

ELEC 5530/6630
Robotics
Lecture 2: State-Variable Systems and
Simulation using Matlab

Instructor: Dr. Bosen Lian
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Auburn University
Spring 2026

□ **State-Variable Systems**

- State-variable systems
- Differential equations to state-variable systems
- Examples

□ **Matlab for Solving State-Variable Systems**

- Matrix operations and indexing
- Ode functions with examples

• State-variable systems / state space representation

A state-variable system models a dynamic system and comprises a first-order ordinary differential system (ODE) that describes time derivatives of a set of state variables.

The most general state-variable system of a linear system with p inputs, q outputs and n state variables is written in the following form

$$\frac{dx}{dt} \leftarrow \dot{x}(t) = A(t)x(t) + B(t)u(t)$$

or x'

$$\underline{y(t)} = C(t)x(t) + D(t)u(t)$$

$x(t) \in \mathbb{R}^n$: state vector

$y(t) \in \mathbb{R}^q$: output vector

$u(t) \in \mathbb{R}^p$: control input vector

$A(t) \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$: state matrix

$B(t) \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times p}$: input matrix

$C(t) \in \mathbb{R}^{q \times n}$: output matrix

$D(t) \in \mathbb{R}^{q \times p}$: feedforward matrix

$$\text{Exp: } \quad x(t) = \begin{bmatrix} x_1(t) \\ x_2(t) \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{aligned} \dot{x}_1(t) &= x_2(t) \\ \dot{x}_2(t) &= x_1(t) + u(t) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}}_A \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}}_B u(t)$$

If (A, B, C, D) are time invariant,
the system is time invariant.

Discrete-time state variable systems

$$x(k+1) = A x(k) + B u(k)$$

$$y(k+1) = C x(k) + D u(k)$$

• Nonlinear state variable systems

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x}(t) = f(x, u) \\ y(t) = h(x, u) \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x}_1 = x_2 \\ \dot{x}_2 = \sin x_1 \end{cases} \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} x_2 \\ \sin x_1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$A(x, u) = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}, \quad B(x, u) = \frac{\partial f}{\partial u}$$

$$C(x, u) = \frac{\partial h}{\partial x}, \quad D(x, u) = \frac{\partial h}{\partial u}$$

- Controllability: the ability to steer states from any initial values to any final values by designing some control inputs.
- Observability: the ability to infer internal states from external outputs

How to check

- controllability :

$$\text{rank} [B \quad AB \quad A^2B \cdots A^{n-1}B] = n$$

- Observability :

$$\text{rank} \begin{bmatrix} C \\ CA \\ \vdots \\ CA^{n-1} \end{bmatrix} = n$$

- Ordinary differential equations to state-variable systems

$$m \frac{d^2 x}{dt^2} = F(x(t)) \quad \checkmark$$

Define $z_1 = x$

$$z_2 = \dot{x}$$

$$\begin{cases} \dot{z}_1 = \underline{\dot{x}} = z_2 \\ \dot{z}_2 = \ddot{x} = \frac{F}{m} \end{cases} \quad \checkmark$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{z}_1 \\ \dot{z}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}}_A \begin{bmatrix} z_1 \\ z_2 \end{bmatrix} + \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}}_B \frac{F}{m}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{z}_1 \\ \dot{z}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} z_2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{F}{m} \end{bmatrix}$$

- Ordinary differential equations to state-variable systems

In general n -th ODE

$$\frac{d^n y}{dt^n} + \alpha_{n-1} \frac{d^{n-1} y}{dt^{n-1}} + \dots + \alpha_1 \frac{dy}{dt} + \alpha_0 y = 0$$

step 1 : define new variables starting with y ;
the No. of $\downarrow$ is the order of ODE

step 2 : express the derivative of new variables
in terms of new variables

- Examples

Step 1: define $z_1 = y$

$$z_2 = \dot{y}$$

$$z_3 = \ddot{y}$$

⋮

$$z_n = y^{(n-1)}$$

step 2:

$$\dot{z}_1 = z_2$$

$$\dot{z}_2 = z_3$$

⋮

$$\dot{z}_n = \frac{d^n y}{dt^n}$$

$$= -\alpha_0 z_1 - \alpha_1 z_2 - \alpha_2 z_3 \cdots - \alpha_{n-1} z_n$$

because $\frac{d^n y}{dt^n} = -\alpha_{n-1} \left\{ \frac{d^{n-1} y}{dt^{n-1}} \right\} \cdots - \alpha_1 \frac{dy}{dt} - \alpha_0 y$

$$= -\alpha_{n-1} z_n \quad -\alpha_1 z_2 - \alpha_0 z_1$$

- Examples

$$\dot{z}_1 = z_2$$

$$\dot{z}_2 = z_3$$

$$\dot{z}_3 = z_4$$

$$\vdots$$

$$\dot{z}_n = -\alpha_0 z_1 - \alpha_1 z_2 - \alpha_2 z_3 \dots - \alpha_{n-1} z_n$$

$$\Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} \dot{z}_1 \\ \dot{z}_2 \\ \vdots \\ \dot{z}_n \end{pmatrix} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ -\alpha_0 & -\alpha_1 & \dots & -\alpha_{n-1} \end{bmatrix}}_A \begin{pmatrix} z_1 \\ z_2 \\ \vdots \\ z_n \end{pmatrix}$$

- Examples

$$\ddot{y}(t) + \dot{y}(t) + y(t) = 0$$

define

$$x_1 = y$$
$$x_2 = \dot{y}$$

$$\dot{x}_1 = \dot{y} = x_2$$

$$\dot{x}_2 = \ddot{y} = -\dot{y} - y = -x_2 - x_1$$

- Examples

$$\dot{x}_1 = x_2$$

$$\dot{x}_2 = -x_1 - x_2$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\downarrow \quad \quad \quad A$$
$$\dot{x} = Ax$$


- Examples

$$\ddot{y} + y^2 \dot{y} + y = 0$$

$$x_1 \triangleq y$$

$$x_2 = \dot{y}$$

$$\dot{x}_1 = x_2$$

$$\dot{x}_2 = -y^2 \dot{y} - y = -x_1^2 x_2 - x_1$$

- Examples

$$\dot{x}_1 = x_2$$

$$\dot{x}_2 = -x_1^2 x_2 - x_1$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} x_2 \\ -x_1^2 x_2 - x_1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\dot{x} = f(x)$$

where $x = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix}$

- Examples

2 degree of freedom robot arm model

$$M \ddot{q}(t) + M L \dot{q}^2(t) + M g L \sin q(t) = u(t)$$

M : mass
 L : length of link
 g : gravity term
 u : force
 q : joint variables

- Examples

Define z_1 z_2

$$z_1 = q(t)$$

$$z_2 = \dot{q}(t)$$

$$\dot{z}_1 = z_2$$

$$\dot{z}_2 = - \left(\frac{1}{L} z_2^2 + g \sin z_1 \right) + u(t)/M$$

- Examples

$$\dot{z} = f(z) + g(z)u$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{z}_1 \\ \dot{z}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} z_2 \\ -Lz_2^2 - gL \sin z_1 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{1}{m} \end{bmatrix} u(t)$$