

**§10.5-10.6 Partial differential
equations, separation of variables.**

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Partial differential equations, distinctive features; simple examples.

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The general solution is

$$u(x, t) = f(x)$$

for *any* function f !

Solutions of PDEs always have “functional degree of freedom” (as opposed to free constants in the case of ODEs).

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Exercise: Show that there are no other solutions! What do we need to specify to determine the particular solution we are interested in? Since we have functional degree of freedom, we need to specify, say an initial **function**.

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3. So: $u_t = \alpha^2 u_{xx}$ for all x and t .

$$u_n(x, t) = c_n \exp(-n^2 \alpha^2 \pi^2 t / L^2) \sin(n\pi x / L)$$

4. Boundary conditions? Check: $u(0, t) = u(L, t) = 0$.
5. Initial condition? $u(x, 0) = c_n \sin(n\pi x / L)$. This is not general enough. We need more solutions.

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We arrive at a pair of ODEs:

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where we seek **nonzero solutions**.

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Putting X_n and T_n together –remember,

$$u_n(x, t) = X_n(x)T_n(t) \quad \text{we have:}$$

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is also a solution of the problem. (We'll deal with convergence: later.)

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Can this be now made to fit any initial temperature distribution, $u(x, 0) = U(x)$? Yes, by the Fourier theorem.

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That ensures that (1) U_1 has a pure sine FS. (2) $U_1=U$ on the interval of interest, $[0, L]$.



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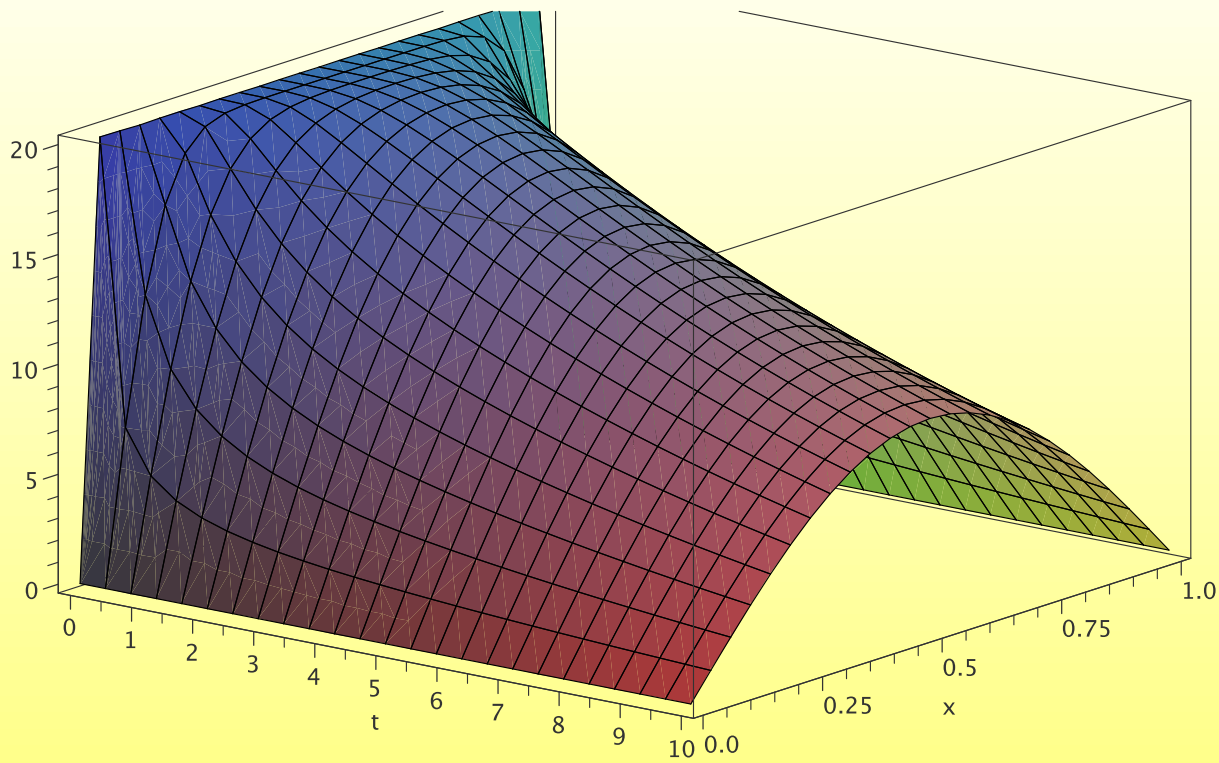
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O. Costin: §10.4-5



Other Heat Equation settings

Nonhomogeneous boundary conditions. Here, we seek to solve

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that is, we have different temperatures at the endpoints. As in nonhomogeneous ODEs, the solution is essentially **any solution of the nonhomogeneous equation plus the general solution of the homogeneous one.**

Indeed if u_0 satisfies the eq, boundary conditions but not necessarily the initial condition, then if we write $u = u_0 + v$ we have $(u_0)_t + v_t = \alpha^2(u_0)_{xx} + v_{xx}$ or $v_t + \underbrace{((u_0)_t - (u_0)_{xx})}_{=0, \text{by construction}} = \alpha^2 v_{xx}$

We need $v(0, t) + u_0(0, t) = T_1$ but $u_0(0, t) = T_1$, by construction, so: $v(0, t) = 0$. Likewise, $v(L, t) = 0$. v satisfies the same problem, with homogeneous boundary values, and initial condition

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$$v(x, 0) + u_0(x, 0) = f(x) \Rightarrow v(x, 0) = f(x) - u_0(x, 0)$$

A particular solution of

$$u_t = \alpha^2 u_{xx}, \quad u(0, t) = T_1, u(L, t) = T_2$$

is easy to find. Look, for instance for solutions that don't depend on t . Then

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