

Homework 2 Solutions

Due April 24, 2015.

1 Separation of Variables: mixed boundary conditions. Consider the heat equation,

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = k \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2},$$

with boundary conditions

$$k \frac{\partial u}{\partial x}(x = 0, t) = 0, \quad \text{and} \quad u(x = L, t) = 0,$$

and the linear initial condition

$$u(x, t = 0) = a(x - L).$$

- (a) What is the steady-state solution when $\partial u / \partial t = 0$?
- (b) Use separation of variables to solve the initial value problem for $u(x, t)$.

Solution.

- (a) The steady-state solution is $u(x, t) = 0$.
- (b) We use separation of variables by proposing $u = f(x)g(t)$. By substituting this into the governing equation and dividing by kfg , we find

$$\frac{g'}{kg} = \frac{f''}{f} = -\lambda,$$

where we have set the two sides of the equation equal to a separation constant $-\lambda$. We thus obtain two ODE's for $f(x)$ and $g(t)$. The equation for $g(t)$ is

$$g' + k\lambda g = 0,$$

which has the solution

$$g = Ce^{-k\lambda t}.$$

The equation for $f(x)$ is

$$f'' + \lambda f = 0,$$

and the solution is

$$f = A \sin(\sqrt{\lambda}x) + B \cos(\sqrt{\lambda}x).$$

The boundary conditions on $f(x)$ follow from the boundary conditions on $u(x, t)$, and are $f'(0) = 0$ and $f(L) = 0$. The condition $f'(0) = 0$ implies that $A = 0$. The condition at $x = L$ implies

$$0 = B \cos(\sqrt{\lambda}L).$$

The only non-trivial solutions are thus found when $\cos(\sqrt{\lambda}L) = 0$. Being well-acquainted with the cosine function, we know it will have zeros when $\sqrt{\lambda}L$ is $\pi/2$, $3\pi/2$, etc. Another way to say this is $\sqrt{\lambda}L = (n - 1/2)\pi$ for n a positive integer. Therefore we find that the spatial modes have the form

$$f = B \cos\left[\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right) \frac{\pi x}{L}\right].$$

The general solution for u is a sum of all modes, and is thus

$$u(x, t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} B_n \cos\left[\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right) \frac{\pi x}{L}\right] \exp\left\{-\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 \frac{\pi^2}{L^2} kt\right\}.$$

We use the initial condition to determine the coefficients B_n . At $t = 0$ we have

$$u(x, 0) = a(x - L) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} B_n \cos\left[\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right) \frac{\pi x}{L}\right].$$

To find the B_n 's, we multiply this equation by $\cos((m - 1/2)\pi x/L)$ and integrate from 0 to L . This yields

$$B_n = \frac{2}{L} \int_0^L a(x - L) \cos\left[\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right) \frac{\pi x}{L}\right] dx.$$

We can evaluate this integral fairly easily with integration by parts. We find

$$B_n = -\frac{2aL}{\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 \pi^2} = -\frac{8aL}{(2n - 1)^2 \pi^2}.$$

The solution is therefore

$$u(x, t) = -\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{8aL}{(1 - 2n)^2 \pi^2} \cos\left[\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right) \frac{\pi x}{L}\right] \exp\left\{-\left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 \frac{\pi^2}{L^2} kt\right\}.$$

A plot of the evolution of $u(x, t)$ is shown in Figure 1.

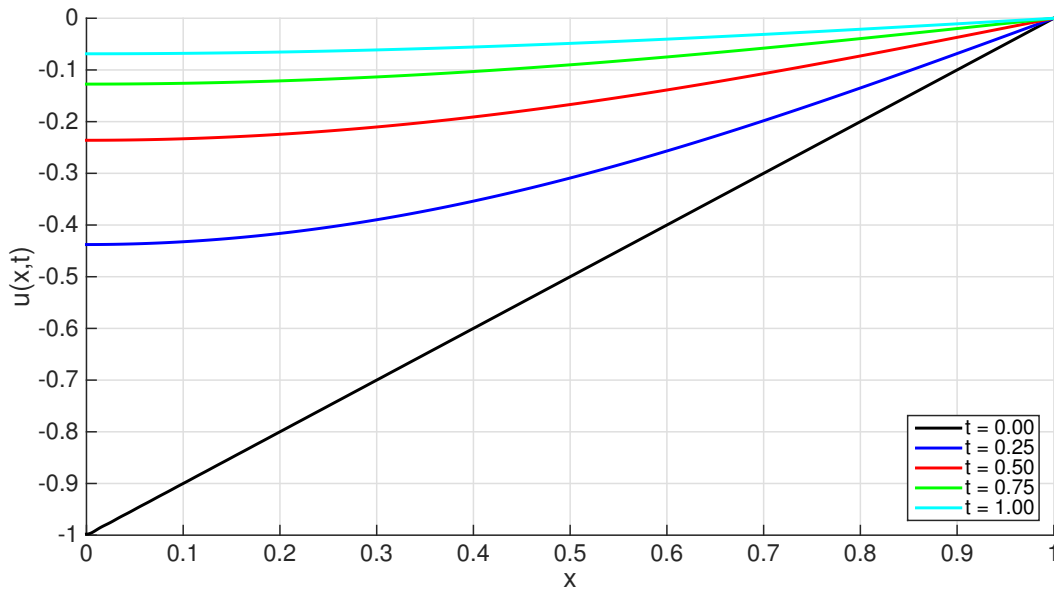


Figure 1: The solution $u(x, t)$ to 1(b) at various times t .

2 Separation of Variables: A pretty bad model for combustion. Consider the same heat equation as above, but with source cu (proportional to u), where c is a constant. This heat-dependent source term might (poorly) model a source of heat arising from, for example, a chemical reaction like combustion. The heat equation becomes

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = k \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + cu.$$

Assume insulating boundary conditions such that

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}(x = 0, t) = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x}(x = L, t) = 0.$$

- Use separation of variables to find the general solution as a series of cosines.
- What is the critical value of c for which $u(x, t)$ can increase in time?

Solution.

- To use separation of variables, we propose u of the form $u(x, t) = f(x)g(t)$. Substituting this into the governing equation yields

$$fg' = kfg'' + cfg.$$

Next, we multiply by $1/kfg$, and move the “ c ” term over to the left side. This gives

$$\frac{g'}{kg} - \frac{c}{k} = \frac{f''}{f}.$$

Per the usual separation of variables argument, because either side is dependent either on x or t but not both, we can only conclude that they are equal to a constant, which we call $-\lambda$. Note that we could have put the constant term c/k on either side; it only seems that including it with the g -equation is simpler.

The f -equation is

$$f'' + \lambda f = 0.$$

We showed in class that, with the boundary condition $f'(0) = f'(L) = 0$, the solutions are cosines of the form

$$f(x) = A \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right),$$

where we have found that $\lambda = (n\pi/L)^2$. It is easy to verify that this satisfies the boundary conditions. The g -equation is

$$g' + (k\lambda - c)g = 0,$$

and the solution is

$$g = Ce^{-k\lambda t} e^{ct}.$$

The general solution is therefore

$$u(x, t) = e^{ct} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} B_n \cos\left(\frac{n\pi x}{L}\right) \exp\left\{-k\left(\frac{n\pi}{L}\right)^2 t\right\}.$$

- (b) Because of the e^{ct} term in front, it is possible for $u(x, t)$ to increase in time, as opposed to decreasing like we normally expect. Note that the modes of $u(x, t)$ (corresponding to values of n) decay at different rates – and the first mode ($n = 1$) decays the slowest. Thus as c increases from 0, it is the first mode which first can grow. The time-dependence of the first mode is

$$\exp\left\{\left(c - \frac{k\pi^2}{L^2}\right)t\right\}.$$

Thus, the amplitude of the first mode grows in time when

$$c > \frac{k\pi^2}{L^2}.$$

When c is less than $k\pi^2/L^2$, none of the modes can grow and the solution decreases in time. When c equals $k\pi^2/L^2$, the amplitude of the first mode is constant, while the higher modes decay to zero.

3 Time-dependent forcing: The sun heating the ocean. Let's try to model for how the sun heats the ocean surface. We use the boundary conditions

$$u(z = 0, t) = u_0 e^{i\omega t} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial u}{\partial z}(z \rightarrow -\infty, t) \rightarrow 0,$$

where $z = 0$ is the ocean surface and as $z \rightarrow -\infty$ we are descending into the abyssal depths of the ocean. We propose to model the action of the sun as a source term in the heat equation by solving

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = k \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2} + Q_0 e^{z/\lambda} e^{i\omega t}.$$

- (a) Assume $\omega = 0$ and $\partial u / \partial t = 0$. Find the steady-state solution to the problem.
- (b) Now solve the problem with $\omega \neq 0$. Propose $u(z, t) = w(z) e^{i\omega t}$, then derive an equation for $w(z)$. Solve this equation.
- (c) Write down the real part of your solution for $w(z)$. This is the solution you would find if you replaced “ $e^{i\omega t}$ ” in the source term and boundary condition with $\cos(\omega t)$.

Solution.

- (a) When $\omega = 0$ and $\partial u / \partial t = 0$, the governing equation reduces to

$$0 = k \frac{d^2 u}{dz^2} + Q_0 e^{z/\lambda},$$

with the boundary conditions $u(0, t) = u_0$ and $du/dz \rightarrow 0$ as $z \rightarrow -\infty$. This equation is easily integrated. First we rearrange it to obtain,

$$\frac{d^2 u}{dz^2} = -\frac{Q_0}{k} e^{z/\lambda}.$$

One integration yields

$$\frac{du}{dz} = -\frac{\lambda Q_0}{k} e^{z/\lambda} + A,$$

and another yields

$$u = -\frac{\lambda^2 Q_0}{k} e^{z/\lambda} + Az + B.$$

The condition that $du/dz \rightarrow 0$ as $z \rightarrow -\infty$ means that $A = 0$ (otherwise du/dz equals a constant as $z \rightarrow -\infty$). The condition at $z = 0$ implies

$$u_0 = -\frac{\lambda^2 Q_0}{k} + B,$$

and from this we deduce that

$$B = \frac{\lambda^2 Q_0}{k} + u_0.$$

The steady-state solution is then

$$u(z, t) = u_0 + \frac{\lambda^2 Q_0}{k} (1 - e^{z/\lambda}).$$

(b) We propose $u(z, t) = w(z)e^{i\omega t}$. Substituting this into the governing equation yields

$$w \left(i\omega e^{i\omega t} \right) = ke^{i\omega t} w'' + Q_0 e^{z/\lambda} e^{i\omega t}.$$

Because every term depends on $e^{i\omega t}$, we can remove this from the equation. This yields

$$w'' - \frac{i\omega}{k} w = -\frac{Q_0}{k} e^{z/\lambda}.$$

The boundary conditions on w are $w = u_0$ at $x = 0$ and $w' \rightarrow 0$ as $z \rightarrow -\infty$. The homogeneous solution to this equation (the part of the solution that satisfies $w'' - i\omega w/k = 0$) is

$$w_h = Ae^{z\sqrt{i\omega/k}} + Be^{-z\sqrt{i\omega/k}}.$$

The particular part of the solution can be found by guessing a solution of the form $w_p = Ce^{z/\lambda}$. Plugging this into the differential equation yields

$$e^{z/\lambda} C \left(\lambda^{-2} - i\omega/k \right) = -\frac{Q_0}{k} e^{z/\lambda},$$

which implies that

$$C = \frac{Q_0}{k(\lambda^{-2} - i\omega/k)} = \frac{Q_0 \lambda^2}{k} \frac{1 + i\lambda^2 \omega/k}{1 + (\lambda^2 \omega/k)^2}.$$

To make our lives a little bit easier, let's define $\tilde{Q} = Q_0 \lambda^2/k$, $\epsilon = \lambda^2 \omega/k$ and $\ell = \sqrt{k/\omega}$ (note that $\epsilon = \lambda^2/\ell^2$). The total solution can then be written

$$w = Ae^{z\sqrt{i}/\ell} + Be^{-z\sqrt{i}/\ell} + \frac{1 + i\epsilon}{1 + \epsilon^2} \tilde{Q} e^{z/\lambda}.$$

The condition that $w' \rightarrow 0$ as $z \rightarrow -\infty$ requires $B = 0$. The condition at $z = 0$ implies

$$u_0 = A + \frac{1 + i\epsilon}{1 + \epsilon^2} \tilde{Q},$$

and so

$$A = u_0 - \frac{1 + i\epsilon}{1 + \epsilon^2} \tilde{Q}.$$

The final solution for $w(z)$ is then

$$w(z) = u_0 e^{z\sqrt{i}/\ell} + \frac{1 + i\epsilon}{1 + \epsilon^2} \tilde{Q} \left(e^{z/\lambda} - e^{z\sqrt{i}/\ell} \right).$$

(c) Finding the real part of $w(z)$ takes some care. We use the fact that

$$\sqrt{i} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (i + 1).$$

This implies that

$$\operatorname{Re} \left[e^{z\sqrt{i}/\ell} \right] = e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \cos(z/\sqrt{2}\ell),$$

and

$$\operatorname{Re} \left[ie^{z\sqrt{i}/\ell} \right] = -e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \sin(z/\sqrt{2}\ell)$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{Re} [w(z)] &= u_0 e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \cos(z/\sqrt{2}\ell) \\ &\quad + \frac{\tilde{Q}}{1+\epsilon^2} \left(e^{z/\lambda} - e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \cos(z/\sqrt{2}\ell) \right) + \frac{\epsilon\tilde{Q}}{1+\epsilon^2} e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \sin(z/\sqrt{2}\ell), \\ &= u_0 e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \cos(z/\sqrt{2}\ell) + \frac{\tilde{Q}}{1+\epsilon^2} \left[e^{z/\lambda} - e^{z/\sqrt{2}\ell} \left(\cos(z/\sqrt{2}\ell) - \epsilon \sin(z/\sqrt{2}\ell) \right) \right]. \end{aligned}$$

3 Laplace's equation in a square. Consider Laplace's equation in Cartesian coordinates in (x, y) ,

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

with the boundary conditions

$$u(x = 0, y) = -1,$$

$$u(x, y = 0) = 0,$$

$$u(x = L, y) = 1,$$

$$u(x, y = L) = 0.$$

A sketch is given below.

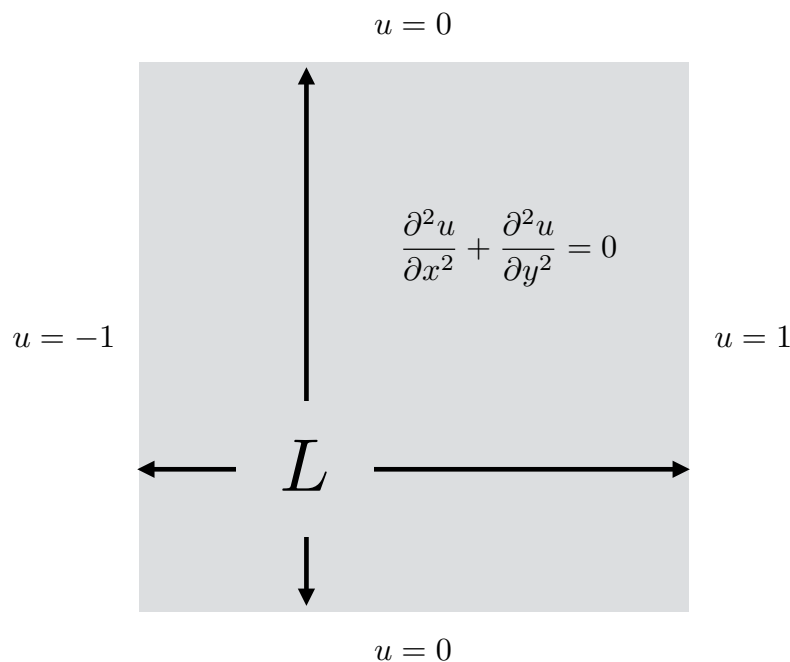


Figure 2: "Sketch" for problem 4.

- (a) Use the principle of superposition and separation of variables to find $u(x, y)$ which satisfies the governing equation and all boundary conditions.
- (b) What is the solution for $u(x, y)$ when the boundary conditions at $y = 0$ and $y = L$ are both changed to

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial y} = 0?$$

Finding the solution should not require more than a line or two of calculation. *Hint: will the solution depend on y ?*

Solution.

- (a) We use separation of variables to find u_1 and u_2 . First, we substitute $u = f(x)g(y)$ into the differential equation, and divide by $f(x)g(y)$. This yields

$$\frac{f''}{f} = -\frac{g''}{g}.$$

The left side of the equation is a function of x only, while the right side is a function of y . Thus they can only be equal if they are both equal to a constant, which we call λ , and which implies

$$\frac{f''}{f} = -\frac{g''}{g} = \lambda.$$

We then obtain the two equations

$$f'' - \lambda f = 0, \quad g'' + \lambda g = 0,$$

with the boundary conditions. The equation for f is a boundary value problem with inhomogeneous boundary conditions, whereas the equation for g is an eigenvalue problem which determines the permissible values of λ .

For both problems, the g -equation has solutions of the form

$$g = a \sin(\sqrt{\lambda}y) + b \cos(\sqrt{\lambda}y).$$

The boundary condition $g(y = 0) = 0$ implies $B = 0$, and $g(y = L) = 0$ implies $\lambda = (n\pi/L)^2$, where n is a positive integer.

We decompose u into

$$u(x, y) = u_1(x, y) + u_2(x, y).$$

The solution u_1 satisfies $u_1 = 1$ at $x = L$ and $u_1 = 0$ on the three other boundaries, while the solution u_2 satisfies $u_2 = -1$ at $x = 0$, and $u_2 = 0$ on the other boundaries.

For u_1 , the solution for f_1 which satisfies $f_1 = 0$ at $x = 0$ is

$$f_1 = c_n \sinh(n\pi x/L).$$

The total solution for u_1 is

$$u_1 = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n \sinh(n\pi x/L) \sin(n\pi y/L).$$

We find the value for A using the boundary condition at $x = L$, which implies

$$1 = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n \sinh(n\pi) \sin(n\pi y/L)$$

Multiplying by $\sin(n\pi y/L)$ and integrating over the domain implies

$$A_n = \frac{2}{n\pi \sinh(n\pi)} (1 - \cos(n\pi)) , \quad (1)$$

$$= \frac{4}{n\pi \sinh(n\pi)} \times \begin{cases} 1 & n \text{ odd} , \\ 0 & n \text{ even} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

We can write the odd n as $n = 2p - 1$, and rewrite this as

$$A_p = \frac{4}{(2p - 1)\pi \sinh((2p - 1)\pi)} , \quad \text{for } p = 1, 2, 3, \dots$$

Therefore

$$u_1(x, y) = \sum_{p=1}^{\infty} \frac{4 \sinh((2p - 1)\pi x/L)}{(2p - 1)\pi \sinh((2p - 1)\pi)} \sin(n\pi y/L) .$$

The problem for u_2 is very similar, except that the solution for f_2 is

$$f_2 = d_n \sinh(n\pi(x - L)/L) .$$

This solution satisfies $f_2(x = L) = 0$. At $x = 0$, we have

$$-1 = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n \sinh(-n\pi) \sin(n\pi y/L) .$$

The A'_n s are therefore identical to before, and we find

$$u_2 = \sum_{p=1}^{\infty} \frac{4 \sinh((2p - 1)\pi(x - L)/L)}{(2p - 1)\pi \sinh((2p - 1)\pi)} \sin(n\pi y/L) .$$

The total solution, $u = u_1 + u_2$, is then

$$u = \sum_{p=1}^{\infty} \frac{4 \sin\left(\frac{(2p-1)\pi y}{L}\right)}{(2p - 1)\pi \sinh((2p - 1)\pi)} \left[\sinh\left(\frac{(2p - 1)\pi x}{L}\right) + \sinh\left(\frac{(2p - 1)\pi}{L}(x - L)\right) \right] .$$

The solution for $u(x, y)$ is plotted in figure 3.

- (b) The hint strongly suggests that the solution will not depend on y . This means we simply need to solve

$$\frac{d^2 u}{dx^2} = 0 ,$$

with $u(0) = -1$ and $u(L) = 1$. The solution is a straight line between -1 and 1 , or

$$u = -1 + \frac{2x}{L} .$$

It is easy to check that this satisfies boundary conditions. Alternatively, we could obtain the solution using the procedure in (a). The resulting lengthy calculation would

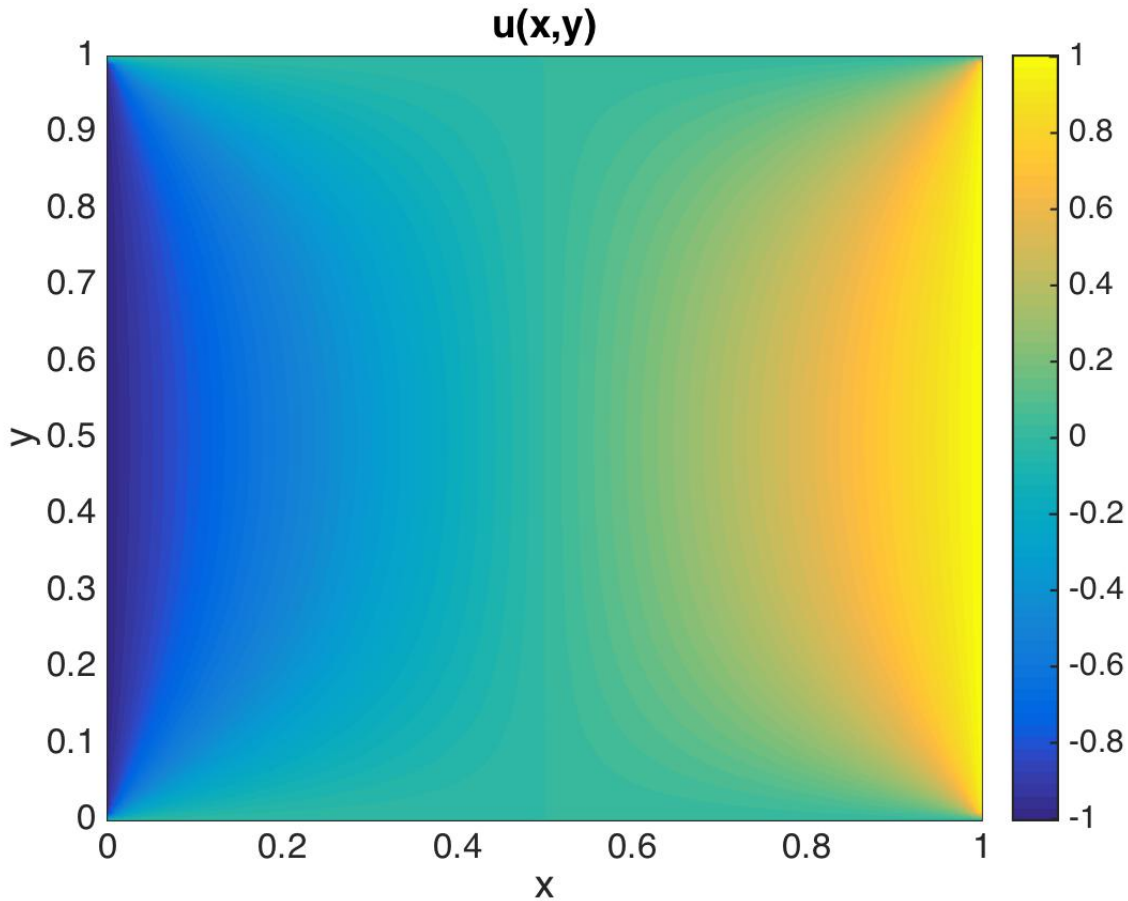


Figure 3: The solution $u(x, y)$ to 3(a) (the second 3).

reveal that the y -modes are cosines, but that the only mode remaining that satisfies the boundary conditions is the one for which $\lambda = 0$; i.e., the one that does not depend on y .

Note that if we find a solution to Laplace's equation which satisfies the boundary conditions, we are guaranteed that this is the single correct solution. Thus for simple problems, finding the solution by educated guess is a legitimate and powerful tool.

4 Laplace's equation outside a disk. Consider Laplace's equation outside the disk with radius a . The domain thus extends from $r = a$ to ∞ . Laplace's equation in polar coordinates is

$$\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r \frac{\partial u}{\partial r} \right) + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \theta^2} = 0.$$

The boundary condition at $r = a$ is

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial r}(r = a, \theta) = 1 + 2 \sin \theta.$$

The boundary condition as $r \rightarrow +\infty$ is

$$\nabla u(r \rightarrow \infty, \theta) \rightarrow 0.$$

A sketch is below.

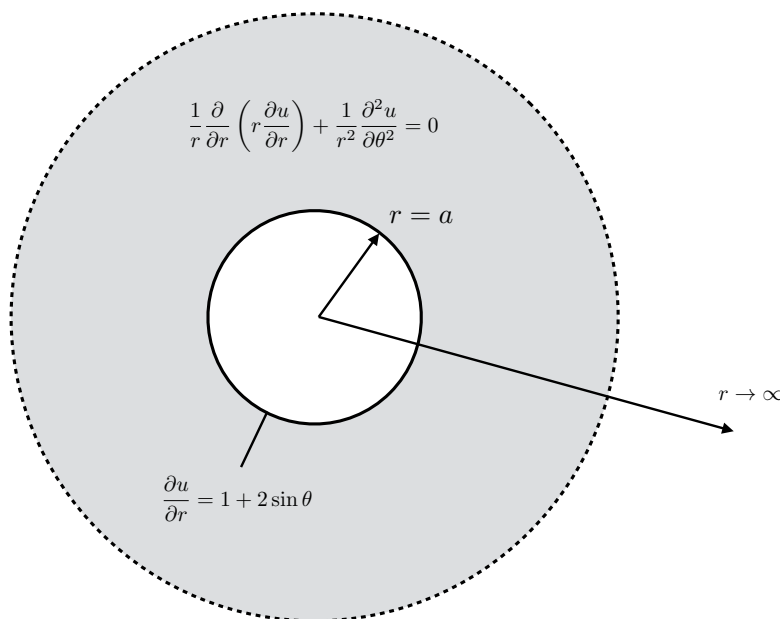


Figure 4: “Sketch” for problem 5.

- (a) Solve for $u(r, \theta)$. *Hint: your solution will contain an undeterminable constant. This is because there are two solutions with no θ -dependence.*

Solution. To use separation of variables we propose $u(r, \theta) = f(r)g(\theta)$ and plug this into the governing equation. After multiplying by r^2/fg and rearranging, we obtain

$$\frac{r}{f} (rf')' = -\frac{g''}{g} = \lambda.$$

The g -equation is the eigenvalue problem. Note that θ goes from $\theta = 0$ to $\theta = 2\pi$, and we have periodic conditions on g such that

$$g(0) = g(2\pi) \quad \text{and} \quad g'(0) = g'(2\pi).$$

The g -equation is therefore

$$g'' + \lambda g = 0,$$

which has the solution

$$g = A \sin(\sqrt{\lambda}\theta) + B \cos(\sqrt{\lambda}\theta).$$

Both are valid solutions under periodic boundary conditions given that $\sqrt{\lambda} = n$, where n is an integer. Notice that $n = 0$ corresponds to the non-trivial solution where g is constant and $u(r, \theta)$ does not depend on θ . Given that $\lambda = n^2$, the equation for f is

$$r^2 f'' + r f' - n^2 f = 0.$$

When $n > 0$, we can solve this equation by proposing $f = Cr^\alpha$. We then have $f' = C\alpha r^{\alpha-1}$ and $f'' = C(\alpha^2 - \alpha)r^{\alpha-2}$, which implies that

$$\alpha^2 - n^2 = 0,$$

and $\alpha = \pm n$. Thus, for $n > 0$, we find

$$f = Cr^n + Dr^{-n}.$$

One of our boundary conditions is that $\nabla u \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow \infty$. Note that

$$\nabla u = \frac{\partial u}{\partial r} \hat{\mathbf{r}} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \theta} \hat{\boldsymbol{\theta}},$$

where $\hat{\mathbf{r}}$ and $\hat{\boldsymbol{\theta}}$ are unit vectors in the r - and θ -directions, respectively. As a consequence, we must have both that $f' \rightarrow 0$ and that $f/r \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow \infty$. The solution $f = Cr^n$ is incompatible with this condition and, therefore, we must have $C = 0$.

However, this is not the whole solution, since there are valid solutions which do not depend on θ , corresponding to the case $n = 0$. In this case, the equation for f is

$$r f'' + f' = 0.$$

To solve this equation, we propose the form $f' = Er^\alpha$, which implies that $\alpha = -1$. Thus

$$f' = \frac{E}{r},$$

and

$$f = E \ln r + F.$$

This comprises the part of the solution independent of θ . Both $f = F$ and $f = E \ln r$ satisfy the conditions that $f' \rightarrow 0$ and $f/r \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow \infty$. The total solution for $u(r, \theta)$ is then

$$u(r, \theta) = F + E \ln r + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} r^{-n} (A_n \sin(n\theta) + B_n \cos(n\theta)).$$

Thus, we can calculate $\partial u / \partial r$,

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial r} = \frac{E}{r} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (-nr^{-n-1}) (A_n \sin(n\theta) + B_n \cos(n\theta)),$$

and at $r = a$ we must have

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial r} \Big|_{r=a} = 1 + 2 \sin(\theta) = \frac{E}{a} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left(-na^{-n-1} \right) (A_n \sin(n\theta) + B_n \cos(n\theta)) .$$

Next, we multiply both sides by $\sin(\theta)$ and integrate from $\theta = 0$ to $\theta = 2\pi$. We then find that

$$2 \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^2(\theta) \, d\theta = -a^{-2} A_1 \int_0^{2\pi} \sin^2(\theta) \, d\theta ,$$

where all the other terms corresponding to B_n and A_n for $n \neq 1$ have disappeared, a consequence of the orthogonality of sines and cosines. We then find that

$$A_1 = -2a^2 .$$

The other part of the initial condition can be obtained simply by integrating from 0 to 2π (one might think of this as multiplying by $\cos(\theta)$ and integrating). All the sines and cosines disappear, and we are left with

$$2\pi = 2\pi \frac{E}{a}, \quad \text{which implies} \quad E = a .$$

The total solution for $u(r, \theta)$ is therefore

$$u(r, \theta) = F + a \ln r - \frac{2a^2}{r} \sin(\theta) .$$

The given boundary conditions do not permit evaluation of F – this is the best we can do! Notice that this form satisfies the boundary conditions and the governing equation.