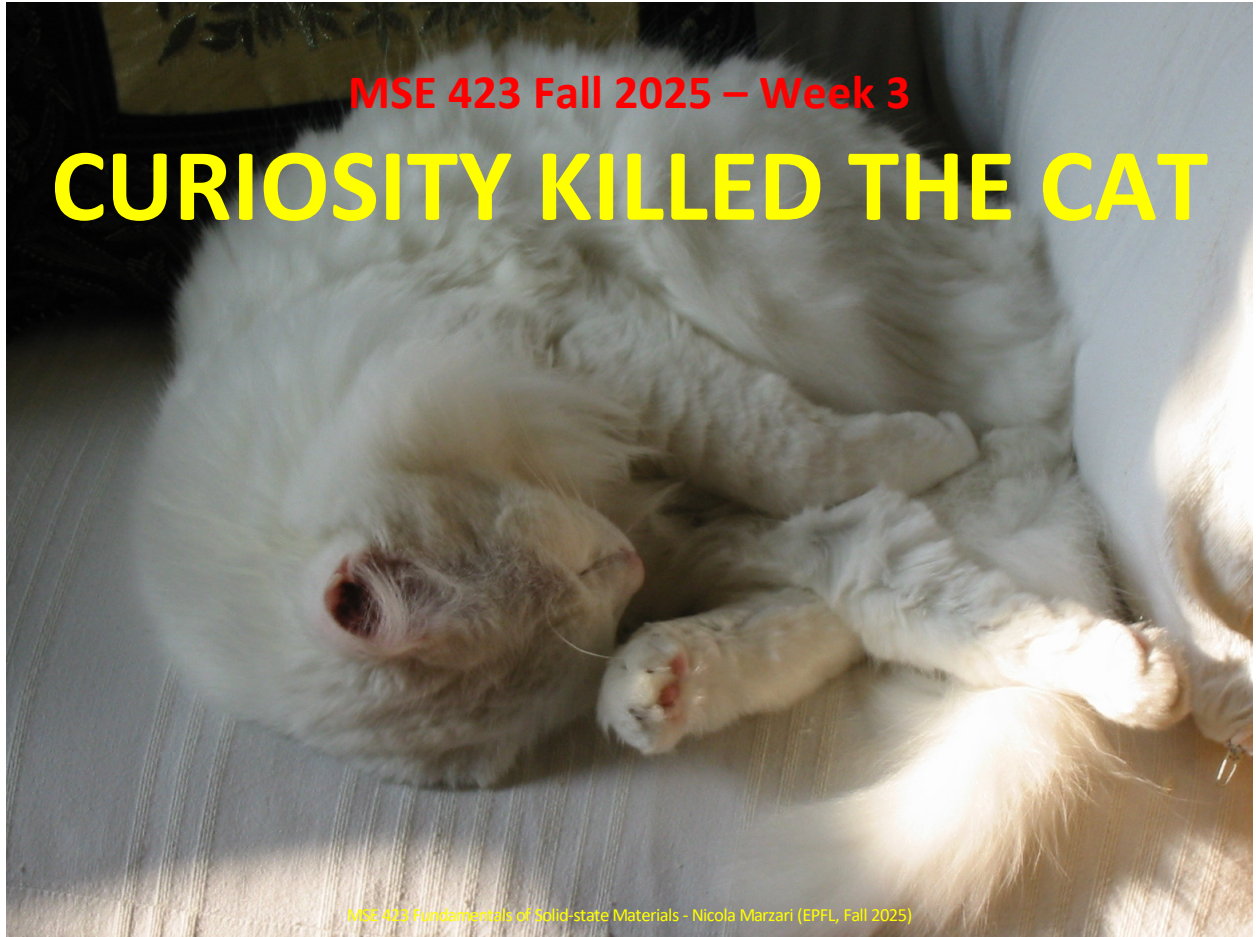


MSE 423 Fall 2025 – Week 3

CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT



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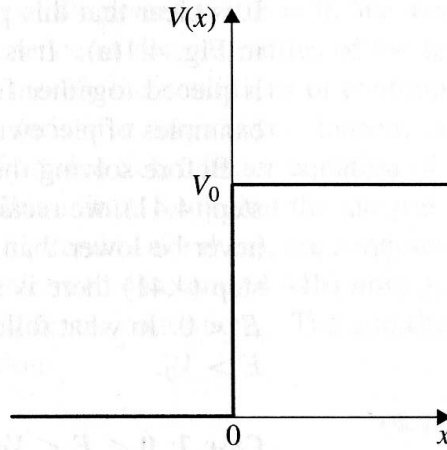
Last week: First steps

1. From one time-dependent Schroedinger eq. to two eqs.: stationary Schr. Eq. for $\varphi(\vec{r})$, and one for $f(t)$
2. Recovering the free particle, plane wave solution
3. Particle in a 1D, 2D, 3D box.
4. Potential step/metal surfaces
5. Quantum applets on oscar.org



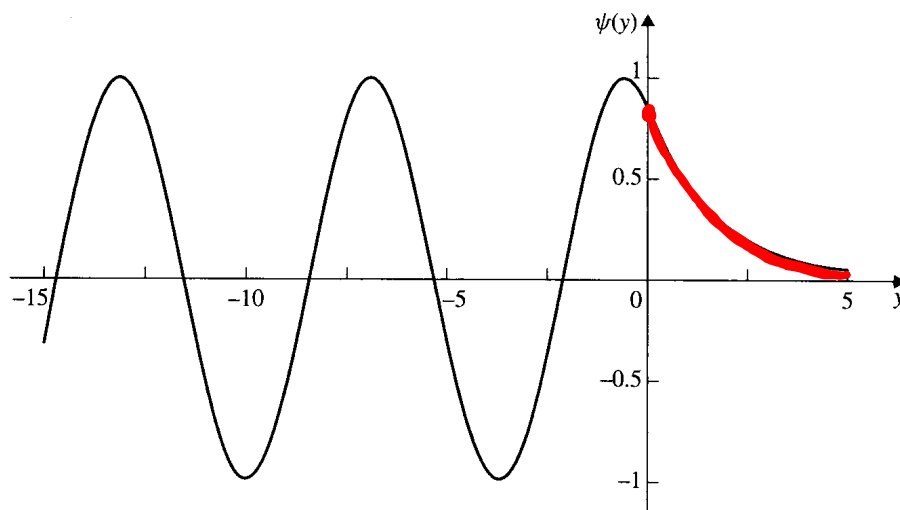
Metal Surfaces (I)

$$\left[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2}{dx^2} + V(x) \right] \varphi(x) = E\varphi(x)$$



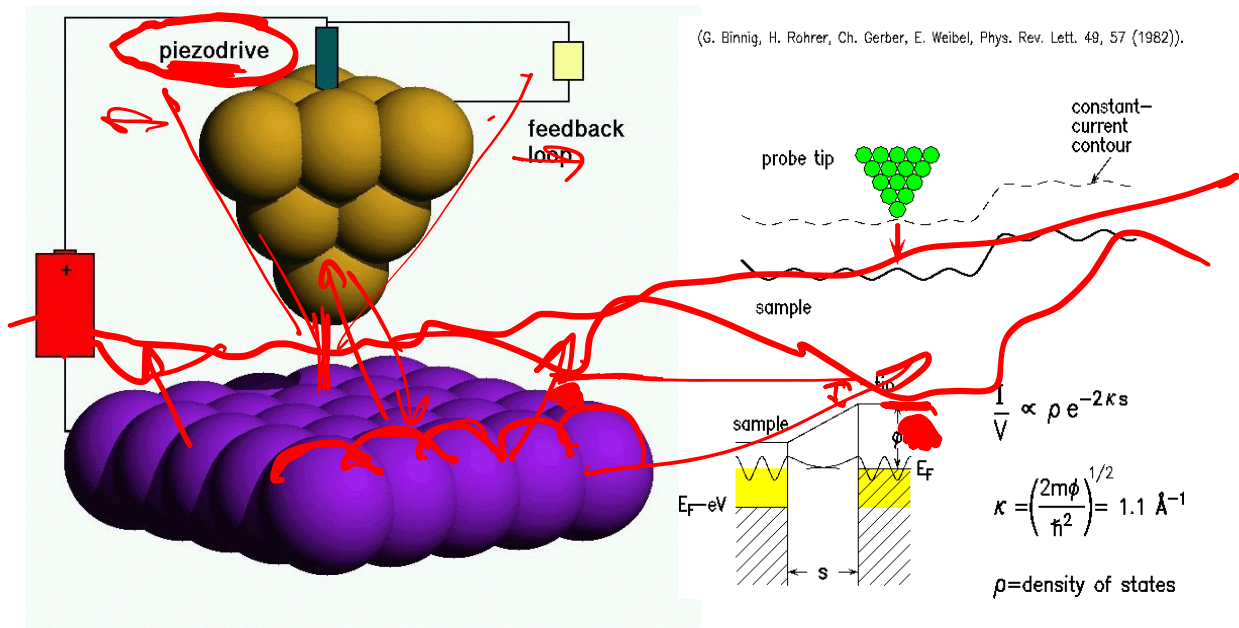
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Metal Surfaces (II)



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Scanning Tunnelling Microscopy



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Eigenvalue equation and expectations

Schrödinger equation: operator, eigenvalues

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \psi(\vec{r}) + V(\vec{r}) \psi(\vec{r}) = E \psi(\vec{r})$$

$$\left[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V(\vec{r}) \right] \psi(\vec{r}) = E \psi(\vec{r})$$

E can be obtained as an "expectation value" $\int \|\psi\|^2 = 1$

$$\int \psi^* \left[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V(\vec{r}) \right] \psi = \int \psi^* (\vec{r}) E \psi(\vec{r}) = E \int \psi^* \psi = E \int \|\psi\|^2$$

EXP. VAL.

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Dirac notation

Dirac's <bra | kets> (elements of vector space)

$$\psi^*(\vec{r}) = \langle \psi | \quad \psi(\vec{r}) = |\psi\rangle$$
$$\langle \psi | \psi \rangle = \int \psi^*(\vec{r}) \psi(\vec{r}) d\vec{r} = \int \|\psi(\vec{r})\|^2 d\vec{r}$$

Scalar product (induces a metric \rightarrow Hilbert space)

$$\langle f | g \rangle = \int f^* g d\vec{r} \quad \vec{a} \cdot \vec{b} = a_x b_x + a_y b_y + a_z b_z$$

SCALAR PRODUCT $\quad \vec{a} \cdot \vec{a} = \|\vec{a}\|^2$

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Eigenvalue equation and expectations

Schrödinger equation: operator, eigenvalues

$$\hat{H} = \left[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V(\vec{r}) \right] \quad \hat{H} |\psi\rangle = E |\psi\rangle$$

E can be obtained as an "expectation value"

$$\langle \psi | \hat{H} | \psi \rangle = \int \psi^*(\vec{r}) \left[-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 + V(\vec{r}) \right] \psi(\vec{r}) d\vec{r}$$
$$\langle \psi | E | \psi \rangle = E \langle \psi | \psi \rangle = E$$

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4 concepts

- Operators $\rightsquigarrow \hat{H}$
- Eigenvalues $\rightsquigarrow E$
- Eigenfunctions $\rightsquigarrow |\psi\rangle$
- Expectation values $\rightsquigarrow \langle \psi | \hat{H} | \psi \rangle$

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Operators: Linear, Hermitian

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{A} (\alpha |f\rangle + \beta |g\rangle) &= \\ &= \alpha \hat{A} |f\rangle + \beta \hat{A} |g\rangle \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \langle f | \hat{A} | g \rangle &= \langle \hat{A} f | g \rangle \\ \hat{A} &\text{ IS HERMITIAN} \end{aligned}$$

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NOT HERMITIAN HERMITIAN

Examples: (d/dx) and $i(d/dx)$

$$\langle f | i \frac{d}{dx} g \rangle \stackrel{?}{=} \langle i \frac{d}{dx} f | g \rangle$$

$$= \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} f^*(x) i \frac{d}{dx} g(x) dx \stackrel{?}{=} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} -i \frac{d}{dx} f^*(x) g(x) dx$$

$$\left[\cancel{f^*(x) g(x)} \right]_{-\infty}^{+\infty} - \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} i \frac{d}{dx} f^*(x) g(x) dx$$

$$d[fg] = df g + f dg$$

Hermitian Operators

1. The eigenvalues of a Hermitian operator are real

$$\hat{A} |f\rangle = a |f\rangle$$

2. Two eigenfunctions corresponding to different eigenvalues are orthogonal

$$\hat{A} |f_1\rangle = a_1 |f_1\rangle$$

$$\hat{A} |f_2\rangle = a_2 |f_2\rangle$$

$$a_1 \neq a_2 \Rightarrow \langle f_1 | f_2 \rangle = \langle f_2 | f_1 \rangle = 0$$

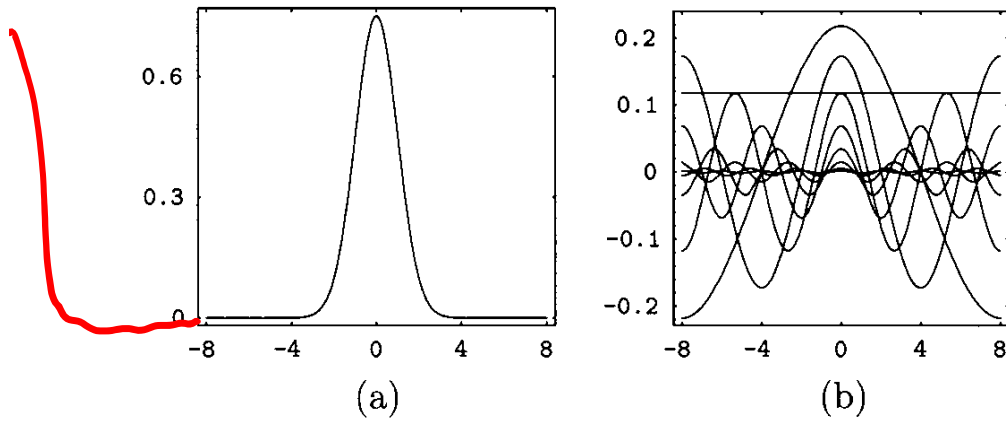
3. The set of eigenfunctions of a Hermitian operator is complete

$$\hat{A} |f_i\rangle = a_i |f_i\rangle$$

$$\underbrace{\quad\quad\quad}$$

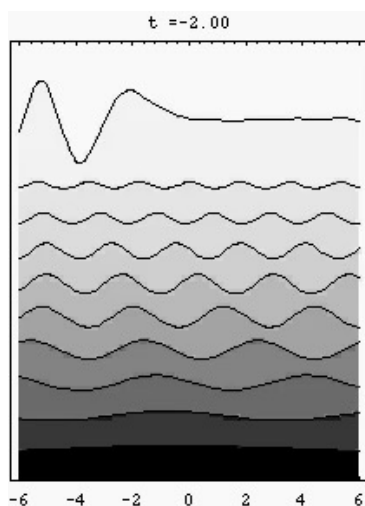
4. Commuting Hermitian operators have a set of common eigenfunctions

The set of eigenfunctions of a Hermitian operator is complete



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The set of eigenfunctions of a Hermitian operator is complete



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Product of operators, and commutators

$$\hat{A} \cdot \hat{B} = \hat{A} \hat{B} \quad \hat{A} (\hat{B} |f\rangle)$$

$$[\hat{A}, \hat{B}] = \hat{A} \hat{B} - \hat{B} \hat{A}$$

COMMUTATOR

$$\hat{A} \text{ AND } \hat{B} \text{ COMMUTE } [\hat{A}, \hat{B}] = 0$$

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Commuting Hermitian operators have a set of common eigenfunctions

$$\textcircled{I} \quad \hat{A} |f_i\rangle = a_i |f_i\rangle \quad [\hat{A}, \hat{B}] = 0 = \hat{A} \hat{B} - \hat{B} \hat{A} = 0$$

$$\textcircled{II} \quad \hat{B} |g_i\rangle = b_i |g_i\rangle \quad \hat{A} \hat{B} = \hat{B} \hat{A}$$

$$\hat{B} \hat{A} |f_i\rangle = \hat{B} a_i |f_i\rangle$$

$$\hat{A} \hat{B} |f_i\rangle = a_i \hat{B} |f_i\rangle$$

$\hat{B} |f_i\rangle$ IS AN EIGENSTATE OF \hat{A}

$$\hat{B} |f_i\rangle = \mu_i |f_i\rangle$$

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First postulate: wavefunctions

- All information of an ensemble of identical physical systems is contained in the ket $|\Psi\rangle$ (usually a wavefunction $\Psi(x, y, z, t)$, which is complex, continuous, finite, and single-valued, square-integrable (i.e. $\int \|\Psi\|^2 d\vec{r}$ is finite)
- The ket can also be a geometrical vector (e.g. spin); wavefunctions are objects that satisfy vector algebra, and the space of wavefunctions is a Hilbert space (instead of being 3-d, it's infinite-d)

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Second postulate: operators

- For every physical observable there is a corresponding Hermitian operator

$$\langle \varphi | \hat{A} \psi \rangle = \langle \hat{A} \varphi | \psi \rangle$$

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From classical mechanics to operators

- classical momentum \vec{p} \rightarrow gradient operator $-i\hbar\vec{\nabla}$

- classical position \vec{r} \rightarrow multiplicative operator \hat{r}

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$$\hat{T} + \hat{V} = \hat{H} | \psi \rangle = E | \psi \rangle$$

The total energy of the system =

• Kinetic energy $K = \vec{p} \cdot \vec{p} = K + V$

$$K = \frac{1}{2} m \vec{v}^2 = \frac{\vec{p}^2}{2m} \Rightarrow \frac{(-i\hbar\vec{\nabla}) \cdot (-i\hbar\vec{\nabla})}{2m} = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{\nabla} = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2$$

$\vec{p} = m\vec{v}$ $\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial}{\partial y}, \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial}{\partial y}, \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2$

- Potential energy V

$$V(\vec{r})$$

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Third postulate: measurements

- In any single measurement of a physical quantity that corresponds to the operator A , the only values that will be measured are the eigenvalues of that operator.

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Position and probability

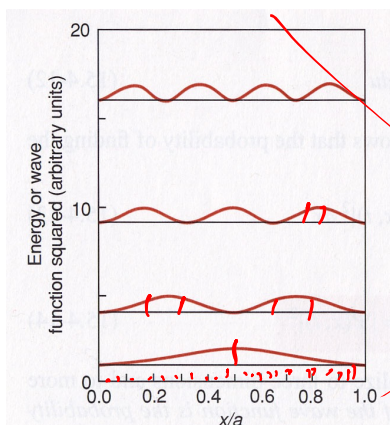


Figure 15.2. The Probability Density for Positions of a Particle in a One-Dimensional Hard Box. This diagram shows the squares of the energy eigenfunctions (probability densities) for the first four states of a particle in a one-dimensional hard box.

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$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle \hat{A} \rangle &= \frac{\langle \psi | \hat{A} | \psi \rangle}{\langle \psi | \psi \rangle} \\
 &= \sum_i \langle \psi | \hat{A} | \psi_i \rangle c_i \\
 &= \sum_{i,j} c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \hat{A} | \psi_i \rangle \\
 &= \sum_{i,j} c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | a_i | \psi_i \rangle = \sum_{i,j} a_i c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle \\
 &= \sum_{i,j} a_i c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle = \sum_{i,j} a_i c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle \\
 &= \sum_{i,j} a_i c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle = \sum_{i,j} a_i c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

$\sum_{i,j} c_j^* c_i \langle \psi_j | \psi_i \rangle$ is NORMALIZED

$$\begin{aligned}
 \hat{A} | \psi_n \rangle &= a_n | \psi_n \rangle \\
 | \psi \rangle &= \sum_i c_i | \psi_i \rangle \\
 c_i &= \langle \psi_i | \psi \rangle \\
 \langle \psi | &= \sum_j c_j^* \langle \psi_j | \\
 \int (\dots) \hat{A} (\dots)
 \end{aligned}$$