Computational Models of Neural Systems: 15-883

Spring 2005

Instructor:
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Course Info

Time: Mon/Wed 4:30 to 5:50

Place: Wean Hall 4615A

Credit: 12 units

Current syllabus: on the class web site

Textbook: none

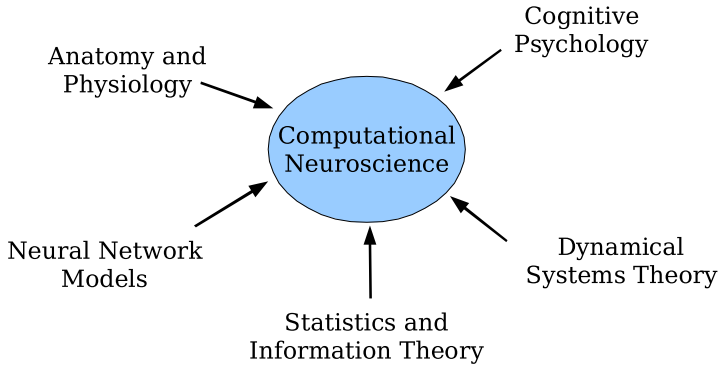
Readings:
Web repositories (linked from syllabus)
Or see Jenn Landefeld in Wean Hall 8120.

The magic photocopying code...

Who Should Take This Course?

- Computer scientists who want to learn about the brain.
  - No prior neuroscience background required.
- Neuroscientists who want a computational perspective on brain function.
  - Focus is on representations and algorithms, rather than anatomy and physiology.
- Cognitive scientists who want to study brains as computing devices.
  - Taking the "brain as computer" metaphor seriously requires learning as much as possible about both.

Computational Neuroscience Intellectual Landscape



Varieties of "Neural Network" Research

1) Neuronal Modeling
2) Computational Neuroscience
3) Connectionist (PDP) Models
4) Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs)

Some investigators work in more than one area.

Courses in all four areas are available at CMU or Pitt.

1: Neuronal Modeling

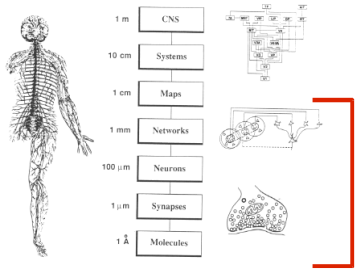
Understand the operation of single neurons or small neural circuits.

Detailed biophysical models of nerve cells, and collections of cells.

J. Comp. Neurosci.

Annual CNS conference

Comp. neuro. course at Pitt
(Bard Ermentrout, Math Dept.)



Churchland & Sejnowski 1988

2: Computational Neuroscience

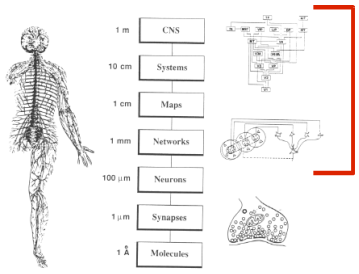
Model information processing in actual brain systems.

The models refer to specific anatomical structures, but their operation may be abstract.

Network; J. Neurosci.

Annual CNS conference

15-883 course (Touretzky)



Churchland & Sejnowski 1988

3: Connectionist (PDP) Modeling

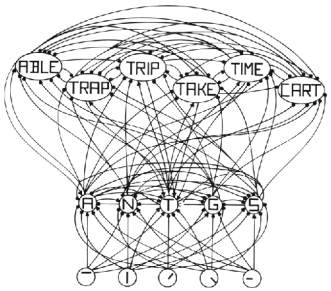
Model human cognition in a brain-like way:

Massively parallel constraint satisfaction.

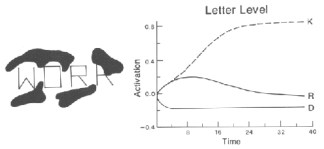
Distributed activity patterns instead of symbols.

Models are fairly abstract.

Cog Sci./Psych journals;
PDP models course
(Dave Plaut)



McClelland & Rumelhart 1981



4: Artificial Neural Nets

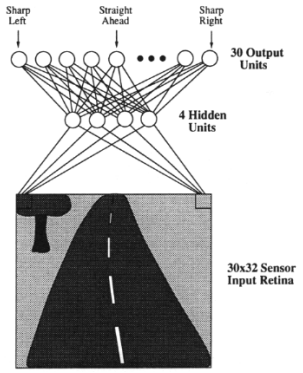
Pattern recognition, adaptive control, time series prediction.
This is where the money gets made.

Simple, "neuron-like" computing elements; local computation.

Neural Computation

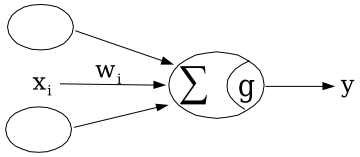
NIPS conference

15-782 (Artificial Neural Nets)



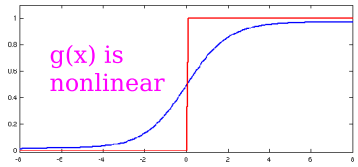
Pomerleau 1993: ALVINN

What's a "Neuron"?



$$\text{netact} = \sum_i w_i x_i = \vec{w} \cdot \vec{x}$$

$$y = g(\text{netact})$$



Organization of this Course

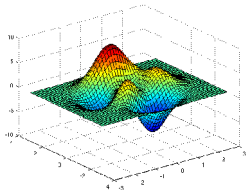
- Specific domain (e.g., the hippocampus)
  - Background lecture: anatomy and physiology
  - Family of models (e.g., associative memory models)
    - One or more papers in each family
    - Class discussion
    - Occasionally: experimentation in MATLAB
- Occasional problem sets
- Modeling project (or term paper)
- Mid-term exam
- Final exam

Grading

Problem sets	10%	
Modeling project	20%	(or term paper)
Midterm exam	30%	
Final exam	40%	

MATLAB

You need to learn MATLAB. It's fun!



Type “matlab” on Andrew to run it.
“peaks” will display this graph;
“doc peaks” will tell you about it

Student Version of MATLAB: available for Windows/Linux/Mac for $99.
Purchase from mathworks.com or CMU bookstore.

Tutorials are available online:
see the class homepage.

What You Should Do Today

- Hand in your student survey questionnaire.
- Read Churchland intro (handout).
- Start learning MATLAB.
  - Type “demo” for a list of demos, and scroll down to the “Graphics” section. Play around a bit.
- Get started on Wednesday's reading.