

**MAE/MSE 502 Partial Differential Equations in Engineering  
Fall 2021**

Mon/Wed 7:30-8:45 PM, **In-Person**, Classroom: SCOB 152

Instructor: Huei-Ping Huang , [hp.huang@asu.edu](mailto:hp.huang@asu.edu)

Office: **ERC 359**

Office hours: Monday 3-5 PM, Tuesday 3-5 PM, or by appointment

## Two websites for the class

1. Main class website: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~hhuang38/MAE502.html>

- Updated schedule
- Homework assignments/solutions
- Supplementary resources
- Archive of slides from lectures, and backup videos  
(Detail forthcoming)

2. Canvas

- Upload/submission of homework
- Grading

# Course Outline

( Also see syllabus )

## *I. Analytic solution of linear PDE*

### 1. Overview of PDE

Commonly encountered PDEs in engineering and science

Types of PDEs, the physical phenomena they represent, and relevant boundary conditions

### 2. Method of separation of variables; eigenfunction expansion

### 3. Short review of Sturm-Liouville Problem and orthogonal functions;

Representation using orthogonal basis

### 4. Fourier Series

Solution of ODE and PDE by Fourier Series expansion

### 5. Fourier transform and other integral transform methods

Solution of PDE by Fourier transform; Behavior of solution in spectral space

### 6. PDE in non-Cartesian geometry

### 7. Forced problem and brief introduction to Green's function

## *II. Additional topics*

### 8. Brief introduction to nonlinear PDE

Examples of nonlinear PDEs for real world phenomena; Behavior of their solutions;

Conservation laws

### 9. Method of characteristics; Solutions of first order PDEs.

**Textbook:**

*Applied Partial Differential Equation*, by R. Haberman, **Required**  
(Both 5th and 4th editions will work)

Additional lecture notes/slides will be provided by instructor

Remarks on textbook ...

Additional recommended textbook:

*Partial Differential Equations for Scientists and Engineers*, by S. J. Farlow  
(Dover Publications) This is a very well-written book that is ideal for  
self-study. It is also relatively cheap (~ \$10 new).

**Grade:** Homework 55%  
Midterm 20%  
Final 25%

Specific rules for collaboration on homework  
will be released along with the first assignment.

## Requirement of programming using Matlab or equivalent

Although this course will focus on analytic solutions, some more complicated computations in the homework assignments will require programming using Matlab (or other programming languages/tools such as Fortran, C, Python, Java, Mathematica, Maple, Sage, R). A beginner's guide for Matlab will be posted to the class website.

- ASU students have free access to Matlab through My Apps
- Instructor will provide initial help on Matlab  
*Please contact instructor individually*

**Although this course is called 'partial differential equations', it also serves the purpose of synthesizing many math subjects you have learned before (calculus, ODE, linear algebra, numerical methods). It is useful to review those subjects.**

**A very short introduction ...**



## Examples of "classical" linear PDEs

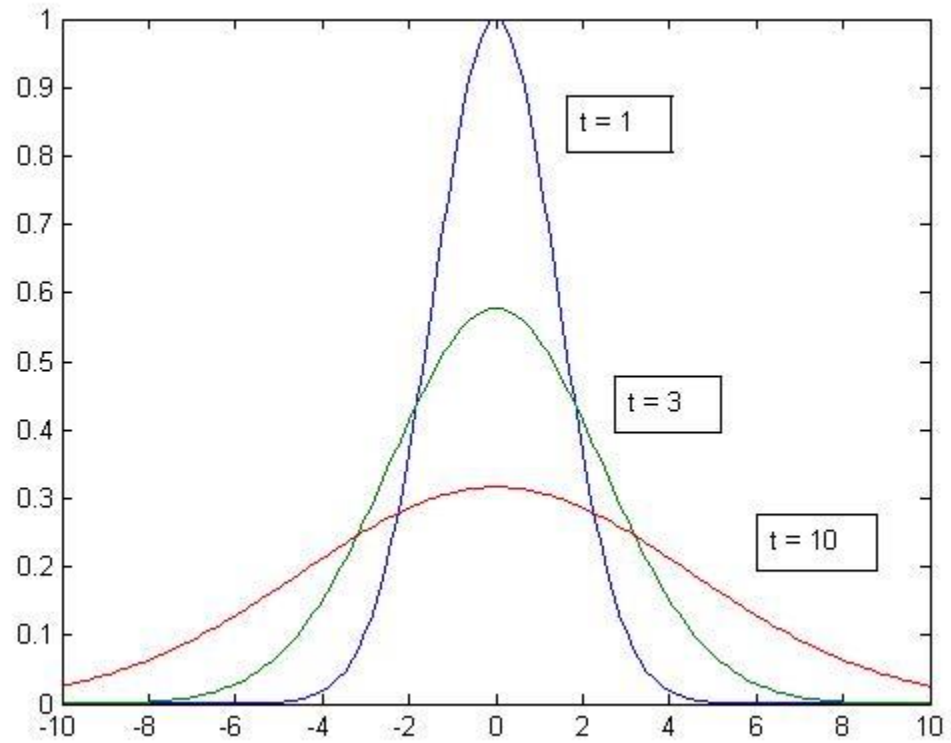
To draw the correspondence between a PDE and a real-world phenomenon, we will use  $t$  to denote time and  $(x, y, z)$  to denote the 3 spatial coordinates

**Heat (or diffusion) equation:**  $\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}$ , describes the diffusion of temperature or the density of a chemical constituent from an initially concentrated distribution (e.g., a "hot spot" on a metal rod, or a speck of pollutant in the open air)

A typical solution (when the initial distribution of  $u$  is a narrow "bump"):  $u(x, t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} \exp\left(-\frac{x^2}{4t}\right)$

[Exercise: Verify that this solution satisfies the PDE with the "initial condition" given as  $u(x, 1) = \exp(-x^2)$ ]

The figure in next page shows this solution at a few different times. As time increases,  $u(x)$  becomes broader, its maximum decreases, but its "center of mass" does not move. These features characterize a "diffusion process".

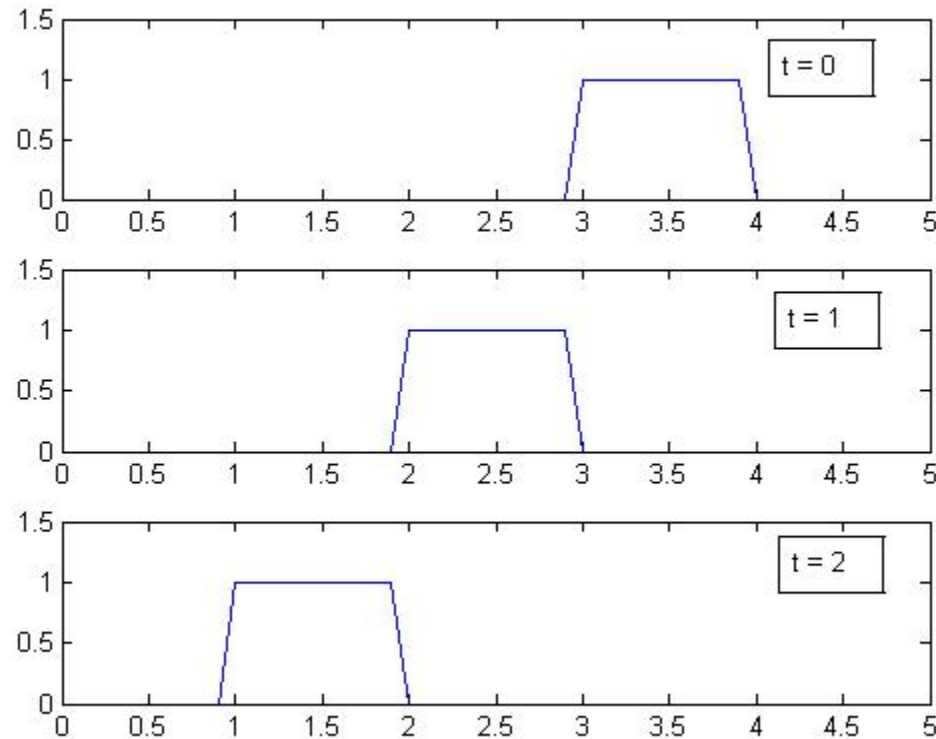


Solution of the heat equation at different times. The three curves are  $u(x, 1)$ ,  $u(x, 3)$ , and  $u(x, 10)$

**Linear advection equation:**  $\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = c \frac{\partial u}{\partial x}$ , describes the constant movement of an initial distribution of  $u$  with a "speed" of  $-c$  along the  $x$ -axis. The distribution moves while preserving its shape.

A typical solution:  $u(x, t) = F(\xi)$ ,  $\xi \equiv x+ct$ ;  $F$  can be any function that depends only on  $x+ct$ .  
(Exercise: Verify that this is indeed a solution of the original equation.)

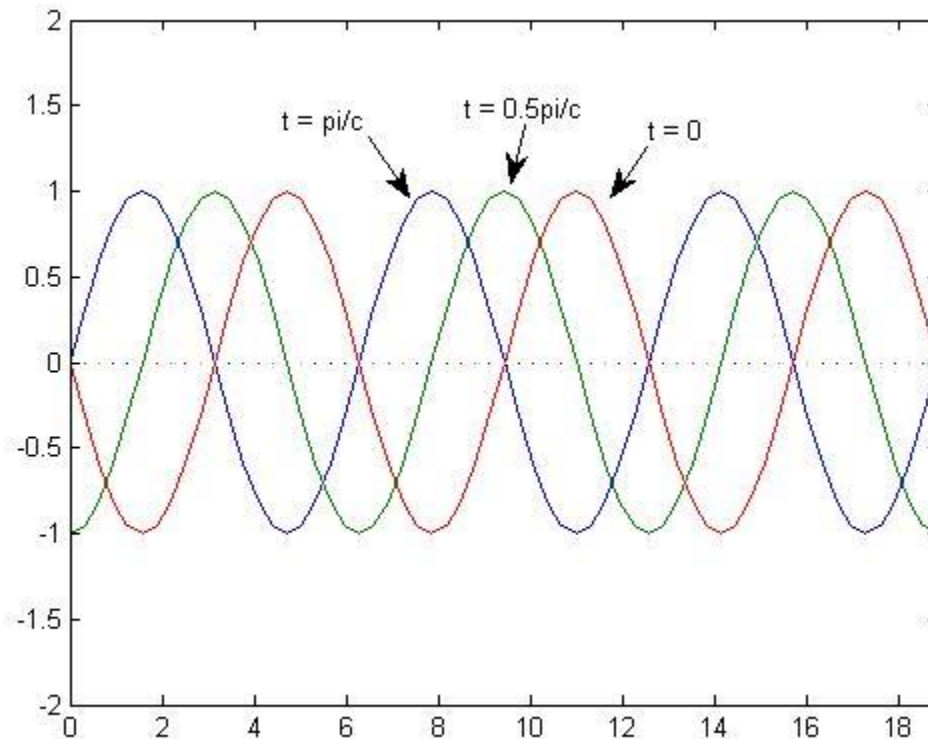
The following figure illustrates the behavior of the solution with  $c = 1$ . The initial condition,  $u(x, t = 0)$ , is a "top hat" structure. At later times, this structure moves to the left with a "speed" of  $\delta x/\delta t = -1$  while preserving its shape. (The  $\delta x$  and  $\delta t$  here are the increments in space and time in the following diagrams.)



The 3 panels are  $u(x, 0)$ ,  $u(x, 1)$ , and  $u(x, 2)$

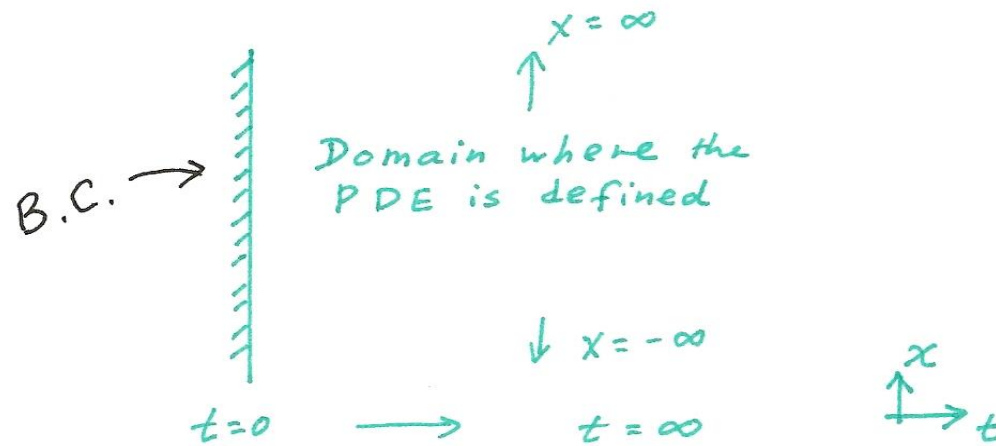
**Linear wave equation:**  $\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}$ , describes wave motion

For example, a simple traveling sinusoidal structure,  $u(x, t) = \sin(x + ct)$ , as illustrated below, is a solution of the equation. (While at this solution is similar to the solution of the linear advection equation, more complicated behavior would emerge when we consider the superposition of different sinusoidal "modes", and when more complicated boundary conditions are introduced for the wave equation.)



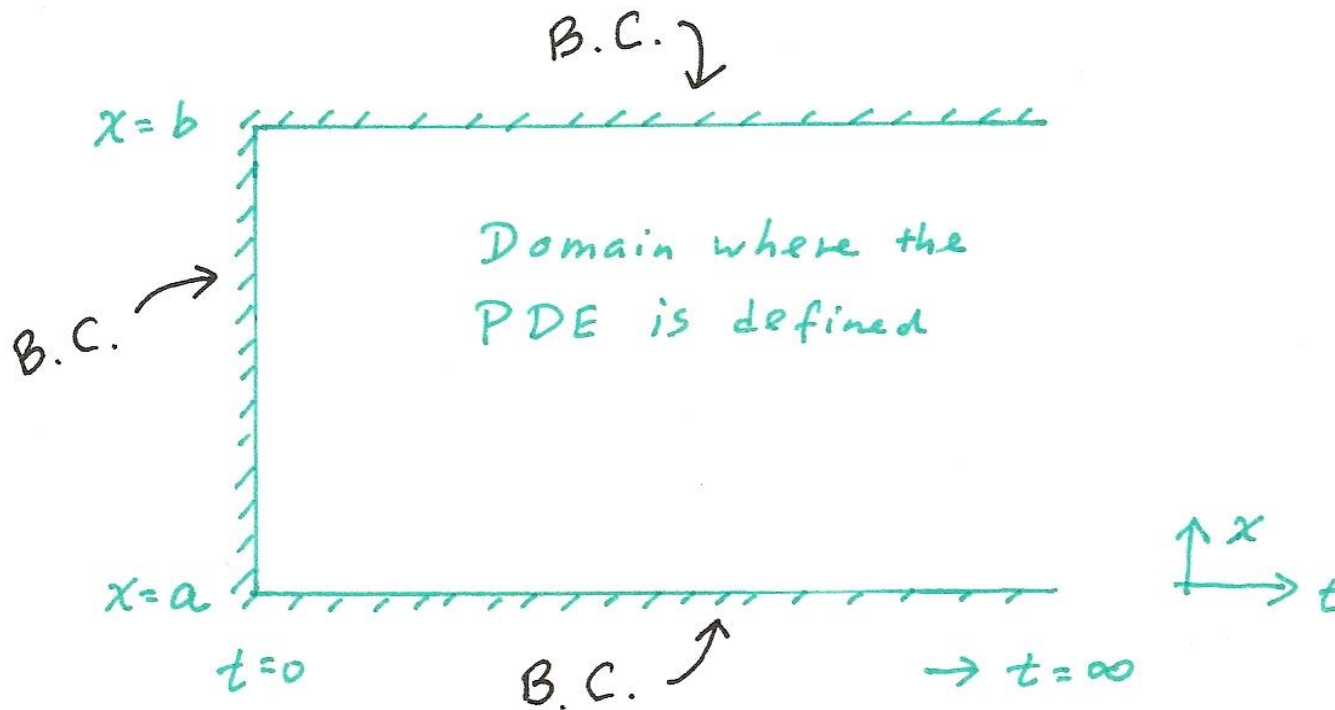
## Boundary conditions (I)

In the three preceding examples, we glossed over the role of boundary conditions. The solutions of the heat equation and linear advection equation described before are valid for an unbounded domain in space,  $-\infty < x < \infty$ , and a "semi-infinite" domain in time,  $0 < t < \infty$ . The first boundary condition we have is simply that  $u$  is well-behaved as  $x \rightarrow \infty$  and  $x \rightarrow -\infty$ . We also need a boundary condition (essentially an "initial condition" in  $t$ ),  $u(x, 0) = G(x)$ . The following diagram illustrates the relevant domain in the  $x$ - $t$  plane.



## Boundary conditions (II)

In real world applications, the heat equation is often defined on a finite interval in  $x$ ,  $a \leq x \leq b$ , and on a semi-infinite domain in  $t$  (consider  $u(x,t)$  as the temperature distribution along a finite metal rod at a given time,  $t$ ). The following diagram illustrates the relevant domain in the  $x-t$  plane in this case. In addition to the boundary condition at  $t = 0$ ,  $u(x,0) = G(x)$ , two more b.c.'s are needed at  $x = a$  and  $x = b$  for all  $t$ . They can be written as  $u(a, t) = P(t)$  and  $u(b, t) = Q(t)$ . Note that  $G(x)$  itself has to satisfy the two boundary conditions,  $G(a) = P(0)$  and  $G(b) = Q(0)$ .

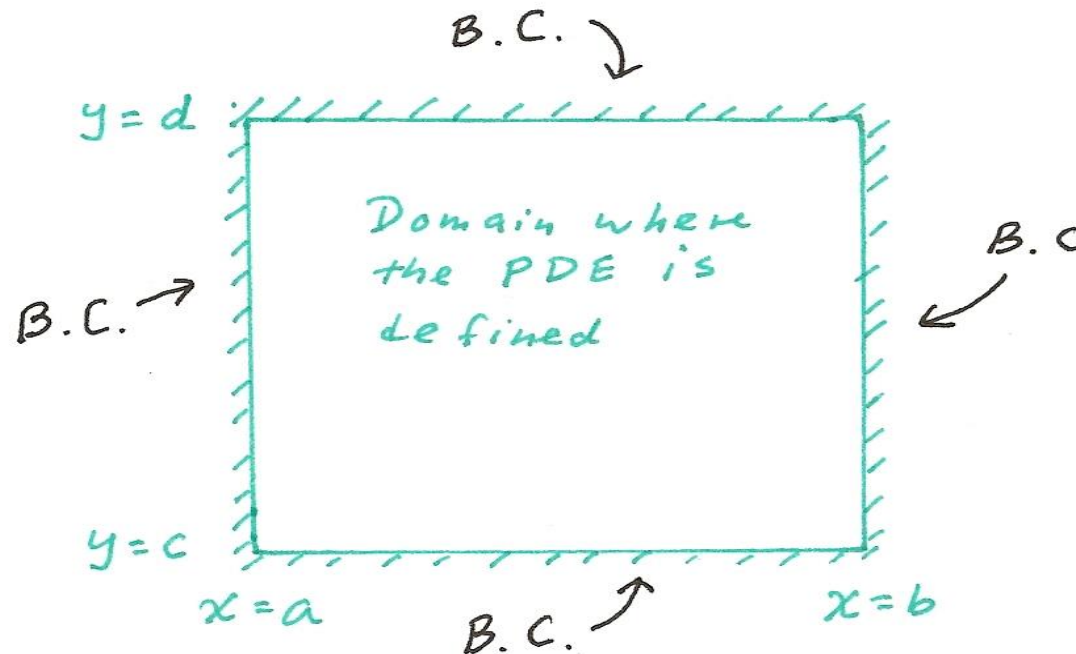


### Boundary conditions (III) - Laplace's equation

There are yet other situations when a PDE is defined on a closed domain. A famous example is

**Laplace's equation:**  $\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = 0$ . (It belongs to the more general class of *elliptic equations*.)

The closed domain is illustrated in the following. In this case, boundary conditions need to be specified at all of the four walls.



**Remark:** Different types of PDEs often need to be matched with different types of boundary conditions in order for their solutions to exist and be unique.

## Heat equation in two- and three-dimensions:

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} \quad (2\text{-D})$$

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2} \quad (3\text{-D})$$

The behavior of the solutions of these equations is similar to that of the 1-D heat equation. An initially concentrated distribution in  $u$  will spread in space as  $t$  increases.

For a closed domain with  $u$  specified on the "walls", the solution may reach "equilibrium" as  $t \rightarrow \infty$ . At this limit,  $u$  ceases to change further so  $\partial u / \partial t \approx 0$ . Then, the heat equation is reduced to Laplace's equation. In other words, Laplace's equation describes the equilibrium solution (or "steady state solution") of the heat transfer or diffusion problem.



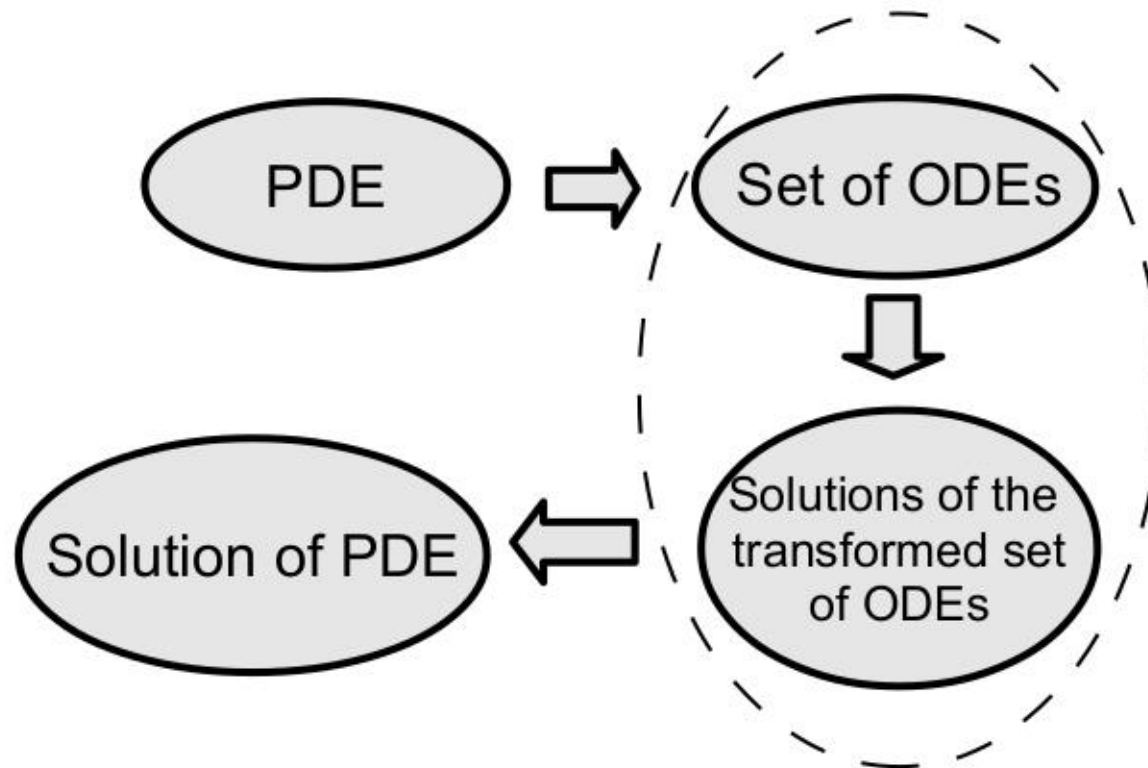
## **Where to begin?**

If you can't solve a problem, then there's an easier problem that you can solve. Find it.

-- G. Polya

**Most of the techniques for solving a PDE relies on transforming the equation into *something simpler* that we know how to solve**

Example: Method of Fourier series expansion / Spectral method



Example: Finite difference method for Laplace's equation

