

Mathematical Methods

for Engineers



Stu Blair
Mighty Goat Press

WHEN IN DOUBT, MULTIPLY BOTH SIDES BY AN ORTHOGONAL FUNCTION
AND INTEGRATE.

P.L. CHEBYSHEV

THE PURPOSE OF COMPUTING IS INSIGHT, NOT PICTURES

L.N. TREFETHEN

NEVER DO A CALCULATION UNTIL YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER.

J.A. WHEELER

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

MATHEMATICAL METHODS FOR ENGINEERS

MIGHTY GOAT PRESS

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Preface

The purpose of this text is to provide a concise reference for engineering students who would like to strengthen their conceptual understanding and practical proficiency in analytical and numerical methods in engineering. The material is based on a sequence of two courses taught at the United States Naval Academy.

Analytical Methods

The first course focused on analytical methods for linear ordinary and partial differential equations. All students came into the course having taken a three-semester sequence of calculus along with a course in ordinary differential equations. The analytical methods portion quickly reviews methods for constant coefficient linear equations and proceeds to methods for non-constant coefficients including Cauchy-Euler equations, power series methods, and method of Frobenius. After a review of Fourier Series methods and an introduction to Fourier-Legendre and Fourier-Bessel expansions we thoroughly explore solutions to second-order, linear, partial differential equations. Since many students are also studying nuclear engineering, there is a heavy focus on addressing boundary value problems in cylindrical and spherical coordinate systems that are applicable to other topics of interest such as reactor physics. There is also heavy emphasis on heat transfer applications that students will see later on in their undergraduate curriculum.

The materials presented are based heavily on Professor Dennis Zill's excellent book.¹ We lightly select from chapters 1-3 for review; chapter 5 for series solution methods; and chapters 12-14 for Fourier Series and solutions to linear boundary value problems. Material from that text is used throughout this book.

What distinguishes this course from Prof Zill's work is the incorporation of computational tools in the solution process. These "semi-analytical methods" are presented here in MATLAB² owing to the students preparation with that tool. Other open-source tools like Octave³ and Python,⁴ of course, could be used.

¹ Dennis G Zill. *Advanced engineering mathematics*. Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2020

² Inc. The Math Works. Matlab, v2022a, 2022. URL <https://www.mathworks.com/>

³ John W. Eaton, David Bateman, Søren Hauberg, and Rik Wehbring. *GNU Octave version 5.2.0 manual: a high-level interactive language for numerical computations*, 2020. URL <https://www.gnu.org/software/octave/doc/v5.2.0/>

⁴ Guido Van Rossum and Fred L. Drake. *Python 3 Reference Manual*. CreateSpace, Scotts Valley, CA, 2009. ISBN 1441412697

Part I

Introduction and Review

Lecture 1 - Introduction, Definitions and Terminology

Objectives

The objectives of this lecture are:

- Provide an overview of course content
- Define basic terms related to differential equations
- Provide examples of classification schemes for differential equations

Course Introduction

THIS COURSE IS INTENDED as a one-semester introduction to partial differential equations. It is assumed that all students have a thorough background in single- and multi-variable calculus as well as differential equations. The first few lectures comprise a review of the portions of differential equations on which this course most heavily relies. This is followed by a treatment of power series methods and the method of Frobenius. These are needed so that students will understand the origins of Legendre Polynomials and Bessel functions that will be used in the solution of boundary value problems in spherical and cylindrical coordinates respectively.

THE MAIN BODY of material deals with the solution of (mostly homogeneous) boundary value problems—wave equation, heat equation, and Laplace equation—in rectangular, polar/cylindrical, and spherical coordinate systems. For this a preparatory review of Fourier series expansions along with Fourier-Legendre and Fourier-Bessel expansions are introduced along with a leavening of Sturm-Liouville theory in boundary value problems. The rest is a problem-by-problem tour of methods and analysis with heavy emphasis on heat transfer and nuclear engineering applications.

Classification of Differential Equations

IT IS IMPORTANT to be able to classify differential equations. In this class we will learn a variety of techniques to find the function that satisfies a differential equation along with its boundary or initial conditions.⁵ The techniques we learn in this class are tailored for specific classes of problems; you classify the problem and that tells you what method to use. If you improperly classify the equation, you will likely use an inappropriate method and may have trouble figuring out why it is not working.

Classification by Type and Order

WE SHALL START with the easiest classification categories: type and order. There are two *types* of differential equations that we will consider: ordinary differential equations; and partial differential equations.

IN AN ORDINARY differential equation, there is only one independent variable. In a *partial* differential equation, there are multiple independent variables and consequently derivatives of the dependent variable will partial derivatives.

THE ORDER of a differential equation is the order of the highest derivative in the equation. This is typically not confusing for students. If anything needs to be added here it is to be mindful of the difference between a higher order derivative and an exponent. For example, in the second order, non-linear, ordinary differential equation shown below,

$$\frac{d^2u}{dx^2} + 5 \left(\frac{du}{dx} \right)^3 - 4u = e^x$$

it isn't too hard to realize that the "3" is an exponent and the "2" denotes a second derivative. Still, be mindful.

Classification by Linearity

An n -th order ordinary differential equation is said to be *linear* when it can be written in the form shown in Equation 1:

$$a_n(x)u^{(n)} + a_{n-1}(x)u^{(n-1)} + \cdots + a_1(x)u' + a_0(x)u = g(x) \quad (1)$$

The key features that you should note in the form of Equation 1 are:

⁵ Consider the differential equation: $\frac{du}{dx} = ux$. The variable u stands for the function, $u(x)$, that satisfies the equation; u is also referred to as the **dependent variable**. The variable x is the **independent variable**. By convention we will use the variables x, y, z and r, θ, ϕ as spatial independent variables and t as an independent variable for time dependent problems. We will use many other letters to denote dependent variables but most commonly u, v , and w .

Example ODE:

$$\frac{d^2u}{dt^2} + t \frac{du}{dt} = 3e^{-t}$$

There is one independent variable, t

Example PDE:

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = 0$$

There are two independent variables, x , and y .

1. The *dependent* variable and *all of its derivatives* are of the first degree; that is, the power of each term involving u is 1.
2. The coefficients of each term, $a_n(x)$, depend at most on the *independent* variable.

A lot of students struggle with discriminating between linear and nonlinear ODEs but it really is as simple as checking these two things. If both conditions are satisfied; the equation is linear. If not, the equation is nonlinear. As examples, Equation 2 violates the first criterion; Equation 3 violates the second.

$$\frac{d^2u}{dx^2} + u^2 = 0 \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{d^3u}{dx^3} - 5u \frac{du}{dx} = x \quad (3)$$

Verification of an Explicit Solution

A solution in which the dependent variable is expressed solely in terms of the independent variable and constants is said to be an *explicit* solution. Otherwise, the solution is *implicit*.

IN THIS CLASS we will mainly be interested in finding explicit solutions to differential equations that we are given or have derived. There are some cases, however, where we are given a function and we wish to verify that it is a solution to a given differential equation. To do this, we simply “plug” the equation into the differential operator and verify that an identity is derived.

Example: Verify that $u = \frac{6}{5} - \frac{6}{5}e^{-20t}$ is a solution to:

$$\frac{du}{dt} + 20u = 24$$

Solution: Since $\frac{du}{dt} = \frac{d}{dt}(\frac{6}{5} - \frac{6}{5}e^{-20t}) = 24e^{-20t}$, we can see that:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{du}{dt} + 20u &= 24e^{-20t} + 20(\frac{6}{5} - \frac{6}{5}e^{-20t}) \\ &= 24e^{-20t} + 24 - 24e^{-20t} \\ &= 24 \end{aligned}$$

which is the expected identity.

Why is this important? Most of the techniques we will learn in this course *depend* upon the fact that the equation we are trying to solve is *linear*. In “*the wild*” you may be presented with (or, more likely *derive*) an equation and may not be explicitly told whether or not the equation is linear. If the equation is **not** linear you will find that most of the tools you learn in this course will not be applicable; you will most likely need to use a numerical method. You need to be able to tell the difference so you know what tools to use.

Example explicit solution: $u(x) = f(x)$.

Example implicit solution: $G(x, u) = 0$

Lecture 2 - Separable and Linear 1st order Equations

Objectives

The objectives of this lecture are:

- Define and describe the solution procedure for *separable* first order equations
- Define and demonstrate the solution procedure for *linear* first order equations

Separable Equations

A first order differential equation of the form shown below

$$\frac{du}{dx} = g(u)h(x) \quad (4)$$

is said to be *separable* or have *separable variables*.

THE SOLUTION METHOD for separable equations is, in principle simple. For the separable differential equation given in Equation 4 we would separate and integrate:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{du}{dx} &= g(u)h(x) \\ \frac{du}{g(u)} &= h(x)dx \\ \int \frac{1}{g(u)} du &= \int h(x) dx \end{aligned}$$

Generally speaking, one of your first checks for a first order equation should be: is it separable? If so, you should separate the variables and solve. The examples below are intended to illustrate the method. Note that in the final example, the integral cannot be done analytically.

Note: there is **no** requirement that the 1st order equation be *linear*. This is one of the few techniques that we will study in this course that can be applied to nonlinear equations.

Note: there are at least two complications here.

1. The solution you thus derive may be either implicit or explicit. An implicit solution is, as a practical matter, fairly inconvenient to deal with; and
2. It may not be possible to actually carry out the integrals analytically.

Nonetheless, we shall carry on and give it a try anyway.

Solve the following separable, first order differential equations .

Example 1:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{du}{dx} &= \frac{u}{1+x} \\ \frac{du}{u} &= \frac{dx}{1+x} \\ \int \frac{d}{u} &= \int \frac{dx}{1+x} \\ \ln |u| + c_1 &= \ln |1+x| + c_2 \\ |u| &= e^{[\ln |1+x| + c_3]} \\ u(x) &= c|1+x|\end{aligned}$$

Example 2:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{du}{dx} &= -\frac{x}{u} \\ \int u \, du &= -\int x \, dx \\ \frac{u^2}{2} &= -\frac{x^2}{2} + c \\ u(x) &= \sqrt{c - x^2}\end{aligned}$$

Example 3: Solve the first order initial value problem shown below:

$$\frac{du}{dx} = e^{-x^2}, \quad u(2) = 6, \quad 2 \leq x < \infty \quad (5)$$

$$\begin{aligned}du &= e^{-x^2} dx \\ \int_2^x \frac{du}{dt} dt &= \int_2^x e^{-t^2} dt \\ u(x) - u(2) &= \int_2^x e^{-t^2} dt \\ u(x) &= 6 + \int_2^x e^{-t^2} dt\end{aligned}$$

where we have used the dummy variable t in the integrals; the last integral will need to be evaluated numerically.

Linear Equations

A first-order differential equation of the form:

$$a_1(x) \frac{du}{dx} + a_0(x)u = g(x) \quad (6)$$

is said to be a first order *linear equation* in the dependent variable u . When $g(x) = 0$, the first-order linear equation is said to be *homogeneous*; otherwise it is *nonhomogeneous*.

WHEN SOLVING equations of this type it is useful to express it in the **standard form**:

$$\frac{du}{dx} + P(x)u = f(x) \quad (7)$$

The method for solving this equation makes use of the linearity property and express the solution in the following way: $u(x) = u_c(x) + u_p(x)$; plugging this into Equation 7 gives us:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dx}[u_c + u_p] + P(x)[u_c + u_p] = \\ \left[\frac{du_c}{dx} + P(x)u_c \right] + \left[\frac{du_p}{dx} + P(x)u_p \right] = f(x) \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

where $u_c(x)$ is the solution to the *associated homogeneous problem*

$$\frac{du_c}{dx} + P(x)u_c = 0 \quad (9)$$

and $u_p(x)$ is the solution to:

$$\frac{du_p}{dx} + P(x)u_p = f(x) \quad (10)$$

We can see that Equation 9 is separable:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{du_c}{dx} + P(x)u_c &= 0 \\ \frac{du_c}{u_c} &= -P(x) dx \\ \ln u_c + C &= - \int P(x) dx \\ u_c(x) &= e^{- \int P(x) dx + C_1} \\ u_c(x) &= e^{- \int P(x) dx} e^{C_1} u_c(x) = Ce^{- \int P(x) dx} \end{aligned}$$

where $C = e^{C_1}$.

WE NEED TO FIND a solution $u_p(x)$ to Equation 10. The technique we will use is called *variation of parameters*. It consists of looking for a solution in the form $y_p(x) = v(x)u_1(x)$, where $u_1(x) = e^{- \int P(x) dx}$ which is $u_c(x)$ with the arbitrary constant set to 1 and $v(x)$ might be thought of as some kind of weighting or *variational* function.

Note: it is sometimes customary to write the differential equation in *operator form* where the differential operator, $\mathcal{L} = a_1(x) \frac{d}{dx} + a_0(x)$, is applied to the function $u(x)$ to get $g(x)$; $\mathcal{L}u(x) = g(x)$

Notice that $g(x)$ is the only term in Equation 6 that does **not** include u or any of its derivatives.

When we say an operator is **linear**, what we mean is that the following relationships must hold:

1. $\mathcal{L}(\alpha u) = \alpha \mathcal{L}(u)$
2. $\mathcal{L}(u + v) = \mathcal{L}(u) + \mathcal{L}(v)$

for functions u, v and scalar constant α . Think of this as a *definition* of linearity.

The linear operator here is: $\mathcal{L} = \frac{d}{dx} + P(x)$. Equation 9 says $\mathcal{L}u_c = 0$; Equation 10 says $\mathcal{L}u_p = f(x)$; Equation 8 says that $\mathcal{L}(u_c + u_p) = 0 + f(x) = f(x)$.

What might trouble you now is: if we have u_p , is this not a solution to Equation 7? Why do we need u_c ? The next thing that should trouble you is that if u_p is a solution, by the linearity property of \mathcal{L} , so is u_p plus *any* constant multiple of u_c . The solution is not *unique*

This will all be resolved when we recall that u_c will have an arbitrary constant through which we will be able to say that $u = u_c + u_p$ is a function describing *all* possible solutions of Equation 7 and the arbitrary constant in u_c will be set so as to uniquely satisfy a given initial/boundary condition.

Note: At some point in time, I will desist in making such piddling distinctions between constants. C_1 is an arbitrary constant, e^{C_1} is still an arbitrary constant; there is no real difference between C_1 and C and, in this author's humble opinion, they do not rate different symbols.

WE WILL INSERT this proposed form of $y_p(x)$ into Equation 10:

$$\frac{d(vu_1)}{dx} + P(x)(v(x)u_1(x)) = f(x)$$

We apply the product rule to the first term and re-arrange terms:

$$\begin{aligned} u_1(x) \frac{dv}{dx} + v(x) \frac{du_1}{dx} + P(x)(v(x)u_1(x)) &= f(x) \\ v(x) \underbrace{\left[\frac{du_1}{dx} + P(x)u_1(x) \right]}_{=0} + u_1(x) \frac{dv}{dx} &= f(x) \\ u_1(x) \frac{dv}{dx} &= f(x) \end{aligned}$$

In the last line we can observe that the equation is *separable* and thus solve:

$$\begin{aligned} v(x) &= \int \frac{f(x)}{u_1(x)} dx \\ &= \int e^{\int P(x) dx} f(x) dx \end{aligned}$$

Now that we know what $v(x)$ must be, we can combine this with $u_1(x)$ to get $u_p(x)$:

$$u_p(x) = e^{-\int P(x) dx} \left[\int e^{\int P(x) dx} f(x) dx \right] \quad (11)$$

Equation 11 is messy and perhaps a bit scary but given definitions of $P(x)$ and $f(x)$ we might hope we can solve it anyway. We now have expressions for both u_c and u_p ; they can be combined into the solution for the first-order linear equation:

$$u(x) = Ce^{-\int P(x) dx} + e^{-\int P(x) dx} \left[\int e^{\int P(x) dx} f(x) dx \right] \quad (12)$$

Method of Solution

Once we have identified a problem to be first-order and linear, we will solve the problem using the following steps:

1. Write the equation in standard form (Equation 7)
2. Determine the integrating factor $\mu = e^{-\int P(x) dx}$.
3. Solve for the general solution $u(x)$ using Equation 12.
4. Apply initial/boundary condition if given.

Example: Solve the problem:

$$\frac{du}{dx} + u = x, \quad u(0) = 4$$

Solution:

Step 1: The equation is already in standard form, so this step is easy.

Step 2: Find the integrating factor μ .

$$\mu u = e^{-\int P(x) dx} = e^{-\int 1 dx} = e^{-x}$$

Step 3: Solve for the general solution $u(x)$ using Equation 12

$$\begin{aligned} u(x) &= Ce^{-x} + e^{-x} \int e^x x dx \\ &= Ce^{-x} + e^{-x} [xe^x - e^x] \\ &= Ce^{-x} + x - 1 \end{aligned}$$

← For the integral $\int e^x x dx$ we need to use integration by parts.

Step 4: Apply initial/boundary conditions if given

$$\begin{aligned} u(0) &= Ce^0 + 0 - 1 \\ &= C - 1 = 4 \\ \Rightarrow C &= 5 \\ u(x) &= 5e^x + x - 1 \end{aligned}$$

Assignment #1

State the order of the given ordinary differential equation and indicate if it is linear or non-linear.

1. $(1 - x)u'' - 4xu' + 5u = \cos x$

2. $t^5 u^{(4)} - t^3 u'' + 6u = 0$

Verify the indicated function is an explicit solution of the given differential equation.

3. $2u' + u = 0, \quad u = e^{-x/2}$

4. $u'' - 6u' + 13u = 0, \quad u = e^{3x} \cos 2x$

Solve the given differential equation by separation of variables

5. $\frac{du}{dx} = \sin 5x$

6. $dx + e^{3x} du = 0$

7. $\frac{dS}{dr} = kS$

8. $\frac{du}{dx} = x\sqrt{1 - u^2}$

Find an explicit solution of the given initial-value problem

9. $x^2 \frac{du}{dx} = u - xu, \quad u(-1) = -1$

Find the general solution of the given differential equation

10. $\frac{du}{dx} + u = e^{3x}$

11. $u' + 3x^2u = x^2$

12. $x \frac{du}{dx} - u = x^2 \sin x$

Part II

Power Series Methods

Part III

Back Matter

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Appendices

Matlab Style Rules

1. **rule:** All scripts will start with the commands: **clear**, **clc**, and **close** 'all'

rationale: No script should depend upon any data visible in the MATLAB workspace when the script starts. By omitting these commands, residual data within the workspace may hide errors.

2. **rule:** Your code must be documented with enough details such that a reader unfamiliar with your work will know what you are doing.

rationale: Code documentation is a habit. For more significant projects readers may need help in deciding what the author of the code intended. For your own code, the most likely reader is you—a few months into the future.

3. **rule:** Function and variable names must be meaningful and reasonable in length.

rationale: Failing to do either make code harder to read and maintain.

4. **rule:** All outputs from the code **must** be meaningful; numbers should be formatted, part of a sentence, and include units. Graphs should be readable and axis labels should make sense and include units.

rationale: Code output is a form of communication. It is important that this communication be clear and unambiguous.

5. **rule:** Do not leave warnings from the Code Analyzer unaddressed.

rationale: Sometimes Code Analyzer warnings can be safely ignored. Most of the time the warning points to a stylistic error that would be unacceptable in software that you use. Occasionally these warnings are indicative of a hidden error.

6. **rule:** Use the “smart indentation tool” to format the indentation of your code.

rationale: This tool improves code readability. It will also occasionally point out errors that you did not see before.

7. **rule:** Pre-allocate arrays; if possible initialize with **NaN** values.

rationale: Pre-allocation improves performance and helps readability. Initialization with **NaN** helps avoid a range of potential logical errors.

8. **rule:** Avoid “magic numbers” — i.e. hard-coded constants.

rationale: Constants included in your code tend to hide your program logic. Also, “magic numbers” make code maintenance more difficult and error prone.

9. **rule:** Only write one statement per line.

rationale: Multi-statement-lines hurt code readability in almost all cases.

10. **rule:** Do not write excessively long lines of code; use the line continuation “...” and indentation to spread long expressions over several lines.

rationale: Following this rule improves code readability.