5 = Q(t)(t - 1)(t - 2) + (2 - t) + 32(t - 1)$$

for some polynomial $Q(t)$.