

MAS114: Lecture 14

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2017–2018

Online tests

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Online tests start again this week.

Division

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But division in modular arithmetic is more complicated than in the integers. Of course, integer division is unique where it exists. In other words, if I choose integers a and b (with b nonzero) and ask about integer solutions to

$$ax = b,$$

then two things can happen: either there is a unique solution (as with $3x = 6$), or there's no solution at all (as with $4x = 7$).

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But we can't always cancel in modular arithmetic: the third example above tells (for example) that $2 \cdot 3 \equiv 2 \cdot 7 \pmod{8}$, but that $3 \not\equiv 7 \pmod{8}$.

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Proof.



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Notice that, as a consequence modular arithmetic modulo a prime p is *fantastically* well-behaved: any nonzero residue $a \not\equiv 0 \pmod{p}$ has an inverse (since we have $\gcd(a, p) = 1$ unless a is a multiple of p).

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- ▶ If m is odd, then 2 is invertible modulo m , because $\gcd(m, 2) = 1$. The inverse is:

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