

Math 664, Spring, 2002
Global Optimization and Semi-definite programming
Instructor: Leonid Faybusovich

Textbook: J. Renegar Mathematical Aspects of Interior-point Algorithms of Optimization, SIAM 2001

The goal of this course is to describe recent applications of interior-point algorithms to global (i.e. nonconvex) optimization problems. We start with a detailed discussion of the semi-definite programming, i.e. the problem of optimization of a linear function on a feasible set obtained as an intersection of an affine subspace with the cone of nonnegative definite symmetric matrices. We discuss several recent techniques for reducing various classes of optimization problems arising in control theory, robotics, statistics, computational geometry, economics to semi-definite programming problems. We then proceed with the discussion of several classes of interior-point algorithms (primal-dual, path-following, potential-reduction etc) as tools for solving semi-definite programming problems. Our main topic is the discussion of semi-definite relaxations as a rigorous tool for obtaining estimates for optimal solutions to a number of important global optimization problems: nonconvex problems with quadratic constraints and max-cut type combinatorial optimization problems with applications to circuit design.

Prerequisites: An undergraduate course in linear algebra