

Robust Control of Aerospace Vehicles (A Remote-Learning EDGE Course)

EAS 6416

Class Periods: Recording schedule Friday 0830-1200 (Pre-recorded lectures become available online)

Location: UF REEF Building; 1350 N Poquito Rd; Shalimar, FL 32579

Academic Term: Fall 2025

Instructor:

Ben Dickinson, PhD

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dickinsb@gmail.com

Online Office Hour: Wednesday, 1900-2000, Weekly (link to be provided)

Teaching Assistant/Peer Mentor/Supervised Teaching Student:

None

Course Description

In this EDGE course, you will learn a curated set of robust, optimal, and adaptive control methods that are highly relevant to modern industrial flight control challenges. Learn how to design controllers that can maintain performance and safety even when faced with uncertainty and unexpected changes. Topics will progress from separate ideas to their combined application to aircraft control problems, including robust servomechanism design, linear quadratic methods, optimal observer-based feedback, multivariable frequency domain analysis, and guidance fundamentals. You will also learn how to augment robust baseline controllers with model reference adaptive control to restore performance in uncertain conditions. Each subject is taught from the ground up, from theory to MATLAB coded examples in lecture, followed by hands-on examples in homework. By the end of this course, you will not only have a theoretical grasp of advanced control for aerospace systems but also practical skills to systematically apply these methods to design and tune controllers for real-world aerospace problems.

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites

Students should be familiar with linear algebra, ordinary differential equations, classical control for SISO systems, and state space control theory. Basic programming skills in MATLAB are essential.

Course Objectives

1. Become proficient in a selected set of highly relevant modern control and estimation methods for aircraft flight control.
2. Develop a useful code-based toolset through homework and project exercises that enables application of modern control and estimation methods within and beyond this course.
3. Learn how to systematically tune flight control systems comprised of modern control and estimation methods.

Materials and Supply Fees

MATLAB is required to run codes provided in class, and complete homework and projects.

Required Textbooks and Software

- Robust and Adaptive Control with Aerospace Applications
Eugene Lavretsky and Kevin Wise
Springer, Second edition, 2024
ISBN-10: 3031383133

Recommended Materials

- Optimal Control Linear Quadratic Methods
Anderson, B. and Moore, J.

Dover, 2007

ISBN-10: 9780486457666

Comments: This text is a good supplement to many of the topics in the required textbook. It is also inexpensive; copies can be found for under 10 dollars.

- Aircraft Control and Simulation

Stevens, B. and Lewis F.

Wiley, third edition, 2015

ISBN-10: 1118870980

Comments: This is recommended for students with particular interest in the subject matter of this course and its application to full nonlinear aircraft simulation. In general, this text is not necessary to succeed in this course.

Required Computer

UF student computing requirement: <https://news.it.ufl.edu/education/student-computing-requirements-for-uf/>

Course Schedule

- Week 1: (Recording August 23rd) Course Introduction, Aircraft equations of motion review, Trim and linearization, Rigid body dynamics, development of directionally decoupled LTI control design models / Chapter 1
- Week 2: (Recording August 30th) Model-based control design overview, Control-oriented LTI models, Introduction to optimal control, Hamilton-Jacobi-Bellman equation / Chapters 2.1-2.3, 2.4.2, 4.1-4.2/ Quiz 1 / HW1 Assigned
- Week 3: (Recording September 6th) Finite horizon regulator, Infinite time regulator, Linear quadratic regulation (LQR) Matrix Hamiltonian equations, Stability of LTI LQR, Kalman's identity, Coded examples with aircraft application / Chapter 4.3
- Week 4: (Recording September 13th) Robustness properties of LTI LQR, Asymptotic properties of LQR, Command tracking motivation, Coded examples with aircraft application/ Chapter 4.3 / Quiz 2 / HW2 Assigned
- Week 5: (Recording September 20th) Derivation of the robust servomechanism (command tracking control), Combining robust servomechanism design and LQ methods, Coded examples with aircraft application / Chapters 4.4-4.5
- Week 6: (Recording September 27th) Review of classical frequency domain methods, Bode's theorems and "Respect the Unstable," Performance-robustness tradeoffs, Systematic tuning in coded examples with aircraft application / Chapters 2.4.1.2, 2.4.2.3, 3.1, and 3.2
- Week 7: (Recording October 4th) Review of vector and matrix norms, The singular value decomposition, Coded examples, Multivariable Nyquist and stability margins, Additive and multiplicative disturbances, Brief introduction to H-infinity control / Chapters 2.6, 3.3, 5 / Quiz 3 / HW3 Assigned
- Week 8: (Recording October 11th) Frequency domain analysis of a MIMO aircraft control system, Rejection of external disturbances, Small gain theorem, Robust stability, Structured singular value / Chapter 3.4 (up to 3.4.3)
- Week 9: (Recording October 18th) Observer overview, Leuenberger observer, duality of LQ observer to LQ control, Systematic tuning, Example application to a rocket, Guidance / Chapters 6.2 (up to 6.2.3) and 6.3.1 to end of Chapter 6 / Quiz 4
- Week 10: (Recording October 25th) Model reference control, Scalar direct model reference adaptive control (MRAC), Application to roll dynamics of an aircraft, Mathematical preliminaries: Lyapunov stability, stability definitions, Lipschitz continuity, Barbalat's lemma, Coded examples / Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 (as required) / HW4 Assigned

Week 11:	(Recording November 1 st) MRAC for MIMO systems, MRAC with integral control, Coded examples / Chapters 9.2, 9.3, and 9.5 through end of Chapter 9. / Quiz 5
Week 12:	(Recording November 8 th) MRAC augmentation of an optimal baseline controller, Coded examples, MRAC modifications for robustness / Chapters 10 and 11.1-11.2 / HW5 Assigned
Week 13:	(Recording November 15 th) MRAC modifications for robustness, The projection operator, Projection based MRAC design, Coded examples / Chapter 11.3 / Quiz 6
Week 14:	(Recording November 22 nd) Projection based MRAC design, Coded examples, Approximation-based MRAC, Course review / Chapter 11.4-11.5
Week 15:	Holiday Week

Important Dates

November 14th, 2025 *Project Due by midnight*

December 9th, 2025 *Final Exam (10-12 ET, Online)*

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

This course is designed for remote learning and as such, in-person attendance is NOT required. If you are local or happen to be in the area, you are welcome to attend in person during recording sessions. Note, due to potential changes in my recording schedule, please verify with me when you plan to attend.

You are expected to watch each lecture set (3 50-minute lectures) within 7 days after they are uploaded. In general, there is a no late homework policy unless it is associated with an excused absence that is consistent with university policies. Extended absences may require make-up work. When such absences are known, you must work with the instructor to develop a plan to make up the work missed.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Homework Sets (5)	500	40%
Quizzes (6)	300	20%
Project	100	20%
Final Exam	100	20%
Total		100%

Grading Policy

Your final grade will be assigned based on your total percent score according to the table below. The instructor may reduce the percentage thresholds for each grade based on overall class performance. Note, if the class does well and the average is high, grade thresholds will not increase, and the table below will still apply.

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
93.4 - 100	A	4.00
90.0 - 93.3	A-	3.67
86.7 - 89.9	B+	3.33
83.4 - 86.6	B	3.00
80.0 - 83.3	B-	2.67
76.7 - 79.9	C+	2.33
73.4 - 76.6	C	2.00
70.0 - 73.3	C-	1.67

66.7 - 69.9	D+	1.33
63.4 - 66.6	D	1.00
60.0 - 63.3	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without the permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Commitment to a Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment

The Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering values varied perspectives and lived experiences within our community and is committed to supporting the University's core values, including the elimination of discrimination. It is expected that every person in this class will treat one another with dignity and respect regardless of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information, and veteran status.

If you feel like your performance in class is being impacted by discrimination or harassment of any kind, please contact your instructor or any of the following:

- Your academic advisor or Undergraduate Coordinator
- HWCoe Human Resources, 352-392-0904, student-support-hr@eng.ufl.edu
- Pam Dickrell, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, 352-392-2177, pld@ufl.edu
- Toshikazu Nishida, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, 352-392-0943, nishida@eng.ufl.edu

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <https://registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Assault, or Violence

If you or a friend has been subjected to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or violence contact the [Office of Title IX Compliance](mailto:title-ix@ufl.edu), located at Yon Hall Room 427, 1908 Stadium Road, (352) 273-1094, title-ix@ufl.edu

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling; <https://career.ufl.edu>.

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
<https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

Student Complaints Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>; <https://care.dso.ufl.edu>.

On-Line Students Complaints: <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/>; <https://distance.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint>.