

Weekplan: Approximation Algorithms I

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References and Reading

[1] Algorithm Design, Kleinberg and Tardos, Addison-Wesley, section 11.0, 11.1. *Available on CampusNet.*

[2] The Design of Approximation Algorithms, Williamson and Shmoys, Cambridge Press, section 2.3 and 2.4.

We expect you to read [1] and section 2.4 in [2] in detail before the lecture. Section 2.3 [2] is alternative reading for the part about scheduling.

In the pretest (see link on Piazza) you can check if you understand the basics before the lecture. The pretest is an absolute minimum for what you should know before the lecture.

Exercises

1 Acyclic Graph Given a directed graph $G = (V, E)$, pick a maximum cardinality set of edges from E such that the resulting graph is acyclic. Give a $1/2$ -approximation algorithm for this problem.

Hint Arbitrarily number the vertices and pick the bigger of the two sets, the forward going edges and the backward going edges.

2 Minimum Maximal Matching A matching in a graph $G = (V, E)$ is a subset of edges $M \subseteq E$, such that no two edges in M share an endpoint. A maximal matching is a matching that cannot be extended, i.e., it is not possible to add an edge from $E \setminus M$ to M without violating the constraint.

Design a 2-approximation algorithm for finding a minimum cardinality maximal matching in an undirected graph.

Hint Use the fact that any maximal matching is at least half the maximum maximal matching.

3 Longest processing time rule Show that LPT obtains an approximation factor of $4/3 - 1/(3m)$.

4 Shipping consultant¹ You are a consultant for a large Danish shipping company "Ships, Ships, and Ships". They have the following problem. When a ship arrives at a port they have to unload the containers from the ship onto trucks. A ship carries containers with different weights, w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n . Each truck can carry multiple containers, but only up to a total weight of W . The shipping company wants to use as few trucks as possible to unload the ship. This is a NP-complete problem.

You suggest that they use the following greedy algorithm: Consider the containers in any order. Start with an empty truck and begin stacking containers on it until you get to a container that would overload the truck. This truck is now declared loaded and sent away, and you continue with a new truck.

This algorithm might not be optimal, but it is simple and easy to implement in practice.

4.1 Prove that the number of trucks used by the algorithm is within a factor of 2 from the optimum.

4.2 Show that this is tight. That is, give an example, that shows that the algorithm might use (almost) twice as many trucks as the optimum solution.

¹inspired by [1]

5 Tight example for LPT Give almost tight examples for the LPT algorithm for scheduling on parallel identical machines. That is, give an example showing that LPT can produce a schedule that is a factor $(4/3 - 1/3m)$ from optimum.

6 [*] Longest processing time rule Prove that for any input where the processing time of each job is more than a third of the optimal makespan, LPT computes an optimal schedule.

7 TSP with fixed start and endpoint In the traveling salesman problem with fixed start and endpoint we are given a start point s and an endpoint $t \neq s$. The salesman must still visit each city exactly once, but he now has to start in s and end in t . Give an approximation algorithm for this problem. Try to get an approximation factor better than 2.

8 Bottleneck TSP In the metric bottleneck travelling salesman problem we have a complete graph with distances satisfying the triangle inequality, and we want to find a hamiltonian cycle such that the cost of the most costly edge in the cycle is minimized. The goal of this exercise is to give a 3-approximation algorithm for this problem.

8.1 A bottleneck minimum spanning tree of a graph G is a spanning tree minimizing the heaviest edge used. Argue that it is possible to find an optimal bottleneck MST in polynomial time.

8.2 Show that it is possible to construct a walk visiting all nodes in a bottleneck MST exactly once without shortcutting more than 2 consecutive nodes.

8.3 Give a 3-approximation algorithm for bottleneck TSP (remember to prove that it is a 3-approximation algorithm).

9 Asymmetric TSP Solve exercise 1.3 in [2].