Math 1553 Supplement, §1.4 and §1.5

Solutions

Problem 1 uses the same widgets and gizmos class from our 1.4 and 1.5 worksheet. The professor in your widgets and gizmos class is trying to decide between three different grading schemes for computing your final course grade. The schemes are based on homework (HW), quiz grades (Q), midterms (M), and a final exam (F). The three schemes can be described by the following matrix A:

$$\begin{array}{r c} & \begin{array}{cccc} \text{HW} & \text{Q} & \text{M} & \text{F} \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{r} \text{Scheme 1} \\ \text{Scheme 2} \\ \text{Scheme 3} \end{array} & \begin{pmatrix} 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.5 & 0.3 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.4 & 0.4 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.6 & 0.2 \end{pmatrix} \end{array}$$

1. Suppose that you have a score of x_1 on homework, x_2 on quizzes, x_3 on midterms, and x_4 on the final, with potential final course grades of b_1, b_2, b_3.

a) In the worksheet for 1.4 and 1.5, you wrote the matrix equation $Ax = b$ to relate your final grades to your scores. Keeping $b = \begin{pmatrix} b_1 \\ b_2 \\ b_3 \end{pmatrix}$ as a general vector, write the augmented matrix $(A \mid b)$.

b) Row reduce this matrix until you reach row echelon form.

c) Looking at the final matrix in (b), what equation in terms of b_1, b_2, b_3 must be satisfied in order for $Ax = b$ to have a solution?

d) The answer to (c) also defines the span of the columns of A. Describe the span geometrically.

e) Solve the equation in (c) for b_1. Looking at this equation, is it possible for b_1 to be the largest of b_1, b_2, b_3? In other words, is it ever possible for the grade under Scheme 1 to be the highest of the three final course grades? Why or why not? Which scheme would you argue for?

Solution.

a) $\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.5 & 0.3 & b_1 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.4 & 0.4 & b_2 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.6 & 0.2 & b_3 \end{array}\right)$

b) Here is the row reduction:

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.5 & 0.3 & b_1 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.4 & 0.4 & b_2 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.6 & 0.2 & b_3 \end{array}\right) \xrightarrow[R_3 = R_3 - R_1]{R_2 = R_2 - R_1} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.5 & 0.3 & b_1 \\ 0 & 0 & -0.1 & 0.1 & b_2 - b_1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0.1 & -0.1 & b_3 - b_1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_3 = R_3 + R_2} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.5 & 0.3 & b_1 \\ 0 & 0 & -0.1 & 0.1 & b_2 - b_1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & b_2 + b_3 - 2b_1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\xrightarrow[]{\substack{R_1=R_1\times 10\\ R_2=R_2\times(-10)}} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 1 & 5 & 3 & 10b_1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -1 & 10b_1-10b_2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & b_2+b_3-2b_1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_1=R_1-5R_2} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 1 & 0 & 8 & -40b_1+50b_2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -1 & 10b_1-10b_2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & b_2+b_3-2b_1 \end{array}\right)$$

c) The last row in the row-reduced matrix translates into $0 = b_2+b_3-2b_1$. Hence the system of equations is inconsistent unless $\boxed{b_2+b_3-2b_1=0}$.

d) This is the 2-plane in $\mathbf{R}^3$ given by $-2b_1+b_2+b_3=0$.

e) Rearranging, this is the set of points (b_1,b_2,b_3) where $b_1=\frac{1}{2}(b_2+b_3)$, i.e., where b_1 is the average of b_2 and b_3. Hence it is impossible for b_1 to be larger than both b_2 and b_3.

You should argue for the second grading scheme if your final grade was higher than your midterm grade; otherwise you should argue for the third.

2. **a)** True or false (justify your answer):
A matrix equation $Ax=b$ is consistent if A has a pivot in every column.

b) Suppose A is a 3×3 matrix and there is a vector y in $\mathbf{R}^3$ so that $Ax=y$ does not have a solution. Is it possible that there is a z in $\mathbf{R}^3$ so that the equation $Ax=z$ has a *unique* solution? Justify your answer.

Solution.

a) False. For example, the system $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}\begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$ has no solution, even though the matrix $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ has a pivot in every column. However, the system is guaranteed to be consistent if A has a pivot in every **row**.

b) No. Since $Ax=y$ is inconsistent for some y in $\mathbf{R}^3$, the big theorem from 1.4 implies that A has at least one row without a pivot, so A has at most 2 pivots. Therefore, at least one of the three columns of A will not have a pivot, so if an equation $Ax=z$ is consistent, the system will have a free variable and thus infinitely many solutions.

3. Suppose the solution set of a certain system of linear equations is given by

$$x_1 = 5 + 4x_3, \qquad x_2 = -2 - 7x_3, \qquad x_3 = x_3 \;\; (x_3 \text{ free}).$$

Write the solution set in parametric vector form. Describe the set geometrically.

Solution.

In parametric vector form, the solutions are given by

$$\begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 5 + 4x_3 \\ -2 - 7x_3 \\ x_3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ -2 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + x_3 \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ -7 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

This is the line in $\mathbf{R}^3$ through $\begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ -2 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ parallel to Span $\left\{\begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ -7 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}\right\}$.