

NIU TEXTBOOKS

NIU TEXTBOOKS ARE A CRUCIAL RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, PROVIDING ESSENTIAL MATERIALS THAT SUPPORT ACADEMIC SUCCESS ACROSS VARIOUS DISCIPLINES. AS THE ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, THE ROLE OF TEXTBOOKS REMAINS SIGNIFICANT, WHETHER IN PHYSICAL OR DIGITAL FORMATS. THIS ARTICLE WILL DELVE INTO THE TYPES OF TEXTBOOKS AVAILABLE AT NIU, WHERE TO FIND THEM, THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH ACQUIRING THEM, AND HOW TO MAXIMIZE THEIR USE FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING. FURTHERMORE, WE WILL ADDRESS THE SHIFT TOWARD DIGITAL RESOURCES AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACCESSING AFFORDABLE OPTIONS. BY UNDERSTANDING THESE ASPECTS, STUDENTS CAN BETTER NAVIGATE THEIR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY AT NIU.

- TYPES OF NIU TEXTBOOKS
- WHERE TO FIND NIU TEXTBOOKS
- COST OF NIU TEXTBOOKS
- MAXIMIZING THE USE OF NIU TEXTBOOKS
- DIGITAL RESOURCES AND ALTERNATIVES
- TIPS FOR FINDING AFFORDABLE NIU TEXTBOOKS

TYPES OF NIU TEXTBOOKS

AT NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, TEXTBOOKS ARE CATEGORIZED INTO SEVERAL TYPES BASED ON FORMAT, USAGE, AND CONTENT. UNDERSTANDING THESE TYPES CAN HELP STUDENTS CHOOSE THE BEST MATERIALS FOR THEIR COURSES.

PHYSICAL TEXTBOOKS

PHYSICAL TEXTBOOKS ARE TRADITIONAL PRINTED BOOKS THAT STUDENTS CAN PURCHASE OR RENT. THESE BOOKS OFTEN INCLUDE ESSENTIAL CONTENT SUCH AS THEORY, EXERCISES, AND REFERENCE MATERIALS, MAKING THEM VALUABLE FOR IN-DEPTH STUDY. MANY STUDENTS PREFER PHYSICAL TEXTBOOKS FOR THEIR TACTILE NATURE, EASE OF ANNOTATION, AND RELIABILITY DURING EXAMS.

DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS

DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS ARE ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF TRADITIONAL BOOKS, ACCESSIBLE ON VARIOUS DEVICES SUCH AS TABLETS, LAPTOPS, AND SMARTPHONES. THEY OFTEN COME WITH INTERACTIVE FEATURES, INCLUDING SEARCH FUNCTIONS, MULTIMEDIA ELEMENTS, AND HYPERLINKS, ENHANCING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE. DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS CAN BE MORE CONVENIENT FOR ON-THE-GO STUDYING AND OFTEN COME AT A REDUCED COST COMPARED TO PHYSICAL COPIES.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER)

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ARE FREE OR LOW-COST EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS THAT ARE OPENLY LICENSED. THESE CAN INCLUDE TEXTBOOKS, LECTURE NOTES, AND ONLINE COURSES, PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL CONTENT WITHOUT THE FINANCIAL BURDEN. NIU SUPPORTS THE USE OF OER TO PROMOTE AFFORDABLE EDUCATION, AND STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES.

WHERE TO FIND NIU TEXTBOOKS

FINDING THE RIGHT TEXTBOOKS FOR YOUR COURSES AT NIU CAN BE STRAIGHTFORWARD IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK. SEVERAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP STUDENTS LOCATE THE MATERIALS THEY NEED.

NIU CAMPUS BOOKSTORE

THE NIU CAMPUS BOOKSTORE IS A PRIMARY SOURCE FOR STUDENTS TO PURCHASE OR RENT TEXTBOOKS. IT STOCKS A WIDE RANGE OF REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR VARIOUS COURSES. THE BOOKSTORE ALSO OFFERS BUYBACK PROGRAMS, ALLOWING STUDENTS TO SELL THEIR USED TEXTBOOKS AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.

ONLINE RETAILERS

ONLINE RETAILERS SUCH AS AMAZON, CHEGG, AND EBAY PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR PURCHASING OR RENTING TEXTBOOKS. THESE PLATFORMS OFTEN HAVE COMPETITIVE PRICES AND A VAST SELECTION OF BOTH NEW AND USED BOOKS. STUDENTS CAN COMPARE PRICES ACROSS DIFFERENT SITES TO FIND THE BEST DEALS.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

THE NIU LIBRARY IS ANOTHER VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR ACCESSING TEXTBOOKS. MANY TEXTBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN, AND STUDENTS CAN CHECK THE LIBRARY CATALOG TO SEE IF THEIR REQUIRED MATERIALS ARE IN STOCK. ADDITIONALLY, THE LIBRARY MAY OFFER DIGITAL VERSIONS OF CERTAIN TEXTBOOKS, ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THEIR ONLINE PORTAL.

COST OF NIU TEXTBOOKS

THE COST OF TEXTBOOKS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT A STUDENT'S BUDGET, MAKING IT ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH ACQUIRING NIU TEXTBOOKS. PRICES CAN VARY WIDELY BASED ON FACTORS SUCH AS FORMAT, PUBLISHER, AND WHETHER THE BOOK IS NEW OR USED.

AVERAGE COSTS

ON AVERAGE, STUDENTS CAN EXPECT TO SPEND SEVERAL HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH SEMESTER ON TEXTBOOKS. THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE STORES REPORTS THAT STUDENTS TYPICALLY SPEND AROUND \$400 TO \$500 ON BOOKS AND SUPPLIES ANNUALLY. THIS COST CAN INCREASE DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF COURSES A STUDENT ENROLLS IN.

COST-SAVING STRATEGIES

STUDENTS CAN ADOPT SEVERAL STRATEGIES TO MINIMIZE TEXTBOOK EXPENSES:

- CONSIDER RENTING TEXTBOOKS INSTEAD OF PURCHASING THEM.
- UTILIZE LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR FREE ACCESS TO REQUIRED TEXTS.
- BUY USED TEXTBOOKS, WHICH CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE COSTS.
- SHARE TEXTBOOKS WITH CLASSMATES WHEN POSSIBLE.
- LOOK FOR DIGITAL VERSIONS, WHICH ARE OFTEN CHEAPER THAN PHYSICAL COPIES.

MAXIMIZING THE USE OF NIU TEXTBOOKS

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR TEXTBOOKS, STUDENTS SHOULD EMPLOY EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES THAT ENHANCE COMPREHENSION AND RETENTION. HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING TEXTBOOK USE.

ACTIVE READING TECHNIQUES

ACTIVE READING INVOLVES ENGAGING WITH THE TEXT RATHER THAN PASSIVELY READING. STUDENTS CAN HIGHLIGHT KEY CONCEPTS, TAKE NOTES IN THE MARGINS, AND SUMMARIZE SECTIONS IN THEIR OWN WORDS. THIS APPROACH HELPS REINFORCE LEARNING AND IMPROVES UNDERSTANDING OF COMPLEX MATERIAL.

INTEGRATING TEXTBOOKS WITH COURSE MATERIALS

STUDENTS SHOULD INTEGRATE THEIR TEXTBOOKS WITH OTHER COURSE MATERIALS, SUCH AS LECTURE NOTES AND ONLINE RESOURCES. THIS HOLISTIC APPROACH CAN PROVIDE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT MATTER, ALLOWING FOR BETTER PREPARATION FOR EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS.

DIGITAL RESOURCES AND ALTERNATIVES

AS EDUCATION INCREASINGLY SHIFTS TOWARD DIGITAL PLATFORMS, STUDENTS AT NIU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VARIOUS DIGITAL RESOURCES THAT COMPLEMENT TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOKS.

ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

MANY COURSES AT NIU UTILIZE ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS THAT OFFER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS VIDEOS, QUIZZES, AND DISCUSSION FORUMS. THESE PLATFORMS OFTEN INTEGRATE WITH TEXTBOOK CONTENT, PROVIDING A COHESIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT CAN ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING AND RETENTION.

APPS AND STUDY TOOLS

THERE ARE NUMEROUS APPS AND TOOLS AVAILABLE THAT CAN AID IN STUDYING AND UNDERSTANDING TEXTBOOK CONTENT. TOOLS LIKE FLASHCARD APPS, NOTE-TAKING SOFTWARE, AND CITATION MANAGERS CAN STREAMLINE THE STUDY PROCESS AND IMPROVE OVERALL EFFICIENCY.

TIPS FOR FINDING AFFORDABLE NIU TEXTBOOKS

FINDING AFFORDABLE TEXTBOOKS IS A PRIORITY FOR MANY STUDENTS AT NIU. HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS SAVE MONEY WHILE OBTAINING NECESSARY MATERIALS.

UTILIZE STUDENT DISCOUNTS

MANY ONLINE RETAILERS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES OFFER DISCOUNTS SPECIFICALLY FOR STUDENTS. ALWAYS CHECK FOR AVAILABLE DISCOUNTS BEFORE MAKING A PURCHASE, AS THESE CAN OFTEN LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS.

JOIN STUDENT GROUPS AND FORUMS

JOINING STUDENT GROUPS OR ONLINE FORUMS RELATED TO YOUR MAJOR CAN PROVIDE LEADS ON WHERE TO FIND TEXTBOOKS AT LOWER PRICES. STUDENTS OFTEN SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT WHERE TO BUY OR SELL TEXTBOOKS AMONG THEMSELVES, WHICH CAN SAVE TIME AND MONEY.

CHECK FOR LIBRARY E-RESOURCES

NIU'S LIBRARY MAY PROVIDE ACCESS TO E-TEXTBOOKS THROUGH ITS DATABASE. STUDENTS SHOULD REGULARLY CHECK THEIR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE TO SEE IF THEIR REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT, WHICH CAN OFTEN BE ACCESSED FREE OF CHARGE.

CONCLUSION

NIU TEXTBOOKS ARE A FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT OF THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY. UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF TEXTBOOKS AVAILABLE, WHERE TO FIND THEM, THE ASSOCIATED COSTS, AND HOW TO MAXIMIZE THEIR USE CAN SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE A STUDENT'S EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY. WITH THE RISE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES AND THE AVAILABILITY OF COST-SAVING STRATEGIES, STUDENTS HAVE MORE OPTIONS THAN EVER TO MANAGE THEIR TEXTBOOK NEEDS EFFECTIVELY. BY BEING INFORMED AND PROACTIVE, STUDENTS CAN NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF TEXTBOOK ACQUISITION AND MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AT NIU.

Q: WHAT TYPES OF TEXTBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT NIU?

A: NIU OFFERS VARIOUS TYPES OF TEXTBOOKS, INCLUDING PHYSICAL TEXTBOOKS, DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS, AND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER), CATERING TO DIVERSE STUDENT PREFERENCES AND NEEDS.

Q: WHERE CAN I PURCHASE OR RENT TEXTBOOKS FOR MY COURSES AT NIU?

A: TEXTBOOKS CAN BE PURCHASED OR RENTED AT THE NIU CAMPUS BOOKSTORE, THROUGH ONLINE RETAILERS, OR ACCESSED VIA THE NIU LIBRARY, WHICH MAY OFFER LOAN OPTIONS FOR REQUIRED TEXTS.

Q: HOW MUCH SHOULD I EXPECT TO SPEND ON TEXTBOOKS EACH SEMESTER AT NIU?

A: ON AVERAGE, STUDENTS AT NIU CAN EXPECT TO SPEND AROUND \$400 TO \$500 ANNUALLY ON TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES, ALTHOUGH THIS CAN VARY BASED ON COURSE SELECTION.

Q: WHAT STRATEGIES CAN I USE TO SAVE MONEY ON TEXTBOOKS AT NIU?

A: TO SAVE MONEY ON TEXTBOOKS, CONSIDER RENTING, PURCHASING USED BOOKS, UTILIZING LIBRARY RESOURCES, SHARING WITH CLASSMATES, AND EXPLORING DIGITAL OPTIONS.

Q: HOW CAN I MAXIMIZE MY LEARNING FROM NIU TEXTBOOKS?

A: MAXIMIZE LEARNING BY USING ACTIVE READING TECHNIQUES, INTEGRATING TEXTBOOKS WITH COURSE MATERIALS, AND EMPLOYING STUDY TOOLS AND APPS TO ENHANCE COMPREHENSION AND RETENTION.

Q: ARE THERE DIGITAL ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOKS AT NIU?

A: YES, NIU PROVIDES ACCESS TO DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS AND ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS THAT OFFER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AND INTERACTIVE FEATURES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' LEARNING.

Q: WHAT ARE OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) AT NIU?

A: OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) ARE FREE OR LOW-COST EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS THAT ARE OPENLY LICENSED, PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CONTENT WITHOUT THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOKS.

Q: HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY TEXTBOOK IS AVAILABLE AT THE NIU LIBRARY?

A: STUDENTS CAN CHECK THE NIU LIBRARY'S ONLINE CATALOG TO SEE IF THEIR REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN OR ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY'S DIGITAL RESOURCES.

Q: IS IT WORTH IT TO BUY DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS INSTEAD OF PHYSICAL ONES?

A: BUYING DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS CAN BE WORTH IT DUE TO THEIR OFTEN LOWER COSTS, PORTABILITY, AND ADDITIONAL FEATURES LIKE SEARCH FUNCTIONS AND INTERACTIVE CONTENT, MAKING THEM A CONVENIENT CHOICE FOR MANY STUDENTS.

Niu Textbooks

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niu textbooks: Writing and Developing Your College Textbook Mary Ellen Lepionka, 2008 This

is the comprehensively revised second edition of a popular professional book on textbook writing and finding one's way in the higher education publishing world—for academic authors and editors, college instructors, and instructional designers. The second edition has two new chapters on the latest industry trends—such as the pricing revolt, open access movement, and wiki-textbook phenomenon, and on the use of learning objectives to structure textbook package development. Every chapter features new sections, links, forms, models, or examples from an even greater range of college courses. Contains updated and expanded appendices, glossary entries, references, bibliography entries, and index. BISAC: Language Arts & Disciplines/Authorship and Publishing

niu textbooks: *A Social History of the Chinese Book* Joseph P. McDermott, 2006-04-01 In this learned, yet readable, book, Joseph McDermott introduces the history of the book in China in the late imperial period from 1000 to 1800. He assumes little knowledge of Chinese history or culture and compares the Chinese experience with books with that of other civilizations, particularly the European. Yet he deals with a wide range of issues in the history of the book in China and presents novel analyses of the changes in Chinese woodblock bookmaking over these centuries. He presents a new view of when the printed book replaced the manuscript and what drove that substitution. He explores the distribution and marketing structure of books, and writes fascinatingly on the history of book collecting and about access to private and government book collections. In drawing on a great deal of Chinese, Japanese, and Western research this book provides a broad account of the way Chinese books were printed, distributed, and consumed by literati and scholars, mainly in the lower Yangzi delta, the cultural center of China during these centuries. It introduces interesting personalities, ranging from wily book collectors to an indigent shoe-repairman collector. And, it discusses the obstacles to the formation of a truly national printed culture for both the well-educated and the struggling reader in recent times. This broad and comprehensive account of the development of printed Chinese culture from 1000 to 1800 is written for anyone interested in the history of the book. It also offers important new insights into book culture and its place in society for the student of Chinese history and culture. 'A brilliant piece of synthetic research as well as a delightful read, it offers a history of the Chinese book to the eighteenth century that is without equal.' - Timothy Brook, University of British Columbia 'Writers, scribes, engravers, printers, binders, publishers, distributors, dealers, literati, scholars, librarians, collectors, voracious readers — the full gamut of a vibrant book culture in China over one thousand years — are examined with eloquence and perception by Joseph McDermott in *The Social History of the Book*. His lively exploration will be of consuming interest to bibliophiles of every persuasion.' - Nicholas A. Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness*, *Patience and Fortitude*, *A Splendor of Letters*, and *Every Book Its Reader* Joseph McDermott is presently Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in Chinese at Cambridge University. He has published widely on Chinese social and economic history, most recently on the economy of the Song (or, Sung) dynasty for the *Cambridge History of China*. He has edited *State and Court Ritual in China* and *Art and Power in East Asia*.

niu textbooks: *Daily Life of the Sky-Mending Person* Jeffrey Sanders, 2016-04-20 In front of the gate of Mingxing Middle School, a young boy held up a wooden sign in his hand, allowing his classmates who were leaving school to watch and laugh at him.

niu textbooks: *Introduction to Aircraft Aeroelasticity and Loads* Jan Robert Wright, Jonathan Edward Cooper, 2008-02-08 Aircraft performance is influenced significantly both by aeroelastic phenomena, arising from the interaction of elastic, inertial and aerodynamic forces, and by load variations resulting from flight and ground manoeuvres and gust / turbulence encounters. There is a strong link between aeroelasticity and loads, and these topics have become increasingly integrated in recent years. *Introduction to Aircraft Aeroelasticity and Loads* introduces the reader to the main principles involved in a wide range of aeroelasticity and loads topics. Divided into three sections, the book begins by reviewing the underlying disciplines of vibrations, aerodynamics, loads and control. It goes on to describe simplified models to illustrate aeroelastic behaviour and aircraft response before introducing more advanced methodologies. Finally, it explains how industrial certification requirements for aeroelasticity and loads may be met and relates these to the earlier

theoretical approaches used. Presents fundamentals of structural dynamics, aerodynamics, static and dynamic aeroelasticity, response and load calculations and testing techniques. Covers performance issues related to aeroelasticity such as flutter, control effectiveness, divergence and redistribution of lift. Includes up-to-date experimental methods and analysis. Accompanied by a website with MatLAB and SIMULINK programs that relate to the models used. Introduction to Aircraft Aeroelasticity and Loads enables the reader to understand the aeroelastic and loads principles and procedures employed in a modern aircraft design office. It will appeal to final year undergraduate and masters students as well as engineers who are new to the aerospace industry.

niu textbooks: Collecting for the Curriculum Amy J. Catalano, 2015-09-28 If you're a librarian charged with collecting curriculum materials and children's literature to support the Common Core State Standards, then this book—the only one that offers explicit advice on collection development in curriculum collections—is for you. While there are many publications on the Common Core for school librarians and K-12 educators, no such literature exists for curriculum librarians at the post-secondary level. This book fills that gap, standing alone as a guide to collection development for curriculum librarians independent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The book provides instruction and guidance to curriculum librarians who acquire and manage collections so you can develop a collection based on best practices. The book begins with a primer on the CCSS and how curriculum librarians can support them. Discussion of the Standards is then woven through chapters, arranged by content area, that share research-based practices in curriculum development and instruction to guide you in curriculum selection. Material types covered include games, textbooks, children's literature, primary sources, counseling, and nonfiction. Additional chapters cover the management of curriculum collections, testing collections, and instruction and reference, as well as how to support and collect for special needs learners. Current practices in collection development for curriculum materials librarians are also reviewed. The book closes with a discussion of the future of curriculum materials.

niu textbooks: Designing History in East Asian Textbooks Gotelind Mueller, 2011-02-01 This book analyses the efforts throughout East Asia to deploy education for purposes of political socialization, and in particular in order to shape notions of identity. The chapters also examine the trend of 'common textbook initiatives', which have recently emerged in East Asia with the aim of helping to defuse tensions arguably fuelled by existing practices of mutual (mis)representation. These are analysed in relation to the East Asian political context, and compared with previous and ongoing endeavours in other parts of the world, particularly Europe, which have been keenly observed by East Asian practitioners. Written by a group of international education experts, chapters discuss the enduring focus on the role of curricula in inculcating homogenous visions of the national self, and indeed homogenized visions of significant 'others'. Including contributions from scholars and curriculum developers involved personally in the writing of national and multi-national history textbooks this book will be of interest to students and scholars of Asian education, Asian history and comparative education studies. Gotelind Müller is Professor of Chinese Studies, University of Heidelberg, Germany

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niu textbooks: Lessons from AlphaZero for Optimal, Model Predictive, and Adaptive Control Dimitri Bertsekas, 2022-03-19 The purpose of this book is to propose and develop a new conceptual framework for approximate Dynamic Programming (DP) and Reinforcement Learning

(RL). This framework centers around two algorithms, which are designed largely independently of each other and operate in synergy through the powerful mechanism of Newton's method. We call these the off-line training and the on-line play algorithms; the names are borrowed from some of the major successes of RL involving games. Primary examples are the recent (2017) AlphaZero program (which plays chess), and the similarly structured and earlier (1990s) TD-Gammon program (which plays backgammon). In these game contexts, the off-line training algorithm is the method used to teach the program how to evaluate positions and to generate good moves at any given position, while the on-line play algorithm is the method used to play in real time against human or computer opponents. Both AlphaZero and TD-Gammon were trained off-line extensively using neural networks and an approximate version of the fundamental DP algorithm of policy iteration. Yet the AlphaZero player that was obtained off-line is not used directly during on-line play (it is too inaccurate due to approximation errors that are inherent in off-line neural network training). Instead a separate on-line player is used to select moves, based on multistep lookahead minimization and a terminal position evaluator that was trained using experience with the off-line player. The on-line player performs a form of policy improvement, which is not degraded by neural network approximations. As a result, it greatly improves the performance of the off-line player. Similarly, TD-Gammon performs on-line a policy improvement step using one-step or two-step lookahead minimization, which is not degraded by neural network approximations. To this end it uses an off-line neural network-trained terminal position evaluator, and importantly it also extends its on-line lookahead by rollout (simulation with the one-step lookahead player that is based on the position evaluator). Significantly, the synergy between off-line training and on-line play also underlies Model Predictive Control (MPC), a major control system design methodology that has been extensively developed since the 1980s. This synergy can be understood in terms of abstract models of infinite horizon DP and simple geometrical constructions, and helps to explain the all-important stability issues within the MPC context. An additional benefit of policy improvement by approximation in value space, not observed in the context of games (which have stable rules and environment), is that it works well with changing problem parameters and on-line replanning, similar to indirect adaptive control. Here the Bellman equation is perturbed due to the parameter changes, but approximation in value space still operates as a Newton step. An essential requirement here is that a system model is estimated on-line through some identification method, and is used during the one-step or multistep lookahead minimization process. In this monograph we aim to provide insights (often based on visualization), which explain the beneficial effects of on-line decision making on top of off-line training. In the process, we will bring out the strong connections between the artificial intelligence view of RL, and the control theory views of MPC and adaptive control. Moreover, we will show that in addition to MPC and adaptive control, our conceptual framework can be effectively integrated with other important methodologies such as multiagent systems and decentralized control, discrete and Bayesian optimization, and heuristic algorithms for discrete optimization. One of our principal aims is to show, through the algorithmic ideas of Newton's method and the unifying principles of abstract DP, that the AlphaZero/TD-Gammon methodology of approximation in value space and rollout applies very broadly to deterministic and stochastic optimal control problems. Newton's method here is used for the solution of Bellman's equation, an operator equation that applies universally within DP with both discrete and continuous state and control spaces, as well as finite and infinite horizon.

niu textbooks: Rollout, Policy Iteration, and Distributed Reinforcement Learning Dimitri Bertsekas, 2021-08-20 The purpose of this book is to develop in greater depth some of the methods from the author's Reinforcement Learning and Optimal Control recently published textbook (Athena Scientific, 2019). In particular, we present new research, relating to systems involving multiple agents, partitioned architectures, and distributed asynchronous computation. We pay special attention to the contexts of dynamic programming/policy iteration and control theory/model predictive control. We also discuss in some detail the application of the methodology to challenging discrete/combinatorial optimization problems, such as routing, scheduling, assignment, and mixed

integer programming, including the use of neural network approximations within these contexts. The book focuses on the fundamental idea of policy iteration, i.e., start from some policy, and successively generate one or more improved policies. If just one improved policy is generated, this is called rollout, which, based on broad and consistent computational experience, appears to be one of the most versatile and reliable of all reinforcement learning methods. In this book, rollout algorithms are developed for both discrete deterministic and stochastic DP problems, and the development of distributed implementations in both multiagent and multiprocessor settings, aiming to take advantage of parallelism. Approximate policy iteration is more ambitious than rollout, but it is a strictly off-line method, and it is generally far more computationally intensive. This motivates the use of parallel and distributed computation. One of the purposes of the monograph is to discuss distributed (possibly asynchronous) methods that relate to rollout and policy iteration, both in the context of an exact and an approximate implementation involving neural networks or other approximation architectures. Much of the new research is inspired by the remarkable AlphaZero chess program, where policy iteration, value and policy networks, approximate lookahead minimization, and parallel computation all play an important role.

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