# Category Theory

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# 0 Introduction

I didn't go to the first 3 lectures, so no intro – sorry. I have no idea on what this course is about, let's see

### 1 Definitions and examples

#### **Definition.** (1.1)

A category C consists of:

- (a) a collection ob  $\mathcal{C}$  of objects A, B, C;
- (b) a collection mor C of morphisms f, g, h;
- (c) two operations domain, codomain assigning to each  $f \in \text{mor } \mathcal{C}$  a pair of objects, its *domain* and *codomain*; we write  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  to mean f is a morphism and dom f = A, cod f = B;
- (d) an operation assigning to each  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  a morphism  $A \xrightarrow{1_A} A$ ;
- (e) a partial binary operation  $(f,g) \to fg$  on morphisms, such that fg is defined iff dom  $f = \operatorname{cod} g$ , and dom $(fg) = \operatorname{dom} g$ ,  $\operatorname{cod}(fg) = \operatorname{cod}(f)$  if fg is defined, satisfying:
- (f)  $f1_A = f = 1_B f$  for any  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$ ;
- (g) (fg)h = f(gh) whenever fg and gh are defined.

#### Remark. (1.2)

- (a) This definition is independent of any model of set theory. If we're given a particular model of set theory, we call  $\mathcal{C}$  small if ob  $\mathcal{C}$  and mor  $\mathcal{C}$  are sets.
- (b) Some texts say fg means f followed by g, i.e. fg is defined iff  $\operatorname{cod} f = \operatorname{dom} g$ .
- (c) Note that a morphism f is an identity iff fg = g and hf = h whenever the composites are defined. So we could formulate the definition entirely in terms of morphisms.

#### Example. (1.3)

(a) The category **Set** has all sets as objects, and all functions between sets as morphisms.

Strictly speaking, morphisms  $A \to B$  are pairs (f, B) where f is a set-theoretic function. (See part II logic and sets)

(b) The category  $\mathbf{Gp}$  has all groups as objects, group homomorphisms as morphisms.

Similarly, **Ring** is the category of rings,  $\mathbf{Mod}_{\mathbf{R}}$  is the category of R-modules.

(c) The category **Top** has all topological spaces as objects, and continuous functions as morphisms.

Similarly, **Unif** has all uniform spaces and uniformly continuous functions as morphisms, **Mf** has all manifolds and smooth maps correspondingly.

- (d) The category **Htpy** has the same objects as **Top**, but morphisms are homotopy classess of continuous functions. More generally, given  $\mathcal{C}$ , we call an equivalence relation  $\simeq$  on mor  $\mathcal{C}$  a congruence if  $f \simeq g \implies \text{dom } f = \text{dom } g$  and cod f = cod g, and  $f \simeq g \implies fh \simeq gh$  and  $kf \simeq kg$  whenever the composites are defined. Then we have a category  $\mathcal{C}/\simeq$  with the same objects as  $\mathcal{C}$ , but congruence classes as morphisms instead.
- (e) Given  $\mathcal{C}$ , the *opposite category*  $C^{op}$  has the same objects and morphisms as  $\mathcal{C}$ , but dom and cod are interchanged, and fg in  $\mathcal{C}^{op}$  is gf in  $\mathcal{C}$ .

This leads to the duality principle: if P is a true statement about categories, so is the statement  $P^*$  obtained from P by reversing all arrows.

(f) A small category with one object is a *monoid*, i.e. a semigroup with 1. In particular, a group is a small cat ( $\boxtimes$ ) with one object in which every morphism is an isomorphism (i.e. for all  $f, \exists g$  s.t. fg and gf are identities).

- (g) A groupoid is a category in which every morphism is an isomorphism. For example, for a topological space X, the fundamental groupoid  $\pi(x)$  has all points of X as objects, and morphisms  $x \to y$  are homotopy classes  $rel\{0,1\}$  of paths  $u:[0,1] \to X$  with u(0)=x, u(1)=y (if you know how to prove that the fundamental group is a group, you can prove that  $\pi(x)$  is a groupoid).
- (h) A discrete cat is one whose only morphism are identities.

A preorder is a cat C in which, for any pair (A, B),  $\exists$  at most 1 morphism  $A \to B$ .

A small preorder is a set equipped with a binary relation which is reflexive and transitive.

In particular, a partially ordered set is a small preorder in which the only isomorphisms are identities.

(i) The category **Rel** has the same objects as *set*, but morphisms  $A \to B$  are arbitrary relations  $R \subseteq A \times B$ . Given R and  $S \subseteq B \times C$ , we define  $S \cdot R = \{(a,c) \in A \times C | (\exists b \in B)((a,b) \in R, (b,c) \in S)\}.$ 

The identity  $1_A: A \to A$  is  $\{(a,a)|a \in A\}$ .

Similarly, the category **Part** are for sets and partial functions (i.e. relations s.t.  $(a,b) \in R$  and  $(a,b') \in R \implies b=b'$ ).

- (j) Let K be a field. The cateogry  $\mathbf{Mat}_{\mathbf{K}}$  has natural numbers as objects, and morphism  $n \to p$  are  $(p \times n)$  matrices with entries from K. Composition is matrix multiplication.
- (k) We write **Cat** for the category whose objects are all small categories, and whose morphisms are functors between them. (see below for definition of functors)

#### **Definition.** (1.4)

Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories. A functor  $F:\mathcal{C}\to\mathcal{D}$  consists of:

- (a) a mapping  $A \to FA$  from ob  $\mathcal{C}$  to ob  $\mathcal{D}$ ;
- (b) a mapping  $f \to Ff$  from mor  $\mathcal{C}$  to mor  $\mathcal{D}$ ,

such that dom(Ff) = F(dom f), cod(Ff) = F(cod f),  $1_{FA} = F(1_A)$ , and (Ff)(Fg) = F(fg) whenever fg is defined.

#### Example. (1.5)

- (a) We have forgetful functors  $U: \mathbf{Gp} \to \mathbf{Set}$ ,  $\mathbf{Ring} \to \mathbf{Set}$ ,  $\mathbf{Top} \to \mathbf{Set}$ ,  $\mathbf{Ring} \to \mathbf{AbGp}$  (forget  $\times$ ),  $\mathbf{Ring} \to \mathbf{Mon}$  (Category of all monoids) (forget +).
- (b) Given a set A, the free group FA has the property:

Given any group G and any function  $A \xrightarrow{f} UG$  (?), there's a unique homomorphism  $FA \xrightarrow{\bar{f}} G$  extending f. Here F is a functor  $\mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Gp}$ : given  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$ , we define Ff to be the unique homomorphism extending  $A \xrightarrow{f} B \leftrightarrow UFB$ . Functorality follows from uniqueness given  $B \xrightarrow{f} C$ . F(gf) and (Fg)(Ff) are both homomorphisms extending  $A \xrightarrow{f} B \xrightarrow{g} C \to UFC$ .

(c) Given a set A, we write PA for the set of all subsets of A.

We can make P into a functor  $\mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Set}$ , given  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$ , we defined  $Pf(A') = \{f(a) | a \in A'\}$  for  $A' \subseteq A$ .

But we also have a functor  $P^*: \mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Set}^{op}$  defined on objects by P, but  $P^*f(B') = \{a \in A | f(a) \in B'\}$  for  $B' \subseteq B$ .

By a contravariant functor  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$ , we mean a functor  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}^{op}$  (or  $\mathcal{C}^{op} \to \mathcal{D}$ ). A covariant functor is one that doesn't reverse arrows (in op I guess?).

- (d) Let K be a field. We have a functor  $*: \mathbf{Mod_K} \to \mathbf{Mod_K}^{op}$  defined by  $V^* = \{ \text{ linear maps } V \to K \}$ , and if  $V \xrightarrow{f} W$ ,  $f^*(\theta : W \to K) = \theta f$ .
- (e) We have a functor  $op : \mathbf{Cat} \to \mathbf{Cat}$ , which is the identity on morphisms (note that this is a covariant).
- (f) A functor between monoids is a monoid homomorphism.
- (g) A functor between posets is an order-preserving map.
- (h) Let G be a group. A functor  $F \circ G \to \mathbf{Set}$  consists of a set A = F\* together with an action of G on A, i.e. a permutation representation of G.

Similarly, a functor  $G \to \mathbf{Mod_K}$  is a K-linear representation of G.

(i) The construction of the fundamental group  $\pi(X, X)$  of a space X with basepoint X is a functor  $\mathbf{Top}* \to \mathbf{Gp}$  where  $\mathbf{Top}*$  is the category of spaces with a chosen basepoint.

Similarly, the fundamental groupoid is a functor  $\mathbf{Top} \to \mathbf{Gpd}$ , where  $\mathbf{Gpd}$  is the category of groupoids and functors between them.

#### **Definition.** (1.6)

Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories and  $F, G: \mathcal{C} \rightrightarrows \mathcal{D}$  (why two arrows?) two functors. A natural transformation  $\alpha: F \to G$  consists of an assignment  $A \to \alpha_A$  from ob  $\mathcal{C}$  to mor  $\mathcal{D}$  (think about this), such that  $\dim_{\alpha_A} = FA$  and  $\operatorname{cod}_{\alpha A} = GA$  for all A, and for all  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  in  $\mathcal{C}$ , the square

$$FA \xrightarrow{Ff} FB$$

$$\downarrow \alpha_A \qquad \downarrow \alpha_B$$

$$GA \xrightarrow{Gf} GB$$

commutes (i.e.  $\alpha_B(Ff) = (Gf)_{\alpha A}$ ).

(1.3) (l) Given categories  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$ , we write  $[\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}]$  for the category whose objects are functors  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  and whose morphisms are natural transformations.

#### Example. (1.7)

(a) Let K be a field, V a vector space over K. There is a linear map  $\alpha_V : V \to V^{**}$  given by  $\alpha_V(v)\theta = \theta(v)$  for  $\theta \in V^*$ .

This is the V-component of a natural transformation  $1_{\mathbf{Mod_K}} \to ** : \mathbf{Mod_K} \to \mathbf{Mod_K}$ .

- (b) For any set A, we have a mapping  $\sigma_A : A \to PA$  sending a to  $\{a\}$ . If  $f : A \to B$ , then  $Pf\{a\} = \{f(a)\}$ . So  $\sigma$  is a natural transformation  $1_{\mathbf{Set}} \to P$ .
- (c) Let  $F:\mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Gp}$  be the free group functor (1.5(b)), and  $U:\mathbf{Gp} \to \mathbf{Set}$  the forgetful functor. The inclusions  $A \to UFA$  form a natural transformation  $1_{\mathbf{Set}} \to UF$ .
- (d) Let G, H be groups and  $f, g : G \Rightarrow H$  be two homomorphisms. A natural transformation  $\alpha : f \to g$  corresponds to an element  $h = \alpha_*$  of H, s.t.  $hf(x) \to g(x)h$  for all  $x \in G$  or equivalently  $f(x) = h^{-1}g(x)h$ , i.e. f and g are conjugate group homomorphisms.
- (e) Let A and B be two G-sets, regarded as functors:  $G \rightrightarrows \mathbf{Set}$ . A natural transformation  $A \to B$  is a function f satisfying  $f(g \cdot a) = g \cdot f(a)$  for all  $a \in A$ , i.e. a G-equivariant map.

#### **Lemma.** (1.8)

Let  $F, G : \mathcal{C} \Rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  be two functors, and  $\alpha : F \to G$  a natural transformation. Then  $\alpha$  is an isomorphism in  $[\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}]$  iff each  $\alpha_A$  is an isomorphism in  $\mathcal{D}$ .

*Proof.* Forward is trivial (ok, I'll check this later). For backward, suppose each  $\alpha_A$  has an inverse  $\beta_A$ . Given  $f: A \to B$  in  $\mathcal{C}$ , we need to show that

$$GA \xrightarrow{Gf} GB$$

$$\downarrow \beta_A \qquad \downarrow \beta_B$$

$$FA \xrightarrow{Ff} FB$$

commutes. But as  $\alpha$  is natural,

$$(Ff)\beta_A = \beta_B \alpha_B(Ff)\beta_A = \beta_B(Gf)\alpha_A\beta_A = \beta_B(Gf)$$

#### **Definition.** (1.9)

Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories. By an *equivalence* between  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$ , we mean a pair of functors  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$ ,  $G: \mathcal{D} \to \mathcal{C}$  together with natural isomorphisms  $\alpha: 1_{\mathcal{C}} \to GF$  and  $\beta: FG \to 1_{\mathcal{D}}$ .

We write  $\mathcal{C} \cong \mathcal{D}$  if  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  are equivalent.

We say a property P of categories is a *categorical property* if whenever C has P and  $C \cong D$ , then D has P.

For example, being a groupoid or a preorder are categorical properties, but being a group or a partial order are not.

#### **Example.** (1.10)

- (a) The category **Part** is equivalent to the category **Set**\* of pointed sets (and basepoint preserving functions (as morphisms)):
- We define  $F : \mathbf{Set}_* \to \mathbf{Part}$  by  $F(A, a) = A \setminus \{a\}$ , and if  $f : (A, a) \to (B, b)$ , then Ff(x) = f(x) if  $f(x) \neq b$ , and undefined otherwise;
- and  $G: \mathbf{Part} \to \mathbf{Set}_*$  by  $G(A) = A^+ = (A \cup \{A\}, A)$ , and if  $f: A \to B$  is a partial function, we define  $Gf: A^+ \to B^+$  by Gf(x) = f(x) if  $x \in A$  and f(x) defined, and equals B otherwise.

The composite FG is the identity on **Part**, but GF is not the identity. However, there is an isomorphism  $(A, a) \to ((A \setminus \{a\})^+, A \setminus \{a\})$  sending a to  $A \setminus \{a\}$  and everything else to itself and this is natural.

Note that there can be no isomorphism from  $\mathbf{Set}_*$  to  $\mathbf{Part}$ , since  $\mathbf{Part}$  has a 1-element isomorphism class  $\{\phi\}$  but  $\mathbf{Set}_*$  doesn't. So we see that equivalent categories can be non-isomorphic.

- (b) The category  $\mathbf{fdMod_K}$  of finite-dimensional vector spaces over K is equivalent to  $\mathbf{fdMod_K}^{op}$ , the functors in both directions are  $(-1)^*$  (???) and both isomorphisms are the natural transformations of 1.7(a).
- (c)  $\mathbf{fdMod}_{\mathbf{K}}$  is also equivalent to  $Mat_{K}$  (1.3(j)).

We define  $F: \mathbf{Mat}_{\mathbf{K}} \to \mathbf{fdMod}_{\mathbf{K}}$  by  $F(n) = K^n$ , and F(A) is the linear map represented by A w.r.t. the standard bases of  $K^n$  and  $K^p$ .

To define  $G: \mathbf{fdMod_K} \to \mathbf{Mat_K}$ , choose a basis for each finite dimensional vector space, and define  $G(V) = \dim V$ ,  $G(V \xrightarrow{f} W)$  to be the matrix representing f w.r.t. chosen bases. GF is the identity, provided we choose the standard bases for the spaces  $K^n$ ;  $FG \neq 1$ , but the chosen bases give isomorphisms  $FG(V) = K^{\dim V} \to V$  for each V, which form a natural isomorphism.

—Lecture 4—

#### **Definition.** (1.11)

Let  $\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D}$  be a functor.

- (a) We say F is faithful if, given  $f, f' \in \text{mor } \mathcal{C}$  with dom f = dom f', cod f = cod f', and Ff = Ff', then f = f' (injectivity on morphisms. The name comes more from representation theory);
- (b) We say F is full if, given  $FA \xrightarrow{g} FB$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ , ther exists  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  in  $\mathcal{C}$  with Ff = g. (this is something like surjective, but see below);
- (c) We say F is essentially surjective if, forevery  $B \in \text{ob } \mathcal{D}$ , there exists  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  and isomorphism  $FA \to B$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ .

We say a subcategory  $\mathcal{C}' \subseteq \mathcal{C}$  is full if the inclusion  $\mathcal{C}' \to \mathcal{C}$  is a full functor. For example,  $\mathbf{Gp}$  is a full subcategory of  $\mathbf{Mon}$  (the category of all monoids), but  $\mathbf{Mon}$  is not a full subcategory of the category  $\mathbf{SGp}$  of semigroups.

#### **Lemma.** (1.12)

Assuming the axiom of choice, a functor  $F \cdot \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  is part of an equivalence  $\mathcal{C} \simeq \mathcal{D}$  (see (1.9) for what an equivalence is. I think here it means one of the functors F, G) if it's full, faithful, and essentially surjective.

*Proof.*  $\Rightarrow$ : Suppose given  $G, \alpha, \beta$  as in (1.9). Then for each  $B \in \text{ob } \mathcal{D}$ ,  $\beta_B$  is an isomorphism  $FGB \to B$ , so F is essentially surjective.

Given  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  in C, we can recover f from Ff as composite  $A \xrightarrow{\alpha_A} GFA \xrightarrow{GFf} GFB \xrightarrow{\alpha_b^{-1}} B$ . Hence if  $A \xrightarrow{f'} B$  satisfies Ff = Ff', then f = f'. So F is faithful:

Lastly, for fullness, given  $FA \xrightarrow{g} FB$ , define f to be the composite  $A \xrightarrow{\alpha_A} GFA \xrightarrow{Gg} GFB \xrightarrow{\alpha_B^{-1}} B$ . Then  $GFf = \alpha_B f \alpha_A^{-1}$ , which by construction is just Gg. But G is faithful for the same reason as f, so Ff = g.

 $\Leftarrow$ : (need to find suitable  $G, \alpha, \beta$  for F.) For each  $B \in \text{ob } \mathcal{D}$ , choose  $GB \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  and an isomorphism  $\beta_B : FGB \to B$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ . Given  $B \xrightarrow{g} B'$ , define  $Gg : GB \to GB'$  to be the unique morphism whose image under F is  $FGB \xrightarrow{\beta_B} B \xrightarrow{g} B' \xrightarrow{\beta_{B'}^{-1}} FGB'$ .

Uniqueness implies functoriality (check what this means – think it appeared somewhere before): given  $B' \xrightarrow{g'} B''$ , (Gg')(Gg) and G(g'g) have the same image under F, so they are equal.

By construction,  $\beta$  is a natural transformation  $FG \to 1_{\mathcal{D}}$ .

Given  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$ , define  $\alpha_A : A \to GFA$  to be the unique morphism whose image under F is  $FA \xrightarrow{\beta_{FA}^{-1}} FGFA$ .  $\alpha_A$  is an isomorphism, since  $\beta_{FA}$  also has a unique pre-image under F. And  $\alpha$  is a natural transformation, since any naturality square for  $\alpha$  (the commutative square when we defined natural transformation. check) is mapped by F to a commutative square, and F is faithful.  $\square$ 

#### **Definition.** (1.13)

By a *skeleton* of a category, we mean a full subcategory  $C_0$  containing one object from each isomorphism class. We say C is *skeletal* if it's a skeleton of itself. For example,  $\mathbf{Mat_K}$  is a skeletal, and the image of  $F: \mathbf{Mat_K} \to \mathbf{fdMod_K}$  of 1.10(c) is a skeleton of  $\mathbf{fdMod_K}$ .

(there are some examples on wikipedia)

Warning: almost any assertion about skeletons is equivalent to axiom of choice (see q2 on example sheet 1).

#### **Definition.** (1.14)

Let  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  be a morphism in C.

- (a) We say f is a monomorphism (or f is monic) if, given any pair  $C \stackrel{g}{\underset{h}{\Longrightarrow}} A$ , fg = fh implies g = h.
- (b) We say f is an *epimorphism* (or *epic*) if it's a monomorphism in  $C^{op}$ , i.e. if gf = hf implies g = h.

We denote monomorphisms by  $A \stackrel{f}{\rightarrowtail} B$ , and epimorphisms by  $A \stackrel{f}{\twoheadrightarrow} B$ .

Any isomorphism is monic and epic: more generally, if f has a left inverse (i.e.  $\exists g$  s.t. gf is an identity), then it's monic. We call such monomorphisms split. We say C is a balanced category if any morphism which is both monic and epic is an isomorphism.

#### Example. (1.15)

- (a) As usual we consider **Set** first. In **Set**, monomorphisms correspond to injections ( $\Leftarrow$  is easy (ok); for  $\Rightarrow$ , take  $C = 1 = \{*\}$ ), and epimorphisms correspond to surjections ( $\Leftarrow$  is easy; for  $\Rightarrow$ , use morphisms  $B \Rightarrow 2 = \{0,1\}$ ). So **Set** is balanced.
- (b) In  $\mathbf{Gp}$ , monomorphisms again correspond to injections (for  $\Rightarrow$  use homomorphisms  $\mathbb{Z} \to A$ ); epimorphisms again correspond to surjections ( $\Rightarrow$  use free products with amalgamation this is a non-trivial fact about groups, read more if free). So  $\mathbf{Gp}$  is also balanced.
- (c) In **Rng** (obvious notation), monomorphisms correspond to injections (proof is much like for **Gp**). However, not all epimorphisms are surjective. For example the inclusion  $\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{Q}$  is an epimorphism, since if  $\mathbb{Q} \stackrel{f}{\underset{g}{\Longrightarrow}} R$  agree on all integers, they agree everywhere. So **Rng** is not balanced.
- (d) One final example is **Top**. Again, monomorphisms are injections and epimorphisms are surjections (and vice versa): proof is similar to **Set** (check). However, **Top** is not balanced since a continuous bijection need not have continuous inverse.

## 2 The Yoneda Lemma

Let's not start on the content this lecture. Why are we talking about one single lemma in a chapter? Well it's not really a lemma. There's some story behind this, check here for an obituary which probably has the story that lecture was talking about in class.