

Differential Geometry

Lecturer:

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Course schedule

Smooth manifolds in \mathbb{R}^n , tangent spaces, smooth maps and the inverse function theorem. Examples, regular values, Sard's theorem (statement only). Transverse intersection of submanifolds. [4]

Manifolds with boundary, degree mod 2 of smooth maps, applications. [3]

Curves in 2-space and 3-space, arc-length, curvature, torsion. The isoperimetric inequality. [2]

Smooth surfaces in 3-space, first fundamental form, area. [1]

The Gauss map, second fundamental form, principal curvatures and Gaussian curvature. Theorema Egregium. [3]

Minimal surfaces. Normal variations and characterization of minimal surfaces as critical points of the area functional. Isothermal coordinates and relation with harmonic functions. The Weierstrass representation. Examples. [3]

Parallel transport and geodesics for surfaces in 3-space. Geodesic curvature. [2]

The exponential map and geodesic polar coordinates. The Gauss-Bonnet theorem (including the statement about classification of compact surfaces). [4]

Global theorems on curves: Fenchel's theorem (the total curvature of a simple closed curve is greater than or equal to 2π); the Fary-Milnor theorem (the total curvature of a simple knotted closed curve is greater than 4π). [2]

Recommended books

J. Milnor *Topology from the differentiable viewpoint*. Princeton University Press, 1997.

M. Do Carmo *Differential Geometry of Curves and Surfaces*. Pearson Higher Education, 1976

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1 Differential topology

Definition Smooth map on an open subset

Let $U \subset \mathbb{R}^n$. We say that $f: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ is smooth if all partial derivatives to all orders exist and are continuous.

Definition Smooth map

Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^n$. We say that $f: X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ is smooth if, for each $x \in X$, there exists (i) an open neighbourhood $U \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ of x and (ii) a smooth map $\tilde{f}: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ such that $\tilde{f}|_{X \cap U} = f|_{X \cap U}$.

Definition Diffeomorphism

Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^n, Y \subset \mathbb{R}^m$. We say that $f: X \rightarrow Y$ is a diffeomorphism if f is a smooth bijection with a smooth inverse. If such a map exists, we say that X and Y are diffeomorphic.

Exercise. Give an example of a smooth bijection that is not a diffeomorphism.

Definition k -dimensional manifold

We say that $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ is a k -dimensional manifold if, for each $x \in X$, there exists an open neighbourhood $V \subset X$ of x such that V is diffeomorphic to an open subset $U \subset \mathbb{R}^k$. A diffeomorphism $\varphi: U \rightarrow V$ is called a local parametrisation of V , whereas its inverse $\psi := \varphi^{-1}: V \rightarrow U$ is called a coordinate system or a chart on V .

Remarks

- By composing φ^{-1} with the projections $\pi_i: \mathbb{R}^k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, (x_1, \dots, x_k) \mapsto x_i$, we get smooth maps $x_i := \pi_i \circ \varphi^{-1}$ which we call coordinate functions.
- WLOG, we can replace ‘diffeomorphic to an open subset $U \subset \mathbb{R}^k$ ’ with ‘diffeomorphic to an open ball in \mathbb{R}^k ’.
- It is easy to see that, if $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ is both a k -dimensional manifold and a \tilde{k} -dimensional manifold, then $k = \tilde{k}$.

Definition Dimension

Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be a k -dimensional manifold. The dimension of X is k , and it is denoted by $\dim X$.

Example Some trivial examples

- $X = \mathbb{R}^N$
- $X = W \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ for any open subset W
- $X = \{(x_1, \dots, x_k, 0, \dots, 0)\} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$

Example S^n

$S^n := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}: \|x\|_2 = 1\}$ is an n -dimensional manifold. To see this, consider the projection $\Pi_k: \mathbb{R}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n, (x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) \mapsto (x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x_{k+1}, \dots, x_{n+1})$. It is easy to verify that maps of the form $\psi_k^\pm = \Pi_k|_{S^n \cap \{\text{sign}(x_k) = \pm 1\}}$ are diffeomorphisms $S^n \cap \{\text{sign}(x_k) = \pm 1\} \rightarrow B_1(0)$.

Remark. It is easy to show that X is a 0-dimensional manifold iff X is a discrete subset of \mathbb{R}^N .

Exercise. Show that, if X and Y are manifolds, then $X \times Y$ is also a manifold, with $\dim X \times Y = \dim X + \dim Y$.

Definition Submanifold

Let $X, Y \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be manifolds. If $Y \subset X$, then we say that Y is a submanifold of X . The codimension of Y in X is defined as

$$\underset{X}{\text{codim}} Y := \dim X - \dim Y$$

1.1 Tangent spaces

We first recall some basic facts from our youth. Let $U \subset \mathbb{R}^k$ be open. The *differential* of a smooth map $f: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ at $x \in U$ is defined by

$$\begin{aligned} df_x: \mathbb{R}^k &\rightarrow \mathbb{R}^N \\ h &\mapsto \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x + th) - f(x)}{t} \end{aligned}$$

This is a linear map, with matrix representation

$$df_x = \left(\frac{\partial f^i}{\partial x^j} \right)_{i,j}$$

Moreover, differentials satisfy the chain rule: given (i) two smooth maps $f: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^l$ and $g: V \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ with $U \subset \mathbb{R}^k, V \subset \mathbb{R}^l$ open and (ii) a point $x \in U$ with $f(x) \in V$, we have

$$d(g \circ f)_x = dg_{f(x)} \circ df_x$$

Definition Tangent space

Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be a k -dimensional manifold and $x \in X$. Choose a local parametrisation $\varphi: U \rightarrow V$ around x . We then define the tangent space $T_x X$ of X at x to be

$$T_x X := \text{im } d\varphi_{\varphi^{-1}(x)}(\mathbb{R}^k)$$

Of course, before we can safely proceed, we must show that $T_x X$ is well-defined:

Lemma 1.1

Let X be as above. $T_x X$ is independent of φ , and $\dim T_x X = k$.

Proof. Let $\tilde{\varphi}: \tilde{U} \rightarrow \tilde{V}$ be another local parametrisation near x . WLOG, by restricting if necessary, we may assume $\tilde{V} = V$. By the chain rule, we have

$$d\varphi_{\varphi^{-1}(x)} = d\tilde{\varphi}_{\tilde{\varphi}^{-1}(x)} \circ d(\tilde{\varphi}^{-1} \circ \varphi)_{\varphi^{-1}(x)}$$

Since $\tilde{\varphi}^{-1} \circ \varphi$ is a diffeomorphism of open subsets of \mathbb{R}^n , the corresponding differential $d(\tilde{\varphi}^{-1} \circ \varphi)$ is a linear isomorphism. Thus,

$$d\varphi_{\varphi^{-1}(x)}(\mathbb{R}^k) = d\tilde{\varphi}_{\tilde{\varphi}^{-1}(x)}(d(\tilde{\varphi}^{-1} \circ \varphi)_{\varphi^{-1}(x)}(\mathbb{R}^k)) = d\tilde{\varphi}_{\tilde{\varphi}^{-1}(x)}(\mathbb{R}^k)$$

as claimed.

Now, it remains to show that $\dim T_x X = k$. By definition, there exists an open set $\hat{V} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ and a smooth map $\Psi: \hat{V} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^k$ that extends the chart $\psi := \varphi^{-1}$. Note that $\Psi \circ \varphi = \text{id}_U$, so by the chain rule,

$$d\Psi_x \circ d\varphi_{\varphi^{-1}(x)} = \text{id}_{\mathbb{R}^k}$$

Then, $d\varphi_{\varphi^{-1}(x)}$ must be an isomorphism $\mathbb{R}^k \rightarrow T_x X$, and hence $\dim T_x X = k$. ■

Example Tangent spaces for our trivial examples

Returning to the trivial examples we previously gave, we now state the corresponding tangent space for an arbitrary point x on each manifold.

- $X = \mathbb{R}^N: T_x X = \mathbb{R}^N$
- $X = W \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ for any open subset $W: T_x X = \mathbb{R}^N$
- $X = \{(x_1, \dots, x_k, 0, \dots, 0)\} \subset \mathbb{R}^N: T_x X = X$

Example Tangent spaces for S^n

From any given chart, we can compute (φ and) $d\varphi$:

$$\frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial x^1} = (1, 0, \dots, 0, -x_1/x_{n+1})$$

and similarly for $\partial\varphi/\partial x^i$. Manifestly, each partial derivative is perpendicular to x . Thus, $T_x X \subset x^\perp := \{v \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1} : \langle v, x \rangle = 0\}$. Since we know from the above lemma that $\dim T_x X = n$, we conclude that $T_x X = x^\perp$.

Definition Differential map for manifolds

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds and $x \in X$. Choose a local parametrisation φ_1 around x and φ_2 around $f(x) \in Y$. We define the differential $df_x: T_x X \rightarrow T_{f(x)} Y$ of f at x by

$$df_x = d\varphi_2|_{\varphi_2^{-1}(f(x))} \circ d(\varphi_2^{-1} \circ f \circ \varphi_1)|_{\varphi_1^{-1}(x)} \circ (d\varphi_1|_{\varphi_1^{-1}(x)})^{-1}$$

Lemma 1.2

df_x is independent of the choice of local parametrisations.

Proof. Trivial exercise. ■

Proposition 1.3 Chain rule for manifolds

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ and $g: Y \rightarrow Z$ be smooth maps between manifolds. For any $x \in X$,

$$d(g \circ f)_x = dg_{f(x)} \circ df_x$$

Proof. Trivial exercise. ■

Theorem 1.4 Inverse function theorem

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds and $x \in X$. Suppose $df_x: T_x X \rightarrow T_{f(x)} Y$ is an isomorphism. Then f is a local diffeomorphism, i.e., each $x \in X$ has an open neighbourhood $V \subset X$ such that $f|_V: V \rightarrow f(V)$ is a diffeomorphism.

Proof. Since df_x is an isomorphism, it follows that $d(\varphi_2^{-1} \circ f \circ \varphi_1)|_{\varphi_1^{-1}(x)}$ is also an isomorphism. We can then use the usual inverse function theorem to deduce the result. ■

1.2 Regular values and Sard's theorem

Definition Critical and regular points

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds. We say that $x \in X$ is a critical point of f if $df_x: T_x X \rightarrow T_{f(x)} Y$ is not surjective. Otherwise, it is a regular point.

Notation. We denote by C the set of all critical points of f .

Remark. If $\dim Y > \dim X$, then $C = X$ and the pre-image of any regular value is \emptyset .

Definition Critical and regular values

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds. We say that $y \in Y$ is a critical value of f if $y = f(x)$ for some $x \in C$. Otherwise, we say that y is a regular value of f .

Theorem 1.5 Pre-image theorem

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds. Suppose $y \in Y$ is a regular value of f . If $f^{-1}(y) \neq \emptyset$, then $f^{-1}(y) \subset X$ is a submanifold of X with $\text{codim}_X f^{-1}(y) = \dim Y$.

Proof. Fix $x \in f^{-1}(y)$. Since y is a regular value, we know that $df_x: T_x X \rightarrow T_y Y$ is surjective. By the rank-nullity theorem, $\dim \ker df_x = \text{codim}_X Y$. Suppose $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, and pick a linear map $T: \mathbb{R}^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{\text{codim}_X Y}$ such that $\ker T \cap \ker df_x = \{0\}$.¹

Now, extend f to the map $F: X \rightarrow Y \times \mathbb{R}^{\text{codim}_X Y}$ given by $z \mapsto (f(z), T(z))$. Note that the differential of F at x is given by

$$dF_x = (df_x, dT_x) = (df_x, T)$$

Since $\ker T \cap \ker df_x = \{0\}$, we have $\ker dF_x = \{0\}$, i.e., dF_x is injective. By the inverse function theorem for manifolds, there exists an open neighbourhood $U \subset X$ of x such that $F|_U: U \rightarrow V$ is a diffeomorphism to an open neighbourhood V of $(y, T(x))$. Hence, $F|_{f^{-1}(y) \cap U}$ is a local parametrisation of $(\{y\} \times \mathbb{R}^{\text{codim}_X Y}) \cap V$, proving that $f^{-1}(y)$ is a manifold of dimension $\text{codim}_X Y$. ■

Exercise. Show that, under the conditions of the pre-image theorem, $T_x f^{-1}(y) = \ker df_x$.

Corollary 1.6

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds of the same dimension, with X compact. If y is a regular value of f , then $f^{-1}(y)$ is finite.

Proof. By the pre-image theorem, $f^{-1}(y)$ is a 0-dimensional manifold, i.e., a collection of points. Since X is compact, such a collection must be finite. ■

With just a bit more analysis and topology, we can actually say more than just finiteness:

Theorem 1.7 Stack of records theorem

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds of the same dimension, with X compact. Let y be a regular value of f , and list the elements of $f^{-1}(y)$ as x_1, \dots, x_n . There exists an open neighbourhood $V \subset Y$ of y and a collection of open neighbourhoods $W_i \subset X$ of each x_i such that

$$f^{-1}(V) = \bigsqcup_{i=1}^n W_i$$

and each $f|_{W_i}: W_i \rightarrow V$ is a diffeomorphism.

Proof. By the inverse function theorem for manifolds, we can pick open neighbourhoods W_i of x such that each $f|_{W_i}$ is a diffeomorphism to an open neighbourhood of y . By shrinking neighbourhoods if necessary, W_i can be taken WLOG to be pairwise disjoint. Now, set

$$V = \left[\bigcap_{i=1}^n f(W_i) \right] \setminus f\left(X \setminus \bigcup_{i=1}^n W_i\right)$$

Note that $f(X \setminus \bigcup_{i=1}^n W_i)$ is a compact set that does not contain y , so V is an open neighbourhood of y . Finally, note that $f^{-1}(V) = \bigsqcup_{i=1}^n W_i$ by construction. ■

Now, the pre-image theorem can be a powerful tool for generating manifolds or showing that a certain set is one.

Application S^n is a manifold

Consider the map $f: \mathbb{R}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, (x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) \mapsto x_1^2 + \dots + x_{n+1}^2$. Note that $f^{-1}(1) = S^n$, so to show that S^n is a manifold, it suffices to show that 1 is a regular point. Indeed, note that $df_x = (2x_1, \dots, 2x_{n+1})$, which is not surjective only if $x = 0 \notin f^{-1}(1)$.

¹It is easy to constructively show using IB Linear Algebra that such a map exists. [Exercise!]

Application *Orthogonal group as a manifold*

Denote by $M(n)$ [resp. $S(n)$] the space of all [resp. symmetric] $n \times n$ matrices with entries in \mathbb{R} . Consider the orthogonal group $O(n) = \{A \in M(n) : AA^t = I\} \subset M(n) = \mathbb{R}^{n^2}$.

Let $f: M(n) \rightarrow O(n)$ be the map $A \mapsto AA^t$. This is smooth since multiplication and addition in \mathbb{R} are smooth. Since $O(n) = f^{-1}(I)$, it suffices to show that I is a regular value of f . Note that

$$df_A(H) = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(A + tH) - f(A)}{t} = AH^t + HA^t$$

Now, fix $A \in M(n)$. Given $B \in S(n)$, observe that

$$df_A\left(\frac{1}{2}CA\right) = \frac{1}{2}AA^tC^t + \frac{1}{2}CAA^t = \frac{1}{2}C + \frac{1}{2}C = C$$

completing the proof that I is a regular value of f .

Remark. Recall that, besides being a manifold as we've just shown, $O(n)$ is also a group. In fact, the group operations $(A, B) \mapsto AB$ and $A \mapsto A^{-1} = A^t$ are smooth. Hence, we see that $O(n)$ is a *Lie group*.

Now, the pre-image theorem raises the question: how easy is to find regular values? This leads us to Sard's theorem.

Definition Measure-zero subsets of \mathbb{R}^N

We say that $S \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ is of measure zero in \mathbb{R}^N if, for each $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists a countable family $\{R_i\}$ of sets of the form $R_i = \prod_{j=1}^N [x_i^{(j)}, y_i^{(j)}]$ such that $S \subset \bigcup_i R_i$ and $\sum_i \text{vol}(R_i) < \varepsilon$.

Definition Measure zero subsets of manifolds

Let $X \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be a k -dimensional manifold. We say that $A \subset X$ is of measure zero in X if, for all local parametrisations $\varphi: U \rightarrow V$ of X , $\varepsilon^{-1}(V \cap A) \subset \mathbb{R}^k$ has measure zero in \mathbb{R}^k .

Exercise. Let $U, \tilde{U} \subset \mathbb{R}^k$ be open and $\psi: U \rightarrow \tilde{U}$ a diffeomorphism. Show that, if $A \subset U$ is of measure zero in \mathbb{R}^k , then $\tilde{A} = \psi(A)$ is of measure zero in \mathbb{R}^k .

Remarks

- In view of the above exercise, $A \subset X$ is of measure zero in X iff $\varphi_i^{-1}(S \cap V_i)$ is of measure zero for all $\varphi_i: U \rightarrow V$ in an atlas of local parametrisations.
- If $\dim Y = 0$, then Y is of measure zero. If $\dim Y > 0$, then every non-empty open subset $V \subset Y$ is not of measure zero in Y .
- If $S \subset X$ is of measure zero in X , then any $\tilde{S} \subset S$ is also of measure zero in X .

Theorem 1.8 Sard's theorem

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be a smooth map between manifolds. Then the set of critical values of f is of measure zero in Y .

Proof. Non-examinable — see Milnor's book if interested. ■

Corollary 1.9

The set of regular values of a smooth map $f: X \rightarrow Y$ between manifolds is dense in Y .

Proof. Any open set $V \subset Y$ cannot lie entirely in $f(C)$ since it has measure zero. ■

1.3 Transversality

Definition Transversal

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be smooth and $Z \subset Y$ a submanifold of Y . We say that f is transversal to Z if, for each $x \in f^{-1}(Z)$,

$$T_{f(x)}Y = T_{f(x)}Z + \text{im } df_x$$

We then write $f \pitchfork Z$.

Remarks

- If $f(X) \cap Z = \emptyset$, then f is transversal to Z .
- If $Z = \{y\}$, then f is transversal to Z iff y is a regular value of f . Thus, transversality is really a generalisation of the notion of regular values.

Exercise. Let X also be a submanifold of Y and $\iota: X \hookrightarrow Y$ the inclusion map. Show that $d\iota_x$ is just the inclusion map $T_x X \hookrightarrow T_x Y$ of the tangent spaces. Thus, $\iota \pitchfork Z$ iff $T_x X + T_x Z = T_x Y$ for all $x \in X \cap Z$.

Now, we state a generalisation of the pre-image theorem for transversal maps:

Theorem 1.10

Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$ be smooth map that is transversal to a submanifold $Z \subset Y$ of Y . If $f^{-1}(Z) \neq \emptyset$, then $f^{-1}(Z) \subset X$ is a submanifold of X , with $\text{codim}_X f^{-1}(Z) = \text{codim}_Y Z$.

Remark. If $Z = \{y\}$, then $\text{codim}_Y Z = \dim Y$ as in the pre-image theorem.

Sketch of proof (non-examinable). Fix $z \in Z$ with $z = f(x)$ for some $x \in X$. Note that, for some open neighbourhood $V \subset Y$ of z , there exists a smooth map $h: V \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{\text{codim}_Y Z}$ such that $Z \cap V = h^{-1}(0)$ and dh_z is surjective. Locally around $x \in X$, $f^{-1}(Z) = (h \circ f)^{-1}(0)$. Thus, by the pre-image theorem, it suffices to show that 0 is a regular value of $h \circ f$.

Now, since $f \pitchfork Z$, we have $T_z Y = T_z Z + \text{im } df_x$. Note that $\ker dh_z = T_z Z$ since $T_z Z \subset \ker dh_z$ and they are subspaces of the same dimension. Moreover, $f \pitchfork Z$ gives us

$$T_z Y = T_z Z + \text{im } df_x = \ker dh_z + \text{im } df_x$$

This then implies that $\text{im } dh_z = \text{im}(dh_z \circ df_x) = \text{im } d(h \circ f)_x$. Since dh_z is surjective, $d(h \circ f)_z$ is also surjective and hence 0 is a regular value of $h \circ f$. ■