A Course in Statistical Theory

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Contents

Preface

Many math and some statistics departments offer a one semester graduate course in statistical inference using texts such as Casella and Berger (2002), Bickel and Doksum (2007) or Mukhopadhyay (2000, 2006). The course typically covers minimal and complete sufficient statistics, maximum likelihood estimators (MLEs), bias and mean square error, uniform minimum variance estimators (UMVUEs) and the Fréchet-Cramér-Rao lower bound (FCRLB), an introduction to large sample theory, likelihood ratio tests, and uniformly most powerful (UMP) tests and the Neyman Pearson Lemma. A major goal of this text is to make these topics much more accessible to students by using the theory of exponential families.

This material is essential for Masters and PhD students in biostatistics and statistics, and the material is often very useful for graduate students in economics, psychology and electrical engineering (especially communications and control).

The material is also useful for actuaries. According to (www.casact.org), topics for the CAS Exam 3 (Statistics and Actuarial Methods) include the MLE, method of moments, consistency, unbiasedness, mean square error, testing hypotheses using the Neyman Pearson Lemma and likelihood ratio tests, and the distribution of the max. These topics make up about 20% of the exam.

One of the most important uses of exponential families is that the theory often provides two methods for doing inference. For example, minimal sufficient statistics can be found with either the Lehmann-Scheffé theorem or by finding $\boldsymbol{T}$ from the exponential family parameterization. Similarly, if $Y_1, ..., Y_n$ are iid from a one parameter regular exponential family with complete sufficient statistic $T(\boldsymbol{Y})$, then one sided UMP tests can be found by using the Neyman Pearson lemma or by using exponential family theory.

The prerequisite for this text is a calculus based course in statistics at the level of Hogg and Tanis (2005), Larsen and Marx (2001), Wackerly, Mendenhall and Scheaffer (2002) or Walpole, Myers, Myers and Ye (2002). Also see Arnold (1990), Gathwaite, Joliffe and Jones (2002), Spanos (1999), Wasserman (2004) and Welsh (1996).

The following intermediate texts are especially recommended: DeGroot and Schervish (2001), Hogg, Craig and McKean (2004), Rice (2006) and Rohatgi (1984).

A less satisfactory alternative prerequisite is a calculus based course in probability at the level of Hoel, Port and Stone (1971), Parzen (1960) or Ross (1984).

A course in Real Analysis at the level of Bartle (1964), Gaughan (1993), Rosenlicht (1985), Ross (1980) or Rudin (1964) would be useful for the large sample theory chapters.

The following texts are at a similar to higher level than this text: Azzalini (1996), Bain and Engelhardt (1992), Berry and Lindgren (1995), Cox and Hinckley (1974), Ferguson (1967), Knight (2000), Lindgren (1993), Lindsey (1996), Mood, Graybill and Boes (1974), Roussas (1997) and Silvey (1970).

The texts Bickel and Doksum (2007), Lehmann and Casella (2003) and Rohatgi (1976) are at a higher level as are Poor (1994) and Zacks (1971). The texts Bierens (2004), Cramér (1946), Lehmann and Romano (2005), Rao (1965), Schervish (1995) and Shao (2003) are at a much higher level. Cox (2006) would be hard to use as a text, but is a useful monograph.

Some other useful references include a good low level probability text Ash (1993) and a good introduction to probability and statistics Dekking, Kraaikamp, Lopuhaä and Meester (2005). Also see Spiegel (1975), Romano and Siegel (1986) and see online lecture notes by Ash at (www.math.uiuc.edu/~r-ash/).

Many of the most important ideas in statistics are due to R.A. Fisher. See, for example, David (1995), Fisher (1922), Savage (1976) and Stigler (2008). The book covers some of these ideas and begins by reviewing probability, counting, conditional probability, independence of events, the expected value and the variance. Chapter 1 also covers mixture distributions and shows how to use the kernel method to find $E(g(Y))$. Chapter 2 reviews joint, marginal, and conditional distributions; expectation; independence of random variables and covariance; conditional expectation and variance; location–scale families; univariate and multivariate transformations; sums of random variables; random vectors; the multinomial, multivariate normal and elliptically contoured distributions. Chapter 3 introduces exponential families while Chapter 4 covers sufficient statistics. Chapter 5 covers maximum likelihood estimators and method of moments estimators. Chapter 6 examines the mean square error and bias as well as uniformly minimum variance unbiased estimators, Fisher information and the Fréchet-Cramér-Rao lower bound. Chapter 7 covers uniformly most powerful and likelihood ratio tests. Chapter 8 gives an introduction to large sample theory while Chapter 9 covers confidence intervals. Chapter 10 gives some of the properties of 44 univariate distributions, many of which are exponential families. The MLEs and UMVUEs for the parameters are derived for several of these distributions. Chapter 11 gives some hints for the problems.

Some highlights of this text follow.

- Exponential families, indicator functions and the support of the distribution are used throughout the text to simplify the theory.

- Section 1.5 describes the kernel method, a technique for computing $E(g(Y))$, in detail rarely given in texts.

- Theorem 2.2 shows the essential relationship between the independence of random variables $Y_1, ..., Y_n$ and the support in that the random variables are dependent if the support is not a cross product. If the support is a cross product and if the joint pdf or pmf factors on the support, then $Y_1, ..., Y_n$ are independent.

- Theorems 2.17 and 2.18 give the distribution of $\sum Y_i$ when $Y_1, ..., Y_n$ are iid for a wide variety of distributions.

- Chapter 3 presents exponential families. The theory of these distributions greatly simplifies many of the most important results in mathematical statistics.

- Corollary 4.6 presents a simple method for finding sufficient, minimal sufficient and complete statistics for k-parameter exponential families.

- Section 5.4.1 compares the "proofs" of the MLE invariance principle due to Zehna (1966) and Berk (1967). Although Zehna (1966) is cited by most texts, Berk (1967) gives a correct elementary proof.

- Theorem 7.3 provides a simple method for finding uniformly most powerful tests for a large class on 1–parameter exponential families.

- Theorem 8.4 gives a simple proof of the asymptotic efficiency of the complete sufficient statistic as an estimator of its expected value for 1–parameter regular exponential families.
- Theorem 8.21 provides a simple limit theorem for the complete sufficient statistic of a k–parameter regular exponential family.
- Chapter 10 gives information on many more "brand name" distributions than is typical.

Much of the course material is on parametric frequentist methods, but the most used methods in statistics tend to be semiparametric. Many of the most used methods originally based on the univariate or multivariate normal distribution are also semiparametric methods. For example the t-interval works for a large class of distributions if σ^2 is finite and n is large. Similarly, least squares regression is a semiparametric method. Multivariate analysis procedures originally based on the multivariate normal distribution tend to also work well for a large class of elliptically contoured distributions.

Warning: For parametric methods that are not based on the normal distribution, often the methods work well if the parametric distribution is a good approximation to the data, but perform very poorly otherwise.

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