

1. Suggested Problems

**Problem 1** (5.2.6). Find the characteristic polynomial and the eigenvalues of the matrix

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & -4 \\ 4 & 6 \end{bmatrix}$$

**Problem 2** (5.2.16). List the eigenvalues, repeated according to their multiplicities

$$\begin{bmatrix} 4 & -7 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & 3 & -4 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 & -8 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

**Problem 3** (5.2.19). Let  $A$  be an  $n \times n$  matrix, and suppose  $A$  has  $n$  real eigenvalues,  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$ , repeated according to multiplicities, so that  $\det(A - \lambda I) = (\lambda_1 - \lambda)(\lambda_2 - \lambda) \cdots (\lambda_n - \lambda)$ . Explain why  $\det A$  is the product of the  $n$  eigenvalues of  $A$ . (This result is true for any square matrix when complex eigenvalues are considered.)

**Problem 4** (5.2.24). (T/F) The matrices  $A$  and  $B^{-1}AB$  have the same set of eigenvalues for every invertible matrix  $B$ .

**Problem 5** (5.2.25). (T/F) If 2 is an eigenvalue of  $A$ , then  $A - 2I$  is not invertible.

**Problem 6** (5.2.26). (T/F) If two matrices have the same set of eigenvalues, then they are similar.

**Worksheet 17 Solution**  
**MATH 240 (Spring 2024)**

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**Problem 1.** The characteristic polynomial is

$$\det \begin{bmatrix} 1 - \lambda & -4 \\ 4 & 6 - \lambda \end{bmatrix} = (1 - \lambda)(6 - \lambda) - (-4) \cdot 4 = \lambda^2 - 7\lambda + 22$$

The *discriminant*  $(-7)^2 - 4 \cdot 1 \cdot 22 < 0$ , so there are no real eigenvalues. The complex eigenvalues (if needed) are given by the quadratic formula

$$\lambda = \frac{7 \pm \sqrt{49 - 88}}{2} = \frac{7 \pm \sqrt{-39}}{2}.$$

**Problem 2.** The characteristic polynomial is

$$\det \begin{bmatrix} 4 - \lambda & -7 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & 3 - \lambda & -4 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 - \lambda & -8 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 - \lambda \end{bmatrix} = (4 - \lambda)(3 - \lambda)(3 - \lambda)(1 - \lambda)$$

Here we used the fact that the determinant of a triangular matrix is the product of the entries along the diagonal. Then the eigenvalue of this matrix is given by 4, 3, 3, 1 according to their multiplicities.

**Problem 3.** Let  $\lambda = 0$ . Then the left-hand side becomes

$$\det(A - \lambda I) = \det(A)$$

and the right-hand side becomes

$$(\lambda_1 - \lambda)(\lambda_2 - \lambda) \cdots (\lambda_n - \lambda) = \lambda_1 \cdots \lambda_2 \cdots \lambda_n$$

Therefore  $\det(A)$  is the product of the  $n$  eigenvalues of  $A$ .

**Problem 4. (True)** By definition  $A$  and  $B^{-1}AB$  are similar for every invertible matrix  $B$ . By Theorem 4 (pg 286), they have the same sets of eigenvalues.

**Problem 5. (True)** If 2 is an eigenvalue of  $A$ , then  $\text{Null}(A - 2I)$  is not the zero space. Therefore,  $A - 2I$  is not invertible.

**Problem 6. (False)** Consider

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \text{ and } \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Both have characteristic polynomial  $(1 - \lambda)^2$ , so the eigenvalue is 1 with multiplicity 2 for both. However, for every invertible matrix  $P$ ,

$$P^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} P = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

so the matrices cannot be similar.