

Short course

A vademecum of statistical pattern recognition and machine learning

Lecture 1

Review of probability and statistics

Massimo Piccardi
University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

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Agenda

- Discrete and continuous random variables
- Joint, conditional, marginal probabilities
- Bayes' theorem
- Independence
- Mean, variance, moments
- Expectations
- Covariance matrix, correlation coefficients
- Sample mean, sample covariance
- Gaussian distribution
- Main properties of Gaussian distributions
- Mixture distributions and Gaussian mixture models

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Random variables

- A *random variable* can be defined as an instrument to map all the possible outcomes of an event
- Many alternative definitions of random variable are possible, at the same time more comprehensive and requiring more mathematical fluency; the above is enough for us
- A random variable has an associated *probability distribution*
- There are two main types of random variables: *discrete* (countable outcomes) and *continuous* (infinite, continuous outcomes)
- Discrete variables are also called *categorical* or sometimes, with a bit of a stretch, *multinomial*

Slight rewording from the Wikipedia entry for random variable, 20 Sept 2010 3pm AEST

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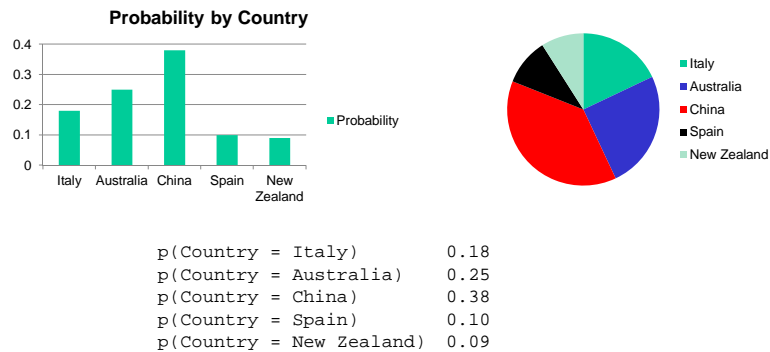
Discrete random variables

- A *discrete* random variable takes values in a finite set of symbols. Examples: variable **Country** can take values in {Italy, Australia, China, ...}; variable **Toss of a Coin** can take values in {Heads, Tails}
- The function assigning a probability value to each of these values is known as the *probability mass function*
- Notation **P(Country)** means the probability of any possible value of Country
- Notation **P(Country = Italy)** means the probability of a specific value; sometimes the shorthand notation **P(Italy)** is used if no ambiguity arises (and sometimes even then...)
- The probability of any value is always ≥ 0 !
- The sum of the probabilities of all values is always 1 for the Axiom of Total Probability!

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Probability mass function

- Draw it the way you like!



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Continuous random variables

- A *continuous* random variable takes values in a continuous interval. Examples: variable Height can take values in (0 cm, 280 cm); variable Weight can take values in (0 Kg, much more than you think)
- The function assigning a probability value to each of these values is known as the *probability density function* (pdf); actually, it assigns a *density of probability* to each value
- Notation **p(x)** means the probability density of any value of x
- Beware: many authors – including the yours truly - use the same notation for p and P, assuming you would guess from the context
- The unit of measurement of p(x) is $[x]^{-1}$; to go back to a probability, one must multiply by any interval over x, finite or infinitesimal (dx)
- It is therefore clear that the pdf is defined only up to the chosen unit of measurement and can be made big or small at will
- What do we lose if we measure the length of a finger in terameters?
Numerical resolution

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Probability density function (pdf)

- The pdf of a continuous random variable, x , defines the *density of probability* for each value of x
- To return to a probability, one must integrate over an interval

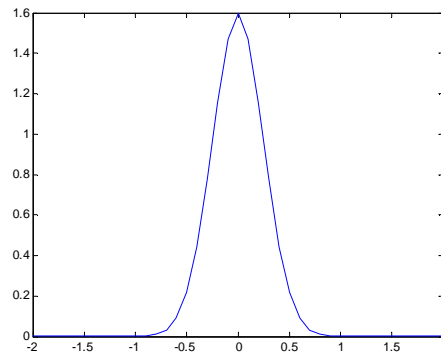
- Some properties:

- $p(x) \geq 0$

- $p(x)$ can be > 1 !

- $\int_a^b p(x) dx \leq 1$

(1 if over the entire domain of x)



Matlab®, Statistics Toolbox™, command `plot(-2:0.1:2, pdf('norm', -2:0.1:2, 0, 0.25))`

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Joint probability

- Let us now consider two discrete random variables:
Weather (W) and Temperature (T)
- Both assumed binary, i.e. only two possible values each:
 - W: rainy (r), sunny (s)
 - T: low (l), high (h)
- Take 100 samples of (W,T) and map the joint frequencies in this table
- Assuming we have enough samples, we call them *joint probabilities*
- We'll use this as a running example for the next few slides

		T	
		l	h
W	r	0.25	0.10
	s	0.05	0.60

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Joint probability

- Joint probability of W and T, value by value:
 $p(W = r, T = l) = 25/100 = 0.25$
 $p(W = r, T = h) = 10/100 = 0.10$
 $p(W = s, T = l) = 5/100 = 0.05$
 $p(W = s, T = h) = 60/100 = 0.60$
- The notation with the variables, $p(W,T)$, means any (or all) of these joint probability values
- $p(W,T) = p(T,W)$: the order does not count
- Each of the above values can be noted as $p(r,l)$ for short, instead of $p(W = r, T = l)$, provided there is no ambiguity

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Joint probability

- The joint probability values add up to 1, as they cover all possible cases (Axiom of total probability)
- Thus, in the example, only 3 of them can be arbitrarily chosen, as the fourth results from: $1 - \text{the sum of the other 3}$. There are 3 independent numbers (*degrees of freedom*, dof, or *parameters* of the discrete distribution)
- For two variables with N values each, the joint probability has $N^2 - 1$ dof

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Conditional probability

- The concept of *conditional probability* is simple: given two r.v., a conditional probability fixes one of the two and uses the other as **the only random variable**
- The conditional probability reflects the frequencies of the random variable not over all the samples, but on the specific sub-set where the given condition is true
- Example: $p(W = r \mid T = l)$
 - reads as: “the probability of Weather being rainy *given that* the Temperature is low”
 - instead of considering all the 100 samples, one just takes those where the temperature is low (30 samples in total)
 - out of the above, compute the frequency of rainy days: 25 out of 30 = 0.83

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Conditional probability

- A conditional probability like $p(W|T)$ is still **a function of both variables**, but **a probability in only one!!!**
- No frequency information whatsoever is provided for T!
- Let us fix $T = l$ in the example; then, the only variable is W, with two possible values:
 $p(W = r \mid T = l) = 25/30 = 0.83$
 $p(W = s \mid T = l) = 5/30 = 0.17$
they are all the possible cases and as such their sum is 1; we have only one dof
- There are many conditional probabilities! One for each value of the variables in the condition
- For variables with N values, each conditional probability has $N - 1$ dof

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Conditional probability

- In the example:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} p(W = r \mid T = l) = 25/30 = .83 \\ p(W = s \mid T = l) = 5/30 = .17 \end{array} \right\} 1 \text{ dof}$$
$$\left. \begin{array}{l} p(W = r \mid T = h) = 10/70 = .14 \\ p(W = s \mid T = h) = 60/70 = .86 \end{array} \right\} 1 \text{ dof}$$

→ there are 2 degrees of freedom overall for $p(W|T)$,
and $N(N-1)$ for two N -valued r.v.

- NB: $p(r, l) < p(r \mid l)$ by definition
(the latter has a smaller denominator!)

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Marginal probability

- W and T are jointly called a *random vector*, or, equivalently, a *multivariate random variable*
- One can obtain the marginal probability of either variable by adding up the joint probabilities for all possible values of the other (**marginalisation**):

$$p(W) = \sum_T p(W, T)$$

- The above is informally called the **sum rule**
- For continuous random variables, the sum is replaced by an integral

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Marginal probability

With our running example:

$$p(W = r) = p(W = r, T = l) + p(W = r, T = h) = 25/100 + 10/100 = 35/100$$

$$p(W = s) = 65/100 \text{ (1 dof)}$$

$$p(T = l) = 30/100$$

$$p(T = h) = 70/100 \text{ (1 dof)}$$

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Bayes' theorem

$$p(W, T) = p(W | T) p(T)$$

joint probability

conditional
probability of W
given T

marginal
probability of T

- Always holds!
- It is informally called the **product rule**
- It is a powerful tool to break down the complexity of the joint probabilities into the product of simpler probabilities
- Sum rule + product rule: foundations of statistical PR
- Bayes' theorem also applies to pdfs

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Bayes' theorem: examples

- Sometimes, you will see it written like this:

$$p(A | B) = \frac{p(B | A)p(A)}{p(B)}$$

- It applies to any two *sets* of random variables:

$$p(A, B, C, D, E) = p(A, D | B, C, E)p(B, C, E)$$

- It applies to joint *conditional* probabilities:

$$p(A, B | C) = p(A | B, C)p(B | C)$$

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Independence

$$p(W, T) = p(W)p(T)$$

joint probability

marginal
probability of W

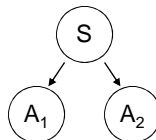
marginal
probability of T

- If the above holds, the two r.v. are called **independent**
- Often (not always!) a desirable case
- Equivalent to $p(W|T) = p(W)$ and $p(T|W) = p(T)$
- Does not hold for our running example! For instance:
 - $p(r, l) = 0.25$
 - $p(r) = 0.35$; $p(l) = 0.30 \rightarrow p(r)p(l) = 0.105$

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An example

- Given three binary r.v., A_1 , A_2 and S , let us assume that
 $p(A_1, A_2 | S) = p(A_1 | S) p(A_2 | S)$
 instead of the always true (from Bayes rule):
 $p(A_1, A_2 | S) = p(A_1 | A_2, S) p(A_2 | S)$, or
 $p(A_1, A_2 | S) = p(A_2 | A_1, S) p(A_1 | S)$
- The above reads as “ A_1 and A_2 are independent given S ”
- Not equivalent to “ A_1 and A_2 are independent”!
- It is a relevant case, with S often called a *state* or *class* and the A_i being *measurements*



assume 90 samples:

$\#(A_1, A_2, S=0)$:

	0	1	A_2
0	20	10	
1	10	5	
A_1			

$\#(A_1, A_2, S=1)$:

	0	1	A_2
0	1	14	
1	2	28	
A_1			

$\#(A_1, A_2)$:

	0	1	A_2
0	21	24	
1	12	33	
A_1			

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A note on the argmax of a probability

- Nota Bene: $A^* = \arg \max_{A,B} p(A, B)$

$$\neq \arg \max_A p(A)$$

$$\neq \arg \max_{A,B} p(A/B)$$

		B		
		b_1	b_2	b_3
A	a_1	30	40	30
	a_2	0	60	10
	a_3	50	20	20

$$a_2 = \arg \left(\max_{A,B} p(A, B) = 60/260 \right)$$

$$a_1 = \arg \left(\max_A p(A) = 100/260 \right)$$

$$a_3 = \arg \left(\max_{A,B} p(A/B) = 50/80 \right)$$

- Yet, for any B, $A^* = \arg \max_A p(A, B) = \arg \max_A p(A/B)$

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Mean, variance and moments

- The pdf of a continuous r.v. describes the probability distribution fully; yet, sometimes we prefer to describe it in a more synthetic way

- Mean, or expected value: $\mu \equiv E[x] = \int_x x p(x) dx$

- Variance: $VAR(x) \equiv \sigma^2 \equiv E[(x - \mu)^2] = \int_x (x - \mu)^2 p(x) dx$
 - The standard deviation, σ , is its square root
 - $VAR(x)$ is also $= E[x^2] - 2\mu E[x] + \mu^2 = E[x^2] - \mu^2$

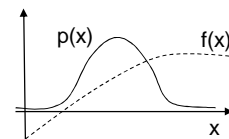
- N^{th} moment: $E[x^N] = \int_x x^N p(x) dx$

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Expectations

- An expectation is an *averaging operation weighted by $p(x)$* ; it can be extended to any function of x , $f(x)$:

$$E[f(x)] = \int_x f(x) p(x) dx$$



- $E[f(x)]$ is a scalar value
 - Jensen's inequality: if $f(x)$ convex, $E[f(x)] \geq f(E[x])$; \leq if concave
 - Here x can be discrete!
- The expectation of a function of multiple variables, $f(x, y)$, over x :

$$E[f(x, y)]_x = \int_x f(x, y) p(x) dx$$

“averages out” x and returns a function of the sole y

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Expectations

- A marginalisation can be seen as a particular expectation:

$$p(y) = \int_x p(y, x) dx = \int_x p(y/x) p(x) dx = E[p(y/x)]_x$$

- An expectation can also be computed over a conditional probability:

$$E[f(x)/y] = \int_x f(x) p(x/y) dx$$

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Sample mean and sample covariance

- At times, either $p(x)$ is not available or the expectation integrals are not easy to compute
- Assuming a set of samples, $x_i, i=1 \dots N$, is available, it is possible to approximate the mean and the variance as:

$$\mu \equiv E[x] \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N x_i \quad \text{sample mean}$$

$$\sigma^2 \equiv E[(x - \mu)^2] \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (x_i - \mu)^2 \quad \text{sample variance}$$

- Other expectations can be approximated in the same way (Monte Carlo methods)

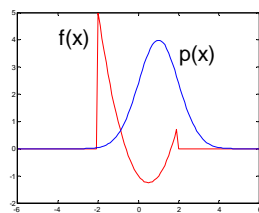
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Example

- Let us compute the expected value of function:

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} x^2 - x - 1 & -2 \leq x \leq 2 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

under Gaussian distribution: $p(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}(x-1)^2}$



NB: $p(x)$ is magnified 10 times to make it visible on $f(x)$

Example

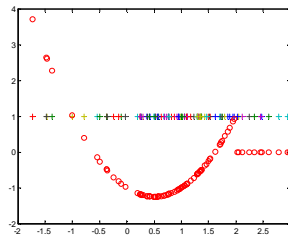
- Analytically, the integral is equal to:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} f(x)p(x)dx &= \int_{-\infty}^{-2} f(x)p(x)dx + \int_{-2}^{+2} f(x)p(x)dx + \int_{+2}^{+\infty} f(x)p(x)dx = \\ &= 0 + \int_{-2}^{+2} f(x)p(x)dx + 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-2}^{+2} f(x)p(x)dx &= \int_{-2}^{+2} (x^2 - x - 1) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}(x-1)^2} dx = -\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}(x-1)^2} \Big|_{-2}^{+2} = \\ &= -0.4839 - 0.0089 = -0.4928 \end{aligned}$$

Example

- Let us approximate this expectation by drawing 100 samples, $\{x_i\}$, $i=1 \dots 100$, from $p(x)$ and computing $f(x)$ at those locations:



- This empirical expectation is equal to (changes at every draw):

$$\frac{1}{100} \sum_{i=1}^{100} f(x_i) = -0.4408$$

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Multivariate random variables: mean, covariance and moments

- The same definitions extend to **multivariate r.v.**, $\mathbf{X} = [x_1, \dots, x_D]^T$:
- The **mean** becomes a $D \times 1$ vector:

$$\boldsymbol{\mu} = E[\mathbf{X}] = [\mu_1, \dots, \mu_D]^T = [E[x_1], \dots, E[x_D]]^T$$

- The variance becomes a $D \times D$ **covariance matrix**:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{COV}(\mathbf{X}) = \boldsymbol{\Sigma} &= E[(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})(\mathbf{X} - \boldsymbol{\mu})^T] = \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} E[(x_1 - \mu_1)(x_1 - \mu_1)] & \dots & E[(x_1 - \mu_1)(x_D - \mu_D)] \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ E[(x_D - \mu_D)(x_1 - \mu_1)] & \dots & E[(x_D - \mu_D)(x_D - \mu_D)] \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

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Multivariate mean

- Although the multivariate mean is intuitive, it may prove useful to derive it to recap on expectations:

NB: it is a $D \times 1$ quantity $\rightarrow E[X] = \int_X X p(X) dX = \int_{x_1 \dots x_D} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \dots \\ x_D \end{bmatrix} p(x_1, \dots, x_D) dx_1 \dots dx_D =$

$$= \begin{bmatrix} \int_{x_1 \dots x_D} x_1 p(x_1, \dots, x_D) dx_1 \dots dx_D \\ \dots \\ \int_{x_1 \dots x_D} x_D p(x_1, \dots, x_D) dx_1 \dots dx_D \end{bmatrix}$$

marginalise $x_2 \dots x_D$

$$= \int_{x_1} x_1 \left(\int_{x_2 \dots x_D} p(x_1, \dots, x_D) dx_2 \dots dx_D \right) dx_1 = \int_{x_1} x_1 p(x_1) dx_1 = E[x_1]$$

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Covariance matrix

- The covariance matrix is a **symmetric matrix** by construction: only $D(D+1)/2$ dof

$$\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1^2 & \dots & \text{cov}(x_1, x_D) \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ \text{cov}(x_D, x_1) = \text{cov}(x_1, x_D) & \dots & \sigma_D^2 \end{bmatrix}$$

- Terms $\text{cov}(x_i, x_j)$ measure how much x_i and x_j *co-vary*
- A covariance matrix is also (at least) **positive semi-definite**:
 $X^T \Sigma X \geq 0$ for any X
- If it is also non-singular (i.e., full rank, invertible) $X^T \Sigma X$ is strictly > 0 for any $X \neq 0$ and Σ is **positive definite**

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Sample mean and sample covariance

- For multivariate variables, given N X_i samples:

$$\mu \equiv E[X] \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N X_i \quad \text{sample mean}$$

$$\Sigma \equiv E[(X - \mu)(X - \mu)^T] \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (X_i - \mu)(X_i - \mu)^T \quad \text{sample covariance}$$

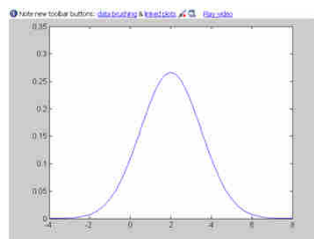
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Gaussian distribution

- The Gaussian, or normal, distribution enjoys nice properties making it very popular for pdf modelling
- Gaussian pdf in 1 dimension (univariate):

$$p(x) = N(x | \mu, \sigma^2) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} e^{-\frac{1}{2} \frac{(x-\mu)^2}{\sigma^2}}$$

with $\mu=2$, $\sigma=1.5$:



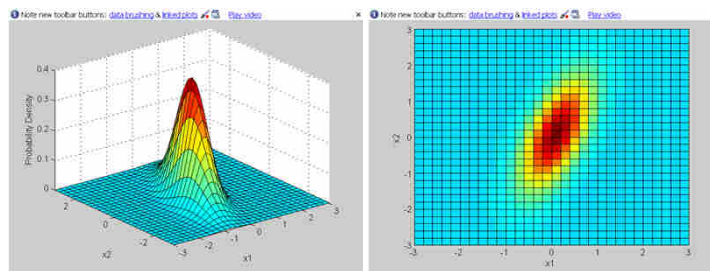
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Multivariate Gaussian distribution

- Gaussian pdf in D dimensions ($X=[x_1, \dots, x_D]^T$):

$$p(X) = N(X | \mu, \Sigma) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{D/2} |\Sigma|^{1/2}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}(X-\mu)^T \Sigma^{-1} (X-\mu)}$$

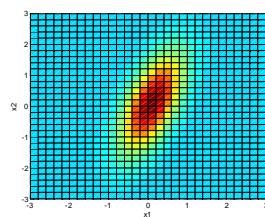
with $D=2$,
 $\mu_1=0, \mu_2=0$,
 $\Sigma=[.25 \ .3; \ .3 \ 1]$



* See the Notes Page *

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Full, diagonal, spherical covariance

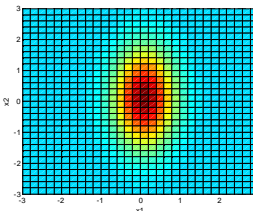


full covariance matrix

$$\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} 0.25 & 0.3 \\ 0.3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

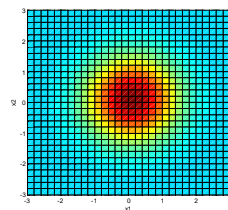
diagonal covariance matrix

$$\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} 0.25 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$



spherical covariance matrix

$$\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} 0.8 & 0 \\ 0 & 0.8 \end{bmatrix}$$



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Properties of Gaussian distributions

- Mean and variance identify the whole pdf
- Uncorrelation \equiv independence
 - Covariance matrix of joint probability becomes diagonal
- ! Given x_1 and x_2 jointly Gaussian, also their marginal and conditional pdfs are Gaussian, and the mean and covariance are available analytically (see *partitioned Gaussians* in Bishop)
- Linear transformations are Gaussian:
 given $X \sim N(\mu, \Sigma)$
 $Y = A X + K$
 $\rightarrow Y \sim N(A\mu + K, A\Sigma A^T)$

* See the Notes Page *

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Properties of Gaussian distributions: example

- Just an example: given two scalar Gaussian r.v., $x_1 \sim N(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2)$ and $x_2 \sim N(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2)$ as marginal probabilities, consider $y = x_1 + x_2$
- This is equivalent to $X = [x_1, x_2]^T$, $A = [1 \ 1]$ and $y = AX$
 $\rightarrow \mu_y = \mu_1 + \mu_2$; $\sigma_y^2 = \sigma_1^2 + 2 \text{cov}(x_1, x_2) + \sigma_2^2$
- If x_1, x_2 have common variance, σ_x^2 :
 $\rightarrow \sigma_y^2 = 2\sigma_x^2 + 2 \text{cov}(x_1, x_2)$
- If they are also uncorrelated/independent :
 $\rightarrow \sigma_y^2 = 2\sigma_x^2$ ($\sigma_y = \sqrt{2} \sigma_x$)
- If they have maximal, positive correlation (degenerate case: $\det(\Sigma) = 0$):
 $\rightarrow \sigma_y^2 = 4\sigma_x^2$ ($\sigma_y = 2 \sigma_x$)
- If they have maximal, negative correlation (degenerate case likewise):
 $\rightarrow \sigma_y^2 = 0$

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Sampling the Gaussian

- Assume we have a uniform random number generator in interval (0,1)
- We can use *the Box-Muller method* to generate independent, univariate Gaussian random samples with zero mean and unit standard deviation
- To obtain D-variate samples, X , just concatenate D univariate samples; their distribution has $\mu = 0$ and $\Sigma = I$ (the identity, or unit, matrix)
- Eventually, to obtain D-variate Gaussian samples, Z , with arbitrary μ and Σ , just use the properties of linear combinations of Gaussian distributions:

$$Z = W X + \mu$$

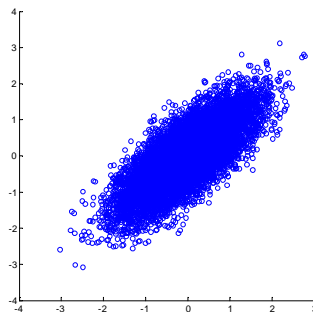
where W such that $W W^T = \Sigma$ is obtained by the Choleski decomposition (Σ must be full rank)

Z has therefore mean equal to μ and covariance equal to $W I W^T = \Sigma$

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Example

- A scatter plot of 10,000 2D Gaussian samples ($\mu = [0,0]$, $\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} 0.61 & 0.48 \\ 0.48 & 0.64 \end{bmatrix}$)

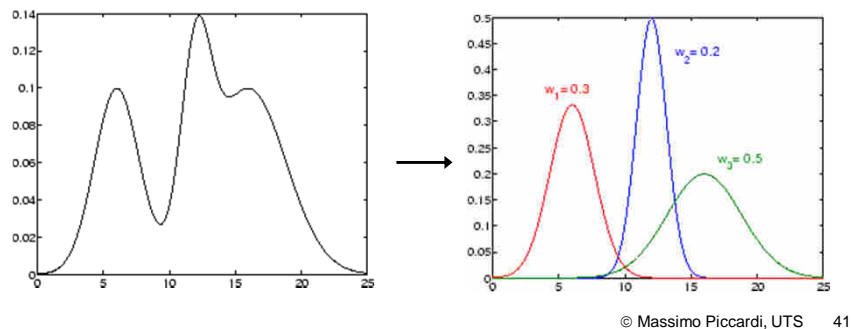


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Mixture distribution

- A *mixture distribution* is a distribution combining a finite number (say, M) of distributions, known as the *components*
- A mixture distribution is often used to represent multi-modal distributions, i.e. distributions with more than one mode:



Mixture distribution

- The principle of a mixture distribution is that **each sample, X , is generated from one of its components**
- A new, discrete random variable is introduced to indicate the component:
 $z \in \{1, \dots, l, \dots, M\}$
- Each component is described by its pdf, $p(X | z = l)$, or $p_l(X)$ if one prefers a shorter notation
- Each component has a prior probability, $p(z = l)$, sometimes noted as α_l or π_l and called the component's "weight"

Mixture distribution: pdf

- The pdf of the mixture distribution, $p(X)$, can be obtained by marginalising the component's index, z :

$$\begin{aligned} p(X) &= \sum_{l=1}^M p(X, z=l) = \\ &= \sum_{l=1}^M p(X | z=l) p(z=l) = \\ &= \sum_{l=1}^M \alpha_l p_l(X) \end{aligned}$$

- Given that M is usually small, evaluation (i.e. given X , compute $p(X)$) is not unreasonably heavy

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Mixture distribution: inference

- Variable z is called a **latent** (*hidden, unobserved*) **random variable**; instead, X is the value (called *measurement* or *observation*) of an observed random variable
- The process of assigning a probability to z given X , $p(z|X)$, is known as **inference** and plays a major role in statistical pattern recognition
- For the mixture distribution, we have:

$$p(z=l | X) = \frac{p(z=l, X)}{p(X)} = \frac{\alpha_l p_l(X)}{\sum_{k=1}^M \alpha_k p_k(X)}$$

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Sampling a mixture distribution

- The mixture distribution can be sampled by *ancestral sampling*:
 - first, draw one value out of M according to discrete distribution $p(z)$; this picks the component
 - second, draw a sample from the selected component
- The so-called *generative model* of the mixture distribution is $p(X, z) = p(X|z)p(z)$. It is represented by the *graphical model* below:



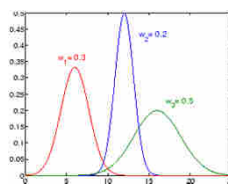
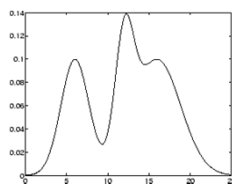
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Gaussian mixture model (GMM)

- A Gaussian mixture model (GMM) has components which are Gaussians with their individual mean and covariance
- The pdf of a GMM is given by:

$$p(X) = \sum_{l=1}^M \alpha_l N(X | \mu_l, \Sigma_l)$$

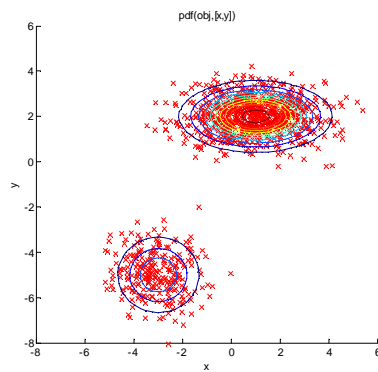
- GMMs are very useful and popular models since they can represent multimodal distributions with Gaussian modes



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Example

- A scatter plot of 1,000 2D samples generated from a GMM with 2 components
 $\alpha_1 = 0.75$, $\mu_1 = [1, 2]$, $\Sigma_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0.5 \end{bmatrix}$, $\alpha_2 = 0.25$, $\mu_2 = [-3, -5]$, $\Sigma_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$



* See the Notes Page *

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