Basic 3D graphics

With affine matrices, we can now transform virtual 3D objects in their local coordinate systems into a global (world) coordinate system:

To synthesize an image of the scene, we also need to add light sources and a viewer/camera:

Pinhole camera

To create an image of a virtual scene, we need to define a camera, and we need to model lighting and shading. For the camera, we use a pinhole camera.

The image is rendered onto an image plane (usually in front of the camera).

Viewing rays emanate from the center of projection (COP) at the center of the pinhole.

The image of an object point \( P \) is at the intersection of the viewing ray through \( P \) and the image plane.

But is \( P \) visible? This the problem of hidden surface removal (a.k.a., visible surface determination). We’ll consider this problem later.
Shading

Next, we’ll need a model to describe how light interacts with surfaces.

Such a model is called a shading model.

Other names:
- Lighting model
- Light reflection model
- Local illumination model
- Reflectance model
- BRDF

An abundance of photons

Given the camera and shading model, properly determining the right color at each pixel is extremely hard.

Look around the room. Each light source has different characteristics. Trillions of photons are pouring out every second.

These photons can:
- interact with molecules and particles in the air ("participating media")
- strike a surface and
  - be absorbed
  - be reflected (scattered)
  - cause fluorescence or phosphorescence.
- interact in a wavelength-dependent manner
- generally bounce around and around

Our problem

We’re going to build up to approximations of reality called the Phong and Blinn-Phong illumination models.

They have the following characteristics:
- not physically correct
- gives a “first-order” approximation to physical light reflection
- very fast
- widely used

In addition, we will assume local illumination, i.e., light goes: light source -> surface -> viewer.

No interreflections, no shadows.

Setup…

Given:
- a point P on a surface visible through pixel p
- The normal N at P
- The lighting direction, L, and (color) intensity, I_L, at P
- The viewing direction, V, at P
- The shading coefficients at P

Compute the color, I, of pixel p.

Assume that the direction vectors are normalized:

\[ |N| \cdot |L| \cdot |V| = 1 \]
“Iteration zero”

The simplest thing you can do is…
Assign each polygon a single color:

\[ I = k_e \]

where

- \( I \) is the resulting intensity
- \( k_e \) is the emissivity or intrinsic shade associated with the object

This has some special-purpose uses, but not really good for drawing a scene.

“Iteration one”

Let’s make the color at least dependent on the overall quantity of light available in the scene:

\[ I = k_e + k_a I_{La} \]

- \( k_e \) is the ambient reflection coefficient.
- really the reflectance of ambient light
- “ambient” light is assumed to be equal in all directions
- \( I_{La} \) is the ambient light intensity.

Physically, what is “ambient” light?

“Diffuse reflectors”

Emissive and ambient reflection don’t model realistic lighting and reflection. To improve this, we will look at diffuse (a.k.a., Lambertian) reflection.

Diffuse reflection can occur from dull, matte surfaces, like latex paint, or chalk.

These diffuse reflectors reradiate light equally in all directions.

Picture a rough surface with lots of tiny microfacets.
**Diffuse reflectors**

...or picture a surface with little pigment particles embedded beneath the surface (neglect reflection at the surface for the moment):

![Diffuse reflectors diagram](image1)

The microfacets and pigments distribute light rays in all directions.

Embedded pigments are responsible for the coloration of diffusely reflected light in plastics and paints.

Note: the figures in this and the previous slide are intuitive, but not strictly (physically) correct.

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**“Iteration two”**

The incoming energy is proportional to giving the diffuse reflection equations:

\[
I = k_e + k_a I_L + k_d I_L B
\]

\[
= k_e + k_a I_L + k_d I_L B(N \cdot L)
\]

where:

- \(k_e\) is the diffuse reflection coefficient
- \(I_L\) is the (color) intensity of the light source
- \(N\) is the normal to the surface (unit vector)
- \(L\) is the direction to the light source (unit vector)
- \(B\) prevents contribution of light from below the surface:

\[
B = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } N \cdot L > 0 \\
0 & \text{if } N \cdot L \leq 0 
\end{cases}
\]

---

**Diffuse reflectors, cont.**

The reflected intensity from a diffuse surface does not depend on the direction of the viewer. The incoming light, though, does depend on the direction of the light source:

![Diffuse reflectors, cont. diagram](image2)

**Specular reflection**

Specular reflection accounts for the highlight that you see on some objects.

It is particularly important for smooth, shiny surfaces, such as:

- metal
- polished stone
- plastics
- apples
- skin

Properties:

- Specular reflection depends on the viewing direction \(V\).
- For non-metals, the color is determined solely by the color of the light.
- For metals, the color may be altered (e.g., brass)
Specular reflection “derivation”

For a perfect mirror reflector, light is reflected about $N$, so

$$ I = \begin{cases} I_c & \text{if } V = R \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} $$

For a near-perfect reflector, you might expect the highlight to fall off quickly with increasing angle $\theta$.

Also known as:
- “rough specular” reflection
- “directional diffuse” reflection
- “glossy” reflection

Phong specular reflection

One way to get this effect is to take $(R \cdot V)$ raised to a power $n_s$.

Phong specular reflection is proportional to:

$$ I_{\text{specular}} \sim B(R \cdot V)^{n_s} $$

where $(x)_+ = \max(0, x)$.

Q: As $n_s$ gets larger, does the highlight on a curved surface get smaller or larger?

Blinn-Phong specular reflection

A common alternative for specular reflection is the Blinn-Phong model (sometimes called the modified Phong model.)

We compute the vector halfway between $L$ and $V$ as:

$$ H = \frac{1}{2} (L + V) $$

Analogous to Phong specular reflection, we can compute the specular contribution in terms of $(N \cdot H)$, raised to a power $n_s$:

$$ I_{\text{specular}} \sim B(N \cdot H)^{n_s} $$

where, again, $(x)_+ = \max(0, x)$.

“Iteration three”

The next update to the Blinn-Phong shading model is then:

$$ I = k_i + k_d I_d + k_s I_s \left[ I_d B(N \cdot L) + k_s B(N \cdot H)^{n_s} \right] $$

where:
- $k_i$ is the specular reflection coefficient
- $n_s$ is the specular exponent or shininess
- $H$ is the unit halfway vector between $L$ and $V$, where $V$ is the viewing direction.
Directional lights

The simplest form of lights supported by renderers are ambient, directional, and point. Spotlights are also supported often as a special form of point light.

We’ve seen ambient light sources, which are not really geometric.

Directional light sources have a single direction and intensity associated with them.

Using affine notation, what is the homogeneous coordinate for a directional light?

Point lights

The direction of a point light sources is determined by the vector from the light position to the surface point.

\[
L = \frac{E - P}{\|E - P\|}
\]

\[
Y = \|E - r\|
\]

Physics tells us the intensity must drop off inversely with the square of the distance:

\[
f_{\text{atten}} = \frac{1}{r^2}
\]

Sometimes, this distance-squared dropoff is considered too “harsh.” A common alternative is:

\[
f_{\text{atten}} = \frac{1}{ar^2 + br + c}
\]

with user-supplied constants for \(a\), \(b\), and \(c\).

Using affine notation, what is the homogeneous coordinate for a point light?

“Iteration four”

Since light is additive, we can handle multiple lights by taking the sum over every light.

Our equation is now (for spotlight lighting):

\[
l = k_a + \sum_j \left( \frac{L \cdot S}{ar_j^2 + br_j + c_j} \right) l_j B_j \left[ k_a (N \cdot L_j) + k_b (N \cdot H_j) \right]
\]

This is the Blinn-Phong illumination model (for spotlights). Note that, in practice, we usually set \(k_a = k_c\).

Which quantities are spatial vectors?

Which are RGB triples?

Which are scalars?
3D Geometry in the Graphics Hardware Pipeline

Graphics hardware applies transformations to bring the objects and lighting into the camera’s coordinate system:

- The geometry is assumed to be made of triangles, and the vertices are projected onto the image plane.

Rasterization

After projecting the vertices, graphics hardware “smears” vertex properties across the interior of the triangle in a process called rasterization.

- Smearing the z-values and using a Z-buffer will enable the graphics hardware to determine if a point inside a triangle is visible. (More on this in another lecture.)
- If we have stored colors at the vertices, then we can smear these as well.

Hardware Pipeline

A vertex shader is run for each vertex, and outputs values to be interpolated across the triangle.

- The vertices are grouped into triangles (or other primitives, e.g., lines) to be rasterized. A geometry shader is possibly run to generate more primitives.
- We iterate through scanlines, interpolating outputs from the vertex shader at each pixel.
- A fragment shader (or pixel shader) is called at each pixel in the primitive, which gets the interpolated values and outputs a final color to the framebuffer.

GLSL: A Simple Vertex Shader

```glsl
in vec3 position;
in vec3 vertex_color;
out vec3 color;
uniform mat4 modelview;
uniform mat4 projection;

void main() {
    color = vertex_color;
    gl_Position = projection * modelview * vec4(position, 1.0);
}
```
GLSL: A Simple Fragment Shader

```
in vec3 color;
out vec4 frag_color;

void main() {
    frag_color = vec4(color, 1.0);
}
```

GLSL: Storage Qualifiers

*uniform*: Global value that is the same across all vertices and fragments (for this draw call).

**Vertex shader**
- *in*: Per-vertex attributes (that were sent to the GPU)
- *out*: Values to be interpolated by the rasterizer and then passed to a fragment shader

**Fragment shader**
- *in*: Interpolated values of vertex shader *out*'s
- *out*: Value to be written to frame buffer

*uniform*'s may include model/view/projection matrices, light parameters, material parameters, textures…

*in*'s and *out*'s may include normals, positions, colors, material parameters, texture coordinates…

Shading the interiors of triangles

We will be computing colors using the Blinn-Phong lighting model.

Let’s assume (as graphics hardware does) that we are working with triangles.

How should we shade the interiors of triangles?

We will consider this over the next few slides…

Per-face normals for triangle meshes

We will be shading and calculating reflections and refractions based on surface normals.

For a triangle mesh, we can make the natural assumption that each triangle has a constant normal (the normal of its supporting plane):

Recall the Blinn-Phong shading equation for a single light source (no ambient or emissive):

\[
I = I_L \left( k_r (N \cdot L)^n + k_s (N \cdot H)^s \right)
\]

Typically, \( L \) and \( V \) vary only a small amount over each triangle, if at all.

Q: If material properties \( (k_r, k_s, n_s) \) are constant over the mesh, how will shading vary within a triangle?
Faceted shading (cont’d)

Williams and Siegel 1990

Gouraud interpolation

To get a smoother result that is easily performed in hardware, we can do Gouraud interpolation.

Here’s how it works:

1. Compute normals at the vertices.
2. Shade only the vertices.
3. Interpolate the resulting vertex colors.

Gouraud interpolation artifacts

Gouraud interpolation has significant limitations.

1. If the polygonal approximation is too coarse, we can miss specular highlights.

2. We will encounter Mach banding (derivative discontinuity enhanced by human eye).

This is what graphics hardware does by default.

A substantial improvement is to do…
Phong interpolation

To get an even smoother result with fewer artifacts, we can perform Phong interpolation.

Here’s how it works:
1. Compute normals at the vertices.
2. Interpolate normals and normalize.
3. Shade using the interpolated normals.

Gouraud vs. Phong interpolation

[Williams and Siegel 1990]

Old pipeline: Gouraud interpolation

Default vertex processing:
- \( L \leftarrow \text{determine lighting direction} \)
- \( V \leftarrow \text{determine viewing direction} \)
- \( N \leftarrow \text{normalize} \)
- \( c_{\text{blinn-phong}} \leftarrow \text{shade with} \ L, V, N, k_d, k_s, n_s \)
- \( v_i \leftarrow \text{project} \ v \ \text{to image} \)
- \( \text{out} \ c_{\text{blinn-phong}} \)
- \( \text{out} \ v_i \)

Fragment shader:
- \( \text{color} \leftarrow c_{\text{blinn-phong}} \)

Programmable pipeline: Phong-interpolated normals!

Vertex shader:
- \( \text{determine eye, normal, vertex in world coordinates} \)
- \( v_i \leftarrow \text{project} \ v \ \text{to image} \)
- \( \text{out} \ \text{eye} \)
- \( \text{out} \ \text{normal} \)
- \( \text{out} \ v_i \)
- \( v_i^1, v_i^2, v_i^3 \rightarrow \text{triangle} \)

Fragment shader:
- \( L \leftarrow \text{determine lighting direction (using} \ v_i^e \)
- \( V \leftarrow \text{normalize} \ (v_i^e - v_i^o) \)
- \( N \leftarrow \text{normalize} \)
- \( \text{color} \leftarrow \text{shade with} \ L, V, N, k_d, k_s, n_s \)
- \( \text{out} \ v_i^e \)
- \( \text{out} \ v_i^o \)
- \( \text{out} \ n_i \)
Choosing Blinn-Phong shading parameters

Experiment with different parameter settings. To get you started, here are a few suggestions:

- Try $n_s$ in the range $[0, 100]$
- Try $k_d + k_s + k_a < 1$
- Use a small $k_a$ (~0.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>$n_s$</th>
<th>$k_d$</th>
<th>$k_a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>Small, color of metal</td>
<td>Large, color of metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Medium, color of plastic</td>
<td>Medium, white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>varying</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more physical correctness, we would also weight the specular part by $N \cdot L$:

$$ f_r(\omega_i, \omega_o) \text{ or } f_r(\omega_i \rightarrow \omega_o) $$

This function is called the **Bi-directional Reflectance Distribution Function (BRDF)**.

More sophisticated BRDF’s

- Anisotropic BRDF’s [Westin, Arvo, Torrance 1992]
- Artistic BRDF’s [Gooch]
Summary

You should understand the equation for the Blinn-Phong lighting model described in the “Iteration Four” slide:

- What is the physical meaning of each variable?
- How are the terms computed?
- What effect does each term contribute to the image?
- What does varying the parameters do?

You should also understand the differences between faceted, Gouraud, and Phong interpolated shading.