

# Frequency Domain Analysis of Circuits

Maxx Seminario

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Spring 2026

# Why Frequency Domain Analysis?

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Limitations of Time Domain:

- Differential equations for AC circuits
- Complex trig math
- Difficult for sinusoidal steady-state

## Frequency Domain Advantages:

- Converts differential equations to algebra
- Easy handling of sinusoidal signals
- Simplifies AC circuit analysis

## Applications:

- AC power systems (60 Hz)
- Audio systems (20 Hz - 20 kHz)
- Radio frequency circuits (MHz - GHz)
- Signal processing and filtering

## Domain Transformation Tool

**Phasor transform** converts time-domain sinusoids to frequency-domain complex numbers

## Goal for this lecture

Review frequency domain (phasor) analysis for AC circuits

# Sinusoidal Signals: The Foundation

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## General Sinusoidal Signal:

$$v(t) = V_m \cos(\omega t + \phi)$$

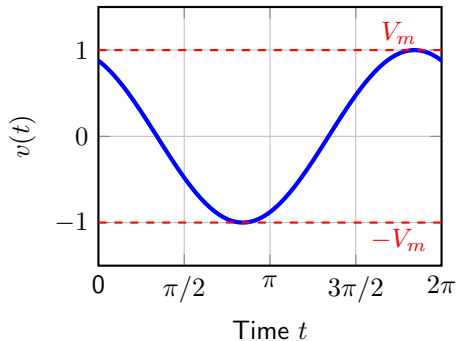
where:

- $V_m$  = amplitude (peak value)
- $\omega$  = angular frequency (rad/s)
- $\phi$  = phase angle (radians or degrees)

## Related Parameters:

- Frequency:  $f = \omega/(2\pi)$  (Hz)
- Period:  $T = 1/f = 2\pi/\omega$  (s)
- RMS value:  $V_{rms} = V_m/\sqrt{2}$

## Sinusoidal Waveform:



# Phasor Concept: From Time to Frequency Domain

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Euler's Identity:

$$e^{j\theta} = \cos \theta + j \sin \theta$$

## Sinusoid as Complex Exponential:

$$v(t) = V_m \cos(\omega t + \phi)$$

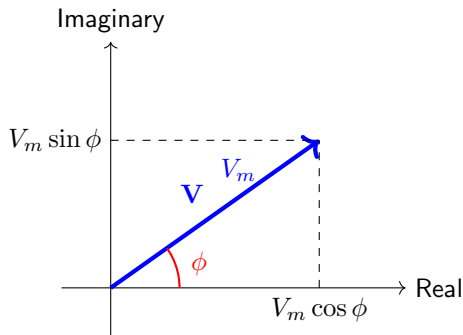
$$v(t) = \operatorname{Re}\{V_m e^{j(\omega t + \phi)}\}$$

$$v(t) = \operatorname{Re}\{V_m e^{j\phi} e^{j\omega t}\}$$

## Phasor Definition

$$\mathbf{V} = V_m e^{j\phi} = V_m \angle \phi$$

## Phasor Diagram:



## Rectangular Form:

$$\mathbf{V} = V_m \cos \phi + j V_m \sin \phi$$

# Phasor Transform: Summary

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

Time Domain	Phasor Domain	Operation
$V_m \cos(\omega t + \phi)$	$\mathbf{V} = V_m \angle \phi$	Domain transformation
$\frac{d}{dt}$	$j\omega$	Differentiation $\rightarrow$ multiplication
$\int dt$	$\frac{1}{j\omega}$	Integration $\rightarrow$ division
Addition	Addition	Same (LTI Systems)

## Key Advantage

- 😊 **Differentiation** in time domain  $\rightarrow$  **Multiplication** by  $j\omega$  in phasor domain.
- 😞 Phasor analysis only works for **linear circuits** with **sinusoidal sources** at the **same frequency** in **steady-state**

# Electrical Impedance

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Definition:

Impedance is the ratio of phasor voltage to phasor current:

$$\mathbf{Z} = \frac{\mathbf{V}}{\mathbf{I}}$$

## Polar Form:

$$\mathbf{Z} = |\mathbf{Z}| \angle \theta$$

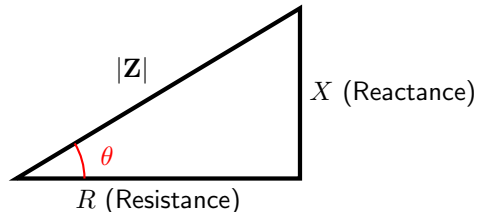
## Rectangular Form:

$$\mathbf{Z} = R + jX$$

where:

- $R$  = resistance (real part)
- $X$  = reactance (imaginary part)

## Impedance in Complex Plane:



## Relationships:

$$|\mathbf{Z}| = \sqrt{R^2 + X^2}$$

$$\theta = \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{X}{R} \right)$$

# Impedance of R, L, and C

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

Element	Time Domain	Impedance	Phase
Resistor	$v = iR$	$\mathbf{Z}_R = R$	0
Inductor	$v = L \frac{di}{dt}$	$\mathbf{Z}_L = j\omega L$	+90
Capacitor	$i = C \frac{dv}{dt}$	$\mathbf{Z}_C = \frac{1}{j\omega C} = \frac{-j}{\omega C}$	-90

## Resistor:

- Real impedance
- V and I in phase
- Frequency independent

## Inductor:

- Imaginary impedance
- V leads I by 90°
- $|\mathbf{Z}_L| = \omega L$  increases with  $\omega$

## Capacitor:

- Imaginary impedance
- I leads V by 90°
- $|\mathbf{Z}_C| = 1/(\omega C)$  decreases with  $\omega$

# Frequency Behavior of Impedance

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

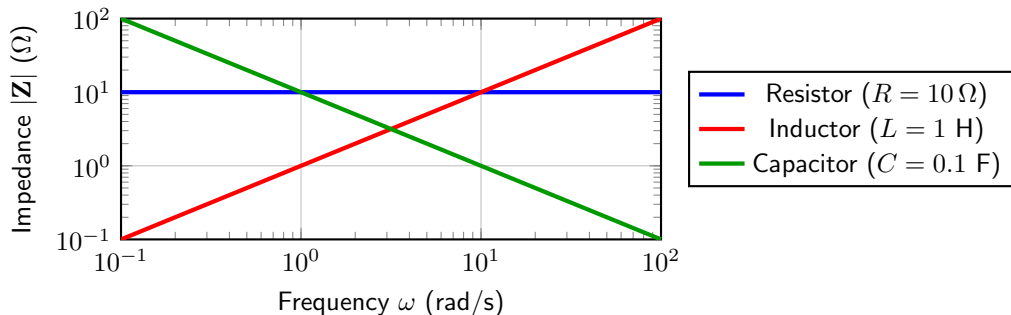
Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary



## Frequency Behavior

- **Resistor:** Constant impedance (frequency independent)
- **Inductor:** High impedance at high frequencies (blocks AC, passes DC)
- **Capacitor:** Low impedance at high frequencies (blocks DC, passes AC)



# Phasor Analysis: Circuit Laws

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

**All DC circuit analysis techniques apply to phasors**

**Kirchhoff's Voltage Law (KVL):**

$$\sum \mathbf{V}_k = 0$$

**Kirchhoff's Current Law (KCL):**

$$\sum \mathbf{I}_k = 0$$

**Ohm's Law:**

$$\mathbf{V} = \mathbf{I}\mathbf{Z}$$

**Series Impedances:**

$$\mathbf{Z}_{eq} = \mathbf{Z}_1 + \mathbf{Z}_2 + \cdots + \mathbf{Z}_n$$

**Parallel Impedances:**

$$\mathbf{Z}_{eq}^{-1} = \mathbf{Z}_1^{-1} + \mathbf{Z}_2^{-1} + \cdots + \mathbf{Z}_n^{-1}$$

**Voltage Divider:**

$$\mathbf{V}_k = \mathbf{V}_s \mathbf{Z}_k (\mathbf{Z}_1 + \mathbf{Z}_2)^{-1}$$

## Key Point

Replace resistances with impedances, and voltages/currents with phasors. Then use the standard DC techniques

# Example: Series RC Circuit

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

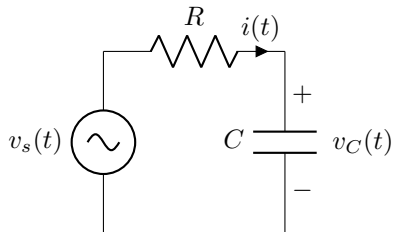
Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Circuit:



## Given:

- $v_s(t) = V_m \cos(\omega t)$
- $R = 100 \Omega$
- $C = 10 \mu\text{F}$
- $\omega = 1000 \text{ rad/s}$

## Phasor Analysis:

Source phasor:  $\mathbf{V}_s = V_m \angle 0$

Impedances:

$$\mathbf{Z}_R = 100 \Omega$$

$$\mathbf{Z}_C = \frac{-j}{\omega C} = \frac{-j}{0.01} = -j100 \Omega$$

Total impedance:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{Z}_{eq} &= R - jX_C = 100 - j100 \\ &= 141.4 \angle -45^\circ \Omega\end{aligned}$$

Current:

$$\mathbf{I} = \frac{\mathbf{V}_s}{\mathbf{Z}_{eq}} = \frac{V_m \angle 0}{141.4 \angle -45^\circ} = \frac{V_m}{141.4} \angle 45^\circ$$

# Example: Phasor Diagram

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

**Voltage Divider:**

Capacitor voltage:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{V}_C &= \mathbf{V}_s \frac{\mathbf{Z}_C}{\mathbf{Z}_R + \mathbf{Z}_C} \\ &= \mathbf{V}_s \frac{-j100}{100 - j100} \\ &= \mathbf{V}_s \frac{100 \angle -90}{141.4 \angle -45} \\ &= 0.707 V_m \angle -45\end{aligned}$$

Resistor voltage:

$$\mathbf{V}_R = \mathbf{I}R = 0.707 V_m \angle 45$$

**Phasor Diagram:**

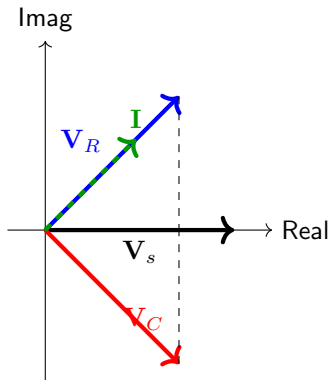


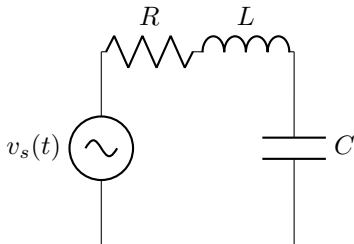
Figure 1:  $\mathbf{V}_R + \mathbf{V}_C = \mathbf{V}_s$  (KVL)

# Example: Series RLC Circuit

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

**Circuit:**



**Total Impedance:**

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{Z} &= R + j\omega L + \frac{1}{j\omega C} = R + j\left(\omega L - \frac{1}{\omega C}\right) \\ &= R + j(X_L - X_C)\end{aligned}$$

**Three Cases:**

**1. Inductive** ( $X_L > X_C$ ):

- Net reactance is positive
- Voltage leads current
- Behaves like RL circuit

**2. Capacitive** ( $X_L < X_C$ ):

- Net reactance is negative
- Current leads voltage
- Behaves like RC circuit

**3. Resonant** ( $X_L = X_C$ ):

- Net reactance is zero
- $\mathbf{Z} = R$  (purely resistive)
- $\mathbf{V}$  and  $\mathbf{I}$  in phase

# Resonance in RLC Circuits

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Resonance Condition:

At resonance:  $X_L = X_C$

$$\omega_0 L = \frac{1}{\omega_0 C}$$

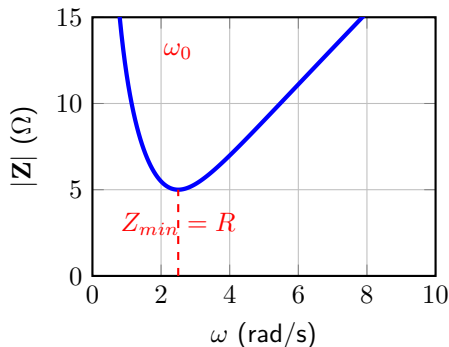
## Resonant Frequency

$$\omega_0 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{LC}}$$

## At Resonance:

- $Z = R$  (minimum impedance)
- Maximum current
- Zero phase angle

## Impedance vs. Frequency:



# AC Power: Instantaneous and Average

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Instantaneous Power:

For  $v(t) = V_m \cos(\omega t)$  and  
 $i(t) = I_m \cos(\omega t - \theta)$ :

$$p(t) = v(t) \cdot i(t)$$

$$= V_m I_m \cos(\omega t) \cos(\omega t - \theta)$$

Using trig identity:

$$p(t) = \frac{V_m I_m}{2} \cos \theta + \frac{V_m I_m}{2} \cos(2\omega t - \theta)$$

## Average Power:

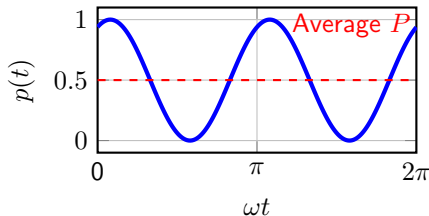
$$P = \frac{1}{T} \int_0^T p(t) dt = \frac{V_m I_m}{2} \cos \theta$$

## Using RMS Values:

$$V_{rms} = \frac{V_m}{\sqrt{2}}, \quad I_{rms} = \frac{I_m}{\sqrt{2}}$$

## Average (Real) Power

$$P = V_{rms} I_{rms} \cos \theta$$



# Reactive and Apparent Power

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

## Power Components:

### 1. Real (Average) Power:

$$P = V_{rms} I_{rms} \cos \theta \quad (\text{W})$$

- Power dissipated (resistors)

### 2. Reactive Power:

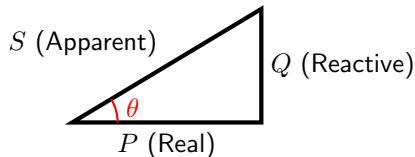
$$Q = V_{rms} I_{rms} \sin \theta \quad (\text{VAR})$$

- Power stored/returned (L/C)

### 3. Apparent Power:

$$S = V_{rms} I_{rms} \quad (\text{VA})$$

## Power Triangle:



$$S = \sqrt{P^2 + Q^2}$$

$$P = S \cos \theta, \quad Q = S \sin \theta$$

## Power Factor:

$$\text{pf} = \cos \theta = \frac{P}{S}$$

# Power Factor and Its Importance

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Power Factor Definition:

$$\text{pf} = \cos \theta = \frac{P}{S}$$

Range:  $0 \leq \text{pf} \leq 1$

## Special Cases:

😊 **pf = 1** (unity): purely resistive,  $\theta = 0$

☹️ **pf = 0**: purely reactive,  $\theta = \pm 90$

## Leading vs. Lagging:

- Lagging pf: inductive load (current lags voltage)
- Leading pf: capacitive load (current leads voltage)

## Low Power Factor Problems

- ☹️ Higher current required
- ☹️ Larger conductor sizes needed
- ☹️ More  $I^2R$  losses in transmission

## Power Factor Correction:

Add capacitors in parallel with inductive loads to:

- 😊 Increase power factor
- 😊 Reduce reactive power
- 😊 Lower current draw



# Power in Circuit Elements

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

Element	Phase	Real Power $P$	Reactive Power $Q$	pf
Resistor	$\theta = 0$	$I^2 R$	0	1
Inductor	$\theta = 90$	0	$I^2 X_L$ (positive)	0
Capacitor	$\theta = -90$	0	$-I^2 X_C$ (negative)	0

## Key Observations

- Only **resistors** dissipate real power (convert to heat · or light if you mess up)
- **Inductors** and **capacitors** store and return energy (reactive power)
- Reactive power from L and C have opposite signs (can cancel to form resonant networks)

# Summary: Frequency Domain Analysis

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

## Phasor Analysis:

- Transform:  $V_m \cos(\omega t + \phi) \leftrightarrow V_m \angle \phi$
- ☺ Differential equations  $\rightarrow$  algebra
- $d/dt \rightarrow j\omega$ ,  $\int dt \rightarrow 1/(j\omega)$

## Impedance:

- $\mathbf{Z} = R + jX$
- Resistor:  $\mathbf{Z}_R = R$
- Inductor:  $\mathbf{Z}_L = j\omega L$
- Capacitor:  $\mathbf{Z}_C = 1/(j\omega C)$

## Circuit Analysis:

- ☺ All DC techniques apply
- KVL, KCL, voltage/current dividers
- Series/parallel combinations

## AC Power:

- Real power:  $P = V_{rms} I_{rms} \cos \theta$
- Reactive power:  $Q = V_{rms} I_{rms} \sin \theta$
- Apparent power:  $S = V_{rms} I_{rms}$

## Power Factor:

- $\text{pf} = \cos \theta = P/S$
- Lagging pf: inductive
- Leading pf: capacitive
- ☹ Low pf  $\rightarrow$  higher losses

## Resonance:

- Occurs when  $X_L = X_C$
- $\omega_0 = 1/\sqrt{LC}$
- ☺ Minimum  $Z$ , maximum  $I$

# Comparison: Time vs. Frequency Domain

ECEN 222

Maxx Seminario

Introduction to  
Frequency  
Domain

Phasor  
Representation

Impedance

Phasor Circuit  
Analysis

AC Power  
Analysis

Summary

Aspect	Time Domain	Frequency Domain
Signals	$v(t)$ , $i(t)$ (real functions)	$\mathbf{V}$ , $\mathbf{I}$ (complex phasors)
Math	Differential equations	Algebraic equations
Circuit elements	R, L, C (time relations)	$\mathbf{Z}_R$ , $\mathbf{Z}_L$ , $\mathbf{Z}_C$ (impedances)
Analysis	Initial conditions, transients	Steady-state, magnitude/phase
Advantages	Shows time evolution	Simplifies sinusoidal analysis
Limitations	Complex for AC steady-state	Only sinusoidal steady-state

## When to Use Each

**Time Domain:** Transients, switching, initial conditions, non-sinusoidal signals

**Frequency Domain:** AC steady-state, sinusoidal sources, impedance analysis