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Introduction to Hamiltonian Dynamical Systems and the N-Body Problem

With 67 Illustrations



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To the memory of Charles C. Conley

Preface

The theory of Hamiltonian systems is a vast subject which can be studied from many different viewpoints. This book develops the basic theory of Hamiltonian differential equations from a dynamical systems point of view. That is, the solutions of the differential equations are thought of as curves in a phase space and it is the geometry of these curves that is the important object of study. The analytic underpinnings of the subject are developed in detail. The last chapter on twist maps has a more geometric flavor. It was written by Glen R. Hall. The main example developed in the text is the classical N -body problem, i.e., the Hamiltonian system of differential equations which describe the motion of N point masses moving under the influence of their mutual gravitational attraction. Many of the general concepts are applied to this example. But this is not a book about the N -body problem for its own sake. The N -body problem is a subject in its own right which would require a sizable volume of its own. Very few of the special results which only apply to the N -body problem are given.

This book is intended for a first course at the graduate level. It assumes a basic knowledge of linear algebra, advanced calculus, and differential equations, but does not assume the advanced topics such as Lebesgue integration, Banach spaces, or Lie algebras. Some theorems which require long technical proofs are stated without proof, but only on rare occasions. The first draft of the book was written in conjunction with a course which was attended by engineering graduate students. The interests and background of these students influenced what was included and excluded.

This book was read by many individuals who made valuable suggestions and many corrections. The first draft was read and corrected by Ricardo Moena, Alan Segerman, Charles Walker, Zhangyong Wan, and Qui Dong Wang while they were students in a seminar on Hamiltonian systems. Gregg

Buck, Konstantin Mischaikow, and Dieter Schmidt made several suggestions for improvements to early versions of the manuscript. Dieter Schmidt wrote the section on the linearization of the equation of the restricted problem at the five libration points. Robin Vandivier found copious grammatical errors by carefully reading the whole manuscript. Robin deserves a special thanks. We hope that these readers absolve us of any responsibility.

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Contents

Preface	vii
Chapter I. Hamiltonian Differential Equations and the N-Body Problem	1
A. Background and Basic Definitions	1
<i>Notation, Hamiltonian systems, Poisson bracket</i>	
B. Examples of Hamiltonian Systems	5
<i>The harmonic oscillator, forced nonlinear oscillator, the elliptic sine function, general Newtonian systems, a pair of harmonic oscillators, linear flow on the torus, the Kirchhoff problem</i>	
C. The N -Body Problem	17
<i>The equations, the classical integrals, the Kepler problem, the restricted 3-body problem</i>	
D. Simple Solutions	21
<i>Central configurations, the Lagrangian equilateral triangle solutions, the Euler–Moulton collinear solutions, equilibria for the restricted three-body problem</i>	
E. Further Reading	28
Problems	29
Chapter II. Linear Hamiltonian Systems	33
A. Preliminaries	33
<i>Hamiltonian & symplectic matrices, reduction with a Lagrangian set</i>	
B. Symplectic Linear Spaces	40
<i>Symplectic basis, Lagrangian splitting</i>	
C. The Spectra of Hamiltonian and Symplectic Operators	44
<i>Characteristic equations, J-orthogonal, simple canonical forms</i>	

D. Nonelementary Divisors	50
<i>General canonical forms</i>	
E. Periodic Systems and Floquet–Lyapunov Theory	53
<i>Multipliers, monodromy matrix, Liapunov transformation</i>	
F. Parametric Stability	56
<i>Stability, parametric stability & instability</i>	
G. The Critical Points in the Restricted Problem	59
<i>Linear equations at Euler & Lagrange points, Routh's critical mass ratio, canonical forms</i>	
H. Further Reading	67
Appendix. Logarithm of a Symplectic Matrix	67
Problems	69
Chapter III. Exterior Algebra and Differential Forms	72
A. Exterior Algebra	72
<i>Multilinear, covector, k-form, determinant</i>	
B. The Symplectic Form	76
<i>Symplectic basis & form, determinant of a symplectic matrix</i>	
C. Tangent Vectors and Cotangent Vectors	77
<i>Contra- & co-variant vectors, Einstein convention</i>	
D. Vector Fields and Differential Forms	79
<i>Contra- & co-variant vector fields, differential forms, exterior derivative, Poincaré's lemma</i>	
E. Changing Coordinates and Darboux's Theorem	83
<i>Symplectic structure, symplectic coordinates, Darboux's theorem</i>	
F. Integration and Stokes' Theorem	85
Problems	85
Chapter IV. Symplectic Transformations and Coordinates	87
A. Symplectic Transformations	87
<i>Definition, remainder function, variational equations</i>	
B. Applications	91
<i>Rotating coordinates, Jacobi coordinates. (special case $N = 2$)</i>	
C. Differential Forms and Generating Functions	95
<i>Symplectic form, action-angle variables, d'Alembert character, generating functions, point transformations, Kepler's problem in polar coordinates, the 3-body problem in Jacobi and Jacobi-Polar coordinates</i>	
D. Symplectic Transformations with Multipliers and Scaling.	102
<i>Gravitational constant, Equations at an equilibrium point, the restricted three body problem</i>	
E. Delaunay and Poincaré Elements	104
F. Further Reading	107
Problems	107

Chapter V. Introduction to the Geometric Theory of Hamiltonian Dynamical Systems	109
A. Introduction to Dynamical Systems	109
<i>Orbit, trajectory, equilibrium point, period orbit, Hamiltonian dynamical system, reparameterization</i>	
B. Discrete Dynamical Systems	113
<i>Diffeomorphisms and symplectomorphisms, Henon map, time τ-map, period map, isotopy, billiards table, crystal model</i>	
C. The Flow Box Theorem and Local Integrals	120
<i>Ordinary point, local integrals, Hamiltonian flow box, integrals in involution, ignorable coordinates</i>	
D. Noether's Theorem and Reduction	125
<i>Discrete and continuous symmetry, reversible system, Noether's Theorem</i>	
E. Periodic Solutions, Fixed Points, and Cross Sections	129
<i>Elementary equilibrium points & periodic orbits, multipliers, cross section, Poincare map, systems with integrals, the cylinder theorem</i>	
F. The Stable Manifold Theorem	136
<i>Hyperbolic point, local and global stable and unstable manifold, transversal homoclinic point, the λ-lemma, the Poincare tangle</i>	
G. Hyperbolic Systems	141
H. Further Reading	148
Appendix. Proof of Shadowing Lemma	149
Problems	152
Chapter VI. Continuation of Periodic Solutions	154
A. Continuation of Equilibrium Points and Periodic Solutions	155
B. Lyapunov's Center Theorem	156
<i>Applications to the Euler and Lagrange libration points</i>	
C. Poincaré's Orbits	158
D. Hill's Orbits	159
E. Comets	161
F. Continuation from the Restricted to the Full Problem	162
G. Some Elliptic Orbits	164
H. Further Reading	166
Problems	166
Chapter VII. Perturbation Theory and Normal Forms	168
A. The Method of Lie Transforms	168
<i>Near identity change of coordinates, the forward Lie transform algorithm, the remainder function</i>	
B. The Perturbation Algorithm	175
<i>Example: Duffing's equation, the general algorithm, the general perturbation theorem, Duffing's equation revisited, uniqueness of normal forms</i>	

C. Normal Form at an Equilibrium	182
<i>The classic case, the general equilibria, example of normal forms in the non-simple case</i>	
D. Normal Form at \mathcal{L}_4	189
E. Normal Forms for Periodic Systems and Diffeomorphisms	190
<i>The reduction, general periodic case, general hyperbolic and elliptic points, higher resonance in the planar case, normal forms when multipliers are ± 1</i>	
F. Further Reading	199
Problems	199
Chapter VIII. Bifurcations of Periodic Orbits	201
A. Bifurcations of Periodic Solutions and Points.	201
<i>Elementary fixed points, extremal fixed points, period doubling, k-bifurcation points.</i>	
B. Duffing Revisited.	212
<i>Duffing at 1-1 resonance, k-bifurcation in Duffing's equation</i>	
C. Schmidt's Bridges	216
D. Bifurcation of \mathcal{L}_4	218
E. Further Reading	224
Problems	224
Chapter IX. Stability and KAM Theory	227
A. Elementary Stability Results	227
B. The Invariant Curve Theorem	229
C. A Simple Example—Duffing's Equation Again	232
D. Applications to the Restricted Problem	233
E. Arnold's Theorem	235
F. Stability of \mathcal{L}_4	238
G. Further Reading	239
Problems	239
Chapter X. Twist Maps and Invariant Curves	241
A. Introduction	241
B. Notation and Definitions	242
C. Existence of Periodic Orbits	253
D. Monotone Orbits	255
E. Invariant Circles	266
F. Applications	274
G. Further Reading	274
Problems	277
References	279
Index	289