Part II

Coding and Cryptography

Year
2018
2017
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2013
2012
2011
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2008
2007
2006
2005
Paper 4, Section I
3H Coding & Cryptography
What is a linear feedback shift register? Explain the Berlekamp–Massey method for recovering a feedback polynomial of a linear feedback shift register from its output. Illustrate the method in the case when we observe output

0 1 0 1 1 1 0 0 0 1 0 . . .

Paper 3, Section I
3H Coding & Cryptography
Compute the rank and minimum distance of the cyclic code with generator polynomial \( g(X) = X^3 + X^2 + 1 \) and parity check polynomial \( h(X) = X^4 + X^3 + X^2 + 1 \). Now let \( \alpha \) be a root of \( g(X) \) in the field with 8 elements. We receive the word \( r(X) = X^2 + X + 1 \) (mod \( X^7 - 1 \)). Verify that \( r(\alpha) = \alpha^4 \), and hence decode \( r(X) \) using minimum-distance decoding.

Paper 2, Section I
3H Coding & Cryptography
What is the channel matrix of a binary symmetric channel with error probability \( p \)? State the maximum likelihood decoding rule and the minimum distance decoding rule. Prove that if \( p < 1/2 \), then they agree.

Let \( C \) be the repetition code \( \{000, 111\} \). Suppose a codeword from \( C \) is sent through a binary symmetric channel with error probability \( p \). Show that, if the minimum distance decoding rule is used, then the probability of error is \( 3p^2 - 2p^3 \).

Paper 1, Section I
3H Coding & Cryptography
State and prove Shannon’s noiseless coding theorem. [You may use Gibbs’ and Kraft’s inequalities as long as they are clearly stated.]
Paper 1, Section II
11H Coding & Cryptography

Define the bar product $C_1 \mid C_2$ of binary linear codes $C_1$ and $C_2$, where $C_2$ is a subcode of $C_1$. Relate the rank and minimum distance of $C_1 \mid C_2$ to those of $C_1$ and $C_2$ and justify your answer.

What is a parity check matrix for a linear code? If $C_1$ has parity check matrix $P_1$ and $C_2$ has parity check matrix $P_2$, find a parity check matrix for $C_1 \mid C_2$.

Using the bar product construction, or otherwise, define the Reed–Muller code $RM(d, r)$ for $0 \leq r \leq d$. Compute the rank of $RM(d, r)$. Show that all but two codewords in $RM(d, 1)$ have the same weight. Given $d$, for which $r$ is it true that all elements of $RM(d, r)$ have even weight? Justify your answer.

Paper 2, Section II
12H Coding & Cryptography

Describe the RSA encryption scheme with public key $(N, e)$ and private key $d$.

Suppose $N = pq$ with $p$ and $q$ distinct odd primes and $1 \leq x \leq N$ with $x$ and $N$ coprime. Denote the order of $x$ in $\mathbb{F}_p^*$ by $O_p(x)$. Further suppose $\Phi(N)$ divides $2^a b$ where $b$ is odd. If $O_p(x^b) \neq O_q(x^b)$ prove that there exists $0 \leq t < a$ such that the greatest common divisor of $x^{2^{tb}} - 1$ and $N$ is a nontrivial factor of $N$. Further, prove that the number of $x$ satisfying $O_p(x^b) \neq O_q(x^b)$ is $\geq \Phi(N)/2$.

Hence, or otherwise, prove that finding the private key $d$ from the public key $(N, e)$ is essentially as difficult as factoring $N$.

Suppose a message $m$ is sent using the RSA scheme with $e = 43$ and $N = 77$, and $c = 5$ is the received text. What is $m$?

An integer $m$ satisfying $1 \leq m \leq N - 1$ is called a fixed point if it is encrypted to itself. Prove that if $m$ is a fixed point then so is $N - m$. 
Let $C$ be a binary code of length $n$. Define the following decoding rules: (i) **ideal observer**, (ii) **maximum likelihood**, (iii) **minimum distance**.

Let $p$ denote the probability that a digit is mistransmitted and suppose $p < 1/2$. Prove that maximum likelihood and minimum distance decoding agree.

Suppose codewords 000 and 111 are sent with probabilities $4/5$ and $1/5$ respectively with error probability $p = 1/4$. If we receive 110, how should it be decoded according to the three decoding rules above?

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**Paper 2, Section I**

3G Coding & Cryptography

Prove that a decipherable code with prescribed word lengths exists if and only if there is a prefix-free code with the same word lengths.

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**Paper 3, Section I**

3G Coding & Cryptography

Find and describe all binary cyclic codes of length 7. Pair each code with its dual code. Justify your answer.

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**Paper 4, Section I**

3G Coding & Cryptography

Describe the RSA system with public key $(N, e)$ and private key $d$.

Give a simple example of how the system is vulnerable to a homomorphism attack.

Describe the El-Gamal signature scheme and explain how this can defeat a homomorphism attack.
Let $C$ be a binary linear code. Explain what it means for $C$ to have length $n$ and rank $k$. Explain what it means for a codeword of $C$ to have weight $j$.

Suppose $C$ has length $n$, rank $k$, and $A_j$ codewords of weight $j$. The weight enumerator polynomial of $C$ is given by

$$W_C(s, t) = \sum_{j=0}^{n} A_j s^j t^{n-j}.$$ 

What is $W_C(1, 1)$? Prove that $W_C(s, t) = W_C(t, s)$ if and only if $W_C(1, 0) = 1$.

Define the dual code $C^\perp$ of $C$.

(i) Let $y \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$. Show that

$$\sum_{x \in C} (-1)^{x \cdot y} = \begin{cases} 2^k, & \text{if } y \in C^\perp, \\ 0, & \text{otherwise}. \end{cases}$$

(ii) Extend the definition of weight to give a weight $w(y)$ for $y \in \mathbb{F}_2^n$. Suppose that for $t$ real and all $x \in C$

$$\sum_{y \in \mathbb{F}_2^n} t^{w(y)} (-1)^{x \cdot y} = (1 - t)^{w(x)} (1 + t)^{n - w(x)}.$$ 

For $s$ real, by evaluating

$$\sum_{x \in C} \left( \sum_{y \in \mathbb{F}_2^n} (-1)^{x \cdot y} \left( \frac{a}{t} \right)^{w(y)} \right)$$

in two different ways, show that

$$W_{C^\perp}(s, t) = 2^{-k} W_C(t - s, t + s).$$
Define the entropy, $H(X)$, of a random variable $X$. State and prove Gibbs’ inequality.

Hence, or otherwise, show that $H(p_1, p_2, p_3) \leq H(p_1, 1-p_1) + (1-p_1)$ and determine when equality occurs.

Show that the Discrete Memoryless Channel with channel matrix

$$
\begin{pmatrix}
1 - \alpha - \beta & \alpha & \beta \\
\alpha & 1 - \alpha - \beta & \beta
\end{pmatrix}
$$

has capacity $C = (1 - \beta)(1 - \log(1 - \beta)) + (1 - \alpha - \beta)\log(1 - \alpha - \beta) + \alpha \log \alpha$. 

Paper 1, Section I
3G Coding and Cryptography

Find the average length of an optimum decipherable binary code for a source that emits five words with probabilities

\[0.25, 0.15, 0.15, 0.2, 0.25.\]

Show that, if a source emits \(N\) words (with \(N \geq 2\)), and if \(l_1, \ldots, l_N\) are the lengths of the codewords in an optimum encoding over the binary alphabet, then

\[l_1 + \cdots + l_N \leq \frac{1}{2}(N^2 + N - 2).\]

[You may assume that an optimum encoding can be given by a Huffman encoding.]

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Paper 2, Section I
3G Coding and Cryptography

Show that the binary channel with channel matrix

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
1 & 0 \\
\frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2}
\end{pmatrix}
\]

has capacity \(\log 5 - 2\).

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Paper 3, Section I
3G Coding and Cryptography

Describe in words the unicity distance of a cryptosystem. Denote the cryptosystem by \(\langle M, K, C \rangle\), in the usual way, and let \(m \in M\) and \(k \in K\) be random variables and \(c = c(m, k)\). The unicity distance \(U\) is formally defined to be the least \(n > 0\) such that \(H(k|c^{(n)}) = 0\). Derive the formula

\[U = \frac{\log |K|}{\log |\Sigma| - H},\]

where \(H = H(m)\), and \(\Sigma\) is the alphabet of the ciphertext. Make clear any assumptions you make.

The redundancy of a language is given by \(R = 1 - \frac{H}{\log |\Sigma|}\). If a language has zero redundancy what is the unicity of any cryptosystem?
Paper 4, Section I
3G Coding and Cryptography

Describe the Rabin–Williams scheme for coding a message \( x \) as \( x^2 \) modulo a certain \( N \). Show that, if \( N \) is chosen appropriately, breaking this code is equivalent to factorising the product of two primes.

Paper 1, Section II
10G Coding and Cryptography

What does it mean to say a binary code \( C \) has length \( n \), size \( m \) and minimum distance \( d \)?

Let \( A(n,d) \) be the largest value of \( m \) for which there exists an \([n,m,d]\)-code. Prove that

\[
\frac{2^n}{V(n, d-1)} \leq A(n,d) \leq \frac{2^n}{V(n, \lfloor (d-1)/2 \rfloor)},
\]

where

\[
V(n, r) = \sum_{j=0}^{r} \left( \begin{array}{c} n \\ j \end{array} \right).
\]

Another bound for \( A(n,d) \) is the Singleton bound given by

\[
A(n,d) \leq 2^{n-d+1}.
\]

Prove the Singleton bound and give an example of a linear code of length \( n > 1 \) that satisfies \( A(n,d) = 2^{n-d+1} \).

Paper 2, Section II
11G Coding and Cryptography

Define a BCH code of length \( n \), where \( n \) is odd, over the field of 2 elements with design distance \( \delta \). Show that the minimum weight of such a code is at least \( \delta \). [Results about the Vandermonde determinant may be quoted without proof, provided they are stated clearly.]

Let \( \omega \in \mathbb{F}_{16} \) be a root of \( X^4 + X + 1 \). Let \( C \) be the BCH code of length 15 with defining set \( \{\omega, \omega^2, \omega^3, \omega^4\} \). Find the generator polynomial of \( C \) and the rank of \( C \). Determine the error positions of the following received words:

(i) \( r(X) = 1 + X^6 + X^7 + X^8 \),
(ii) \( r(X) = 1 + X + X^4 + X^5 + X^6 + X^9 \).
Paper 4, Section I

3G Coding and Cryptography

Explain how to construct binary Reed–Muller codes. State and prove a result giving the minimum distance for each such Reed–Muller code.

Paper 3, Section I

3G Coding and Cryptography

Let $A$ be a random variable that takes each value $a$ in the finite alphabet $A$ with probability $p(a)$. Show that, if each $l(a)$ is an integer greater than 0 and $\sum 2^{-l(a)} \leq 1$, then there is a decodable binary code $c : A \to \{0,1\}^*$ with each codeword $c(a)$ having length $l(a)$.

Prove that, for any decodable code $c : A \to \{0,1\}^*$, we have

$$H(A) \leq E l(A)$$

where $H(A)$ is the entropy of the random variable $A$. When is there equality in this inequality?

Paper 2, Section I

3G Coding and Cryptography

A random variable $A$ takes values in the alphabet $A = \{a, b, c, d, e\}$ with probabilities 0.4, 0.2, 0.2, 0.1 and 0.1. Calculate the entropy of $A$.

Define what it means for a code for a general finite alphabet to be optimal. Find such a code for the distribution above and show that there are optimal codes for this distribution with differing lengths of codeword.

[You may use any results from the course without proof. Note that $\log_2 5 \approx 2.32$.]
Paper 1, Section I

3G  Coding and Cryptography

Let $\mathcal{A}$ be a finite alphabet. Explain what is meant by saying that a binary code $c : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ has minimum distance $\delta$. If $c$ is such a binary code with minimum distance $\delta$, show that $c$ is $\delta - 1$ error-detecting and $\lfloor \frac{1}{2}(\delta - 1) \rfloor$ error-correcting.

Show that it is possible to construct a code that has minimum distance $\delta$ for any integer $\delta > 0$.

Paper 1, Section II

9G  Coding and Cryptography

Define the Hamming code. Show that it is a perfect, linear, 1-error correcting code.

I wish to send a message through a noisy channel to a friend. The message consists of a large number $N = 1,000$ of letters from a 16-letter alphabet $\mathcal{A}$. When my friend has decoded the message, she can tell whether there have been any errors. If there have, she asks me to send the message again and this is repeated until she has received the message without error. For each individual binary digit that is transmitted, there is independently a small probability $p = 0.001$ of an error.

(a) Suppose that I encode my message by writing each letter as a 4-bit binary string. The whole message is then $4N$ bits long. What is the probability $P$ that the entire message is transmitted without error? How many times should I expect to transmit the message until my friend receives it without error?

(b) As an alternative, I use the Hamming code to encode each letter of $\mathcal{A}$ as a 7-bit binary string. What is the probability that my friend can decode a single 7-bit string correctly? Deduce that the probability $Q$ that the entire message is correctly decoded is given approximately by

$$Q \simeq (1 - 21p^2)^N \simeq \exp(-21Np^2).$$

Which coding method is better?
Briefly describe the RSA public key cipher.

Just before it went into liquidation, the Internet Bank decided that it wanted to communicate with each of its customers using an RSA cipher. So, it chose a large modulus $N$, which is the product of two large prime numbers, and chose encrypting exponents $e_j$ and decrypting exponents $d_j$ for each customer $j$. The bank published $N$ and $e_j$ and sent the decrypting exponent $d_j$ secretly to customer $j$. Show explicitly that the cipher can be broken by each customer.

The bank sent out the same message to each customer. I am not a customer of the bank but have two friends who are and I notice that their published encrypting exponents are coprime. Explain how I can find the original message. Can I break the cipher?
Paper 4, Section I
4I Coding and Cryptography

Explain what is meant by a Bose–Ray Chaudhuri–Hocquenghem (BCH) code with design distance \( \delta \). Prove that, for such a code, the minimum distance between code words is at least \( \delta \). How many errors will the code detect? How many errors will it correct?

Paper 3, Section I
4I Coding and Cryptography

Let \( A \) be a random variable that takes values in the finite alphabet \( A \). Prove that there is a decodable binary code \( c : A \to \{0,1\}^* \) that satisfies

\[
H(A) \leq E(l(A)) \leq H(A) + 1,
\]

where \( l(a) \) is the length of the code word \( c(a) \) and \( H(A) \) is the entropy of \( A \).

Is it always possible to find such a code with \( E(l(A)) = H(A) \)? Justify your answer.

Paper 2, Section I
4I Coding and Cryptography

Let \( c : A \to \{0,1\}^* \) be a decodable binary code defined on a finite alphabet \( A \). Let \( l(a) \) be the length of the code word \( c(a) \). Prove that

\[
\sum_{a \in A} 2^{-l(a)} \leq 1.
\]

Show that, for the decodable code \( c : A \to \{0,1\}^* \) described above, there is a prefix-free code \( p : A \to \{0,1\}^* \) with each code word \( p(a) \) having length \( l(a) \). [You may use, without proof, any standard results from the course.]
Paper 1, Section I

41 Coding and Cryptography

State and prove Gibbs' inequality.

Show that, for a pair of discrete random variables $X$ and $Y$, each taking finitely many values, the joint entropy $H(X,Y)$ satisfies

$$H(X,Y) \leq H(X) + H(Y),$$

with equality precisely when $X$ and $Y$ are independent.

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Paper 2, Section II

12I Coding and Cryptography

What is the information capacity of a memoryless, time-independent channel?

Compute the information capacity of a binary symmetric channel with probability $p$ of error. Show the steps in your computation.

Binary digits are transmitted through a noisy channel, which is memoryless and time-independent. With probability $\alpha$ ($0 < \alpha < 1$) the digit is corrupted and noise is received, otherwise the digit is transmitted unchanged. So, if we denote the input by 0 and 1 and the output as 0, $*$ and 1 with $*$ denoting the noise, the transition matrix is

$$
\begin{pmatrix}
1 - \alpha & 0 \\
\alpha & \alpha \\
0 & 1 - \alpha
\end{pmatrix}.
$$

Compute the information capacity of this channel.

Explain how to code a message for transmission through the channel described above, and how to decode it, so that the probability of error for each bit is arbitrarily small.
Describe, briefly, either the RSA or the Elgamal public key cipher. You should explain, without proof, why it is believed to be difficult to break the cipher you describe.

How can such a cipher be used to sign messages? You should explain how the intended recipient of the message can (a) know from whom it came; (b) know that the message has not been changed; and (c) demonstrate that the sender must have signed it.

Let $I_0, I_1, \ldots, I_N$ be friendly individuals each of whom has a public key cipher. $I_0$ wishes to send a message to $I_N$ by passing it first to $I_1$, then $I_1$ passes it to $I_2$, $I_2$ to $I_3$, until finally it is received by $I_N$. At each stage the message can be modified to show from whom it was received and to whom it is sent. Devise a way in which these modifications can be made so that $I_N$ can be confident both of the content of the original message and that the message has been passed through the intermediaries $I_1, I_2, \ldots, I_{N-1}$ in that order and has not been modified by an enemy agent. Assume that it takes a negligible time to transmit a message from $I_k$ to $I_{k+1}$ for each $k$, but the time needed to modify a message is not negligible.
Paper 4, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
Describe how a stream cipher works. What is a one-time pad?

A one-time pad is used to send the message $x_1x_2x_3x_4x_5x_6y_7$ which is encoded as 0101011. In error, it is reused to send the message $y_0x_1x_2x_3x_4x_5x_6$ which is encoded as 0100010. Show that there are two possibilities for the substring $x_1x_2x_3x_4x_5x_6$, and find them.

Paper 3, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
Describe briefly the Rabin cipher with modulus $N$, explaining how it can be deciphered by the intended recipient and why it is difficult for an eavesdropper to decipher it.

The Cabinet decides to communicate using Rabin ciphers to maintain confidentiality. The Cabinet Secretary encrypts a message, represented as a positive integer $m$, using the Rabin cipher with modulus $N$ (with $0 < m < N$) and publishes both the encrypted message and the modulus. The Defence Secretary deciphers this message to read it but then foolishly encrypts it again using a Rabin cipher with a different modulus $N'$ (with $m < N'$) and publishes the newly encrypted message and $N'$. Mr Rime (the Leader of the Opposition) knows this has happened. Explain how Rime can work out what the original message was using the two different encrypted versions.

Can Rime decipher other messages sent out by the Cabinet using the original modulus $N$?

Paper 2, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
Let $A(n,d)$ denote the maximum size of a binary code of length $n$ with minimum distance $d$. For fixed $\delta$ with $0 < \delta < 1/2$, let $\alpha(\delta) = \lim \sup \frac{1}{n} \log_2 A(n,n\delta)$. Show that

$$1 - H(\delta) \leq \alpha(\delta) \leq 1 - H(\delta/2)$$

where $H(p) = -p \log_2 p - (1-p) \log_2 (1-p)$.

[You may assume the GSV and Hamming bounds and any form of Stirling’s theorem provided you state them clearly.]
Paper 1, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography

A binary Huffman code is used for encoding symbols 1, . . . , m occurring with respective probabilities \( p_1 \geq \cdots \geq p_m > 0 \) where \( \sum_{1 \leq j \leq m} p_j = 1 \). Let \( s_1 \) be the length of a shortest codeword and \( s_m \) the length of a longest codeword. Determine the maximal and minimal values of each of \( s_1 \) and \( s_m \), and find binary trees for which they are attained.

Paper 2, Section II
12H Coding and Cryptography

Define a BCH code of length \( n \), where \( n \) is odd, over the field of 2 elements with design distance \( \delta \). Show that the minimum weight of such a code is at least \( \delta \). [Results about the van der Monde determinant may be quoted without proof, provided they are stated clearly.]

Consider a BCH code of length 31 over the field of 2 elements with design distance 8. Show that the minimum distance is at least 11. [Hint: Let \( \alpha \) be a primitive element in the field of \( 2^5 \) elements, and consider the minimal polynomial for certain powers of \( \alpha \).]

Paper 1, Section II
12H Coding and Cryptography

Define the bar product \( C_1|C_2 \) of binary linear codes \( C_1 \) and \( C_2 \), where \( C_2 \) is a subcode of \( C_1 \). Relate the rank and minimum distance of \( C_1|C_2 \) to those of \( C_1 \) and \( C_2 \) and justify your answer. Show that if \( C^\perp \) denotes the dual code of \( C \), then

\[
(C_1|C_2)^\perp = C_2^\perp|C_1^\perp.
\]

Using the bar product construction, or otherwise, define the Reed–Muller code \( \text{RM}(d, r) \) for \( 0 \leq r \leq d \). Show that if \( 0 \leq r \leq d-1 \), then the dual of \( \text{RM}(d, r) \) is again a Reed–Muller code.
Paper 4, Section I

4G Coding and Cryptography

Describe the BB84 protocol for quantum key exchange.

Suppose we attempt to implement the BB84 protocol but cannot send single photons. Instead we send $K$ photons at a time all with the same polarization. An enemy can separate one of these photons from the other $K - 1$. Explain briefly how the enemy can intercept the key exchange without our knowledge.

Show that an enemy can find our common key if $K = 3$. Can she do so when $K = 2$ (with suitable equipment)?

Paper 3, Section I

4G Coding and Cryptography

Describe the RSA system with public key $(N, e)$ and private key $d$. Give a simple example of how the system is vulnerable to a homomorphism attack. Explain how a signature system prevents such an attack.

Paper 2, Section I

4G Coding and Cryptography

What is a (binary) linear code? What does it mean to say that a linear code has length $n$ and minimum weight $d$? When is a linear code perfect? Show that, if $n = 2^r - 1$, there exists a perfect linear code of length $n$ and minimum weight 3.
Paper 1, Section I

4G Coding and Cryptography

Let $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{B}$ be alphabets of sizes $m$ and $a$ respectively. What does it mean to say that $c : \mathcal{A} \to \mathcal{B}^*$ is a decodable code? State Kraft’s inequality.

Suppose that a source emits letters from the alphabet $\mathcal{A} = \{1, 2, \ldots, m\}$, each letter $j$ occurring with (known) probability $p_j > 0$. Let $S$ be the codeword-length random variable for a decodable code $c : \mathcal{A} \to \mathcal{B}^*$, where $|\mathcal{B}| = a$. It is desired to find a decodable code that minimizes the expected value of $a^S$. Establish the lower bound $\mathbb{E}(a^S) \geq \left( \sum_{j=1}^m \sqrt{p_j} \right)^2$, and characterise when equality occurs. [Hint. You may use without proof the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality, that (for positive $x_i, y_i$)
\[
\sum_{i=1}^m x_i y_i \leq \left( \sum_{i=1}^m x_i^2 \right)^{1/2} \left( \sum_{i=1}^m y_i^2 \right)^{1/2},
\]
with equality if and only if $x_i = \lambda y_i$ for all $i$.]

Paper 2, Section II

12G Coding and Cryptography

What does it mean to say that $f : \mathbb{F}_2^d \to \mathbb{F}_2^d$ is a linear feedback shift register? Let $(x_n)_{n \geq 0}$ be a stream produced by such a register. Show that there exist $N, M$ with $N + M \leq 2^d - 1$ such that $x_{r+N} = x_r$ for all $r \geq M$.

Describe and justify the Berlekamp–Massey method for ‘breaking’ a cipher stream arising from a linear feedback register of unknown length.

Let $x_n, y_n, z_n$ be three streams produced by linear feedback registers. Set
\[
k_n = x_n \quad \text{if} \quad y_n = z_n
\]
\[
k_n = y_n \quad \text{if} \quad y_n \neq z_n.
\]
Show that $k_n$ is also a stream produced by a linear feedback register. Sketch proofs of any theorems you use.
Define a cyclic binary code of length $n$.

Show how codewords can be identified with polynomials in such a way that cyclic binary codes correspond to ideals in the polynomial ring with a suitably chosen multiplication rule.

Prove that any cyclic binary code $C$ has a unique generator, that is, a polynomial $c(X)$ of minimum degree, such that the code consists of the multiples of this polynomial. Prove that the rank of the code equals $n - \deg c(X)$, and show that $c(X)$ divides $X^n - 1$.

Show that the repetition and parity check codes are cyclic, and determine their generators.
Paper 1, Section I
4G Coding and Cryptography

I think of an integer $n$ with $1 \leq n \leq 10^6$. Explain how to find $n$ using twenty questions (or less) of the form ‘Is it true that $n \geq m$?’ to which I answer yes or no.

I have watched a horse race with 15 horses. Is it possible to discover the order in which the horses finished by asking me twenty questions to which I answer yes or no?

Roughly how many questions of the yes/no type are required to discover the order in which $n$ horses finished if $n$ is large?

[You may assume that I answer honestly.]

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Paper 2, Section I
4G Coding and Cryptography

I happen to know that an apparently fair coin actually has probability $p$ of heads with $1 > p > 1/2$. I play a very long sequence of games of heads and tails in which my opponent pays me back twice my stake if the coin comes down heads and takes my stake if the coin comes down tails. I decide to bet a proportion $\alpha$ of my fortune at the end of the $n$th game in the $(n+1)$st game. Determine, giving justification, the value $\alpha_0$ maximizing the expected logarithm of my fortune in the long term, assuming I use the same $\alpha_0$ at each game. Can it be actually disadvantageous for me to choose an $\alpha < \alpha_0$ (in the sense that I would be better off not playing)? Can it be actually disadvantageous for me to choose an $\alpha > \alpha_0$?

[Moral issues should be ignored.]

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Paper 3, Section I
4G Coding and Cryptography

What is the rank of a binary linear code $C$? What is the weight enumeration polynomial $W_C$ of $C$?

Show that $W_C(1,1) = 2^r$ where $r$ is the rank of $C$. Show that $W_C(s,t) = W_C(t,s)$ for all $s$ and $t$ if and only if $W_C(1,0) = 1$.

Find, with reasons, the weight enumeration polynomial of the repetition code of length $n$, and of the simple parity check code of length $n$. 

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Part II, 2011 List of Questions
Paper 4, Section I
4G Coding and Cryptography
Describe a scheme for sending messages based on quantum theory which is not vulnerable to eavesdropping. You may ignore engineering problems.

Paper 1, Section II
12G Coding and Cryptography
Describe the Rabin–Williams coding scheme. Show that any method for breaking it will enable us to factorise the product of two primes.

Explain how the Rabin–Williams scheme can be used for bit sharing (that is to say ‘tossing coins by phone’).

Paper 2, Section II
12G Coding and Cryptography
Define a cyclic code. Show that there is a bijection between the cyclic codes of length $n$ and the factors of $X^n - 1$ over the field $\mathbb{F}_2$ of order 2.

What is meant by saying that $\alpha$ is a primitive $n$th root of unity in a finite field extension $K$ of $\mathbb{F}_2$? What is meant by saying that $C$ is a BCH code of length $n$ with defining set $\{\alpha, \alpha^2, \ldots, \alpha^{n-1}\}$? Show that such a code has minimum distance at least $\delta$.

Suppose that $K$ is a finite field extension of $\mathbb{F}_2$ in which $X^7 - 1$ factorises into linear factors. Show that if $\beta$ is a root of $X^3 + X^2 + 1$ then $\beta$ is a primitive 7th root of unity and $\beta^2$ is also a root of $X^3 + X^2 + 1$. Quoting any further results that you need show that the BCH code of length 7 with defining set $\{\beta, \beta^2\}$ is the Hamming code.

[Results on the Vandermonde determinant may be used without proof provided they are quoted correctly.]
Paper 1, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
Explain what is meant by saying that a binary code $C$ is a decodable code with words $C_j$ of length $l_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq n$. Prove the MacMillan inequality which states that, for such a code,

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} 2^{-l_j} \leq 1.$$ 

Paper 2, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
Describe the standard Hamming code of length 7, proving that it corrects a single error. Find its weight enumeration polynomial.

Paper 3, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
What is a linear code? What is a parity check matrix for a linear code? What is the minimum distance $d(C)$ for a linear code $C$?

If $C_1$ and $C_2$ are linear codes having a certain relation (which you should specify), define the bar product $C_1|C_2$. Show that

$$d(C_1|C_2) = \min\{2d(C_1), d(C_2)\}.$$ 

If $C_1$ has parity check matrix $P_1$ and $C_2$ has parity check matrix $P_2$, find a parity check matrix for $C_1|C_2$.

Paper 4, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography
What is the discrete logarithm problem?

Describe the Diffie–Hellman key exchange system for two people. What is the connection with the discrete logarithm problem? Why might one use this scheme rather than just a public key system or a classical (pre-1960) coding system?

Extend the Diffie–Hellman system to $n$ people using $n(n - 1)$ transmitted numbers.
Paper 1, Section II
12H Coding and Cryptography

State and prove Shannon’s theorem for the capacity of a noisy memoryless binary symmetric channel, defining the terms you use.

[You may make use of any form of Stirling’s formula and any standard theorems from probability, provided that you state them exactly.]

Paper 2, Section II
12H Coding and Cryptography

The Van der Monde matrix $V(x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{r-1})$ is the $r \times r$ matrix with $(i, j)$th entry $x_j^{i-1}$. Find an expression for $\det V(x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{r-1})$ as a product. Explain why this expression holds if we work modulo $p$ a prime.

Show that $\det V(x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{r-1}) \equiv 0$ modulo $p$ if $r > p$, and that there exist $x_0, \ldots, x_{p-1}$ such that $\det V(x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{p-1}) \neq 0$. By using Wilson’s theorem, or otherwise, find the possible values of $\det V(x_0, x_1, \ldots, x_{p-1})$ modulo $p$.

The Dark Lord Y’Trinti has acquired the services of the dwarf Trigon who can engrave pairs of very large integers on very small rings. The Dark Lord wishes Trigon to engrave $n$ rings in such a way that anyone who acquires $r$ of the rings and knows the Prime Perilous $p$ can deduce the Integer $N$ of Power, but owning $r - 1$ rings will give no information whatsoever. The integers $N$ and $p$ are very large and $p > N$. Advise the Dark Lord.

For reasons to be explained in the prequel, Trigon engraves an $(n + 1)$st ring with random integers. A band of heroes (who know the Prime Perilous and all the information contained in this question) set out to recover the rings. What, if anything, can they say, with very high probability, about the Integer of Power if they have $r$ rings (possibly including the fake)? What can they say if they have $r + 1$ rings? What if they have $r + 2$ rings?
Paper 1, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography

I am putting up my Christmas lights. If I plug in a set of bulbs and one is defective, none will light up. A badly written note left over from the previous year tells me that exactly one of my 10 bulbs is defective and that the probability that the $k$th bulb is defective is $k/55$.

(i) Find an explicit procedure for identifying the defective bulb in the least expected number of steps.

[You should explain your method but no proof is required.]

(ii) Is there a different procedure from the one you gave in (i) with the same expected number of steps? Either write down another procedure and explain briefly why it gives the same expected number or explain briefly why no such procedure exists.

(iii) Because I make such a fuss about each test, my wife wishes me to tell her the maximum number $N$ of trials that might be required. Will the procedure in (i) give the minimum $N$? Either write down another procedure and explain briefly why it gives a smaller $N$ or explain briefly why no such procedure exists.

Paper 2, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography

Knowing that $25 \equiv 2886^2 \mod 3953$ and that 3953 is the product of two primes $p$ and $q$, find $p$ and $q$.

[You should explain your method in sufficient detail to show that it is reasonably general.]

Paper 3, Section I
4H Coding and Cryptography

Define a binary code of length 15 with information rate $11/15$ which will correct single errors. Show that it has the rate stated and give an explicit procedure for identifying the error. Show that the procedure works.

[Hint: You may wish to imitate the corresponding discussion for a code of length 7.]
Paper 4, Section I

4H Coding and Cryptography

What is a general feedback register? What is a linear feedback register? Give an example of a general feedback register which is not a linear feedback register and prove that it has the stated property.

By giving proofs or counterexamples, establish which, if any, of the following statements are true and which, if any, are false.

(i) Given two linear feedback registers, there always exist non-zero initial fills for which the outputs are identical.

(ii) If two linear feedback registers have different lengths, there do not exist non-zero initial fills for which the outputs are identical.

(iii) If two linear feedback registers have different lengths, there exist non-zero initial fills for which the outputs are not identical.

(iv) There exist two linear feedback registers of different lengths and non-zero initial fills for which the outputs are identical.

Paper 1, Section II

12H Coding and Cryptography

(i) State and prove Gibbs’ inequality.

(ii) A casino offers me the following game: I choose strictly positive numbers $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ with $\sum_{j=1}^{n} a_j = 1$. I give the casino my entire fortune $f$ and roll an $n$-sided die. With probability $p_j$ the casino returns $u_j^{-1} a_j f$ for $j = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. If I intend to play the game many times (staking my entire fortune each time) explain carefully why I should choose $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ to maximise $\sum_{j=1}^{n} p_j \log(u_j^{-1} a_j)$.

[You should assume $n \geq 2$ and $u_j, p_j > 0$ for each $j$.]

(iii) Determine the appropriate $a_1, \ldots, a_n$. Let $\sum_{i=1}^{n} u_i = U$. Show that, if $U < 1$, then, in the long run with high probability, my fortune increases. Show that, if $U > 1$, the casino can choose $u_1, \ldots, u_n$ in such a way that, in the long run with high probability, my fortune decreases. Is it true that, if $U > 1$, any choice of $u_1, \ldots, u_n$ will ensure that, in the long run with high probability, my fortune decreases? Why?

Paper 2, Section II

12H Coding and Cryptography

Describe the construction of the Reed–Miller code $RM(m, d)$. Establish its information rate and minimum weight.

Show that every codeword in $RM(d, d - 1)$ has even weight. By considering $x \wedge y$ with $x \in RM(m, r)$ and $y \in RM(m, m - r - 1)$, or otherwise, show that $RM(m, m - r - 1) \subseteq RM(m, r)^{\perp}$. Show that, in fact, $RM(m, m - r - 1) = RM(m, r)^{\perp}$.
1/I/4G Coding and Cryptography

Define the entropy $H(X)$ of a random variable $X$ that takes no more than $N$ different values. What are the maximum and the minimum values for the entropy for a fixed value of $N$? Explain when the maximum and minimum are attained. You should prove any inequalities that you use.

2/I/4G Coding and Cryptography

Describe briefly the Shannon–Fano and Huffman binary codes for a finite alphabet. Find examples of such codes for the alphabet $\mathcal{A} = \{a, b, c, d\}$ when the four letters are taken with probabilities $0.4, 0.3, 0.2$ and $0.1$ respectively.

1/II/12G Coding and Cryptography

State Shannon’s Noisy Coding Theorem for a binary symmetric channel.

Define the mutual information of two discrete random variables $X$ and $Y$. Prove that the mutual information is symmetric and non-negative. Define also the information capacity of a channel.

A channel transmits numbers chosen from the alphabet $\mathcal{A} = \{0, 1, 2\}$ and has transition matrix

$$
\begin{pmatrix}
1 - 2\beta & \beta & \beta \\
\beta & 1 - 2\beta & \beta \\
\beta & \beta & 1 - 2\beta
\end{pmatrix}
$$

for a number $\beta$ with $0 \leq \beta \leq \frac{1}{3}$. Calculate the information capacity of the channel.

3/I/4G Coding and Cryptography

Define the Hamming code $h: \mathbb{F}_2^4 \to \mathbb{F}_2^7$ and prove that the minimum distance between two distinct code words is 3. Explain how the Hamming code allows one error to be corrected.

A new code $c: \mathbb{F}_2^4 \to \mathbb{F}_2^8$ is obtained by using the Hamming code for the first 7 bits and taking the last bit as a check digit on the previous 7. Find the minimum distance between two distinct code words for this code. How many errors can this code detect? How many errors can it correct?
2/II/12G  Coding and Cryptography

Describe the Rabin cipher with modulus $N$, explaining how it can be deciphered by the intended recipient and why it is difficult for an interceptor to decipher it.

The Bursars’ Committee decides to communicate using Rabin ciphers to maintain confidentiality. The secretary of the committee encrypts a message, thought of as a positive integer $m$, using the Rabin cipher with modulus $N$ (with $0 < m < N$) and publishes both the encrypted message and the modulus. A foolish bursar deciphers this message to read it but then encrypts it again using a Rabin cipher with a different modulus $N'$ (with $m < N'$) and publishes the newly encrypted message and $N'$. The president of CUSU, who happens to be a talented mathematician, knows that this has happened. Explain how the president can work out what the original message was using the two different encrypted versions.

Can the president of CUSU also decipher other messages sent out by the Bursars’ Committee?

4/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

What is a binary cyclic code of length $N$? What is the generator polynomial for such a cyclic code? Prove that the generator polynomial is a factor of $X^N - 1$ over the field $\mathbb{F}_2$.

Find all the binary cyclic codes of length 5.
1/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

Let $\Sigma_1$ and $\Sigma_2$ be alphabets of sizes $m$ and $a$. What does it mean to say that $f : \Sigma_1 \rightarrow \Sigma_2^*$ is a decipherable code? State the inequalities of Kraft and Gibbs, and deduce that if letters are drawn from $\Sigma_1$ with probabilities $p_1, \ldots, p_m$ then the expected word length is at least $H(p_1, \ldots, p_m)/\log a$.

2/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

Briefly explain how and why a signature scheme is used. Describe the El Gamal scheme.

1/II/11G  Coding and Cryptography

Define the bar product $C_1|C_2$ of linear codes $C_1$ and $C_2$, where $C_2$ is a subcode of $C_1$. Relate the rank and minimum distance of $C_1|C_2$ to those of $C_1$ and $C_2$. Show that if $C^\perp$ denotes the dual code of $C$, then

$$(C_1|C_2)^\perp = C_2^\perp|C_1^\perp.$$ 

Using the bar product construction, or otherwise, define the Reed–Muller code $RM(d, r)$ for $0 \leq r \leq d$. Show that if $0 \leq r \leq d-1$, then the dual of $RM(d, r)$ is again a Reed–Muller code.

3/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

Compute the rank and minimum distance of the cyclic code with generator polynomial $g(X) = X^3 + X + 1$ and parity-check polynomial $h(X) = X^4 + X^2 + X + 1$. Now let $\alpha$ be a root of $g(X)$ in the field with 8 elements. We receive the word $r(X) = X^3 + X^3 + X \pmod{X^7 - 1}$. Verify that $r(\alpha) = \alpha^4$, and hence decode $r(X)$ using minimum-distance decoding.

2/II/11G  Coding and Cryptography

Define the capacity of a discrete memoryless channel. State Shannon’s second coding theorem and use it to show that the discrete memoryless channel with channel matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1/2 & 1/2 \end{pmatrix}$$

has capacity $\log 5 - 2$. 

Part II  2007
What is a linear feedback shift register? Explain the Berlekamp–Massey method for recovering the feedback polynomial of a linear feedback shift register from its output. Illustrate in the case when we observe output

1 0 1 0 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 . . . .
1/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

Define a linear feedback shift register. Explain the Berlekamp–Massey method for “breaking” a key stream produced by a linear feedback shift register of unknown length. Use it to find the feedback polynomial of a linear feedback shift register with output sequence

0 1 0 1 1 1 0 0 0 1 0 . . . .

2/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

Let $\Sigma_1$ and $\Sigma_2$ be alphabets of sizes $m$ and $a$. What does it mean to say that an $a$-ary code $f : \Sigma_1 \rightarrow \Sigma_2^*$ is decipherable? Show that if $f$ is decipherable then the word lengths $s_1, \ldots, s_m$ satisfy

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} a^{-s_i} \leq 1.$$ 

Find a decipherable binary code consisting of codewords 011, 0111, 01111, 11111, and three further codewords of length 2. How do you know the example you have given is decipherable?

2/II/12G  Coding and Cryptography

Define a cyclic code. Show that there is a bijection between the cyclic codes of length $n$, and the factors of $X^n - 1$ in $\mathbb{F}_2[X]$.

If $n$ is an odd integer then we can find a finite extension $K$ of $\mathbb{F}_2$ that contains a primitive $n$th root of unity $\alpha$. Show that a cyclic code of length $n$ with defining set $\{ \alpha, \alpha^2, \ldots, \alpha^{d-1} \}$ has minimum distance at least $d$. Show that if $n = 7$ and $\delta = 3$ then we obtain Hamming’s original code.

[You may quote a formula for the Vandermonde determinant without proof.]

3/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

What does it mean to say that a binary code $C$ has length $n$, size $m$ and minimum distance $d$? Let $A(n, d)$ be the largest value of $m$ for which there exists an $[n, m, d]$-code. Prove that

$$\frac{2^n}{V(n, d-1)} \leq A(n, d) \leq \frac{2^n}{V(n, \lfloor \frac{1}{2} (d-1) \rfloor)}$$

where $V(n, r) = \sum_{j=0}^{r} \binom{n}{j}$. 

Part II 2006
3/II/12G  Coding and Cryptography

Describe the RSA system with public key \((N, e)\) and private key \((N, d)\). Briefly discuss the possible advantages or disadvantages of taking (i) \(e = 2^{16} + 1\) or (ii) \(d = 2^{16} + 1\).

Explain how to factor \(N\) when both the private key and public key are known.

Describe the bit commitment problem, and briefly indicate how RSA can be used to solve it.

4/I/4G  Coding and Cryptography

A binary erasure channel with erasure probability \(p\) is a discrete memoryless channel with channel matrix

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
1 - p & p & 0 \\
0 & p & 1 - p
\end{pmatrix}.
\]

State Shannon’s second coding theorem, and use it to compute the capacity of this channel.
Coding and Cryptography

Briefly describe the methods of Shannon-Fano and Huffman for economical coding. Illustrate both methods by finding decipherable binary codings in the case where messages $\mu_1, \ldots, \mu_5$ are emitted with probabilities $0.45, 0.25, 0.2, 0.05, 0.05$. Compute the expected word length in each case.

Coding and Cryptography

What is a linear binary code? What is the weight $w(C)$ of a linear binary code $C$? Define the bar product $C_1|C_2$ of two binary linear codes $C_1$ and $C_2$, stating the conditions that $C_1$ and $C_2$ must satisfy. Under these conditions show that

$$w(C_1|C_2) \geq \min(2w(C_1), w(C_2)).$$

Coding and Cryptography

What does it mean to say that $f : \mathbb{F}_2^d \to \mathbb{F}_2^n$ is a linear feedback shift register? Let $(x_n)_{n \geq 0}$ be a stream produced by such a register. Show that there exist $N, M$ with $N + M \leq 2^d - 1$ such that $x_{r+N} = x_r$ for all $r \geq M$.

Explain and justify the Berlekamp–Massey method for ‘breaking’ a cipher stream arising from a linear feedback register of unknown length.

Let $x_n, y_n, z_n$ be three streams produced by linear feedback registers. Set

$$k_n = x_n \text{ if } y_n = z_n$$
$$k_n = y_n \text{ if } y_n \neq z_n.$$

Show that $k_n$ is also a stream produced by a linear feedback register. Sketch proofs of any theorems that you use.

Coding and Cryptography

Briefly explain how and why a signature scheme is used. Describe the el Gamal scheme.
3/II/12J Coding and Cryptography

Define a cyclic code. Define the generator and check polynomials of a cyclic code and show that they exist.

Show that Hamming’s original code is a cyclic code with check polynomial $X^4 + X^2 + X + 1$. What is its generator polynomial? Does Hamming’s original code contain a subcode equivalent to its dual?

4/I/4J Coding and Cryptography

What does it mean to transmit reliably at rate $r$ through a binary symmetric channel (BSC) with error probability $p$? Assuming Shannon’s second coding theorem, compute the supremum of all possible reliable transmission rates of a BSC. What happens if (i) $p$ is very small, (ii) $p = 1/2$, or (iii) $p > 1/2$?