Administrative Trivia

• Instructor:
  – Dr. Xiaoli Fern
  – web.engr.oregonstate.edu/~xfern
  – Office hour: one hour before class or by appointment

• Course webpage
  classes.engr.oregonstate.edu/eecs/fall2011/cs434

• Please check course webpage frequently
  – Learning objectives, Syllabus, Course policy
  – Course related announcements
  – Assignments
Briefly

- **Grading (tentative):**
  - Homeworks & class participations – 40%
  - Exam (one midterm) – 25%
  - Final project – 35%

- **Homeworks**
  - due at the beginning of the class (first 5 minutes of the class)
  - Late submission will be accepted if it’s no more than 24 hours late, but only gets 80%

- **Collaborations policy (for solo assignments)**
  - Verbal discussion about general approaches and strategies allowed
  - Can talk about examples not in the assignments
  - Anything you turn in has to be created by you and you alone
  - For team assignments, the above policies apply between teams
  - Team assignment submissions must also indicate the individual roles
Course materials

• No text book required, slides and reading materials will be provided on course webpage

• There are a few recommended books that are good references
  – Machine learning by Tom Mitchell (TM) – slightly out of date but good intro to some topics
  – Pattern recognition and machine learning by Chris Bishop (Bishop) – dense material
What is learning?

Generally speaking
“any change in a system that allows it to perform better the second time on repetition of the same task or on another task drawn from the same distribution”

--- Herbert Simon
Learning = Improving with experience at some task
- Improve over task $T$
- with respect to $P$
- based on experience $E$
When do we need computer to learn?

What is not learning?

- A program that does tax return
- A program that looks up phone numbers in phone directory
- …
When do we need learning?

- Sometimes there is no human expert knowledge
  - Predict whether a new compound will be effective for treating some disease
  - Predict whether two profiles on match.com would be a good match (or does this belong the next category?)
- Sometimes humans can do it but can’t describe how they do it
  - Recognize visual objects
  - Speech recognition
- Sometimes the things we need to learn change frequently
  - Stock market analysis, weather forecasting, computer network routing
- Sometimes the thing we need to learn needs customization
  - Spam filters, movie/product recommendation
Sub-fields of Interest

- Supervised learning – learn to predict
- Unsupervised learning – learn to understand and describe the data
- Reinforcement learning – learn to act

*Data mining*

  A highly overlapping concept, but focuses on large volume of data:

  *To obtain useful knowledge from large volume of data*
Supervised Learning: example

• Learn to predict output from input
  – Output can be continuous or discrete
  – E.g. predict the risk level (high vs. low) of a loan applicant based on income and savings

MANY successful applications!

Spam filters

Collaborative filtering (predicting if a customer will be interested in an advertisement …)

Ecological (predicting if a species is absent/present in a certain environment …)

Medical diagnosis …
Unsupervised learning

• Find patterns and structure in data

Clustering art
Example Applications

• Market partition: divide a market into distinct subsets of customers
  – Find clusters of similar customers, where each cluster may conceivably be selected as a market target to be reached with a distinct marketing strategy

• Image, document, web clustering
  – Automatic organization of pictures
  – Generate a categorized view of a collection of documents
  – For organizing search results etc.

• Bioinformatics
  – Clustering the genes based on their expression profile
  – Find clusters of similarly regulated genes – functional groups
Reinforcement learning
Example Applications

• Robotics
  – Gait control for robotic legs

• Controls
  – Helicopter control, automatous vehicle

• Operation research
  – Automatic pricing of internet advertisements

• AI game agents
  – Real time strategy game agent
  – GO, Chess ..
Course Learning Objectives

1. Students are able to *apply supervised learning algorithms to prediction problems and evaluate the results.*

2. Students are able to *apply unsupervised learning algorithms to data analysis problems and evaluate results.*

3. Students are able to *apply reinforcement learning algorithms to control problem and evaluate results.*

4. Students are able to *take a description* of a new problem and *decide what kind of problem* (supervised, unsupervised, or reinforcement) it is.
Example: Learning to play checkers

- **Task:** play checkers
- **Performance:** percent of games won in the world tournament
- To design a learning system for this task, we need to consider:
  - What experience to learn from? (the *training data*)
  - What should we exactly learn? (the *target function*)
  - How should we represent *this thing* that we are learning? (*Representation of the target function*)
  - What type of learning is it – supervised, unsupervised, or reinforcement learning, and what specific algorithm to use?
Type of training experience

• Direct training (like watching a master play)
  – For a given board state, we observe a best move for that position
  – Observe many states and many moves (that will be our training data)
  – Try to learn a formula of some sort that tells us what is the best move for any arbitrary state
  – This fits in *supervised learning*

• Indirect training (like learning by playing)
  – Just observe a sequence of plays and the end result
  – More difficult, because
    • which of the moves are the bad (good) ones for a bad (good) game?
    • This is the credit assignment problem, challenging to solve
  – This is more like reinforcement learning
Choose the Target Function (what should we learn)

- Choose move: board state -> move?
  - Supervised learning
- V: Board state -> Reward (value of the state)?
  - Reinforcement learning
  - If you know the value of all possible states, at any state you can choose a move that leads to the best next state
  - This is more similar to how people understands the game
Possible definition for target function \( V \)

- If \( b \) is a final board state that won, \( V(b)=100 \)
- If \( b \) is a final board state that is lost, \( V(b)=-100 \)
- If \( b \) is a final board state that is drawn, the \( V(b)=0 \)
- If \( b \) is not a final board state, then \( V(b)=V(b') \), where \( b' \) is the best possible final state reachable from \( b \).

This gives correct values, but is not operational

A more practical approach is to compute a set of features describing the board state and the value of the board state is a function of these features

- Features can be: \# of black pieces, \# of red pieces, \# of black king pieces, ....
Choose representation for target function

- Linear function of the board features?
  \[ w_0 + w_1 f_1(b) + w_2 f_2(b) + \cdots + w_n f_n(b) \]

- Polynomial functions of board features?
  \[ w_0 + w_1 f_1(b) + w_2 f_2(b) + w_3 f_1^2(b) + w_4 f_2^2(b) + w_5 f_1(b) f_2(b) + \cdots \]

- …
A diagram of design choices

In this class, you will become familiar with many of these choices, and even try them in practice.

We would like to prepare you so that you can make good design choices when facing a new learning problem!
For next lecture

• A small exercise for you to do

• Please take some measurements (all in cms) of yourself and send me the results by tomorrow
  – Your height
  – The knee height

  – The arm-span (spreading your arms out, and measure the length from finger tip to finger tip)