

MATH 311

Topics in Applied Mathematics I

Lecture 25:

Orthogonal complement.

Orthogonal projection.

Orthogonality

Definition 1. Vectors $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ are said to be **orthogonal** (denoted $\mathbf{x} \perp \mathbf{y}$) if $\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y} = 0$.

Definition 2. A vector $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is said to be **orthogonal** to a nonempty set $Y \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ (denoted $\mathbf{x} \perp Y$) if $\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y} = 0$ for any $\mathbf{y} \in Y$.

Definition 3. Nonempty sets $X, Y \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ are said to be **orthogonal** (denoted $X \perp Y$) if $\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y} = 0$ for any $\mathbf{x} \in X$ and $\mathbf{y} \in Y$.

Examples in \mathbb{R}^3 . • The line $x = y = 0$ is orthogonal to the line $y = z = 0$.

Indeed, if $\mathbf{v} = (0, 0, z)$ and $\mathbf{w} = (x, 0, 0)$ then $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = 0$.

• The line $x = y = 0$ is orthogonal to the plane $z = 0$.

Indeed, if $\mathbf{v} = (0, 0, z)$ and $\mathbf{w} = (x, y, 0)$ then $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = 0$.

• The line $x = y = 0$ is not orthogonal to the plane $z = 1$.

The vector $\mathbf{v} = (0, 0, 1)$ belongs to both the line and the plane, and $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v} = 1 \neq 0$.

• The plane $z = 0$ is not orthogonal to the plane $y = 0$.

The vector $\mathbf{v} = (1, 0, 0)$ belongs to both planes and $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v} = 1 \neq 0$.

Proposition 1 If $X, Y \in \mathbb{R}^n$ are orthogonal sets then either they are disjoint or $X \cap Y = \{\mathbf{0}\}$.

Proof: $\mathbf{v} \in X \cap Y \implies \mathbf{v} \perp \mathbf{v} \implies \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0 \implies \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{0}$.

Proposition 2 Let V be a subspace of \mathbb{R}^n and S be a spanning set for V . Then for any $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$

$$\mathbf{x} \perp S \implies \mathbf{x} \perp V.$$

Proof: Any $\mathbf{v} \in V$ is represented as $\mathbf{v} = a_1\mathbf{v}_1 + \cdots + a_k\mathbf{v}_k$, where $\mathbf{v}_i \in S$ and $a_i \in \mathbb{R}$. If $\mathbf{x} \perp S$ then

$$\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{v} = a_1(\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{v}_1) + \cdots + a_k(\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{v}_k) = 0 \implies \mathbf{x} \perp \mathbf{v}.$$

Example. The vector $\mathbf{v} = (1, 1, 1)$ is orthogonal to the plane spanned by vectors $\mathbf{w}_1 = (2, -3, 1)$ and $\mathbf{w}_2 = (0, 1, -1)$ (because $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}_1 = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}_2 = 0$).

Orthogonal complement

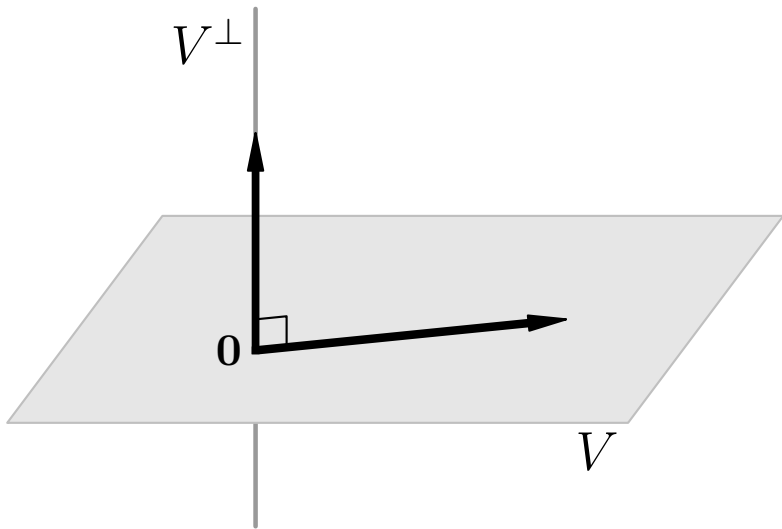
Definition. Let $S \subset \mathbb{R}^n$. The **orthogonal complement** of S , denoted S^\perp , is the set of all vectors $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ that are orthogonal to S . That is, S^\perp is the largest subset of \mathbb{R}^n orthogonal to S .

Theorem 1 S^\perp is a subspace of \mathbb{R}^n .

Note that $S \subset (S^\perp)^\perp$, hence $\text{Span}(S) \subset (S^\perp)^\perp$.

Theorem 2 $(S^\perp)^\perp = \text{Span}(S)$. In particular, for any subspace V we have $(V^\perp)^\perp = V$.

Example. Consider a line $L = \{(x, 0, 0) \mid x \in \mathbb{R}\}$ and a plane $\Pi = \{(0, y, z) \mid y, z \in \mathbb{R}\}$ in \mathbb{R}^3 . Then $L^\perp = \Pi$ and $\Pi^\perp = L$.



Fundamental subspaces

Definition. Given an $m \times n$ matrix A , let

$$N(A) = \{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n \mid A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{0}\},$$

$$R(A) = \{\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{R}^m \mid \mathbf{b} = A\mathbf{x} \text{ for some } \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n\}.$$

$R(A)$ is the range of a linear mapping $L : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$, $L(\mathbf{x}) = A\mathbf{x}$. $N(A)$ is the kernel of L .

Also, $N(A)$ is the nullspace of the matrix A while $R(A)$ is the column space of A . The row space of A is $R(A^T)$.

The subspaces $N(A), R(A^T) \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ and $R(A), N(A^T) \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ are **fundamental subspaces** associated to the matrix A .

Theorem $N(A) = R(A^T)^\perp$, $N(A^T) = R(A)^\perp$.

That is, the nullspace of a matrix is the orthogonal complement of its row space.

Proof: The equality $A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{0}$ means that the vector \mathbf{x} is orthogonal to rows of the matrix A . Therefore $N(A) = S^\perp$, where S is the set of rows of A . It remains to note that $S^\perp = \text{Span}(S)^\perp = R(A^T)^\perp$.

Corollary Let V be a subspace of \mathbb{R}^n . Then $\dim V + \dim V^\perp = n$.

Proof: Pick a basis $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k$ for V . Let A be the $k \times n$ matrix whose rows are vectors $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k$. Then $V = R(A^T)$, hence $V^\perp = N(A)$. Consequently, $\dim V$ and $\dim V^\perp$ are rank and nullity of A . Therefore $\dim V + \dim V^\perp$ equals the number of columns of A , which is n .

Problem. Let V be the plane spanned by vectors $\mathbf{v}_1 = (1, 1, 0)$ and $\mathbf{v}_2 = (0, 1, 1)$. Find V^\perp .

The orthogonal complement to V is the same as the orthogonal complement of the set $\{\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2\}$. A vector $\mathbf{u} = (x, y, z)$ belongs to the latter if and only if

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v}_1 = 0 \\ \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v}_2 = 0 \end{cases} \iff \begin{cases} x + y = 0 \\ y + z = 0 \end{cases}$$

Alternatively, the subspace V is the row space of the matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

hence V^\perp is the nullspace of A .

The general solution of the system (or, equivalently, the general element of the nullspace of A) is $(t, -t, t) = t(1, -1, 1)$, $t \in \mathbb{R}$. Thus V^\perp is the straight line spanned by the vector $(1, -1, 1)$.

Orthogonal projection

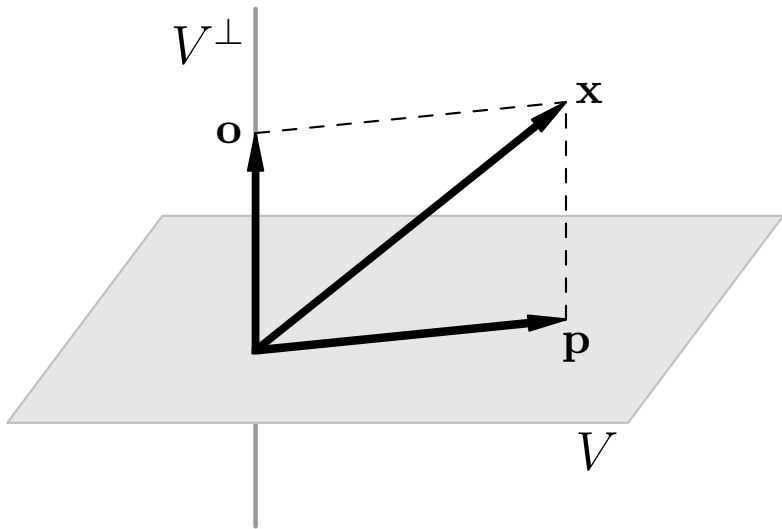
Theorem 1 Let V be a subspace of \mathbb{R}^n . Then any vector $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is uniquely represented as $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{o}$, where $\mathbf{p} \in V$ and $\mathbf{o} \in V^\perp$.

Idea of the proof: Let $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k$ be a basis for V and $\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_m$ be a basis for V^\perp . Then $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_m$ is a linearly independent set. Hence it is a basis for \mathbb{R}^n .

In the above expansion, \mathbf{p} is called the **orthogonal projection** of the vector \mathbf{x} onto the subspace V .

Theorem 2 $\|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{v}\| > \|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{p}\|$ for any $\mathbf{v} \neq \mathbf{p}$ in V .

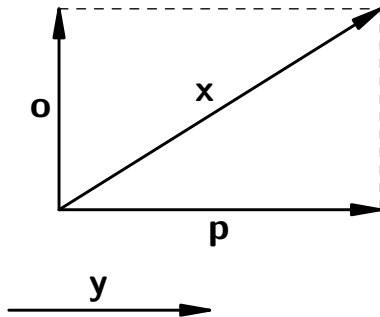
Thus $\|\mathbf{o}\| = \|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{p}\| = \min_{\mathbf{v} \in V} \|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{v}\|$ is the **distance** from the vector \mathbf{x} to the subspace V .



Orthogonal projection onto a vector

Let $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, with $\mathbf{y} \neq \mathbf{0}$.

Then there exists a unique decomposition $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{o}$ such that \mathbf{p} is parallel to \mathbf{y} and \mathbf{o} is orthogonal to \mathbf{y} .



\mathbf{p} = orthogonal projection of \mathbf{x} onto \mathbf{y}

Orthogonal projection onto a vector

Let $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, with $\mathbf{y} \neq \mathbf{0}$.

Then there exists a unique decomposition $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{o}$ such that \mathbf{p} is parallel to \mathbf{y} and \mathbf{o} is orthogonal to \mathbf{y} .

We have $\mathbf{p} = \alpha \mathbf{y}$ for some $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$. Then

$$0 = \mathbf{o} \cdot \mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{x} - \alpha \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{y} = \mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y} - \alpha \mathbf{y} \cdot \mathbf{y}.$$

$$\implies \alpha = \frac{\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y}}{\mathbf{y} \cdot \mathbf{y}} \implies \boxed{\mathbf{p} = \frac{\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y}}{\mathbf{y} \cdot \mathbf{y}} \mathbf{y}}$$

Problem. Find the distance from the point $\mathbf{x} = (3, 1)$ to the line spanned by $\mathbf{y} = (2, -1)$.

Consider the decomposition $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{o}$, where \mathbf{p} is parallel to \mathbf{y} while $\mathbf{o} \perp \mathbf{y}$. The required distance is the length of the orthogonal component \mathbf{o} .

$$\mathbf{p} = \frac{\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{y}}{\mathbf{y} \cdot \mathbf{y}} \mathbf{y} = \frac{5}{5} (2, -1) = (2, -1),$$

$$\mathbf{o} = \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{p} = (3, 1) - (2, -1) = (1, 2), \quad \|\mathbf{o}\| = \sqrt{5}.$$

Problem. Find the point on the line $y = -x$ that is closest to the point $(3, 4)$.

The required point is the projection \mathbf{p} of $\mathbf{v} = (3, 4)$ on the vector $\mathbf{w} = (1, -1)$ spanning the line $y = -x$.

$$\mathbf{p} = \frac{\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}}{\mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{w}} \mathbf{w} = \frac{-1}{2} (1, -1) = \left(-\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\right).$$