18.335 Problem Set 1
Due Monday, 20 September 2010.

Problem 1: Gaussian elimination
Trefethen, problem 20.4.

Problem 2: Asymptotic notation
This problem asks a few simple questions to make sure that you understand the asymptotic notations $O$, $\Omega$, and $\Theta$ as defined in the handout in class, and also to make sure you are comfortable with simple proofs. (A detailed review of asymptotic notation can be found in any computer-science textbook, or on many sites online.)

(a) If $f(n) = \Theta[F(n)]$ and $g(n) = \Theta[G(n)]$ for nonnegative functions $f$, $g$, $F$, and $G$, prove that $f(n) + g(n) = \Theta[F(n) + G(n)]$.

(b) Prove that $f(n) = O[g(n)]$ if and only if $g(n) = \Omega[f(n)]$. [For example, $n^2 = O(n^3)$ and $n^3 = \Omega(n^2)$.

(c) If $f(n) = O[F(n)]$, prove that any function that is $O[f(n) + cF(n)]$ must also be $O[F(n)]$ for any constant $c \neq 0$—that is, if we regard $O[\cdots]$ as a set of functions, prove $O[f(n) + cF(n)] \subseteq O[F(n)]$. [For example, $O(n^2 + 3n^3) = O(n^3)$.] Is it also true that $\Theta[f(n) + cF(n)] \subseteq \Theta[F(n)]$ for any $c \neq 0$ if $f(n) = O[F(n)]$? Explain.

(d) Explain why the statement, “The running time of this algorithm is $O(n^2)$ or worse,” cannot provide any information about the algorithm.

Problem 3: Caches and matrix multiplications
In class, we considered the performance and cache complexity of matrix multiplication $A = BC$, especially for square $m \times m$ matrices, and showed how to reduce the number of cache misses using various forms of blocking. In this problem, you will be comparing optimized matrix-matrix products to optimized matrix-vector products, using Matlab.

(a) The code matmul_bycolumn.m posted on the 18.335 web page computes $A = BC$ by multiplying $B$ by each column of $C$ individually (using Matlab’s highly-optimized BLAS matrix-vector product). Benchmark this: plot the flop rate for square $m \times m$ matrices as a function of $m$, and also benchmark Matlab’s built-in matrix-matrix product and plot it too. For example, Matlab code to benchmark Matlab’s $m \times m$ products for $m = 1, \ldots, 1000$, storing the flop rate ($2m^3$/nanoseconds) in an array gflops(m), is:

```matlab
gflops = zeros(1,1000);
for m = 1:1000
    A = rand(m,m);
    B = rand(m,m);
    t = 0;
    iters = 1;
    tic
    for iter = 1:iters
        tic
    t = t + toc;
    end
    end
gflops(m) = 2*t/m^3;
end
```
C = A * B;
end
t = toc;  % elapsed time in seconds
iters = iters * 2;
gflops(m) = 2*m^3 * 1e-9 / (t * 2/iters);
disp(sprintf('gflops for m=%d = %g after %d iters',m,gflops(m),iters/2));
drawnow update;
end
plot([1:1000], gflops, 'r-')

(b) Compute the cache complexity (the asymptotic number of cache misses in the ideal-cache model, as in class) of an \( m \times m \) matrix-vector product implemented the “obvious” way (a sequence of row-column dot products).

(c) Propose an algorithm for matrix-vector products that obtains a better asymptotic cache complexity (or at least a better constant coefficient, e.g. going from \( \sim 3m^2 \) to \( \sim 2m^2 \), even if it is still the same \( \Theta[\cdot\cdot\cdot] \) complexity) by dividing the operation into some kind of blocks.

(d) Assuming Matlab uses something like your “improved” algorithm from part (c) to do matrix-vector products, compute the cache complexity of `matmul_bycolumn`. Compare this to the cache complexity of the blocked matrix-matrix multiply from class. Does this help to explain your results from part (a)?

Problem 4: Caches and backsubstitution

In this problem, you will consider the impact of caches (again in the ideal-cache model from class) on the problem of backsubstitution: solving \( RX = b \) for \( x \), where \( R \) is an \( m \times m \) upper-triangular matrix (such as might be obtained by Gaussian elimination). The simple algorithm you probably learned in previous linear-algebra classes (and reviewed in the book, lecture 17) is (processing the rows from bottom to top):

\[
x_m = b_m/r_{mm} \\
\text{for } j = m-1 \text{ down to } 1 \\
x_j = (b_j - \sum_{k=j+1}^{m} r_{jk}x_k)/r_{jj}
\]

Suppose that \( X \) and \( B \) are \( m \times n \) matrices, and we want to solve \( RX = B \) for \( X \)—this is equivalent to solving \( Rx = b \) for \( n \) different right-hand sides \( b \) (the \( n \) columns of \( B \)). One way to solve the \( RX = B \) for \( X \) is to apply the standard backsubstitution algorithm, above, to each of the \( n \) columns in sequence.

(a) Give the asymptotic cache complexity \( Q(m, n; Z) \) (in asymptotic \( \Theta \) notation, ignoring constant factors) of this algorithm for solving \( RX = B \).

(b) Suppose \( m = n \). Propose an algorithm for solving \( RX = B \) that achieves a better asymptotic cache complexity (by cache-aware/blocking or cache-oblivious algorithms, your choice). Can you gain the factor of \( 1/\sqrt{Z} \) savings that we showed is possible for square-matrix multiplication?