

1. Review of Main Concepts

(a) Discrete to Continuous:

	Discrete	Continuous
PMF/PDF	$p_X(x) = \mathbb{P}(X = x)$	$f_X(x) \neq \mathbb{P}(X = x) = 0$
CDF	$F_X(x) = \sum_{t \leq x} p_X(t)$	$F_X(x) = \int_{-\infty}^x f_X(t) dt$
Normalization	$\sum_x p_X(x) = 1$	$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_X(x) dx = 1$
Expectation	$\mathbb{E}[X] = \sum_x x p_X(x)$	$\mathbb{E}[X] = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x f_X(x) dx$
LOTUS	$\mathbb{E}[g(X)] = \sum_x g(x) p_X(x)$	$\mathbb{E}[g(X)] = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} g(x) f_X(x) dx$

(b) Multivariate: Discrete to Continuous:

	Discrete	Continuous
Joint PMF/PDF	$p_{X,Y}(x, y) = \mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y)$	$f_{X,Y}(x, y) \neq \mathbb{P}(X = x, Y = y)$
Joint range/support $\Omega_{X,Y}$	$\{(x, y) \in \Omega_X \times \Omega_Y : p_{X,Y}(x, y) > 0\}$	$\{(x, y) \in \Omega_X \times \Omega_Y : f_{X,Y}(x, y) > 0\}$
Joint CDF	$F_{X,Y}(x, y) = \sum_{t \leq x, s \leq y} p_{X,Y}(t, s)$	$F_{X,Y}(x, y) = \int_{-\infty}^x \int_{-\infty}^y f_{X,Y}(t, s) ds dt$
Normalization	$\sum_{x,y} p_{X,Y}(x, y) = 1$	$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_{X,Y}(x, y) dx dy = 1$
Marginal PMF/PDF	$p_X(x) = \sum_y p_{X,Y}(x, y)$	$f_X(x) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_{X,Y}(x, y) dy$
Expectation	$\mathbb{E}[g(X, Y)] = \sum_{x,y} g(x, y) p_{X,Y}(x, y)$	$\mathbb{E}[g(X, Y)] = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} g(x, y) f_{X,Y}(x, y) dx dy$
Independence must have	$\forall x, y, p_{X,Y}(x, y) = p_X(x) p_Y(y)$ $\Omega_{X,Y} = \Omega_X \times \Omega_Y$	$\forall x, y, f_{X,Y}(x, y) = f_X(x) f_Y(y)$ $\Omega_{X,Y} = \Omega_X \times \Omega_Y$

(c) **Standardizing:** Let X be any random variable (discrete or continuous, not necessarily normal), with $\mathbb{E}[X] = \mu$ and $Var(X) = \sigma^2$. If we let $Y = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma}$, then $\mathbb{E}[Y] = 0$ and $Var(Y) = 1$.

(d) **Closure of the Normal Distribution:** Let $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$. Then, $aX + b \sim \mathcal{N}(a\mu + b, a^2\sigma^2)$. That is, linear transformations of normal random variables are still normal.

(e) **“Reproductive” Property of Normals:** Let X_1, \dots, X_n be independent normal random variables with $\mathbb{E}[X_i] = \mu_i$ and $Var(X_i) = \sigma_i^2$. Let $a_1, \dots, a_n \in \mathbb{R}$ and $b \in \mathbb{R}$. Then,

$$X = \sum_{i=1}^n (a_i X_i + b) \sim \mathcal{N} \left(\sum_{i=1}^n (a_i \mu_i + b), \sum_{i=1}^n a_i^2 \sigma_i^2 \right)$$

There’s nothing special about the parameters – the important result here is that the resulting random variable is still normally distributed.

(f) **Law of Total Probability (Continuous):** A is an event, and X is a continuous random variable with density function $f_X(x)$.

$$\mathbb{P}(A) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbb{P}(A|X = x) f_X(x) dx$$

(g) **Central Limit Theorem (CLT):** Let X_1, \dots, X_n be iid random variables with $\mathbb{E}[X_i] = \mu$ and $Var(X_i) = \sigma^2$. Let $X = \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$, which has $\mathbb{E}[X] = n\mu$ and $Var(X) = n\sigma^2$. Let $\bar{X} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$, which has $\mathbb{E}[\bar{X}] = \mu$ and $Var(\bar{X}) = \frac{\sigma^2}{n}$. \bar{X} is called the *sample mean*. Then, as $n \rightarrow \infty$, \bar{X} approaches the normal distribution $\mathcal{N} \left(\mu, \frac{\sigma^2}{n} \right)$. Standardizing, this is equivalent to $Y = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$ approaching $\mathcal{N}(0, 1)$. Similarly, as $n \rightarrow \infty$, X approaches $\mathcal{N}(n\mu, n\sigma^2)$ and $Y' = \frac{X - n\mu}{\sigma\sqrt{n}}$ approaches $\mathcal{N}(0, 1)$.

It is no surprise that \bar{X} has mean μ and variance σ^2/n – this can be done with simple calculations. The importance of the CLT is that, for large n , regardless of what distribution X_i comes from, \bar{X} is *approximately normally distributed with mean μ and variance σ^2/n* . Don't forget the continuity correction, only when X_1, \dots, X_n are discrete random variables.

2. Zoo of Continuous Random Variables

(a) **Uniform:** $X \sim \text{Uniform}(a, b)$ iff X has the following probability density function:

$$f_X(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{b-a} & \text{if } x \in [a, b] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$\mathbb{E}[X] = \frac{a+b}{2}$ and $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{(b-a)^2}{12}$. This represents each real number from $[a, b]$ to be equally likely.

(b) **Exponential:** $X \sim \text{Exponential}(\lambda)$ iff X has the following probability density function:

$$f_X(x) = \begin{cases} \lambda e^{-\lambda x} & \text{if } x \geq 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$\mathbb{E}[X] = \frac{1}{\lambda}$ and $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{1}{\lambda^2}$. $F_X(x) = 1 - e^{-\lambda x}$ for $x \geq 0$. The exponential random variable is the continuous analog of the geometric random variable: it represents the waiting time to the next event, where $\lambda > 0$ is the average number of events per unit time. Note that the exponential measures how much time passes until the next event (any real number, continuous), whereas the Poisson measures how many events occur in a unit of time (nonnegative integer, discrete). The exponential random variable X is memoryless:

$$\text{for any } s, t \geq 0, \mathbb{P}(X > s + t \mid X > s) = \mathbb{P}(X > t)$$

The geometric random variable also has this property.

(c) **Normal (Gaussian, “bell curve”):** $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ iff X has the following probability density function:

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{\sigma^2}}, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}$$

$\mathbb{E}[X] = \mu$ and $\text{Var}(X) = \sigma^2$. The “standard normal” random variable is typically denoted Z and has mean 0 and variance 1: if $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$, then $Z = \frac{X-\mu}{\sigma} \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$. The CDF has no closed form, but we denote the CDF of the standard normal as $\Phi(z) = F_Z(z) = \mathbb{P}(Z \leq z)$. Note from symmetry of the probability density function about $z = 0$ that: $\Phi(-z) = 1 - \Phi(z)$.

3. Grading on a curve

In some classes (not CSE classes) an examination is regarded as being good (in the sense of determining a valid spread for those taking it) if the test scores of those taking it are well approximated by a normal density function. The instructor often uses the test scores to estimate the normal parameters μ and σ^2 and then assigns a letter grade of A to those whose test score is greater than $\mu + \sigma$, B to those whose score is between μ and $\mu + \sigma$, C to those whose score is between $\mu - \sigma$ and μ , D to those whose score is between $\mu - 2\sigma$ and $\mu - \sigma$ and F to those getting a score below $\mu - 2\sigma$. If the instructor does this and a student's grade on the test really is normally distributed with mean μ and variance σ^2 , what is the probability that student will get each of the possible grades A,B,C,D and F?

4. Normal questions

(a) Let X be a normal random with parameters $\mu = 10$ and $\sigma^2 = 36$. Compute $\mathbb{P}(4 < X < 16)$.

- (b) Let X be a normal random variable with mean 5. If $\mathbb{P}(X > 9) = 0.2$, approximately what is $Var(X)$?
- (c) Let X be a normal random variable with mean 12 and variance 4. Find the value of c such that

$$\mathbb{P}(X > c) = 0.10.$$

5. Round-off error

Let X be the sum of 100 real numbers, and let Y be the same sum, but with each number rounded to the nearest integer before summing. If the roundoff errors are independent and uniformly distributed between -0.5 and 0.5, what is the approximate probability that $|X - Y| > 3$?

6. Tweets

A prolific Twitter user tweets approximately 350 tweets per week. Let's assume for simplicity that the tweets are independent, and each consists of a uniformly random number of characters between 10 and 140. (Note that this is a discrete uniform distribution.) Thus, the central limit theorem (CLT) implies that the number of characters tweeted by this user is approximately normal with an appropriate mean and variance. Assuming this normal approximation is correct, estimate the probability that this user tweets between 26,000 and 27,000 characters in a particular week. (This is a case where continuity correction will make virtually no difference in the answer, but you should still use it to get into the practice!).

7. Bad Computer

Each day, the probability your computer crashes is 10%, independent of every other day. Suppose we want to evaluate the computer's performance over the next 100 days.

- (a) Let X be the number of crash-free days in the next 100 days. What distribution does X have? Identify $\mathbb{E}[X]$ and $Var(X)$ as well. Write an exact (possibly unsimplified) expression for $\mathbb{P}(X \geq 87)$.
- (b) Approximate the probability of at least 87 crash-free days out of the next 100 days using the Central Limit Theorem. Use continuity correction.

Important: continuity correction says that if we are using the normal distribution to approximate

$$\mathbb{P}(a \leq \sum_{i=1}^n X_i \leq b)$$

where $a \leq b$ are integers and the X_i 's are i.i.d. **discrete** random variables, then, as our approximation, we should use

$$\mathbb{P}(a - 0.5 \leq Y \leq b + 0.5)$$

where Y is the appropriate normal distribution that $\sum_{i=1}^n X_i$ converges to by the Central Limit Theorem.¹

For more details see pages 209-210 in the book.

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The intuition here is that, to avoid a mismatch between discrete distributions (whose range is a set of integers) and continuous distributions, we get a better approximation by imagining that a discrete random variable, say W , is a continuous distribution with density function

$$f_W(x) := p_W(i) \quad \text{when } i - 0.5 \leq x < i + 0.5 \text{ and } i \text{ integer}$$

8. Transformations

This has not been covered in class yet and probably won't be. But if you're interested, please read Section 4.4.

Suppose $X \sim \text{Uniform}(0, 1)$ has the continuous uniform distribution on $(0, 1)$. Let $Y = -\frac{1}{\lambda} \log X$ for some $\lambda > 0$.

- What is Ω_Y ?
- First write down $F_X(x)$ for $x \in (0, 1)$. Then, find $F_Y(y)$ on Ω_Y .
- Now find $f_Y(y)$ on Ω_Y (by differentiating $F_Y(y)$ with respect to y). What distribution does Y have?

9. Convolutions

This has not been covered in class. We're not yet sure if we will have time for it, but if you're interested, please read Section 5.5.

Suppose $Z = X + Y$, where $X \perp Y$. (\perp is the symbol for independence. In other words, X and Y are independent.) Z is called the convolution of two random variables. If X, Y, Z are discrete,

$$p_Z(z) = \mathbb{P}(X + Y = z) = \sum_x \mathbb{P}(X = x \cap Y = z - x) = \sum_x p_X(x) p_Y(z - x)$$

If X, Y, Z are continuous,

$$F_Z(z) = \mathbb{P}(X + Y \leq z) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbb{P}(Y \leq z - X | X = x) f_X(x) dx = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} F_Y(z - x) f_X(x) dx$$

Suppose $X_1 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2)$ and $X_2 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2)$.

- Find an expression for $\mathbb{P}(X_1 < 2X_2)$ using a similar idea to convolution, in terms of $F_{X_1}, F_{X_2}, f_{X_1}, f_{X_2}$. (Your answer will be in the form of a single integral, and requires no calculations – do not evaluate it).
- Find s , where $\Phi(s) = \mathbb{P}(X_1 < 2X_2)$ using the fact that linear combinations of independent normal random variables are still normal.