Quiz Section 9.5

Review

1) A **discrete-time stochastic process (DTSP)** is a sequence of random variables $X^{(0)}, X^{(1)}, X^{(2)}, \ldots$, where $X^{(t)}$ is the value at time t. For example, the temperature in Seattle or stock price of TESLA each day, or which node you are at after each time step on a random walk on a graph.

2) **Markov Chain** is a DTSP, with the additional following three properties:

(a) ...has a finite (or countably infinite) **state space** $\mathcal{S} = \{s_1, \ldots, s_n\}$ which it bounces between, so each $X^{(t)} \in \mathcal{S}$.

(b) ...satisfies the **Markov property**. A DTSP satisfies the Markov property if the future is (conditionally) independent of the past given the present. Mathematically, it means,

$$\mathbb{P}\left(X^{(t+1)} = x_{t+1} \mid X^{(0)} = x_0, X^{(1)} = x_1, \ldots, X^{(t-1)} = x_{t-1}, X^{(t)} = x_t\right) = \mathbb{P}\left(X^{(t+1)} = x_{t+1} \mid X^{(t)} = x_t\right) .$$

(c) ...has **fixed transition probabilities**. Meaning, if we are at some state s_i, we transition to another state s_j with probability *independent* of the current time. Due to this property and the previous, the transitions are governed by n^2 probabilities: the probability of transitioning from one of n current states to one of n next states. These are stored in a square $n \times n$ **transition probability matrix (TPM)** $\mathbf{M}$, where $M_{ij} = \mathbb{P}\left(X^{(t+1)} = s_j \mid X^{(t)} = s_i\right)$ is the probability of transitioning from state s_i to state s_j for any/every value of t.

3) A **stationary distribution** of a Markov chain is a probability distribution on states that is unchanged by taking one step of the Markov chain.

Task 1 – Faulty Machines

You are trying to use a machine that only works on some days. If on a given day, the machine is working it will break down the next day with probability $0 < b < 1$, and works on the next day with probability $1 - b$. If it is not working on a given day, it will work on the next day with probability $0 < r < 1$ and not work the next day with probability $1 - r$.

a) In this problem we will formulate this process as a Markov chain. First, let $X^{(t)}$ be a variable that denotes the state of the machine at time t. Then, define a state space $\mathcal{S}$ that includes all the possible states that the machine can be in. Lastly, for all $A, B \in \mathcal{S}$ find $\mathbb{P}(X^{(t+1)} = A \mid X^{(t)} = B)$ (A and B can be the same state).

b) Suppose that on day 1, the machine is working. What is the probability that it is working on day 3?

c) As $n \to \infty$, what does the probability that the machine is working on day n converge to? To get the answer, solve for the *stationary distribution*.

Task 2 – Another Markov Chain

Suppose that the following is the transition probability matrix for a 4 state Markov chain (states 1,2,3,4).

$$M = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1/2 & 1/2 & 0 \\ 1/3 & 0 & 0 & 2/3 \\ 1/3 & 1/3 & 0 & 1/3 \\ 1/5 & 2/5 & 2/5 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

a) What is the probability that $X^{(2)} = 4$ given that $X^{(0)} = 4$?

b) Write down the system of equations that the stationary distribution must satisfy and solve them.

Task 3 – Three Tails

You flip a fair coin until you see three tails in a row. Model this as a Markov chain with the following states:

- S: start state, which we are only in before flipping any coins.
- H: We see a heads, which means no streak of tails currently exists.
- T: We've seen exactly one tail in a row so far.
- TT: We've seen exactly two tails in a row so far.
- TTT: We've accomplished our goal of seeing three tails in a row, stop flipping, and stay there.

a) Write down the transition probability matrix.

b) Write down the system of equations whose variables are $D(s)$ for each state $s \in \{S, H, T, TT, TTT\}$, where $D(s)$ is the expected number of steps until state TTT is reached starting from state s. Solve this system of equations to find $D(S)$.

c) Write down the system of equations whose variables are $\gamma(s)$ for each state $s \in \{S, H, T, TT, TTT\}$, where $\gamma(s)$ is the expected number of heads seen before state TTT is reached. Solve this system to find $\gamma(S)$, the expected number of heads seen overall until getting three tails in a row.