Section 7.8 Improper Integrals

Type I: Infinite Intervals

(a) If $\int_a^t f(x)\,dx$ exists for every number $t \geq a$, then

$$\int_a^\infty f(x)dx = \lim_{t\to\infty} \int_a^t f(x)dx,$$

provided this limit exists (as a finite number).

(b) If $\int_t^b f(x)\,dx$ exists for every number $t \leq b$, then

$$\int_{-\infty}^b f(x)dx = \lim_{t\to-\infty} \int_t^b f(x)dx,$$

provided this limit exists (as a finite number).

The improper integrals $\int_a^\infty f(x)\,dx$ and $\int_{-\infty}^b f(x)\,dx$ are called convergent if the corresponding limit exists and divergent if the limit does not exist.

(c) If both $\int_a^\infty f(x)\,dx$ and $\int_{-\infty}^a f(x)\,dx$ are convergent, then we define

$$\int_{-\infty}^\infty f(x)dx = \int_{-\infty}^a f(x)dx + \int_a^\infty f(x)dx.$$

In part (c), any real number a can be used.

Type 2: Discontinuous Integrals

(a) If f is continuous on $[a, b)$ and is discontinuous at b, then

$$\int_a^b f(x)dx = \lim_{t\to b^-} \int_a^t f(x)dx,$$

if this limit exists (as a finite number).

(b) If f is continuous on $(a, b]$ and is discontinuous at a, then

$$\int_a^b f(x)dx = \lim_{t\to a^+} \int_t^b f(x)dx,$$

if this limit exists (as a finite number).

The improper integral $\int_a^b f(x)\,dx$ is called convergent if the corresponding limit exists and divergent if the limit does not exist.

(c) If f has a discontinuity at c, where $a < c < b$, and both $\int_a^c f(x)\,dx$ and $\int_c^b f(x)\,dx$ are convergent, then we define

$$\int_a^b f(x)dx = \int_a^c f(x)dx + \int_c^b f(x)dx.$$

Comparison Theorem

Suppose that f and g are continuous functions with $f(x) \geq g(x) \geq 0$ for $x \geq a$.

(a) If $\int_a^\infty f(x)\,dx$ is convergent, then $\int_a^\infty g(x)\,dx$ is convergent.

(b) If $\int_a^\infty g(x)\,dx$ is divergent, then $\int_a^\infty f(x)\,dx$ is divergent.