Recitation 7

Learning Theory

10-701: Introduction to Machine Learning

April 3 2026

1 Learning Theory

1.1 PAC Learning

1. Basic notation:
   - Probability distribution (unknown): $X \sim p^*$
   - **True function** (unknown): $c^* : X \to Y$
   - **Hypothesis space** $\mathcal{H}$ and **hypothesis** $h \in \mathcal{H} : X \to Y$
   - Training dataset $D = \{x^{(1)}, \ldots, x^{(N)}\}$
2. **True Error (expected risk)**

$$R(h) = P_{x \sim p^*(x)}(c^*(x) \neq h(x))$$

3. **Train Error (empirical risk)**

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{R}(h) &= P_{x \sim D}(c^*(x) \neq h(x)) \\ &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \mathbb{1}(c^*(x^{(i)}) \neq h(x^{(i)})) \\ &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \mathbb{1}(y^{(i)} \neq h(x^{(i)}))\end{aligned}$$

The **PAC criterion** is that we produce a high accuracy hypothesis with high probability. More formally,

$$P(\forall h \in \mathcal{H}, \_\_\_\_\_ \leq \_\_\_\_) \geq \_\_\_\_\_$$

Sample Complexity is the minimum number of training examples N such that the PAC criterion is satisfied for a given ϵ and δ.

Sample Complexity for 4 Cases: See Figure 1. Note that

- **Realizable** means $c^* \in \mathcal{H}$
- **Agnostic** means c^* may or may not be in $\mathcal{H}$

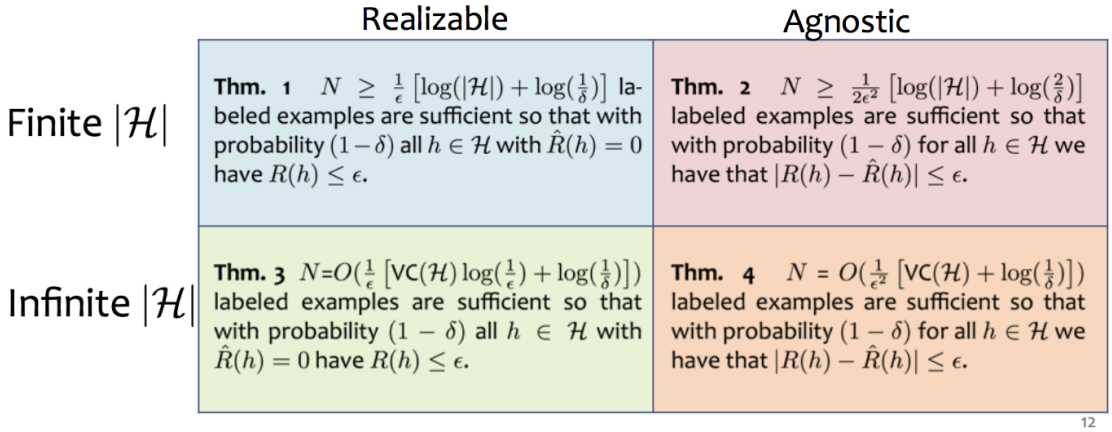

Figure 1: Sample Complexity for 4 Cases

The **VC dimension** of a hypothesis space $\mathcal{H}$, denoted $\text{VC}(\mathcal{H})$ or $d_{VC}(\mathcal{H})$, is the maximum number of points such that there exists at least one arrangement of these points and a hypothesis $h \in \mathcal{H}$ that is consistent with any labelling of this arrangement of points.

To show that $\text{VC}(\mathcal{H}) = n$:

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Questions

1. For the following examples, write whether or not there exists a dataset with the given properties that can be shattered by a linear classifier.
   - 2 points in 1D
   - 3 points in 1D
   - 3 points in 2D
   - 4 points in 2D

   How many points can a linear boundary (with bias) classify exactly for d-Dimensions?

2. Consider a rectangle classifier (i.e. the classifier is uniquely defined 3 points $x_1, x_2, x_3 \in \mathbb{R}^2$ that specify 3 out of the four corners), where all points within the rectangle must equal 1 and all points outside must equal -1.

   (a) Which of the configurations of 4 points in Figure 2 can a rectangle shatter?

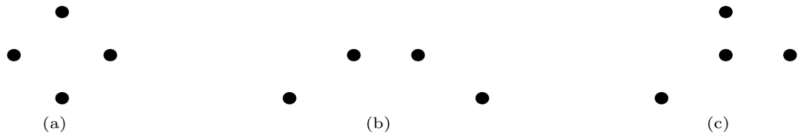

Figure 2

   (b) What about the configurations of 5 points in Figure 3?

Figure 3

3. Let $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$ be n random variables that represent binary literals ($x \in \{0,1\}^n$). Let the hypothesis class $\mathcal{H}_n$ denote the conjunctions of no more than n literals in which each variable occurs at most once. Assume that $c^* \in \mathcal{H}_n$.

   Example: For $n = 4$, $(x_1 \wedge x_2 \wedge x_4), (x_1 \wedge \neg x_3) \in \mathcal{H}_4$

   Find the minimum number of examples required to learn $h \in \mathcal{H}_{10}$ which guarantees at least 99% accuracy with at least 98% confidence.