

Artificial Intelligence Foundation - JC3001

Lecture 10: Search IV: Adversarial Search I

Prof. Aladdin Ayesh (aladdin.ayesh@abdn.ac.uk)

Dr. Binod Bhattacharai (binod.bhattacharai@abdn.ac.uk)

Dr. Gideon Ogunniye, (g.ogunniye@abdn.ac.uk)

September 2025



UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN



Material adapted from:
Russell and Norvig (AIMA Book): Chapter 5
Russell and Norvig (AIMA Book): Chapter 17/18 (17.1/18.2)
Shoham and Leyton-Brown (Game Theory)

- Part 1: Introduction
 - ① Introduction to AI ✓
 - ② Agents ✓
- Part 2: Problem-solving
 - ① Search 1: Uninformed Search ✓
 - ② Search 2: Heuristic Search ✓
 - ③ Search 3: Local Search ✓
 - ④ **Search 4: Adversarial Search**
- Part 3: Reasoning and Uncertainty
 - ① Reasoning 1: Constraint Satisfaction
 - ② Reasoning 2: Logic and Inference
 - ③ Probabilistic Reasoning 1: BNs
 - ④ Probabilistic Reasoning 2: HMMs
- Part 4: Planning
 - ① Planning 1: Intro and Formalism
 - ② Planning 2: Algos and Heuristics
 - ③ Planning 3: Hierarchical Planning
 - ④ Planning 4: Stochastic Planning
- Part 5: Learning
 - ① Learning 1: Intro to ML
 - ② Learning 2: Regression
 - ③ Learning 3: Neural Networks
 - ④ Learning 4: Reinforcement Learning
- Part 6: Conclusion
 - ① Ethical Issues in AI
 - ② Conclusions and Discussion

- Games
- Non-deterministic search
- Adversarial Search
 - MinMax Search
 - Alpha-Beta Pruning
 - Expectimax

- We have covered a number of search strategies which operate by systematically generating new states and testing them against a goal
- These are typically highly inefficient:
 - Apart from the state space and cost, they do not take any knowledge of the problem into account
 - They represent **uninformed search**
- By using problem specific knowledge (i.e., an **informed search**), we can perform better than the algorithms already encountered

- Idea: select node for expansion based on an **evaluation function**, $f(n)$
 - estimate of “desirability”
 - expand most desirable unexpanded node
- This function could measure distance from the goal, so expand node with lowest evaluation
- Typically implemented via a **priority queue**
- Our search is a best-first one; we expand the node that (we believe) is the best one first

- The A* search is probably the most used type of heuristic search
- It combines the cost to reach a node ($g(n)$) with the cost to get from the node to the goal ($h(n)$)
$$f(n) = g(n) + h(n)$$
- $f(n)$ is the **estimated cost** of the cheapest solution through n
- Since we are trying to find the cheapest solution, it makes sense to try the node with the lowest $f(n)$ first
- Under certain conditions of $h(n)$, A* search is complete and optimal

- Certain classes of problems do not care about the path towards a solution or its intermediary states
- We call these methods local search: they consist of optimising an objective function
- Entire classes of algorithms focus on stochastic moves towards local/global maxima
 - (Stochastic) Hill Climbing / Gradient Descent (Ascent)
 - Beam Search
 - Genetic Algorithms



Outline

2 Games

► Games

► Game Theory

- In multiagent environments, each agent must:
 - Consider everyone else's actions
 - Coordinate in order to act coherently
- These issues assumed agents were **cooperative**
- We have also seen that agents can be **competitive**
 - Main subject for **game theory**

- Game theory views any multiagent system as “game”
- Most commonly studied games in AI are called
 - Deterministic
 - Turn-taking (agents act alternately)
 - Two-player
 - Zero-sum (individual utility is always equal and opposite)
 - Perfect Information (fully observable)

- Games in game theory are not the same as the games you play
 - “Diablo 3” can be modelled as a game
 - Other games include:
 - Naval patrols in pirate-infested seas
 - Police deployment
 - Financial market trading
 - Events-crowd management

- Many games (of the type you play) have been an early focus of AI
- Most real games are **very hard** to solve (e.g. chess)
 - Branching factor of about 35
 - Matches often go into 50 rounds (35^{100} nodes)
- Games penalise inefficiency severely (if you wait too long, you lose)

- Key Ingredients:
 - **Players:** who are the decision makers?
People, governments, companies
 - **Actions:** what can the players do?
Enter a bid in an auction? Decide whether to end a strike? Decide when to sell a stock?
Decide how to vote?
 - **Payoffs:** what motivates players?
Do they care about some profit? Do they care about other players?

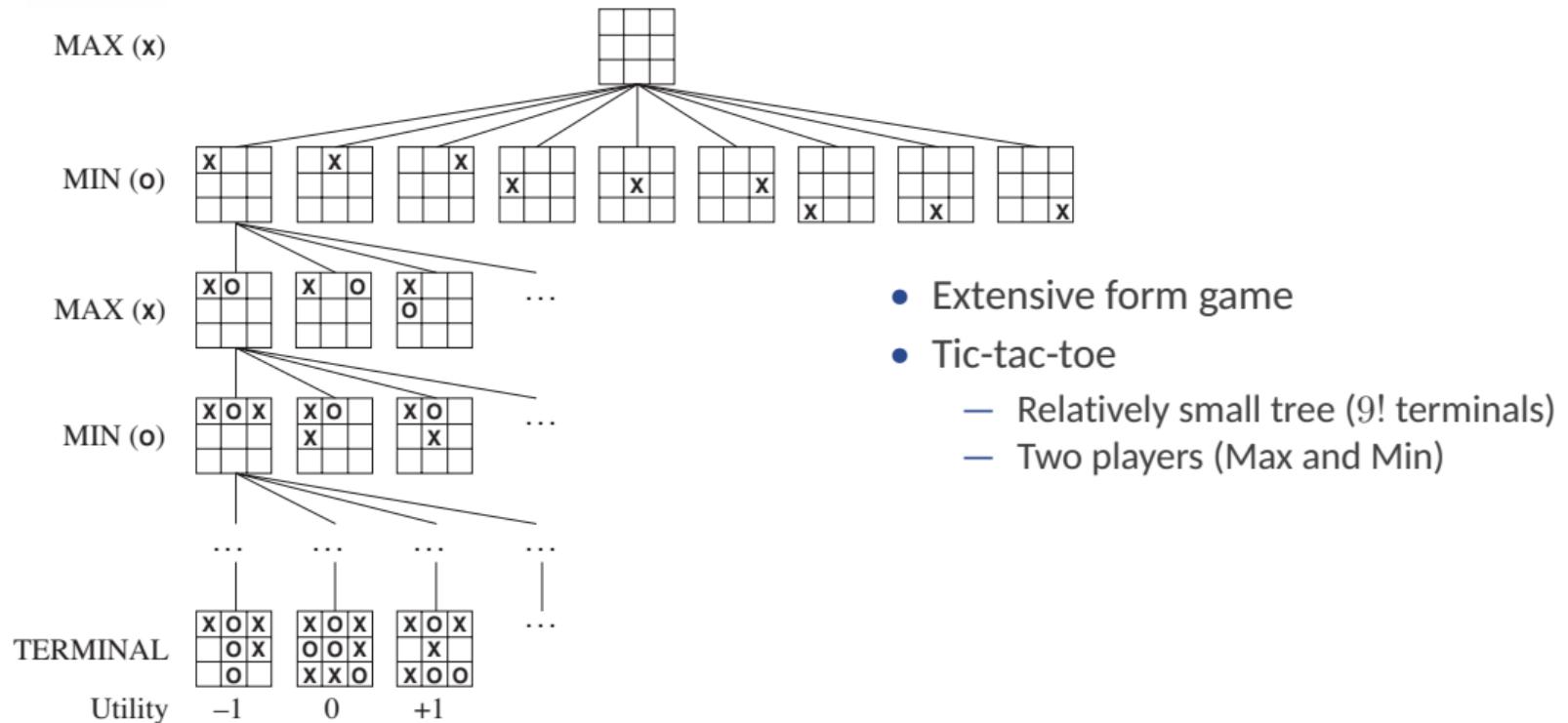
- Two Standard Representations:
 - **Normal Form:** (a.k.a. Matrix Form, Strategic Form)
List what payoffs get as a function of their actions
 - It is as if players moved simultaneously
 - But strategies encode many things
 - **Extensive Form:** includes timing of moves
 - Players move sequentially, represented as a tree
 - Keeps track of what each player knows when they make each decision

- Finite, n-person **normal form** game $\langle N, A, u \rangle$:
 - **Players:** $N = \{1, \dots, n\}$ is a finite set of n , indexed by i
 - **Action Set** for player i A_i
 - $a = (a_1, \dots, a_n) \in A = A_1 \times \dots \times A_n$ is an **action profile**
 - **Utility function** or Payoff function for player $i : u_i : A \mapsto \mathbb{R}$
 - $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n)$, is a **profile of utility functions**

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	-1, -1	-3, 0
	D	0, -3	-2, -2

- Normal Form Game
- Prisoner's Dilemma
 - 2-player game written as a **matrix**
 - row player is player 1,
column player is player 2
 - rows correspond to actions $a_1 \in A_1$
 - columns correspond to $a_2 \in A_2$
 - cells listing utility/payoff for each player:
row player first, then column

- An extensive form game is defined as a search problem with the following elements:
 - S_0 : initial state
 - $Player(s)$: which player moves at state s
 - $Actions(s)$: what are the actions available at state s
 - $Result(s, a)$: **transition model**
 - $TerminalTest(s)$: true when the game is over, defines **terminal states**
 - $Utility(s, p)$: utility function (or payoff) for player p at terminal state s
(in zero sum games $Utility(s, p_1) = -Utility(s, p_2)$)





Outline

3 Game Theory

► Games

► Game Theory

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	4, 4	0, 6
	D	6, 0	2, 2

- Prisoner's Dilemma, rescaled
 - Double and add six
 - Dominant strategies
 - Equilibria (e.g. Nash)
 - Efficiency/Optimality (e.g. Pareto)

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	4, 4	0, 6
	D	✓ 6, 0	2, 2

- Prisoner's Dilemma, rescaled
 - Double and add six
 - Dominant strategies
 - Equilibria (e.g. Nash)
 - Efficiency/Optimality (e.g. Pareto)

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	4, 4	0, 6
	D	✓ 6, 0	✓ 2, 2

- Prisoner's Dilemma, rescaled
 - Double and add six
 - Dominant strategies
 - Equilibria (e.g. Nash)
 - Efficiency/Optimality (e.g. Pareto)

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1		C	4, 4
		D	✓ 6, 0 ✓ 2, 2

- Prisoner's Dilemma, rescaled
 - Double and add six
 - Dominant strategies
 - Equilibria (e.g. Nash)
 - Efficiency/Optimality (e.g. Pareto)

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1		C	4, 4
		D	✓ 6, 0 ✓ 2, 2 ✓

- Prisoner's Dilemma, rescaled
 - Double and add six
 - Dominant strategies
 - Equilibria (e.g. Nash)
 - Efficiency/Optimality (e.g. Pareto)

		Player 2	
		Heads	Tails
Player 1	Heads	1, -1	-1, 1
	Tails	-1, 1	1, -1

- Matching Pennies

- One player wants to match; the other wants to mismatch

		Player 2	
		Heads	Tails
Player 1	Heads	✓ 1, -1	-1, 1
	Tails	-1, 1	1, -1

- Matching Pennies

- One player wants to match; the other wants to mismatch

		Player 2	
		Heads	Tails
Player 1	Heads	$\checkmark 1, -1$	-1, 1
	Tails	-1, 1	$\checkmark 1, -1$

- Matching Pennies

- One player wants to match; the other wants to mismatch

		Player 2	
		Heads	Tails
Player 1	Heads	$\checkmark 1, -1$	$-1, 1\checkmark$
	Tails	$-1, 1$	$\checkmark 1, -1$

- Matching Pennies

- One player wants to match; the other wants to mismatch

		Player 2	
		Heads	Tails
Player 1	Heads	$\checkmark 1, -1$	$-1, 1\checkmark$
	Tails	$-1, 1\checkmark$	$\checkmark 1, -1$

- Matching Pennies

- One player wants to match; the other wants to mismatch

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	0, 0	-1, 1	1, -1
	Paper	1, -1	0, 0	-1, 1
	Scissors	-1, 1	1, -1	0, 0

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1	1, -1
	Paper	✓ 1, -1	O, O	-1, 1
	Scissors	-1, 1	1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1	1, -1
	Paper	✓ 1, -1	O, O	-1, 1
	Scissors	-1, 1	✓ 1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1	✓1, -1
	Paper	✓1, -1	O, O	-1, 1
	Scissors	-1, 1	✓1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1✓	✓1, -1
	Paper	✓1, -1	O, O	-1, 1
	Scissors	-1, 1	✓1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1✓	✓1, -1
	Paper	✓1, -1	O, O	-1, 1✓
	Scissors	-1, 1	✓1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2		
		Rock	Paper	Scissors
Player 1	Rock	O, O	-1, 1✓	✓1, -1
	Paper	✓1, -1	O, O	-1, 1✓
	Scissors	-1, 1✓	✓1, -1	O, O

- Rock, Paper, Scissors

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	0, 0	-1, 1
	D	1, -1	-2, -2

- Quitting Game
 - Who Quits First?
 - Anti-coordination game

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1	C	O, O	-1, 1
	D	✓ 1, -1	-2, -2

- Quitting Game
 - Who Quits First?
 - Anti-coordination game

		Player 2	
		C	D
Player 1		C	O, O
		D	✓ 1, -1
		✓ -1, 1	
		-2, -2	

- Quitting Game
 - Who Quits First?
 - Anti-coordination game

		Player 2	
		C	D
		O, O	-1, 1
Player 1	C	O, O	-1, 1
	D	1, -1	-2, -2

- Quitting Game
 - Who Quits First?
 - Anti-coordination game

		Player 2	
		C	D
		O, O	-1, 1
Player 1	C	O, O	-1, 1
	D	1, -1	-2, -2

- Quitting Game
 - Who Quits First?
 - Anti-coordination game

		Player 2	
		Left	Right
Player 1	Left	1, 1	0, 0
	Right	0, 0	1, 1

- Coordination Game
 - Which side of the road should you drive on?

		Player 2	
		Left	Right
Player 1		Left	✓ 1, 1
		Right	0, 0
		Right	1, 1

- Coordination Game
 - Which side of the road should you drive on?

		Player 2	
		Left	Right
Player 1		Left	✓ 1, 1
		Right	0, 0

- Coordination Game
 - Which side of the road should you drive on?

		Player 2	
		Left	Right
		Left	Right
Player 1	Left	✓ 1, 1✓	0, 0
	Right	0, 0	✓ 1, 1

- Coordination Game
 - Which side of the road should you drive on?

		Player 2	
		Left	Right
		Left	Right
Player 1	Left	✓ 1, 1✓	0, 0
	Right	0, 0	✓ 1, 1✓

- Coordination Game
 - Which side of the road should you drive on?

		Player 2	
		B	F
		2, 1	0, 0
Player 1	B	2, 1	0, 0
	F	0, 0	1, 2

- Matching Game
 - Both players want to **match**

		Player 2	
		B	F
		B	2, 1
Player 1	B	2, 1	0, 0
	F	0, 0	1, 2

- Matching Game
 - Both players want to **match**

		Player 2	
		B	F
		B	2, 1
Player 1	B	2, 1	0, 0
	F	0, 0	1, 2

- Matching Game
 - Both players want to **match**

		Player 2	
		B	F
		B	O, O
Player 1	B	✓ 2, 1✓	O, O
	F	O, O	✓ 1, 2

- Matching Game
 - Both players want to **match**

		Player 2	
		B	F
		B	2, 1
Player 1	B	2, 1	0, 0
	F	0, 0	1, 2

- Matching Game
 - Both players want to **match**



UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN



To continue in the next session.