CS 277 (W26): Control and Reinforcement Learning

Quiz 7: Planning and MBRL

Due date: Monday, March 2, 2026 (Pacific Time)

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https://royf.org/crs/CS277/W26

Instructions: please solve the quiz in the marked spaces and submit this PDF to Gradescope.

Question 1 When sampling experience (s, a, r, s') for RL, an arbitrary-reset ("teleporting robot") simulator $\hat{p}(s'|s, a)$, which can be reset to any state s, is more useful than a simulator that cannot, in the following ways (check all that hold):

- ☐ s can be sampled from an arbitrary distribution.
- ☐ a can be sampled on-policy $(a|s) \sim \pi$.
- ☐ $(r, s'|s, a)$ can be sampled multiple times.
- ☐ The next state can be set to $s' + \epsilon$, with some random noise ϵ, to sample more noisy trajectories.
- ☐ None of the above

Question 2 In model-based exploration algorithms, let $\hat{M}$ be a good approximation of the real MDP in a subset S of states (*known* states). $\hat{M}'$ is similar to $\hat{M}$, except that $\hat{M}$ gives the minimum reward 0 in unknown states, while $\hat{M}'$ gives the maximum reward $r_{\max}$. Check all that hold for the optimal policy π in $\hat{M}$ and the optimal policy π' in $\hat{M}'$:

- ☐ If π has low probability to reach an unknown state, than it is near-optimal in M.
- ☐ If π' has low probability to reach an unknown state, than it is near-optimal in M.
- ☐ E^3 uses π' rather than π for exploration, because π' is optimistic under uncertainty and thus explores more.
- ☐ In E^3, π can be better than π' for deployment after training, because π tends to have a lower probability to reach an unknown state.
- ☐ None of the above

Question 3 Model Predictive Control (MPC) uses an approximate model for planning, but then only executes each plan for a single step, and re-plans after every action. This scheme partly mitigates the accumulation of model error. How does this benefit depend on the state observability?

- ☐ Tends to be more beneficial the more observable the state is.
- ☐ Tends to be about equally beneficial regardless of how observable the state is.
- ☐ Tends to be less beneficial the more observable the state is.

Briefly justify: