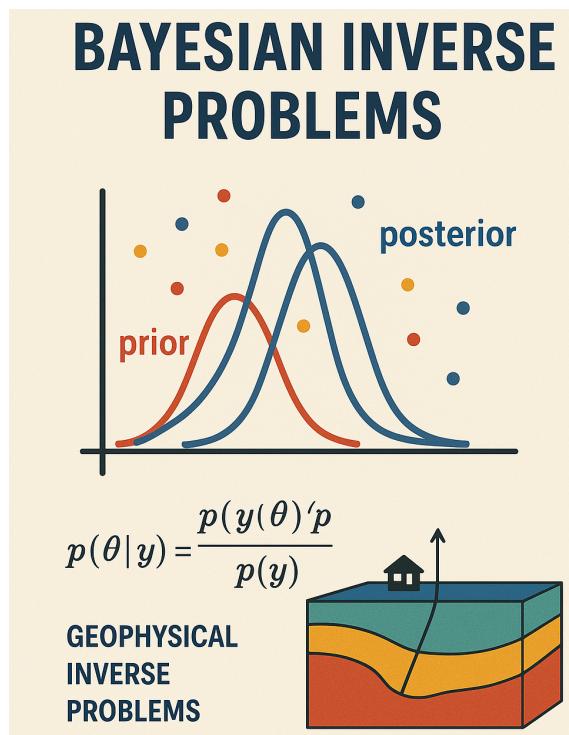


# Inverse Problems and DA PRACTICAL

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Mark Asch - MAKUTU/2025



Practical for Lecture 01

## Ex. 1—III-Posedness

Consider the highly nonlinear Duffing's equation,

$$\ddot{x} + 0.05\dot{x} + x^3 = 7.5 \cos t$$

with (true) initial state  $x(0) = 3$  and  $\dot{x}(0) = 4$ . This equation exhibits high sensitivity to the initial conditions.

1. Solve the equation using a suitable ODE integrator over the interval  $t \in [0, 50]$ .
2. Show that two very closely spaced initial states lead to a large discrepancy in the trajectories:
  - introduce an error of 0.03% - until when do we have an accurate forecast?
  - introduce an error of 0.06% - until when do we have an accurate forecast?

## Ex. 2—Deterministic Inversion: Adjoint Method

- See slides of DA on Adjoints, pp. 4–14.

Consider the **convection-diffusion** equation, where the **diffusion coefficient is spatially varying**. This model is close to many physical situations, where the medium is not homogeneous and we have zones with differing diffusive properties.

- The system is described by

$$\begin{cases} - (a(x)u'(x))' - u'(x) = q(x), & 0 < x < 1, \\ u(0) = 0, \quad u(1) = 0. \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

- Define the  $L_2$ -mismatch cost function as

$$J[a] = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^1 (u(x) - u^{\text{obs}}(x))^2 \, dx, \quad (2)$$

where  $u^{\text{obs}}(x)$  denotes the observations on  $[0, 1]$ .

- Objective: Derive the gradient using the **Lagrangian** (or variational formulation).
- Step 1: Let the cost function

$$\begin{aligned} J^*[a, p] = & \frac{1}{2} \int_0^1 (u(x) - u^{\text{obs}}(x))^2 \, dx \\ & + \int_0^1 p \left( -(au')' - u' - q \right) \, dx, \end{aligned}$$

noting that

- ⇒ the second integral is zero when  $u$  is a solution of (1)
- ⇒ and that the **adjoint variable**,  $p$ , can be considered here to be a **Lagrange multiplier** function.

- Step 2: Take the variation of  $J^*$  with respect to

its variables,  $a$  and  $p$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}\delta J^* &= \int_0^1 (u - u^{\text{obs}}) \delta u \, dx \\ &\quad + \int_0^1 \delta p \overbrace{\left( -(au')' - u' - q \right)}^{=0} \, dx \\ &\quad + \int_0^1 p \left[ (-\delta a u' - a \delta u' - \delta u)' \right] \, dx.\end{aligned}$$

- Step 3: Integrate by parts, passing derivatives from  $u$  to  $p$  and define the **adjoint equation** and boundary conditions on  $p$  so as to obtain an integral expression for the variation  $\delta J^*$ . Assume zero boundary conditions on the perturbation  $\delta u$ .
- Step 4: Based on the key result relating the variation to the gradient,

$$\delta J \doteq \nabla_{\mathbf{m}} J \delta \mathbf{m},$$

prove that the explicit expression for the gradient of  $J^*$  with respect to the unknown parameter  $a$  is given by

$$\nabla_{a(x)} J^* = u' p'.$$

- Conclusion: With

- ⇒ one solution of the direct system (1), plus
- ⇒ one solution of the adjoint system for  $p$ , we recover the gradient of the cost function with respect to the sought for diffusion coefficient,  $a(x)$ .
- ⇒ This gradient can then be used to find (numerically) the optimal function  $a(x)$  that minimizes  $J$  by a suitable descent algorithm, usually by a quasi-Newton method.

## Ex. 3: Adjoint method—constant parameter case

- The code `adj_inv.py` solves a constant-valued parameter estimation inverse problem

$$-bu''(x) + cu'(x) = f(x)$$

with  $u(0) = u(1) = 0$  and the cost function (2).

- Create a fully-documented notebook based on this code, with:
  - ⇒ formulation of the problem;
  - ⇒ presentation of the adjoint equation and the expression for the cost function and its gradient.
- Run the code and compare the accuracy of the inversion for:
  - ⇒ varying noise levels, starting from zero;

- ⇒ varying initial guesses for  $b$  and  $c$ ;
- ⇒ tuning of the L-BFGS optimizer.

- Draw detailed conclusions regarding the complexity (difficulties) of the inversion.

## Ex. 4: Adjoint method—variable parameter case

In Exercise 2 above, we derived the adjoint state and cost function gradient for the convection-diffusion ordinary differential equation, with a spatially varying diffusion coefficient.

- The code `adj_inv_cx.py` solves a slightly simpler version of the variable parameter estimation inverse problem, where

$$-u'' + c(x)u' = f(x)$$

with  $u(0) = u(1) = 0$  and the cost function (2).

- Create a fully-documented notebook based on this code, with
  - ⇒ formulation of the problem;

- ⇒ presentation of the adjoint equation and the expression for the cost function and its gradient;
  - ⇒ explanation of the regularization strategy.
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- Run the code and compare the accuracy of the inversion for
    - ⇒ varying noise levels, starting from zero;
    - ⇒ varying initial guesses for  $c(x)$ ;
    - ⇒ different (simpler) functions for the spatially-varying coefficient  $c(x)$ .
  - Draw detailed conclusions regarding the complexity (difficulties) of the inversion.

## Ex. 5: Adjoint method—Linear PDE

- The natural extension of the ordinary differential equations seen above is the initial-boundary-value problem known as the **diffusion equation**,

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} - \nabla \cdot (\nu \nabla u) = 0, \quad x \in (0, L), \quad t > 0,$$
$$u(x, 0) = u_0(x), \quad u(0, t) = 0, \quad u(L, t) = \eta(t).$$

- This equation has multiple origins emanating from different physical situations.
  - ⇒ The most common application is **particle diffusion**, where  $u$  is a concentration and  $\nu$  is a diffusion coefficient.
  - ⇒ Then there is **heat diffusion**, for which  $u$  is a temperature and  $\nu$  is a thermal conductivity.
  - ⇒ The equation is also found in finance, being closely related to the Black-Scholes model.

- ⇒ Another important application is **population dynamics**.
- ⇒ These diverse application fields, and hence the diffusion equation, give rise to a number of **inverse and data assimilation problems**.
- A variety of different controls can be applied to this system:
  - ⇒ *internal* control,  $\nu(x)$ : this is the parameter identification problem, also known as tomography;
  - ⇒ *initial* control,  $\xi(x) = u_0(x)$ : this is a source detection IP or DA problem;
  - ⇒ *boundary* control,  $\eta(t) = u(L, t)$ : this is the “classical” boundary control problem, also a parameter identification IP.
- As above, we can define the mismatch/L2 **cost function**,

$$J[\nu, \xi, \eta] = \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L (u - u^{\text{obs}})^2 \, dx \, dt,$$

which is now a space-time multiple integral, and its related LAGRANGIAN,

$$\begin{aligned} J^* = & \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L (u - u^{\text{obs}})^2 \, dx \, dt \\ & + \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L p [u_t - (\nu u_x)_x] \, dx \, dt. \end{aligned}$$

- Now take the variation of  $J^*$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \delta J^* = & \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L 2(u - u^{\text{obs}}) \delta u \, dx \, dt \\ & + \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L \delta p \overbrace{[u_t - (\nu u_x)_x]}^{=0} \, dx \, dt \\ & + \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L p [\delta u_t - (\delta \nu u_x + \nu \delta u_x)_x] \, dx \, dt, \end{aligned}$$

and perform integration by parts to obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\delta J^* &= \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T \int_0^L \delta\nu u_x p_x \, dx \, dt \quad (3) \\ &\quad - \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^L p \left. \delta u \right|_{t=0} \, dx \\ &\quad + \frac{1}{LT} \int_0^T p \left. \delta\eta \right|_{x=L} \, dt,\end{aligned}$$

where we have defined the adjoint equation as

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial p}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\nu \nabla p) &= 2(u - u^{\text{obs}}), \quad x \in (0, L), \quad t > 0 \\ p(0, t) &= 0, \quad p(L, t) = 0, \\ p(x, T) &= 0.\end{aligned}$$

- As before, this equation is of the same type as the original diffusion equation, but must be solved **backwards in time**.
- Finally, from (3) we can pick off each of the three

desired terms of the gradient,

$$\nabla_{\nu(x)} J^* = \frac{1}{T} \int_0^T u_x p_x \, dt,$$

$$\nabla_{u|_{t=0}} J^* = -p|_{t=0},$$

$$\nabla_{\eta|_{x=L}} J^* = p|_{x=L}.$$

- Conclusion:

- ⇒ Once again, at the expense of a single (backward) solution of the adjoint equation, we obtain explicit expressions for the gradient of the cost function with respect to each of the three control variables.
- ⇒ This is quite remarkable and completely avoids “brute force” or exhaustive minimization, though, as mentioned earlier, we only have the guarantee to find a local minimum.
- ⇒ However, if we have a good starting guess that is usually obtained from historical or other “phys-

ical" knowledge of the system, we are sure to arrive at a good (or at least, better) minimum.

- **Exercise:** go through the calculations, step-by-step, and reproduce the results.

## Ex. 6: Adjoint method—Nonlinear PDE

We study here Burgers' Equation (a simplified, but realistic model for **Navier-Stokes**) with control of the initial condition and boundary control.

- Viscous Burgers equation in the interval  $x \in [0, L]$  is defined by

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} + u \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} - \nu \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} = f,$$

$$u(0, t) = \psi_1(t), \quad u(L, t) = \psi_2(t), \\ u(x, 0) = u_0(x).$$

- The **control vector**

$$(u_0(x), \psi_1(t), \psi_2(t)).$$

- The cost function is taken as

$$J(u_0, \psi_1, \psi_2) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^T \int_0^L (u - u^{\text{obs}})^2 dx dt.$$

- The adjoint model is

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial p}{\partial t} + u \frac{\partial p}{\partial x} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 p}{\partial x^2} &= u^{\text{obs}} - u, \\ p(0, t) &= 0, \quad p(L, t) = 0, \\ p(x, T) &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

- Gradient/variation/directional derivative of  $J$  is finally,

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{J} [u_0, \psi_1, \psi_2] (\delta_u, \delta_1, \delta_2) &= - \int_0^L \delta_u p(x, 0) dx \\ &\quad + \int_0^T \nu \delta_2 \frac{\partial p}{\partial x}(L, t) \\ &\quad - \nu \delta_1 \frac{\partial p}{\partial x}(0, t) dt \end{aligned}$$

that gives,

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla_{u_0} J &= -p(x, t = 0) \\ \nabla_{\psi_1} J &= -\nu \frac{\partial p}{\partial x}(x = 0, t) \\ \nabla_{\psi_2} J &= \nu \frac{\partial p}{\partial x}(x = L, t).\end{aligned}$$

- These explicit gradients enable us to solve **inverse problems** for
  - ⇒ the initial condition, which is a **data assimilation** problem;
  - ⇒ or for the boundary conditions, which is an optimal **boundary control** problem;
  - ⇒ or for both.
- **Exercise:** Consider a parameter identification

problem for the **viscosity**  $\nu$ . Derive the adjoint and gradient expressions for this case.

# DA Codes

Various open-source repositories and codes are available for both academic and operational data assimilation.

1. DARC: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/met-darc/> from Reading, UK.
2. DAPPER: <https://github.com/nansencenter/DAPPER> from Nansen, Norway.
3. DART: <https://dart.ucar.edu/> from NCAR, US, specialized in ensemble DA.
4. OpenDA: <https://www.openda.org/>.
5. Verdandi: <http://verdandi.sourceforge.net/> from INRIA, France.

6. PyDA: <https://github.com/Shady-Ahmed/PyDA>,  
a Python implementation for academic use.
7. Filterpy: <https://github.com/rlabbe/filterpy>,  
dedicated to KF variants.
8. EnKF; <https://enkf.nersc.no/>, the original  
Ensemble KF from Geir Evensen.