



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Operations Research and Resource Planning

2627-3-E3101Q128

Aims

Operations research (OR) is the study of scientific tools that deals with the application of advanced analytical methods to help make better decisions. It is a key branch of applied mathematics with applications in a wide spectrum of areas including computer science, engineering and economics. The goal of this course is to teach students to formulate mathematical models that represent real-world problems and to recognize approaches and tools to solve these models.

Namely, we will cover nonlinear, linear, network flow and integer optimization problems, with applications in planning, economics, business, and engineering.

According to the Dublin Descriptors:

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

Understand the theoretical foundations of mathematical programming: linear programming (LP), integer linear programming (ILP), and nonlinear programming (NLP), including duality and optimality conditions (KKT).

Demonstrate in-depth comprehension of key algorithms such as: graphical method, Simplex and duality for LP, Branch and Bound for ILP, and nonlinear optimization techniques including bisection, Newton's method, gradient methods, and KKT conditions.

Assimilate the use of Python with the PuLP library as a tool for modeling and solving optimization problems.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding

The student will be able to:

Translate real-world problems (engineering, economics, computer science) into LP, ILP, and NLP models.

Solve models manually (graphical method, Simplex, Branch and Bound) and through software tools (PuLP/Python).

Interpret and analyze results (optimal solutions, costs, sensitivity analysis), also through applied examples.

Making Judgements

Critical thinking skills will be developed through:

Practical exercises involving the modeling and solution of real problems, with justification of assumptions and

methodological choices.

Written exams requiring the selection of the appropriate approach (LP/ILP/NLP), execution of calculations, and explanation of adopted procedures.

An optional oral exam where students are required to justify methodological choices and critically discuss results.

Communication Skills

The student will develop communication abilities through:

Assignments (optional) and a written exam including exercises and open-ended questions, in which the student presents problem formulation, solution strategy, and conclusions.

Classroom discussions aimed at justifying decisions and comparing outcomes with peers and instructors.

An optional oral exam assessing the ability to clearly communicate knowledge, methods, and obtained results.

Learning Skills

Tools and methods to support continuous learning include:

Supplementary teaching materials: slides, solved examples, along with bibliographies and reference texts (Hillier & Lieberman, Bertsimas & Tsitsiklis, Bazaraa et al.).

Use of the PuLP library and Python, which encourages self-learning and the extension of exercises to new case studies.

Contents

- A. Linear programming
- B. Linear integer programming
- C. Non linear programming

Detailed program

Introduction to Mathematical Programming

A. Linear Programming

1. Introduction to Linear Programming (LP): properties and modelling strategies
2. Graphical solution method
3. Geometry of LP and the simplex method
4. Duality

B. Integer Linear Programming

1. Introduction to integer linear programming (ILP)
2. Properties and modelling strategies
3. Branch and Bound

C. Non Linear Programming

1. Optimizing non linear functions of a single variable
2. Optimizing non linear functions of multiple variables
3. Optimizing constrained non linear functions, Karush-Kuhn-Tucker conditions

Prerequisites

- Linear Algebra; vector, matrix, sistem of linear equations, ...
- Function; of one variable, of more variables, convex, derivative, gradient, hessian, ...

Teaching form

Lectures, exercises and demo using sw
The course will be delivered in Italian.

- 32 lectures of theory of 2 hours each in presence
- 20 exercise lectures of 2 hours each in presence
- 24 laboratory lectures of 2 hours each (of which 3 hours of interactive lectures in presence and a maximum of 3 hours of interactive lectures on line)

Textbook and teaching resource

Main textbook

- Frederick S. Hillier and Gerald J. Lieberman, Ricerca Operativa, McGraw-Hill, 9th edition, 2010.

Additional textbooks

- Dimitris Bertsimas and John Tsitsiklis, Introduction to Linear Optimization, Belmont, Massachusetts, 2008.
- Mokhtar S. Bazaraa, John J. Jarvis, Hanif D. Sherali, Linear Programming and Network Flows, Wiley, 4th edition, 2010.
- Mokhtar S. Bazaraa, Hanif D. Sherali, C. M. Shetty, Nonlinear Programming: Theory and Algorithms, Wiley, 3th edition, 2006.

Software

- Python + Libreria PuLP: <https://www.python.org/> + <https://pypi.org/project/PuLP/>

Additional Material

Slides of the lectures and some solved exercises will also be available

Semester

I semester

Assessment method

Two alternatives

1. During lecturing period - INTERMEDIATE EXAMS

- two intermediate exams, with exercises and open questions, each one awards a maximum of 15 points,
- the dates will be communicated during the first lecturing week
- intermediate exams take place in the Università di Milano-Bicocca laboratories
- the access to the second intermediate exam is allowed to students awarded with at least 6 points in the first intermediate exam, in case this condition is not met refer to exam form 2)
- the second intermediate exam is valid only if the student is awarded at least 6 points, if thi is not the case please refer to exam form 2)
- the final grade is the aritmetinc sum of the grades awarded in the two intermediate exams
- the exam is passed only if the final grade is at least equal to 18
- the oral exam is facoltative and allowed only to a student awarded at least 18 points, it awars a maximum of 3 points tto be added to the base grade
- if the oral exam is particular bad then it may be the case the base grade is lowered of a maximum of 3 points

2. When the lecturing period is over - STANDARD EXAM

- the exam takes place at the Università di Milano-Bicocca laboratories
- the exam consists of two phases
- phase 1 consists of 10 closed-form quizzes about course pre-requisites
- phase 2 happens only if you have been awarded at least 6 points (at least 6 quizzes are corret) at phase 1
- Phase 2 awards a maximum of 30 points and consists of exercises and open questions.
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 happen in strinct sequence, without any temporal lag
- the exam is successful if the student is awarded at least 18 points
- the oral exam is facoltative and allowed only to a student awarded at least 18 points, it awars a maximum of 3 points tto be added to the base grade
- if the oral exam is particular bad then it may be the case the base grade is lowered of a maximum of 3 points

Office hours

Guglielmo Lulli by appointment
 Enza Messina by appointment
 Mauro Passacantando by appointment
 Fabio Stella by appointment

Sustainable Development Goals

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
