

# Math 5760/6890: Introduction to Mathematical Finance Geometric Brownian Motion and SDE's

See Petters and Dong 2016, Sections 6.7-6.8

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November 21, 2023



We have introduced the stochastic process Brownian motion,  $B_t = B(t)$ .

- $P(B(t) = 0) = 1$
- $B$  is continuous with probability 1
- The  $n$  sequential increments formed by any choice of  $n + 1$  ordered time points  $t_1, \dots, t_{n+1}$  are mutually independent
- For any  $0 \leq s \leq t < \infty$ , then  $B(t) - B(s) \sim \mathcal{N}(0, t - s)$ .

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Using this, we have defined the Itô integral:

$$\int_0^T f(t)dB_t = \lim_{n \uparrow \infty} \sum_{j=1}^n f(t_{j-1})(B(t_j) - B(t_{j-1})), \quad t_j = \frac{jT}{n}.$$

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The Itô integral can be used to notationally define differentials and (stochastic) differential equations:

$$X_T := \int_0^T f(t) dB_t \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad dX_t = f(t) dB_t. \quad \text{Handwritten: } \frac{dX_t}{dB_t} = f(t)$$

It is this differential notation that we will mostly exercise moving forward.

$$\frac{d}{dt} \int_a^t f(x) dx = f(t) \quad \int_a^b f(x) dx = F(b) - F(a)$$



# Some examples

Here are some examples of SDE's:

- Let  $S_t = \mu t + \sigma B_t$ , where  $B_t$  is a standard Brownian motion. To determine an SDE, note that by definition:

$$B_t = \lim_{n \uparrow \infty} B_t = \lim_{n \uparrow \infty} \sum_{j=1}^n (B_j - B_{j-1}) = \int_0^T 1 dB_t,$$

i.e.,

$$dB_t = dB_t.$$

Combining this with linearity of the Itô integral and our usual understanding of the deterministic differential, we conclude:

$$S_T = \int_0^T \mu dt + \int_0^T \sigma dB_t \quad \implies \quad dS_t = \mu dt + \sigma dB_t.$$

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- From last time:

$$d(B_t^2) = dt + 2B_t dB_t$$

Stochastic processes that are driven by Brownian motion have special terminology:

Suppose  $X_t$  is a stochastic process satisfying,

$$dX_t = \mu(X_t, t)dt + \sigma(X_t, t)dB_t,$$

where  $\mu(\cdot, \cdot)$  and  $\sigma(\cdot, \cdot)$  are deterministic functions (“drift” and “volatility”, respectively).

Then  $X_t$  is called an *Itô process*.

# Itô processes and diffusion

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If  $\mu = \mu(\cdot)$  and  $\sigma = \sigma(\cdot)$ , i.e.,

$$dX_t = \mu(X_t)dt + \sigma(X_t)dB_t,$$

then  $X_t$  is an *Itô diffusion*.

Why the difference? Recall:  $y' = y$  have different behavior.  
 $y' = ty$

# Change of variables

A particularly useful tool is a change-of-variable result: Suppose a function satisfies,

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = \mu(x; t)$$

What differential equation does  $y := f(x, t)$  satisfy?

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dy}{dt} &= \frac{d}{dt} f(x, t) = \frac{\partial f}{\partial t}(x, t) + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(x, t) \cdot \frac{dx}{dt} \\ &\quad \uparrow \\ &\quad \text{chain rule} \\ &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \mu \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \end{aligned}$$

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Through a simple application of the chain rule, we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dy}{dt} &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} x'(t) \\ &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \mu(\cancel{x}; t) \end{aligned}$$

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If  $X_t$  is a trivial Itô process:

$$dX_t = \mu(X_t, t)dt, \quad (\sigma \equiv 0)$$

then the standard chain rule would apply for  $Y_t = f(X_t, t)$ :

$$dY_t = \left( \frac{\partial f}{\partial t}(X_t, t) + \mu(X_t, t) \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(X_t, t) \right) dt.$$

But this does not apply for  $\sigma \neq 0$ .

# Itô's Lemma

The corresponding chain rule-like result that includes the volatility is the following.

## Lemma (Itô's Lemma)

Let  $X_t$  be an Itô process:

$$dX_t = \mu(X_t, t)dt + \sigma(X_t, t)dB_t.$$

Define  $Y_t = f(X_t, t)$ . Then  $Y_t$  is an Itô process, and satisfies the SDE,

$$dY_t = \left( \frac{\partial f}{\partial t}(X_t, t) + \mu(X_t, t) \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(X_t, t) + \frac{\sigma^2(X_t, t)}{2} \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2}(X_t, t) \right) dt + \sigma(X_t, t) \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(X_t, t) dB_t$$

E.g.:  $dB_t = dB_t$  ( $\mu=0, \sigma=1$ )

$$f(x, t) = x^2$$

$$Y_t = f(B_t, t) = B_t^2$$

Itô's Lemma:  $\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} = 0, \quad \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} = 2x, \quad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} = 2$

$$\Rightarrow dY_t = \frac{1^2}{2} \cdot 2 dt + 1 \cdot 2 B_t dB_t = dt + 2 B_t dB_t$$



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$$\begin{aligned} dY_t = & \left( \frac{\partial f}{\partial t}(X_t, t) + \mu(X_t, t) \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(X_t, t) + \frac{\sigma^2(X_t, t)}{2} \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2}(X_t, t) \right) dt \\ & + \sigma(X_t, t) \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(X_t, t) dB_t \end{aligned}$$

More compactly: if we drop the explicit notational dependence on  $t, X_t$ , and use  $f_t, f_x, f_{xx}$  to denote partial derivatives then:

$$dY = \mu_Y dt + \sigma_Y dB,$$

with

$$\mu_Y = f_t + \mu f_x + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} f_{xx}, \quad \sigma_Y = \sigma f_x.$$

## Some intuition

Most of Itô's lemma is immediately motivated from deterministic calculus.

I.e., from the standard chain rule on deterministic quantities:

$$y(t) = f(x(t), t), \quad \implies \quad \frac{dy}{dt} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \mu(u; t),$$

we already expect that:

$$\begin{aligned} dY_t &= f_t dt + f_x (\mu dt + \sigma dB) \\ &= (f_t + \mu f_x) dt + \sigma f_x dB. \end{aligned}$$

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This term arises because  $[B]_t = t$ , or  $(dB_t)^2 = dt$ :

$$\begin{aligned} f(X(t + \Delta t), t + \Delta t) - f(X(t), t) &\approx f_t \Delta t + (X(t + \Delta t) - X(t)) f_x \\ &\quad + \frac{1}{2} (X(t + \Delta t) - X(t))^2 f_{xx} + \dots \end{aligned}$$

The first-order derivatives yield what we already expect. The second order term yields,

$$\frac{1}{2} (X(t + \Delta t) - X(t))^2 f_{xx} \sim \frac{1}{2} (\mu dt + \sigma dB_t)^2 f_{xx} \sim \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 f_{xx} (dB_t)^2 + \dots = \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 f_{xx} dt + \dots$$

# Some utility of Itô's Lemma

Itô's Lemma is extremely useful in general, but some utility that is particularly useful for us is the ability to identify SDEs for processes.

## Example

Recall that

$$\mu=1 \quad \sigma=2B_t$$

$$d(B_t^2) = dt + 2B_t dB_t$$

Construct an SDE for  $e^{(B_t^2)+t}$ , and identify the drift and volatility functions.

$$f(x,t) = e^{x+t} \Rightarrow f(B_t^2, t) = e^{(B_t^2)+t} = Y_t$$

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} = e^{x+t}, \quad \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} = e^{x+t}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} = e^{x+t}$$

$$dY = \underbrace{\left( f_t + \mu f_x + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} f_{xx} \right)}_{\mu_Y} dt + \underbrace{(\sigma f_x)}_{\sigma_Y} dB_t$$

$$\Rightarrow \mu_Y = e^{(b_t)^2 + t} \left[ 1 + 1 + \frac{4(b_t)^2}{2} \right] = Y_t \cdot 2(1 + (b_t)^2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_Y &= 2b_t e^{(b_t)^2 + t} &= Y_t \cdot 2 \cdot [1 + \log(Y_t) - t] \\ &= 2 \sqrt{\log Y_t - t} \cdot Y_t \end{aligned}$$

# Geometric Brownian Motion

Back to securities, we assumed availability of continuous-time drift and volatility  $(\mu, \sigma)$ .

We've seen that a reasonable stochastic model for the log-return  $L(t)$  is,

$$L_t = \mu t + \sigma B_t,$$

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We then expect that a reasonable model for the security price is,

$$S_t = S_0 e^{L_t} = S_0 e^{\mu t + \sigma B_t}.$$

What kind of SDE does  $S_t$  satisfy?

$$dS_t = ?$$

$$f(x, t) = e^x$$

$$\frac{S_t}{S_0} = f(L_t, t) = e^{L_t}$$

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} = 0$$

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x} = e^x$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} = e^x$$

$$\text{Itô's lemma: } dS_t = \left[ \frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \mu \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} \right] dt + \sigma \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} dB_t$$

$$dS_t = \left[ \mu e^{L_t} + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} e^{L_t} \right] dt + \sigma e^{L_t} dB_t$$

$$dS_t = \frac{1}{S_0} \left[ \left( \mu + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} \right) S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t \right]$$

- or - :  $dS_t = \left( \mu + \frac{\sigma^2}{2} \right) S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t$   
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## Definition

Let  $\mu, \sigma$  be constants,  $\sigma > 0$ . With  $B_t$  a standard Brownian motion, suppose  $S_t$  is a stochastic process defined by,

$$dS_t = \mu S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t, \quad S(t=0) = S_0.$$

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Then  $S_t$  is a **Geometric Brownian Motion** with drift and volatility  $(\mu, \sigma)$ .

Note that  $S_t$  as defined above corresponds to the process,

$$S_t = S_0 e^{(\mu - \sigma^2/2)t + \sigma B_t},$$

which is a lognormal  $\left(\left(\mu - \frac{\sigma^2}{2}\right)t, \sigma^2 t\right)$  random variable.

# The gist and summary

We set out to construct a continuous-time analogue of the binomial tree model for securities.

- Geometric Brownian motion, i.e., a stochastic process satisfying an SDE of the form,

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- This model can be viewed as the continuous-time limit of the CRR model for  $S_n$ : the price of  $S_n$  in the CRR model evolves according to *geometric* increments. Geometric Brownian motion follows a similar principle (as the SDE reveals).
- One nice thing about the SDE formulation: it's ok if  $\mu$  or  $\sigma$  vary with time, or even depend on  $S_t$ . This model is *flexible*.

How does one numerically simulate SDE paths? It's not quite the same as coin flips. The model is,

$$dS_t = \mu S_t dt + \sigma S_t dB_t, \quad S(t=0) = S_0.$$

Given an equispaced set of times,

$$t_j = hj, \quad h > 0,$$

and for notational ease setting  $S_{t_j} = S_j$ , then how do we generate a trajectory?

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$$S_{j+1} - S_j = \mu S_j \underbrace{(t_{j+1} - t_j)}_h + \sigma S_j \underbrace{(B_{j+1} - B_j)}_{\text{Brownian motion increment}}.$$

$$N(0, h)$$



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$$S_{j+1} - S_j = \mu S_j (t_{j+1} - t_j) + \sigma S_j (B_{j+1} - B_j).$$

But  $t_{j+1} - t_j = h$ , and  $B_{j+1} - B_j \sim \mathcal{N}(0, h)$ , so this scheme can be written as,

$$S_{j+1} = S_j + \mu h S_j + \sigma S_j \sqrt{h} Z, \quad Z \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1),$$

with  $S_0$  given and fixed.

This scheme is called the **Euler-Maruyama method**.

(This is exactly how Brownian motion figures were generated on previous slides.)

## A digression on SDEs

We won't really use SDE's in more complicated situations than we've covered.

But SDEs are **enormously** useful in various non-finance contexts.

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Around the target is key: of course we can generate completely random things that might not make sense.

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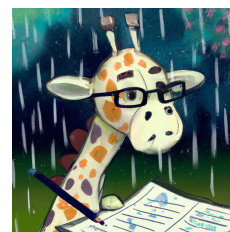
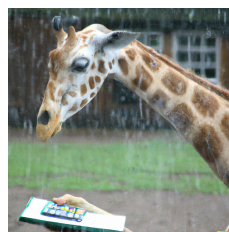
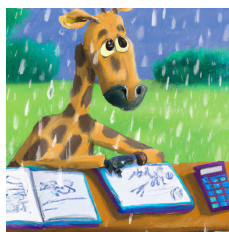
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Around the target is key: of course we can generate completely random things that might not make sense.

Suppose we tried to generate random images of objects or scenarios: Abstractly, what this means is that there should be a pipeline that accomplishes:

“A giraffe completing mathematical finance homework in the rain”  $\rightarrow$  “Drift”  $\mu$   $\rightarrow$  Generate SDE trajectories

That should generate an output like:

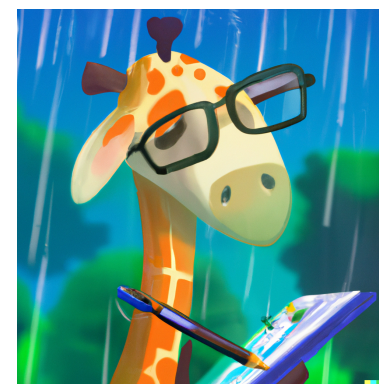
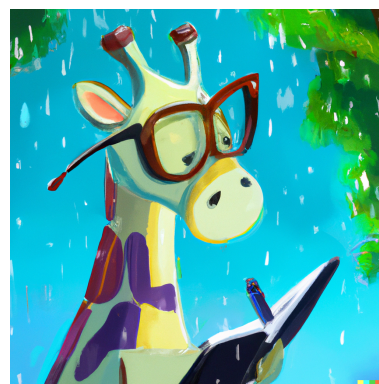
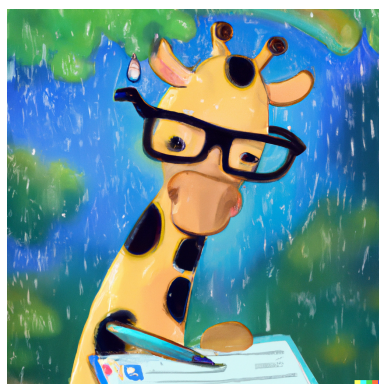
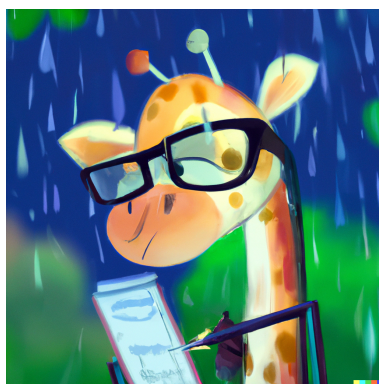


# SDEs for images

Or even more abstractly, the input “target” can be an image itself:



And the output could be SDE-based stochastic diffusions of the input:



This methodology is called creating a **diffusion map**, although there are many variants.

And this is exactly what certain **generative AI** software does, in particular image-based AI generators.

SDEs are a large part of the mathematics that underlie these deep learning-based models.

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The key, very difficult problem is a proper learning of the drift: one has to hit the right target in image space.

(Of course one should also add “noise” in the right ways.)

This is why most diffusion-based generative AI models require lots of data: training the drift and volatility so that the SDE evolution generates meaningful outputs is very hard. (The figures on the previous slides were generated using DALL-E.)

 Petters, Arlie O. and Xiaoying Dong (2016). *An Introduction to Mathematical Finance with Applications: Understanding and Building Financial Intuition*. Springer. ISBN: 978-1-4939-3783-7.