

PHYS 662 - Quantum Field Theory I
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Homework 2

Problem 1 - Action Principle for a Relativistic Particle

Consider a free particle moving along $x^\mu(t)$ in Minkowski spacetime

$$ds^2 = \eta_{\mu\nu} dx^\mu dx^\nu.$$

Take as the action

$$S = -m \int ds = -m \int dt \left(\frac{ds}{dt} \right).$$

Vary it and find the equations of motion.

Solution. We start by dividing by $(dt)^2$ on both sides to get a time derivative of the infinitesimal path, and taking $\eta_{\mu,\nu}$ to be the Minkowski metric, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{(ds)^2}{(dt)^2} &= \frac{1}{(dt)^2} (\eta_{\mu\nu} dx^\mu dx^\nu) \\ \left(\frac{ds}{dt} \right)^2 &= \frac{1}{(dt)^2} [(dt)^2 - ((dx)^2 + (dy)^2 + (dz)^2)] \\ \left(\frac{ds}{dt} \right)^2 &= 1 - \left(\frac{dx}{dt} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{dy}{dt} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{dz}{dt} \right)^2 \\ \frac{ds}{dt} &= \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{dx}{dt} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{dy}{dt} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{dz}{dt} \right)^2} \\ \dot{s} &= \sqrt{1 - (\dot{x} + \dot{y} + \dot{z})} \\ \dot{s} &= \sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu} = \sqrt{\partial_0 x_\mu \partial_0 x^\mu}. \end{aligned}$$

Our action becomes

$$S = -m \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu} dt,$$

where $\mathcal{L}(x^\mu, \dot{x}^\mu, t) = -m\sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu}$ is the Lagrangian. The Euler-Lagrange equations are given by

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial x^\mu} - \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \dot{x}^\mu} \right) = 0.$$

- **Varying x^μ :**

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial x^\mu} = 0.$$

- **Varying \dot{x}^μ :**

$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \dot{x}^\mu} \right) = -m \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{2\dot{x}^\mu}{2\sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu}} \right) = -m \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\dot{x}^\mu}{\sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu}} \right).$$

Then, plugging these into the Euler-Lagrange equation, we have

$$m \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\dot{x}^\mu}{\sqrt{\dot{x}_\mu \dot{x}^\mu}} \right) = 0 \quad \implies \quad \dot{x}^\mu = \text{constant}.$$

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Problem 2 - Coulomb Gauge

Consider classical Maxwell fields.

- (a) Expand the Lagrangian density in the presence of a current in terms of $A^\mu = (\varphi, \vec{A})$, where φ is the electrostatic potential and \vec{A} is the vector potential satisfying the Coulomb gauge $\vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{A}(x) = 0$.
- (b) Vary the action with respect to φ and \vec{A} to find the equations of motion.
- (c) Find the solution to the equations of motion using Fourier transform.

Solution. (a) Considering classical Maxwell fields, the Lagrangian is given by

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{4}F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu} + J^\mu A_\mu.$$

The field strength is defined as

$$F_{\mu\nu} = \partial_\mu A_\nu - \partial_\nu A_\mu.$$

By replacing that in the Lagrangian, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L} &= -\frac{1}{4}(\partial_\mu A_\nu - \partial_\nu A_\mu)(\partial^\mu A^\nu - \partial^\nu A^\mu) + J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= -\frac{1}{4}[\partial_\mu A_\nu \partial^\mu A^\nu - \partial_\mu A_\nu \partial^\nu A^\mu - \partial_\nu A_\mu \partial^\mu A^\nu + \partial_\nu A_\mu \partial^\nu A^\mu] + J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}[\partial_\mu A_\nu \partial^\mu A^\nu - \partial_\mu A_\nu \partial^\nu A^\mu] + J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}[(\partial_t A_\nu)(\partial_t A^\nu) - (\partial_x A_\nu)(\partial_x A^\nu) - (\partial_y A_\nu)(\partial_y A^\nu) - (\partial_z A_\nu)(\partial_z A^\nu) \\ &\quad - (\partial_t A_\mu)(\partial^\mu A_t) + (\partial_x A_\mu)(\partial^\mu A_x) + (\partial_y A_\mu)(\partial^\mu A_y) + (\partial_z A_\mu)(\partial^\mu A_z)] - J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}[\cancel{(\partial_t A_t)(\partial_t A_t)} - \cancel{(\partial_t A_x)(\partial_t A_x)} - \cancel{(\partial_t A_y)(\partial_t A_y)} - \cancel{(\partial_t A_z)(\partial_t A_z)} \\ &\quad - \cancel{(\partial_x A_t)(\partial_x A_t)} + \cancel{(\partial_x A_x)(\partial_x A_x)} + (\partial_x A_y)(\partial_x A_y) + (\partial_x A_z)(\partial_x A_z) \\ &\quad - (\partial_y A_t)(\partial_y A_t) + (\partial_y A_x)(\partial_y A_x) + \cancel{(\partial_y A_y)(\partial_y A_y)} + (\partial_y A_z)(\partial_y A_z) \\ &\quad - (\partial_z A_t)(\partial_z A_t) + (\partial_z A_x)(\partial_z A_x) + (\partial_z A_y)(\partial_z A_y) + \cancel{(\partial_z A_z)(\partial_z A_z)} \\ &\quad - \cancel{(\partial_t A_t)(\partial_t A_t)} + \cancel{(\partial_t A_x)(\partial_t A_x)} + (\partial_t A_y)(\partial_y A_t) + (\partial_t A_z)(\partial_z A_t) \\ &\quad + (\partial_x A_t)(\partial_t A_x) - \cancel{(\partial_x A_x)(\partial_x A_x)} - (\partial_x A_y)(\partial_y A_x) - (\partial_x A_z)(\partial_z A_x) \\ &\quad + (\partial_y A_t)(\partial_t A_y) - (\partial_y A_x)(\partial_x A_y) - \cancel{(\partial_y A_y)(\partial_y A_y)} - (\partial_y A_z)(\partial_z A_y) \\ &\quad + (\partial_z A_t)(\partial_t A_z) - (\partial_z A_x)(\partial_x A_z) - (\partial_z A_y)(\partial_y A_z) - \cancel{(\partial_z A_z)(\partial_z A_z)}] - J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}\left[-(\partial_t A_x - \partial_x A_t)^2 - (\partial_t A_y - \partial_y A_t)^2 - (\partial_t A_z - \partial_z A_t)^2 + \right. \\ &\quad \left. + (\partial_x A_y - \partial_y A_x)^2 + (\partial_x A_z - \partial_z A_x)^2 + (\partial_y A_z - \partial_z A_y)^2\right] - J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= \frac{1}{2}\left[|\partial_t \mathbf{A} + \nabla\varphi|^2 - |\nabla \times \mathbf{A}|^2\right] - J^\mu A_\mu \\ &= \frac{1}{2}\left(|\partial_t \mathbf{A} + \nabla\varphi|^2 - |\nabla \times \mathbf{A}|^2\right) - (\rho\varphi - \mathbf{j} \cdot \mathbf{A}). \end{aligned}$$

- (b) The action of this system is given by

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \int \mathcal{L} d^4x \\ &= \int \left[\frac{1}{2} \left(|\partial_t \mathbf{A} + \nabla\varphi|^2 - |\nabla \times \mathbf{A}|^2 \right) - (\rho\varphi - \mathbf{j} \cdot \mathbf{A}) \right] d^4x. \end{aligned}$$

Varying the action, we get

$$\begin{aligned}\delta S &= \int \left[\frac{1}{2} (2(\nabla\varphi) \cdot (\nabla(\delta\varphi)) + 2(\nabla\varphi) \cdot (\partial_t(\delta\mathbf{A})) + 2(\nabla(\delta\varphi)) \cdot (\partial_t\mathbf{A}) \right. \\ &\quad \left. + 2(\partial_t\mathbf{A}) \cdot (\partial_t(\delta\mathbf{A})) - 2(\nabla \times \mathbf{A}) \cdot (\nabla \times \delta\mathbf{A}) - \rho\delta\varphi + \mathbf{j} \cdot \delta\mathbf{A} \right] d^4x \\ &= \int [(-\nabla^2\varphi - \rho)\delta\varphi + (-\partial_t^2\mathbf{A} + \nabla^2\mathbf{A} - \partial_t(\nabla\varphi) + \mathbf{j})\delta\mathbf{A}] d^4x,\end{aligned}$$

which give us the following equations of motion

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla^2\varphi &= -\rho, \\ (-\partial_t^2 + \nabla^2)\mathbf{A} &= \nabla(\partial_t\varphi) - \mathbf{j}.\end{aligned}$$

(c) Let $\nabla^2\varphi(\mathbf{x}, t) = -\rho(\mathbf{x}, t)$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\nabla^2 \int G(\mathbf{x}, t, \mathbf{x}', t')\rho(\mathbf{x}', t') d^3x' dt' &= \nabla^2 \int G(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x})\delta(t' - t)\rho(\mathbf{x}', t') d^3x' dt' \\ &= - \int \delta(\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x})\delta(t' - t)\rho(\mathbf{x}', t') d^3x' dt',\end{aligned}$$

where $G(\mathbf{x}, t, \mathbf{x}', t')\rho(\mathbf{x}', t') = G(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x})\delta(t' - t)$ and $\nabla^2 G(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x}) = -\delta(\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x})$.

Consider the Fourier transform

$$\frac{1}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \nabla^2 \int \tilde{G}(\mathbf{k}) e^{i\mathbf{k} \cdot (\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x})} d^3k = -\frac{1}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \int e^{i\mathbf{k} \cdot (\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x})} d^3k,$$

then we can conclude that $\tilde{G}(\mathbf{k}) = \frac{1}{k^2}$.

Replacing, we have

$$G(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \int \frac{1}{k^2} e^{i\mathbf{k} \cdot (\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x})} d^3k.$$

Let $d^3k = k^2 \sin(\theta) dk d\theta d\phi$, which means $\mathbf{k} \cdot (\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}) = k |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}| \cos(\theta)$. Thus,

$$\begin{aligned}G(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x}) &= \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0} \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^\pi \int_0^\infty \frac{k^2 \sin(\theta) e^{ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}| \cos(\theta)}}{k^2 + \epsilon^2} dk d\theta d\phi \\ &= \frac{2\pi}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0} \int_0^\infty \frac{k^2}{k^2 + \epsilon^2} \int_0^\pi \sin(\theta) e^{ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}| \cos(\theta)} d\theta dk \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0} \int_0^\infty \frac{k^2}{k^2 + \epsilon^2} \left(\frac{e^{ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} - e^{-ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|}}{ik |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} \right) dk \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{i |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0} \int_0^\infty \frac{k \left(e^{ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} - e^{-ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} \right)}{(k - i\epsilon)(k + i\epsilon)} dk \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{i |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0} \int_{-\infty}^\infty \frac{k e^{ik \cdot |\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|}}{(k - i\epsilon)(k + i\epsilon)} dk \\ &= \frac{1}{|\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|}.\end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$\varphi(\mathbf{x}, t) = \int \frac{\rho(\mathbf{x}', t)}{|\mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{x}|} d^3x'.$$

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Problem 3 - Spontaneous Symmetry Breaking

Consider a complex relativistic scalar field with Lagrangian density

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{2} (\partial_\mu \Phi^\dagger) (\partial^\mu \Phi) + \lambda (\Phi^\dagger \Phi - \phi_0)^2.$$

- (a) Find the classical equations of motion.
- (b) Consider constant field configurations and find the minima of action.
- (c) Expand the field $\Phi(x^\mu)$ around this minimum to the second-order and find the mass of the excitations.
- (d) Is there a massless mode?

Solution. (a) The classical equations of motion are given by the Euler-Lagrange equation for scalar fields given by

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \Phi(x)} - D_\mu \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial (\partial_\mu \Phi(x))} = 0.$$

Since we have two dynamical variables, Φ and Φ^\dagger , we have to vary with respect to each of them to derive the equations of motion, *i.e.* we will have to take two Euler-Lagrange equations, one for Φ and another for Φ^\dagger . When varying the first, the second must be considered as a constant, and vice versa.

- **For Φ :**

- **First Term:**

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \Phi} = \lambda(2(\Phi^\dagger)^2 \Phi - 2\phi_0 \Phi^\dagger) = 2\lambda \Phi^\dagger (\Phi^\dagger \Phi - \phi_0).$$

- **Second Term:**

$$\begin{aligned} D_\mu \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial (\partial_\mu \Phi)} &= -\frac{1}{2} D_\mu (\partial^\mu \Phi^\dagger) \\ &= -\frac{1}{2} (\partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi^\dagger + \delta_\nu^\mu \partial_\mu \partial^\nu \Phi^\dagger) \\ &= -\partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi^\dagger. \end{aligned}$$

- **Euler-Lagrange:**

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \Phi} - D_\mu \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial (\partial_\mu \Phi)} &= 0 \\ 2\lambda \Phi^\dagger (\Phi^\dagger \Phi - \phi_0) + \partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi^\dagger &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

- **For Φ^\dagger :**

- **First Term:**

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \Phi^\dagger} = \lambda(2\Phi^\dagger \Phi^2 - 2\phi_0 \Phi) = 2\lambda \Phi (\Phi^\dagger \Phi - \phi_0).$$

- **Second Term:**

$$\begin{aligned} D_\mu \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial (\partial_\mu \Phi^\dagger)} &= -\frac{1}{2} D_\mu (\partial^\mu \Phi) \\ &= -\frac{1}{2} (\partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi + \delta_\nu^\mu \partial_\mu \partial^\nu \Phi) \\ &= -\partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi. \end{aligned}$$

- **Euler-Lagrange:**

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \Phi^\dagger} - D_\mu \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial (\partial_\mu \Phi^\dagger)} &= 0 \\ 2\lambda \Phi (\Phi^\dagger \Phi - \phi_0) + \partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the two equations of motions are given by

$$\begin{cases} 2\lambda\Phi^\dagger(\Phi^\dagger\Phi - \phi_0) + \partial_\mu\partial^\mu\Phi^\dagger &= 0, \\ 2\lambda\Phi(\Phi^\dagger\Phi - \phi_0) + \partial_\mu\partial^\mu\Phi &= 0. \end{cases}$$

(b) If $\Phi = \text{constant}$, then $\partial^\mu\Phi = 0$, and we have

$$\begin{aligned} 2\lambda\Phi^\dagger(\Phi^\dagger\Phi - \phi_0) &= 0, \\ \implies \Phi &= 0, \quad \text{or} \quad \Phi^\dagger\Phi = \phi_0 \\ &\implies \Phi = \sqrt{\phi_0}e^{i\theta}. \end{aligned}$$

The minimum of the action is then $S_{\min} = 0$.

(c) If

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi &= \sqrt{\phi_0}e^{i\theta} + \Psi, \\ \Phi^\dagger &= \sqrt{\phi_0}e^{-i\theta} + \Psi^\dagger, \end{aligned}$$

where $|\Psi|$ is small, then the Lagrangian becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L} &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\left[\left(\sqrt{\phi_0}e^{-i\theta} + \Psi^\dagger\right)\left(\sqrt{\phi_0}e^{i\theta} + \Psi\right) - \phi_0\right]^2 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\left[\left(\phi_0 + \sqrt{\phi_0}e^{-i\theta}\Psi + \sqrt{\phi_0}e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger + \Psi^\dagger\Psi\right) - \phi_0\right]^2 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\left[\sqrt{\phi_0}\left(e^{-i\theta}\Psi + e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger\right) + \Psi^\dagger\Psi\right]^2 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\left[\phi_0\left(e^{-i\theta}\Psi + e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger\right)^2 + 2\sqrt{\phi_0}\left(e^{-i\theta}\Psi + e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger\right)\Psi^\dagger\Psi + (\Psi^\dagger\Psi)^2\right] \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\left[\phi_0\left(e^{-2i\theta}\Psi^2 + 2\Psi\Psi^\dagger + e^{2i\theta}(\Psi^\dagger)^2\right) + 2\sqrt{\phi_0}\left(e^{-i\theta}\Psi + e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger\right)\Psi^\dagger\Psi + (\Psi^\dagger\Psi)^2\right]. \end{aligned}$$

Invoking the fact that Ψ is small, we will only consider terms up to the second-order in Ψ and ignore those of higher orders. Then, we have

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\Psi^\dagger)(\partial^\mu\Psi) + \lambda\phi_0\left(e^{-2i\theta}\Psi^2 + 2\Psi\Psi^\dagger + e^{2i\theta}(\Psi^\dagger)^2\right).$$

We define the following

$$\begin{cases} \varphi_1 = e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger + e^{-i\theta}\Psi, \\ \varphi_2 = e^{i\theta}\Psi^\dagger - e^{-i\theta}\Psi, \end{cases} \iff \begin{cases} \Psi = e^{i\theta}(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2), \\ \Psi^\dagger = e^{-i\theta}(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2). \end{cases}$$

Replacing in the Lagrangian, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L} &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu(e^{-i\theta}(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2)))(\partial^\mu(e^{i\theta}(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2))) \\ &\quad + \lambda\phi_0\left[e^{-2i\theta}(e^{i\theta}(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2))^2 + 2(e^{i\theta}(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2))(e^{-i\theta}(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2)) + e^{2i\theta}(e^{-i\theta}(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2))^2\right] \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2))(\partial^\mu(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2)) + \lambda\phi_0\left[(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2)^2 + 2(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2)(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2) + (\varphi_1 + \varphi_2)^2\right] \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\varphi_1 + \partial_\mu\varphi_2)(\partial^\mu\varphi_1 - \partial^\mu\varphi_2) + \lambda\phi_0[(\varphi_1 - \varphi_2) + (\varphi_1 + \varphi_2)]^2 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu\varphi_1\partial^\mu\varphi_1 - \partial_\mu\varphi_2\partial^\mu\varphi_2) + 4\lambda\phi_0\varphi_1^2. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{m_1^2}{2} &= 4\lambda\phi_0, \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{m_2^2}{2} = 0, \\ m_1 &= \sqrt{8\lambda\phi_0}, \quad \text{and} \quad m_2 = 0.\end{aligned}$$

(d) From part (c), we can see the massless mode is m_2 .

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