

# Lecture Notes in Commutative Algebra

Ashish Kujur

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## Introduction

This is a set of lecture notes which I took for reviewing stuff that I typed after taking class from *Dr. Viji Z Thomas*. All the typos and errors are of mine.

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## §1 Lecture 1 — 10th August 2022 — Local Rings, Semilocal rings, Chinese Remainder Theorem

We will be assuming the following things before proceeding in the course:

- A ring  $A$  is a commutative ring with unity.
- Existence of maximal ideals in a commutative ring with unity (this follows immediately from Zorn's Lemma)

- Definition of ring morphism.
- Definition of prime and maximal ideals and the facts that
  - $P$  is a prime ideal of  $A$  iff  $A/P$  is an integral domain and
  - $M$  is a maximal ideal of  $A$  iff  $A/P$  is a field

## §1.1 Basic Definitions — Local Rings, Semilocal rings and few other results

**Definition §1.1.1** (local ring). Let  $A$  be a ring.  $A$  is said to be a *local ring* if  $A$  has a unique maximal ideal  $M$ . A local ring is often denoted by  $(A, M)$ .

**Definition §1.1.2** (semilocal ring). Let  $A$  be a ring.  $A$  is said to be a *semilocal ring* if  $A$  has only finitely many maximal ideals.

How does one come up with a semilocal ring with exactly  $m$  maximal ideals? Here's an example:

**Example §1.1.3** (A ring with  $m$  distinct maximal ideals). Let  $A = \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$ . It is fairly easy to show that all the ideals of  $A$  are of the form  $(\bar{k})$  where  $k \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $k \mid n$  and also that if  $k, j \mid n$  and  $(\bar{k}) \subset (\bar{j})$  iff  $j \mid k$ . (See Sepanski Exercise 3.47 and 3.48) Now let  $p_1, p_2, \dots, p_m$  be  $m$  distinct primes. Define  $n = p_1 p_2 \cdots p_m$ . It is easy to see from the aforementioned facts that  $A = \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$  has  $m$  distinct maximal ideals.

**Example §1.1.4** (A standard example of a local ring?). Let  $A$  be a ring,  $M$  be a maximal ideal of  $A$  and  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . Observe that  $M^n$  is an ideal of  $A$  (See Sepanski Exercise 3.51). We claim that  $A/M^n$  has only prime ideal namely  $M/M^n$ . Let  $\mathcal{P}$  be a prime ideal of  $A/M^n$ . Then by the correspondence theorem,  $\mathcal{P} = P/M^n$  where  $P$  is a prime ideal of  $A$  containing  $M^n$ . Then  $P \supset M^n$  which further implies that  $P \supset M$  (due to Lemma §1.1.7. Since  $M$  is a maximal ideal, we have that  $P = M$ . This completes the proof of the claim. Also, note that since every maximal ideal is prime, we have that  $A/M^n$  is a local ring.

**Fact §1.1.5.** Let  $A$  be ring,  $B$  be an integral domain,  $f : A \rightarrow B$  be a ring morphism and  $Q$  be a prime ideal of  $B$ . Then  $\ker(f)$  is a prime ideal of  $A$ .

*Proof of the fact.* Suppose that  $ab \in \ker(f)$ . Then  $f(ab) = 0$  which further implies  $f(a)f(b) = 0$  and hence  $a \in \ker(f)$  or  $b \in \ker(f)$  since  $B$  is an integral domain.  $\square$

**Lemma §1.1.6.** Let  $A, B$  be rings,  $f : A \rightarrow B$  be a ring morphism and  $Q$  be a prime ideal in  $B$ . Then  $f^{-1}(Q)$  is a prime ideal of  $A$ .

*Proof.* Let  $p : B \rightarrow B/Q$  be the canonical homomorphism. Consider the map  $p \circ f : A \rightarrow B/Q$ . We show that  $\ker(p \circ f) = f^{-1}(Q)$ . The lemma will follow from fact §1.1.5, if we show that  $\ker(p \circ f) = f^{-1}(Q)$  as  $B/Q$  is an integral domain. So consider the following:

$$\begin{aligned}
 x \in \ker(p \circ f) &\Leftrightarrow p(f(x)) = 0 \\
 &\Leftrightarrow f(x) + Q = Q \\
 &\Leftrightarrow f(x) \in Q \\
 &\Leftrightarrow x \in f^{-1}(Q)
 \end{aligned}$$

□

**Lemma §1.1.7.** *Let  $A$  be a ring, let  $I, J$  be ideals of  $A$  and  $P$  be a prime ideal of  $A$ . If  $P \supset IJ$  then either  $P \supset I$  or  $P \supset J$ .*

*Proof.* Suppose that  $P \not\supset I$ . Then there is some  $i \in I \setminus P$ . We show that  $J \subset P$ . Let  $j \in P$ . Then  $ij \in IJ$  and hence  $ij \in P$ . Since  $P$  is a prime ideal, we must have that either  $i \in P$  or  $j \in P$ . But the former is not possible by assumption, therefore,  $j \in P$ . Since  $j$  was arbitrary, the proof is complete. □

*Remark §1.1.8.* Let  $A$  be a ring,  $I$  be any ideal of  $A$ . Then there is a maximal ideal  $M$  of  $A$  containing  $I$ . The proof of this remark is fairly straightforward. Consider the ring  $A/I$ . Since every ring has a maximal ideal, so there must be some maximal ideal  $\mathcal{M}$  of  $A/I$ . By the correspondence theorem,  $\mathcal{M} = M/I$  for some ideal  $M$  of  $A$ . This ideal  $M$  of  $A$  must be maximal again by the correspondence theorem and this completes the proof of the remark.

**Lemma §1.1.9.** *Let  $A$  be a ring,  $I, J, K$  be ideals of  $A$ . Furthermore, assume that  $I, J$  are comaximal and  $I, K$  are comaximal. Then  $I + JK = A$ . (Recall that two ideals  $I, J$  are said to be comaximal if  $I + J = A$ .)*

*Proof.* Suppose that  $I + JK \subsetneq A$ . Then by Remark §1.1.8, we have that there is some maximal (and hence prime) ideal  $P$  containing  $I + JK$ . Thus, we have that  $I \subset P$  and  $JK \subset P$ .

From  $JK \subset P$ , we can conclude that  $J \subset P$  or  $K \subset P$  from Lemma §1.1.7. But in the either case, we have that  $I + J \subset P \subsetneq A$ . A contradiction and hence  $I + JK = A$ . □

**Example §1.1.10.** Let  $A = \mathbb{Z}$ . Note that the ideal  $(3, 4)$  generated by 3 and 4 and the ideal  $(3, 5)$  generated by 3 and 5 are exactly  $\mathbb{Z}$ . Thus, the ideal  $(3, 20) = A$  by Lemma §1.1.9.

## §1.2 Chinese Remainder Theorem

**Theorem §1.2.1** (Chinese Remainder Theorem). *Let  $A$  be a ring,  $I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n$  be ideals of  $A$ . Consider the canonical map  $\varphi : A \rightarrow A/I_1 \times A/I_2 \times \dots \times A/I_n$  given by  $\varphi(x) = (x + I_1, \dots, x + I_n)$ . Then the following holds:*

1. *If  $I_p, I_q$  are comaximal for all  $1 \leq p < q \leq n$  then  $I_1 I_2 \dots I_n = I_1 \cap I_2 \cap \dots \cap I_n$*
2.  *$\varphi$  is injective iff  $\ker \varphi = I_1 \cap I_2 \cap \dots \cap I_n = \{0\}$*
3. *If  $\varphi$  is surjective iff  $I_m, I_n$  are comaximal for all  $1 \leq m < n \leq n$*

*Proof of (1).* We proceed by induction on  $n$ . Suppose that  $n = 2$ . Consider the ideals  $I_1, I_2$  satisfying  $I_1 + I_2 = A$ . We show that  $I_1 I_2 = I_1 \cap I_2$ .

It is fairly easy to see that  $I_1 I_2 \subset I_1 \cap I_2$ . if  $i_1 \in I_1$  and  $i_2 \in I_2$  then  $i_1 i_2 \in I_1$  and  $i_1 i_2 \in I_2$  as  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are both ideals of  $A$ . Hence,  $i_1 i_2 \in I_1 \cap I_2$ . To see the reverse inclusion, we use the comaximality of  $I_1$  and  $I_2$ . Since  $I_1 + I_2 = A$ ,  $1 = i_1 + i_2$  for some  $i_1 \in I_1$  and some  $i_2 \in I_2$ . Let  $c \in I_1 \cap I_2$ . Then  $c = i_1 c + c i_2$ . Clearly  $i_1 c \in I_1 I_2$  and  $c i_2 \in I_1 I_2$  and hence  $c \in I_1 I_2$ .

Suppose that (1) holds true for any  $n - 1$  ideals of  $A$  where  $n > 2$ . Let  $I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n$  be ideals of  $A$ . Define  $J = I_1 I_2 \cdots I_{n-1}$  and  $I = I_n$ . We show that  $I + J = A$ .

It is easy to see that  $I + J \subset A$ . Now we use that comaximality of  $I_{n-1}$  and  $I_n$ . By the comaximality, we have  $1 = i_{n-1} + i_n$  for some  $i_{n-1} \in I_{n-1}$  and some  $i_n \in I_n$ . Let  $a \in A$ . Then  $a = ai_{n-1} + ai_n$ . Clearly,  $ai_n \in I_n$  as  $I_n$  is an ideal and  $ai_{n-1} \in I_{n-1}$ . Since  $I_{n-1} \subset I$ , we are done.

By the  $n = 2$ , it follows that  $IJ = I \cap J$ . Now our result follows from the induction hypothesis:

$$\begin{aligned} I_1 \cdots I_{n-1} I_n &= JI \\ &= J \cap I \\ &= I_1 \cdots I_{n-1} \cap I_n \\ &= I_1 \cap \cdots \cap I_{n-1} \cap I_n \end{aligned}$$

Observe that the third equality follows from the induction hypothesis. □

## §2 Lecture 2 — 12th August 2022 — Chinese Remainder Theorem continued...

### §2.1 Proof of Chinese Remainder Theorem continued ...

*Proof of (2) and (3).* Observe the following:

$$\begin{aligned} a \in \ker \varphi &\iff \varphi(a) = (I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n) \\ &\iff (a + I_1, a + I_2, \dots, a + I_n) = (I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n) \\ &\iff a \in I_1 \cap I_2 \cap \cdots \cap I_n \end{aligned}$$

Hence  $\ker \varphi = I_1 \cap I_2 \cap \cdots \cap I_n$ . So it is easy to see now that (2) follows immediately from what we just proved.

Now, we proceed to prove (3). We first prove ( $\Leftarrow$ ) direction. Suppose that  $I_p$  and  $I_q$  are comaximal for  $1 \leq p < q \leq n$ . Let us denote  $e_i$  ( $1 \leq i \leq n$ ) for  $e_i = (I_1, I_2, \dots, 1 + I_i, \dots, I_n)$ .

We first show that  $I_1 + I_2 \cdots I_n = A$ . We show this by induction. Clearly,  $I_1 + I_2 = A$  by assumption. Now suppose that  $I_1 + I_2 \cdots I_{n-1} = A$ . It then follows from Lemma §1.1.9 and  $I_1 + I_n = A$  that  $I_1 + I_2 \cdots I_n = A$ .

Now,  $1 = x + y$  for some  $x \in I_1$  and  $y \in I_2 \cdots I_n$ . It follows from part (1) of this theorem that  $I_2 \cdots I_n = I_2 \cap \cdots \cap I_n$ . Thus  $y \in I_2 \cap \cdots \cap I_n$ . Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(y) &= (y + I_1, \dots, y + I_n) \\ &= (1 - x + I_1, y + I_2, \dots, y + I_n) \\ &= (1 + I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n) \\ &= e_1 \end{aligned}$$

This shows that  $e_1$  is in the image of  $\varphi$ . Similarly, it can be shown that  $e_i$  is in the image of  $\varphi$  for each  $i$ .

Now, we can finally show that  $\varphi$  is actually surjective. Let  $(a_1 + I_1, \dots, a_n + I_n)$  be in the codomain of  $\varphi$ . Since we have shown that each  $e_i$  is in the image of the  $\varphi$ ,  $\varphi(y_i) = e_i$  for some  $y_i \in A$ .

Now observe that

$$\begin{aligned}\varphi\left(\sum_{i=1}^n a_i y_i\right) &= \sum_{i=1}^n \varphi(a_i) \varphi(y_i) \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (a_i + I_1, \dots, a_i + I_i, \dots, a_i + I_n) (I_1, \dots, 1 + I_i, \dots, I_n) \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (I_1, I_2, \dots, a_i + I_i, \dots, I_n) \\ &= (a_1 + I_1, a_2 + I_2, \dots, a_n + I_n)\end{aligned}$$

This shows that  $\varphi$  is surjective.

We proceed to prove the  $(\Rightarrow)$  direction of (3). Suppose that  $\varphi$  is surjective. We just show that  $I_1 + I_2 = A$ . The others follow similarly. To prove that  $I_1 + I_2 = A$ , it suffices to show that  $1 \in I_1 + I_2$ . Following the convention in the previous direction, there is some  $x \in X$  such that  $\varphi(x) = e_1$ . So  $(x + I_1, \dots, x + I_n) = (1 + I_1, \dots, I_n)$ . Then  $1 - x \in I_1$  and  $x \in I_2$ . Hence  $1 = (1 - x) + x \in I_1 + I_2$ . This completes the proof.  $\square$

**Lemma §2.1.1** (Prime Avoidance Lemma). *Let  $I, P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n$  be ideals of a ring  $A$ . Furthermore, assume that  $P_i$  is prime for each  $i$ . If  $I \subset P_1 \cup P_2 \cup \dots \cup P_n$  then there is some  $j$  such that  $I \subset P_j$ .*

## §3 Lecture 3 — 17th August, 2022 — Proof of Prime Avoidance, Jacobson Radical, Modules

### §3.1 Proof of Prime Avoidance Lemma

*Proof of §2.1.1.* We prove that the following equivalent statement that:

If for all  $j$ ,  $I \not\subset P_j$  for all  $j$ , there is some element  $x \in I$  such that  $x \notin P_j$  for all  $j$ . ( $\star$ )

We prove this theorem by assuming that all but 2 of the  $P_i$  are prime ideals. (Note : this is a slightly weaker assumption!)

We now start the proof using induction.

We first consider the case when  $n = 2$ . Let  $I$  be an ideal and  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  be prime ideals of  $A$  such that  $I \not\subset P_1$  and  $I \not\subset P_2$ . So, there are some element  $x \in I \setminus P_1$  and  $y \in I \setminus P_2$ .

If  $x \notin P_2$  then we are done. Likewise if  $y \notin P_1$  then we are again done. So, we may assume that  $x \in P_2$  and  $y \in P_1$ .

Now consider  $x + y$ . Undoubtedly,  $x + y \in I$ . If it were the case that  $x + y \in P_1$  then  $x \in P_1$  which is not possible by choice of  $x$ . Likewise if it were the case that  $x + y \in P_2$  then  $y \in P_2$  as  $x \in P_2$  which again is not possible by choice of  $y$ . Therefore, we have that  $x + y \in I$ ,  $x + y \notin P_1$  and  $x + y \notin P_2$  and this ends our verification of the base case.

Now, suppose that the  $(\star)$  is true when the number of prime ideals is equal to  $n - 1$  where  $n \geq 3$ .

Let  $I$  be an ideal and  $P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n$  be prime ideals such that  $I \not\subset P_j$  for  $1 \leq j \leq n$ .

By using the induction hypothesis, there is an element  $x \in I$  such that  $x \notin P_j$  for  $1 \leq j \leq n - 1$ .

If  $x \notin P_n$  then our proof is complete! So, we assume that  $x \in P_n$ .

Furthermore, we may assume that for  $i \neq j$ , it is not the case that  $P_i \subset P_j$  or  $P_j \subset P_i$ , that is, there are no inclusions among the prime ideals. Since  $n \geq 3$  and all but 2 of the  $P_j$  are prime ideals, we may assume that  $P_n$  is a prime ideal.

We claim that  $IP_1P_2 \dots P_{n-1} \not\subset P_n$ . Suppose not then  $IP_1P_2 \dots P_{n-1} \subset P_n$ . It follows by induction and Lemma §1.1.7 that  $I \subset P_n$  or  $P_i \subset P_n$  for some  $1 \leq j \leq n - 1$ . Note that the latter part of the 'or' cannot hold by our assumption in the previous paragraph. Thus  $I \subset P_n$ . But then again this is a contradiction! So, we have that  $IP_1P_2 \dots P_{n-1} \not\subset P_n$ .

Now select a  $y \in IP_1 \dots P_{n-1}$  but  $y \notin P_n$ .

Now, we finish the proof by showing that  $x + y \in I$  but  $x + y \notin P_i$  for all  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . It is evident that  $x + y \in I$ . If  $x + y \in P_n$  then  $y \in P_n$  which is not possible by choice of  $y$ . Note that  $y \in IP_1 \dots P_{n-1}$  implies  $y \in P_i$  for all  $1 \leq i \leq n - 1$ . Now if  $x + y \in P_i$  for some  $1 \leq i \leq n - 1$  then  $x \in P_i$ . But that cannot happen by choice of  $x$ . Thus we have found an element which is in  $I$  but not in any of  $P_i$  and this completes the proof! □

### §3.2 Jacobson Radical & Local Rings revisited

**Notation §3.2.1.** Let  $A$  be a ring. We will use  $\max\text{-spec}(A)$  to denote the set of all maximal ideals of  $A$ .

**Definition §3.2.2** (Jacobson Radical). Let  $A$  be a ring. The Jacobson radical  $\mathcal{J}(A)$  is defined to be the intersection of all maximal ideals of  $A$ . In other words,

$$\mathcal{J}(A) := \bigcap \{m : m \in \max\text{-spec}(A)\}$$

**Lemma §3.2.3.** Let  $A$  be a ring. Then  $x \in \mathcal{J}(A)$  iff  $1 - xy$  is a unit for all  $y \in A$ .

*Proof.* ( $\implies$ ) Suppose that  $x \in \mathcal{J}(A)$ . Suppose that  $1 - xy$  is not a unit for some  $y \in A$ . Then there is some maximal ideal  $m$  of  $A$  containing  $1 - xy$ . (Just consider the ideal generated by  $1 - xy$  and Remark §1.1.8)

Since  $x \in \mathcal{J}(A)$ ,  $x \in m$ . So  $xy \in m$  as  $m$  is an ideal. Then  $1 = (1 - xy) + xy \in m$  but this is not possible as maximal ideals are not the entire ring by definition! Hence  $1 - xy$  is a unit for all  $y \in A$ .

( $\impliedby$ ) Now suppose that  $1 - xy$  is a unit for all  $y \in A$ . If  $x \notin \mathcal{J}(A)$  then there must be some maximal ideal  $m$  of  $A$  such that  $x \in A \setminus m$ . Now consider the ideal  $m + (x)$ . Clearly  $m + (x) \supsetneq m$  for otherwise  $x \in m$ . Hence  $m + (x) = A$  as  $m$  is a maximal ideal. Thus there are some elements  $z \in m$  and  $y \in A$  such that  $z + xy = 1$ . But then  $1 - xy = z \in m$ . Also,  $1 - xy$  is a unit, but that cannot possibly happen as maximal ideals cannot contain units! □

**Lemma §3.2.4.** *Let  $A$  be a ring and  $m$  be a nontrivial ideal such that every element of  $A \setminus m$  is a unit. Then  $(A, m)$  is a local ring.*

*Proof.* Let  $I$  be any nontrivial ideal of  $A$ . To show that  $(A, m)$  is a local ring, it suffices to show that  $I \subset m$ . Let  $x \in I$ . If  $x \notin m$  then  $x$  must be a unit by hypothesis. But that is not possible as  $I$  is not trivial and hence  $I \subset m$ . Thus,  $(A, m)$  is a local ring.  $\square$

**Lemma §3.2.5.** *Let  $A$  be a ring,  $m$  be a maximal ideal. If every element of  $1 + m$  is a unit then  $(A, m)$  is local.*

*Proof.* By lemma §3.2.4, it suffices to show that every element of  $A \setminus m$  is a unit. So let  $x \in A \setminus m$ . Then  $(x) + m = A$  as  $m$  is a maximal ideal. So, there are elements  $y \in A$  and  $z \in m$  such that  $1 = xy + z$ . Then  $xy = 1 - z \in 1 + m$  and hence  $xy$  is a unit. Since  $xy$  is a unit, there is some  $u \in A$  such that  $(xy)u = u(xy) = 1$ . But by associativity and commutativity, we have that  $x(yu) = (yu)x = 1$  and hence  $x$  is a unit.  $\square$

### §3.3 Introduction to Modules

**Definition §3.3.1.** Let  $A$  be a ring. An  $A$ -module is an abelian group  $M$  with a multiplication map

$$\begin{aligned} \cdot : A \times M &\rightarrow M \\ (a \cdot x) &\mapsto ax \end{aligned}$$

satisfying

- (i)  $a(x + y) = ax + ay$  for all  $a \in A$  and  $x, y \in M$ ,
- (ii)  $(a + b)x = ax + bx$  for all  $a, b \in A$  and  $x \in M$ ,
- (iii)  $(ab)x = a(bx)$  for all  $a, b \in A$  and  $x \in M$ ,
- (iv)  $1_A x = x$  for  $x \in M$ .

Alternatively, an  $A$ -module is an abelian group  $M$  together with a ring homomorphism  $\varphi : A \rightarrow \text{End}(M)$  where  $\text{End}(M)$  is the ring of endomorphism of the abelian group  $M$ . Recall that sum in the ring  $\text{End}(M)$  is given pointwise and the multiplication is given by function composition.

To check the equivalence of two definitions, let  $M$  be a  $A$ -module in the sense of Definition §3.3.1. Define a map  $\varphi : A \rightarrow \text{End}(M)$  by  $a \mapsto \varphi_a$  where  $\varphi_a : M \rightarrow M$  given by  $\varphi_a(m) = am$  for every  $m \in M$ . It is now easily seen that  $\varphi$  is a ring homomorphism. Conversely, let  $M$  be a module in the sense of previous paragraph. Now, define  $\cdot : A \times M \rightarrow M$  by  $(a \cdot m) = (\varphi(a))(m)$ . It is easy to check the properties (i)–(iv) of Definition §3.3.1.

**Definition §3.3.2.** A  $A$ -module  $M$  is said to be *faithful* if the map  $\varphi : A \rightarrow \text{End}(M)$  is injective.

**Example §3.3.3.** Here are a few examples of modules:

1. Every vector space over a field  $k$  is a  $k$ -module.
2. Every abelian group is a  $\mathbb{Z}$ -module.

## §4 Lecture 4 — 22 August, 2022 — *insert the topic name*

Begin lecture 4!