

# Data-Efficient Reinforcement Learning Using Probabilistic Modeling

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- **Vision:** Autonomous robots support humans in everyday activities ➤ **Fast learning** and **automatic adaptation**



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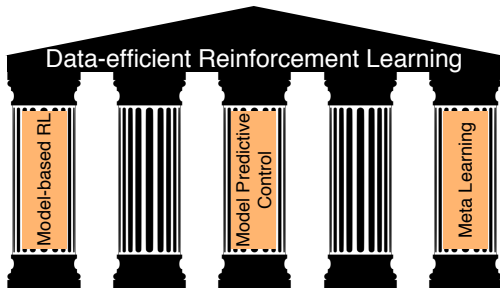


- **Vision:** Autonomous robots support humans in everyday activities ► **Fast learning** and **automatic adaptation**
- **Currently:** **Data-hungry learning** or **human guidance**

Fully **autonomous learning and decision making with little data** in real-life situations

## Data-Efficient Reinforcement Learning

Ability to learn and make decisions in complex domains without requiring large quantities of data



## 1 Model-based RL

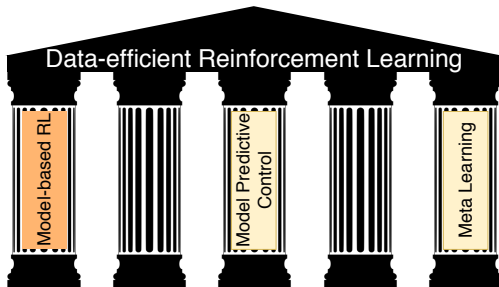
▶▶ Data-efficient decision making

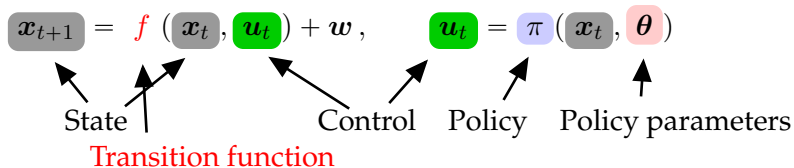
## 2 Model predictive RL

▶▶ Speed up learning further by online planning

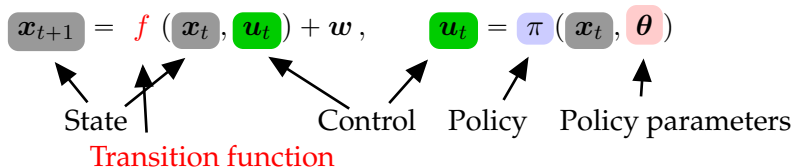
## 3 Meta learning

▶▶ Generalization of knowledge to new situations









## Objective (Controller Learning)

Find policy parameters  $\boldsymbol{\theta}^*$  that minimize the expected long-term cost

$$J(\boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t) | \boldsymbol{\theta}], \quad p(\mathbf{x}_0) = \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}_0, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_0).$$

Instantaneous cost  $c(\mathbf{x}_t)$ , e.g.,  $\|\mathbf{x}_t - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}}\|^2$

- ▶ Typical objective in optimal control and reinforcement learning (Bertsekas, 2005; Sutton & Barto, 1998)

## Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost  $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)|\theta]$

## PILCO Framework: High-Level Steps

- 1 Probabilistic model for transition function  $f$ 
  - ▶▶ System identification

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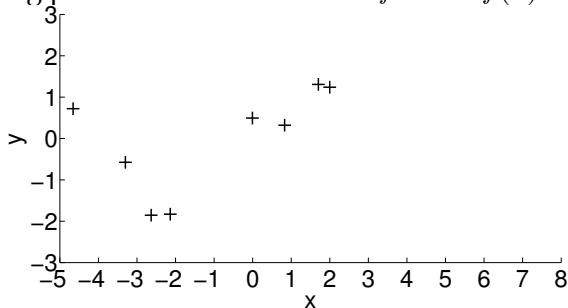
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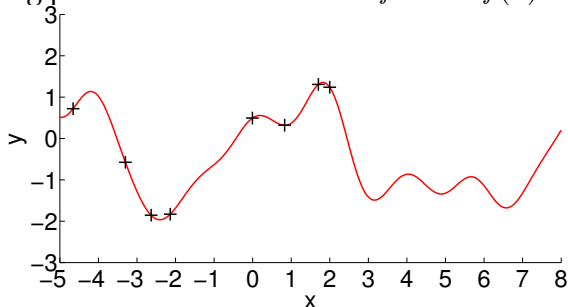
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- 4 Apply controller**

Model learning problem: Find a function  $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$



Observed function values

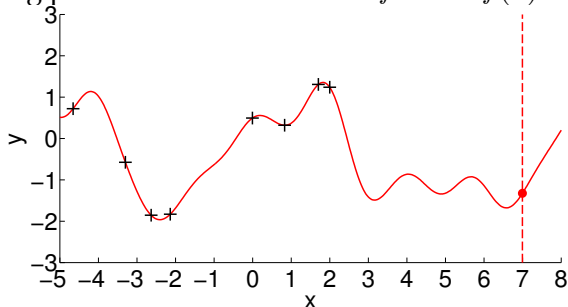
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Plausible model



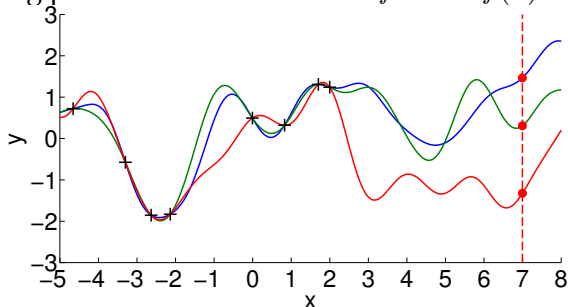
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Plausible model

**Predictions? Decision Making?**

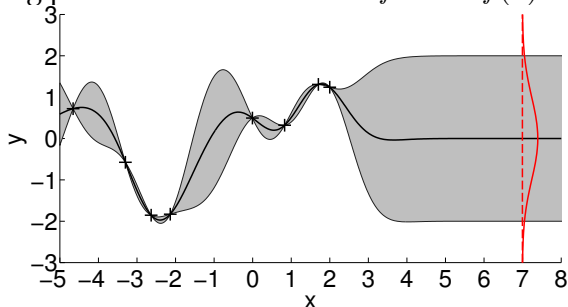
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More plausible models

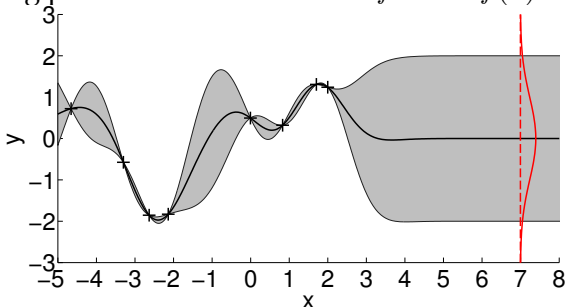
**Predictions? Decision Making? Model Errors!**

Model learning problem: Find a function  $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$



Distribution over plausible functions

Model learning problem: Find a function  $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$



Distribution over plausible functions

- ▶ Express **uncertainty** about the underlying function to be **robust to model errors**
- ▶ **Gaussian process** for model learning (Rasmussen & Williams, 2006)

- Flexible Bayesian regression method
- Probability distribution over functions
- Fully specified by
  - **Mean function**  $m$  (average function)
  - **Covariance function**  $k$  (assumptions on structure)

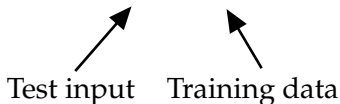
$$k(\mathbf{x}_p, \mathbf{x}_q) = \text{Cov}[f(\mathbf{x}_p), f(\mathbf{x}_q)]$$

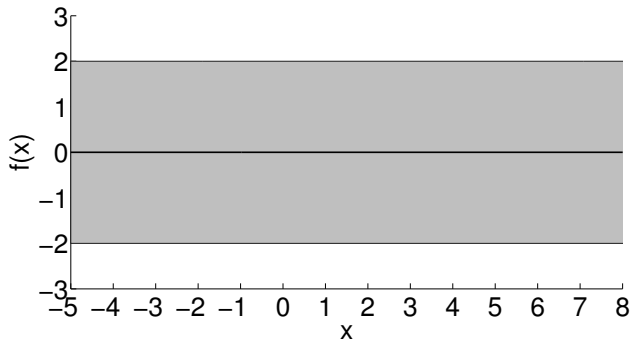
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- **Posterior predictive distribution** at  $\mathbf{x}_*$  is Gaussian (Bayes' theorem):

$$p(f(\mathbf{x}_*) | \mathbf{x}_*, \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}) = \mathcal{N}(f(\mathbf{x}_*) | m(\mathbf{x}_*), \sigma^2(\mathbf{x}_*))$$



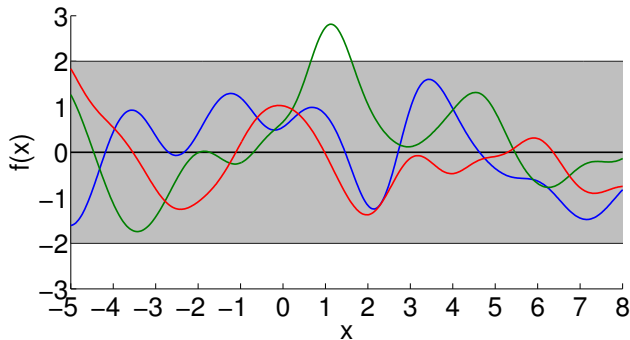


Prior belief about the function

Predictive (marginal) mean and variance:

$$\mathbb{E}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)|\mathbf{x}_*, \emptyset] = m(\mathbf{x}_*) = 0$$

$$\mathbb{V}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)|\mathbf{x}_*, \emptyset] = \sigma^2(\mathbf{x}_*) = k(\mathbf{x}_*, \mathbf{x}_*)$$



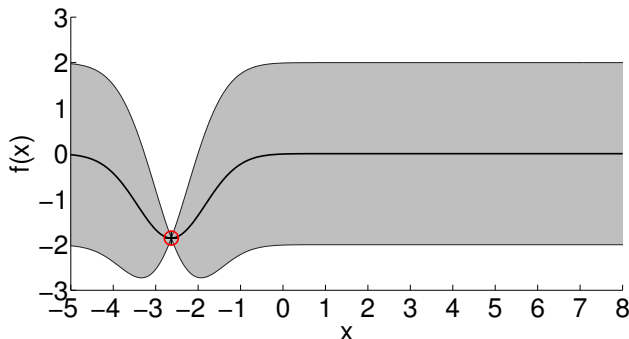
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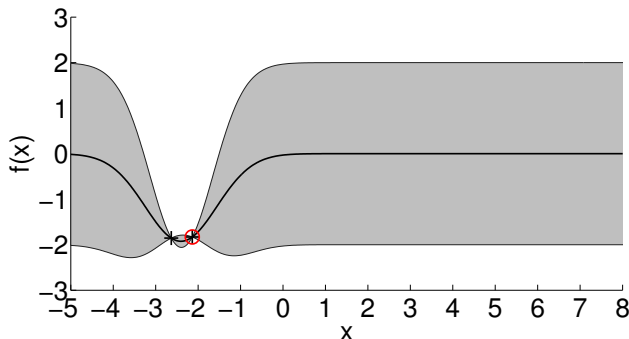
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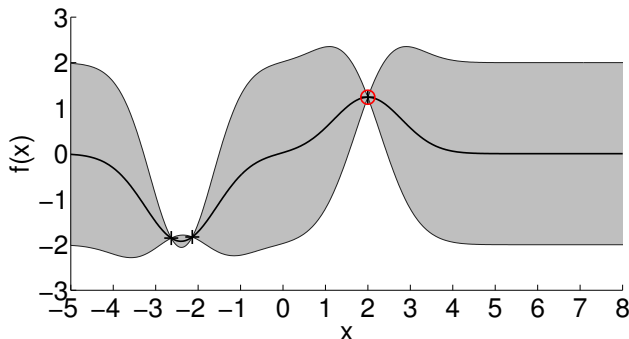
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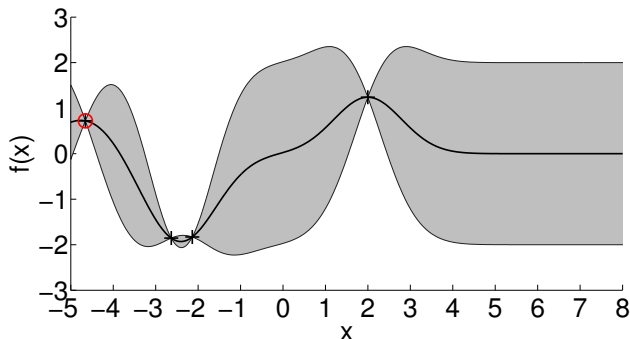
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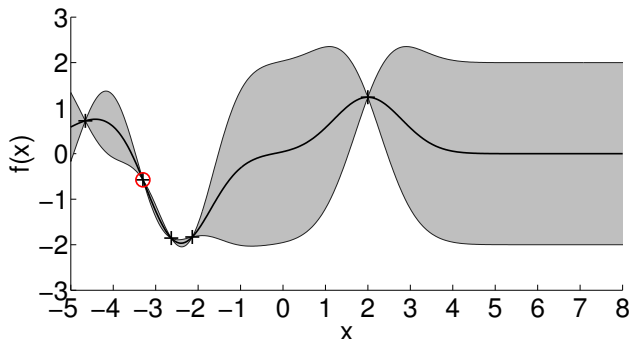
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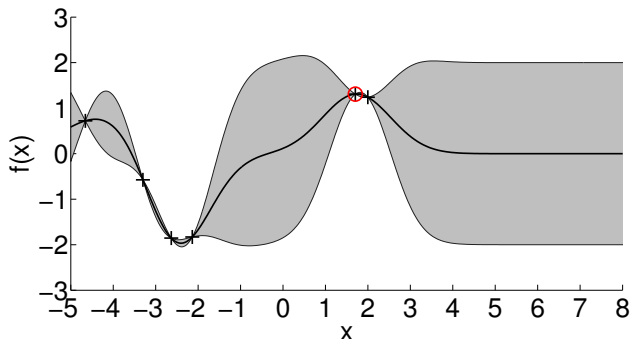
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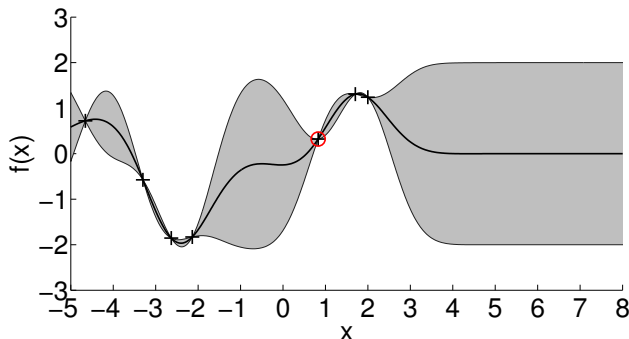
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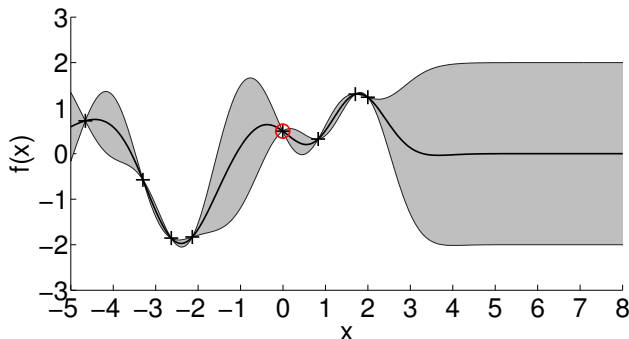
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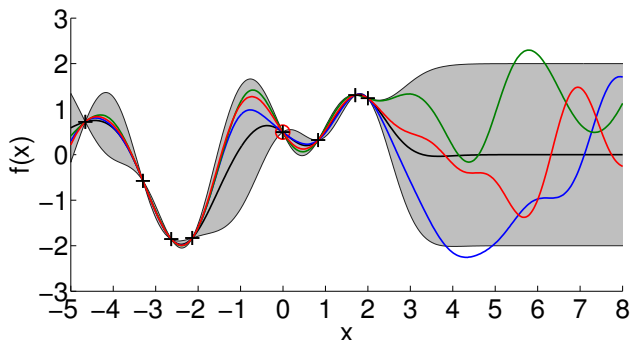
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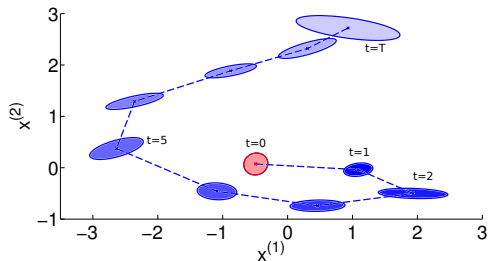
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## Objective

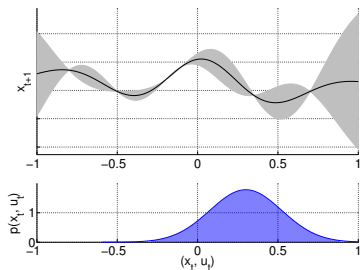
Minimize expected long-term cost  $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)|\theta]$

## PILCO Framework: High-Level Steps

- 1 Probabilistic model for transition function  $f$ 
  - ▶ System identification
- 2 **Compute long-term predictions**  $p(\mathbf{x}_1|\theta), \dots, p(\mathbf{x}_T|\theta)$
- 3 Policy improvement
- 4 Apply controller

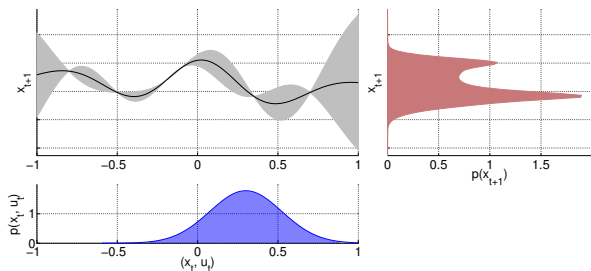


- Iteratively compute  $p(\mathbf{x}_1|\boldsymbol{\theta}), \dots, p(\mathbf{x}_T|\boldsymbol{\theta})$



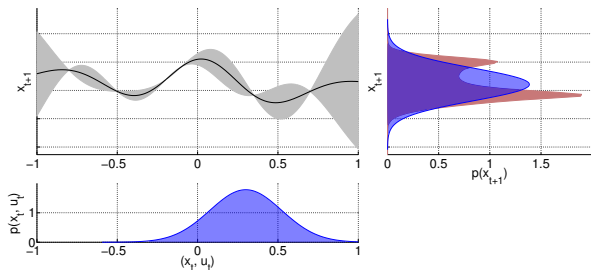
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$$\underbrace{p(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}|\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t)}_{\text{GP prediction}} \underbrace{p(\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t|\boldsymbol{\theta})}_{\mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})}$$



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## ►► GP moment matching

(Girard et al., 2002; Quiñonero-Candela et al., 2003)

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- 3 **Policy improvement**
  - Compute expected long-term cost  $J(\theta)$
  - Find parameters  $\theta$  that minimize  $J(\theta)$
- 4 Apply controller

## Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost  $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)|\theta]$

- Know how to predict  $p(\mathbf{x}_1|\theta), \dots, p(\mathbf{x}_T|\theta)$



## Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost  $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)|\theta]$

- Know how to predict  $p(\mathbf{x}_1|\theta), \dots, p(\mathbf{x}_T|\theta)$
- Compute

$$\mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)|\theta] = \int c(\mathbf{x}_t) \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{x}_t | \boldsymbol{\mu}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_t) d\mathbf{x}_t, \quad t = 1, \dots, T,$$

and sum them up to obtain  $J(\theta)$

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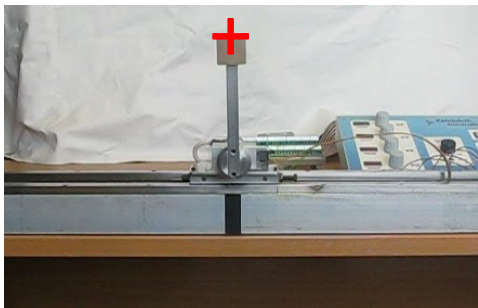
- Analytically compute gradient  $dJ(\theta)/d\theta$
- Standard gradient-based optimizer (e.g., BFGS) to find  $\theta^*$

## Objective

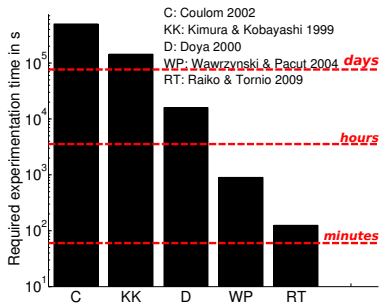
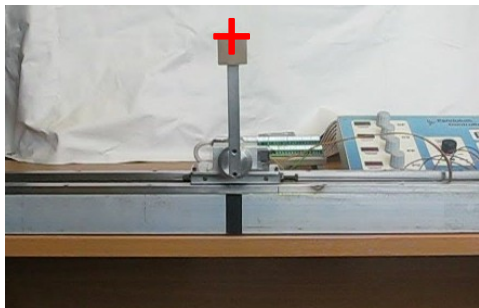
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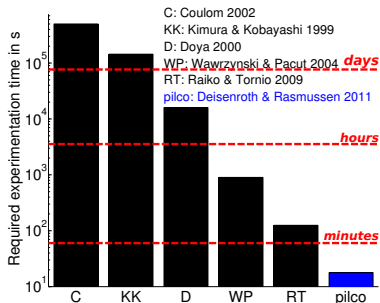
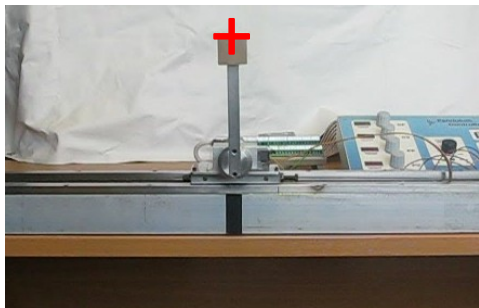
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- Swing up and balance a freely swinging pendulum on a cart
- No knowledge about nonlinear dynamics ►► Learn from scratch
- Cost function  $c(\mathbf{x}) = 1 - \exp(-\|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}}\|^2)$
- Code: <https://github.com/ICL-SML/pilco-matlab>

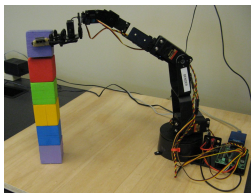


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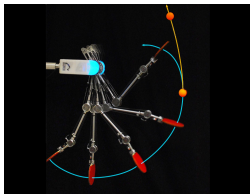


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- **Unprecedented learning speed** compared to state-of-the-art
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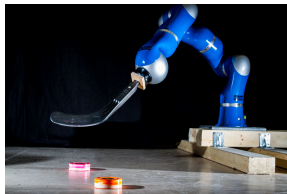
Deisenroth & Rasmussen (ICML, 2011): *PILCO: A Model-based and Data-efficient Approach to Policy Search*



with D Fox



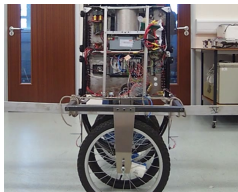
with P Englert, A Paraschos, J Peters



with A Kupcsik, J Peters, G Neumann



B Bischoff (Bosch), ESANN 2013



A McHutchon (U Cambridge)



B Bischoff (Bosch), ECML 2013

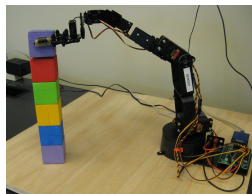
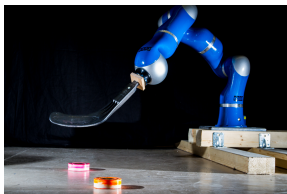
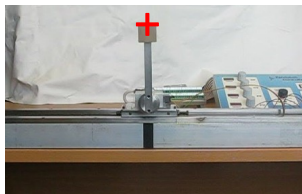
## ►► Application to a wide range of robotic systems

Deisenroth et al. (RSS, 2011): *Learning to Control a Low-Cost Manipulator using Data-efficient Reinforcement Learning*

Englert et al. (ICRA, 2013): *Model-based Imitation Learning by Probabilistic Trajectory Matching*

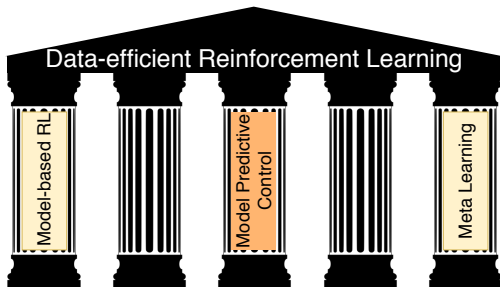
Deisenroth et al. (ICRA, 2014): *Multi-Task Policy Search for Robotics*

Kupcsik et al. (AIJ, 2017): *Model-based Contextual Policy Search for Data-Efficient Generalization of Robot Skills*

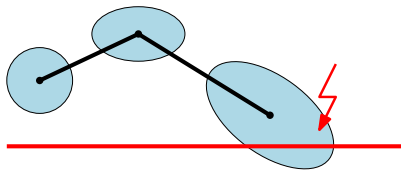


- In robotics, **data-efficient** learning is critical
- Probabilistic, model-based RL approach
  - Reduce model bias
  - Unprecedented learning speed
  - Wide applicability

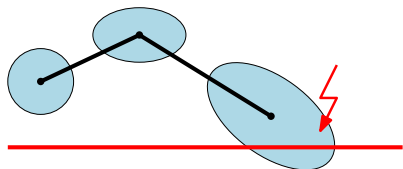




Sanket Kamthe



- Deal with real-world safety constraints (states and controls)
- Use probabilistic model to predict whether constraints are violated (e.g., Sui et al., 2015; Berkenkamp et al., 2017)
- Adjust policy if necessary (during policy learning)



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- Adjust policy if necessary (during policy learning)
- ▶▶ Safe exploration within an MPC-based RL setting
- ▶▶ Optimize control signals  $\mathbf{u}_t$  directly (no policy parameters)

- Idea: Optimize control signals directly (instead of policy parameters)
- Few parameters to optimize ►► **Low-dimensional search space**
- Open-loop control
  - **No chance of success** (with minor model inaccuracies)

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- Few parameters to optimize ▶▶ **Low-dimensional search space**
- Open-loop control
  - ▶▶ **No chance of success** (with minor model inaccuracies)
- **Model Predictive Control (MPC)** turns this into a closed-loop control approach
- Positive side-effect: **Increase robustness** to model errors (online approach)
  - ▶▶ **Increase data efficiency**

- Learned GP model for transition dynamics
- Repeat (while executing the policy):
  - 1 In current state  $\mathbf{x}_t$ , determine optimal control sequence  $\mathbf{u}_0^*, \dots, \mathbf{u}_{H-1}^*$
  - 2 Apply first control  $\mathbf{u}_0^*$  in state  $\mathbf{x}_t$
  - 3 Transition to next state  $\mathbf{x}_{t+1}$
  - 4 Update GP transition model with new transition  $((\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_0^*), \mathbf{x}_{t+1})$

- **Uncertainty propagation is deterministic** (GP moment matching)
  - ▶▶ Re-formulate system dynamics:

$$z_{t+1} = f_{MM}(z_t, \mathbf{u}_t)$$

$$z_t = \{\boldsymbol{\mu}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_t\} \quad \text{▶▶ Collects moments}$$



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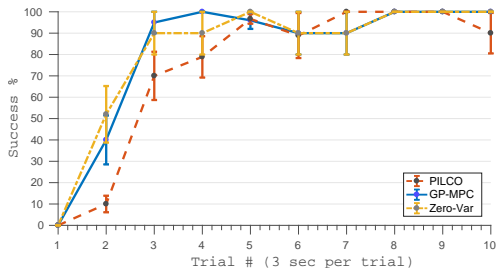
- **Deterministic** system function that propagates moments
- Lipschitz continuity (under mild assumptions) implies that we can apply **Pontryagin's Minimum Principle**
  - ▶▶ Principled treatment of **control constraints**

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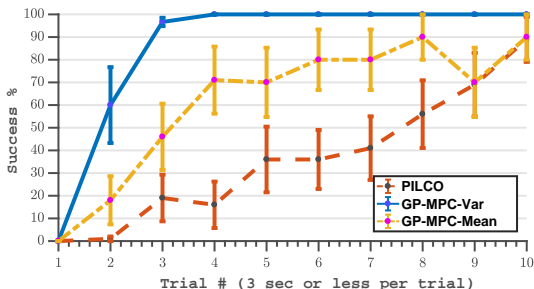
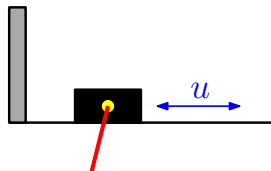
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- **Deterministic** system function that propagates moments
- Lipschitz continuity (under mild assumptions) implies that we can apply **Pontryagin's Minimum Principle**
  - ▶▶ Principled treatment of **control constraints**
- Use predictive uncertainty to check violation of **state constraints**

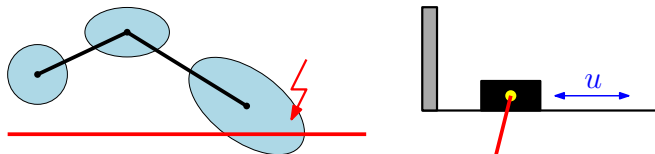


- Zero-Var: Only use the mean of the GP, discard variances for long-term predictions
- MPC: Increased data efficiency (40% less experience required than PILCO)
  - ▶ MPC is more robust to model inaccuracies than a parametrized feedback controller

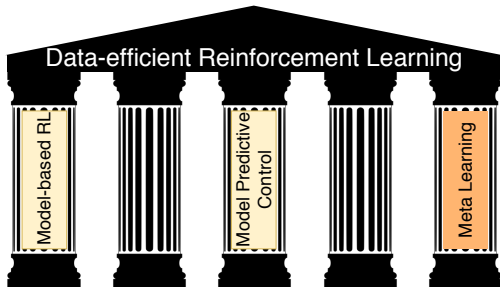


|             |        |                       |
|-------------|--------|-----------------------|
| PILCO       | 16/100 | constraint violations |
| GP-MPC-Mean | 21/100 | constraint violations |
| GP-MPC-Var  | 3/100  | constraint violations |

## ▶▶ Propagating model uncertainty important for safety



- Probabilistic prediction models for safe exploration
- Uncertainty propagation can be used to reduce violation of safety constraints
- MPC framework increases robustness to model errors
  - ▶ Increased data efficiency



Steindór Sæmundsson



Katja Hofmann



## Meta Learning

Generalize knowledge from known tasks to new (related) tasks



## Meta Learning

Generalize knowledge from known tasks to new (related) tasks

- Different robot configurations (link lengths, weights, ...)
- Re-use experience gathered so far generalize learning to new dynamics that are similar
  - ▶ Accelerated learning

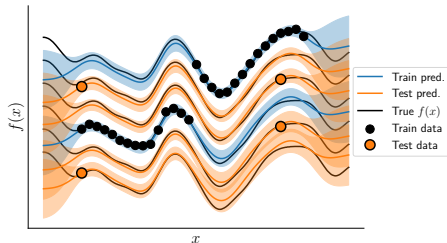
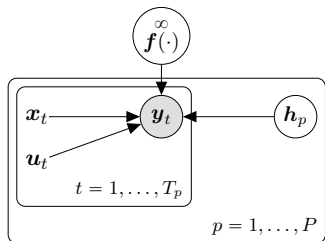




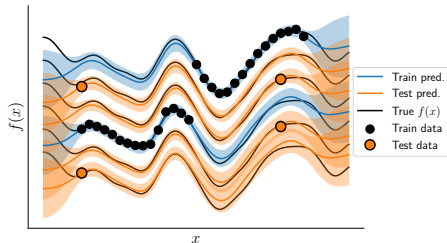
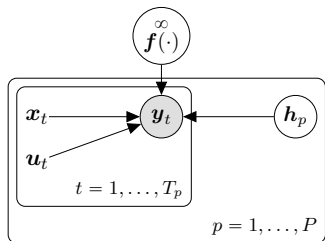
- Separate global and task-specific properties
- Shared global parameters describe general dynamics
- Describe task-specific (local) configurations with latent variable



- Separate global and task-specific properties
- Shared global parameters describe general dynamics
- Describe task-specific (local) configurations with latent variable
- Online variational inference of (unseen) configurations
- Few-shot model-based RL

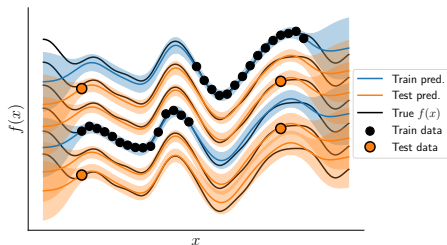
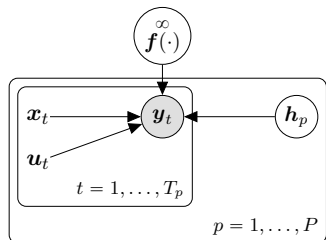


$$y_t = f(x_t, u_t, h_p)$$



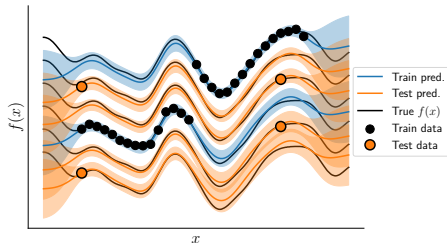
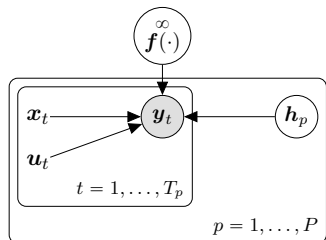
$$y_t = f(x_t, u_t, h_p)$$

- GP captures global properties of the dynamics



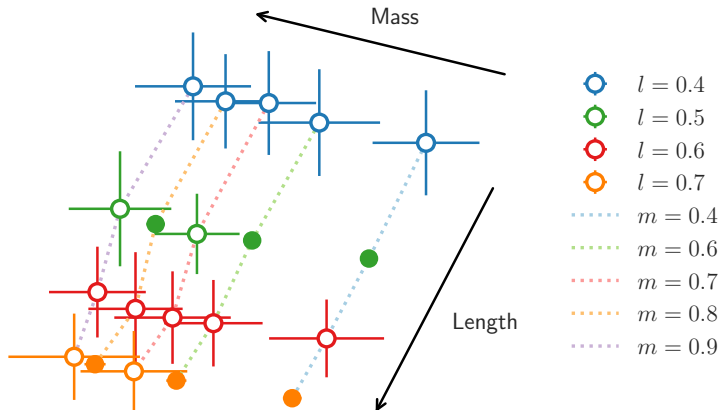
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- GP captures **global properties** of the dynamics
- Latent variable  $h_p$  describes **local configuration**
  - ▶ Variational inference to find a posterior on latent configuration

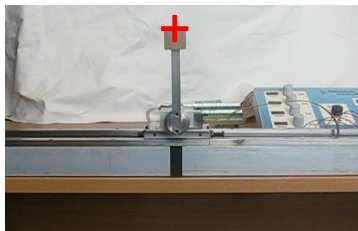


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- GP captures **global properties** of the dynamics
- Latent variable  $h_p$  describes **local configuration**
  - ▶ Variational inference to find a posterior on latent configuration
- **Fast online inference** of new configurations (no model re-training required)



- Latent variable  $h$  encodes length  $l$  and mass  $m$  of the cart pole
- 6 training tasks, 14 held-out test tasks

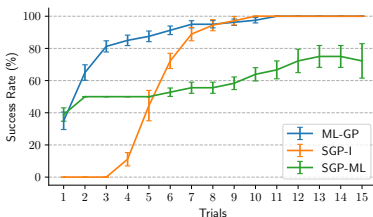


- Pre-trained on 6 training configurations until solved

| Model         | Training (s)   | Description                          |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Independent   | $16.1 \pm 0.4$ | Independent GP-MPC                   |
| Aggregated    | $23.7 \pm 1.4$ | Aggregated experience (no latents)   |
| Meta learning | $15.1 \pm 0.5$ | Aggregated experience (with latents) |

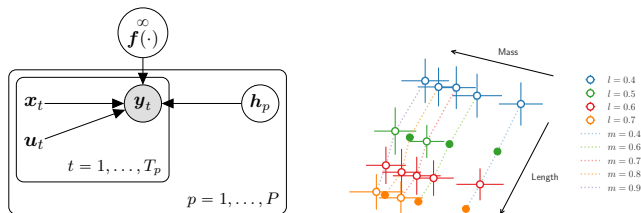
►► **Meta learning can help speeding up RL**





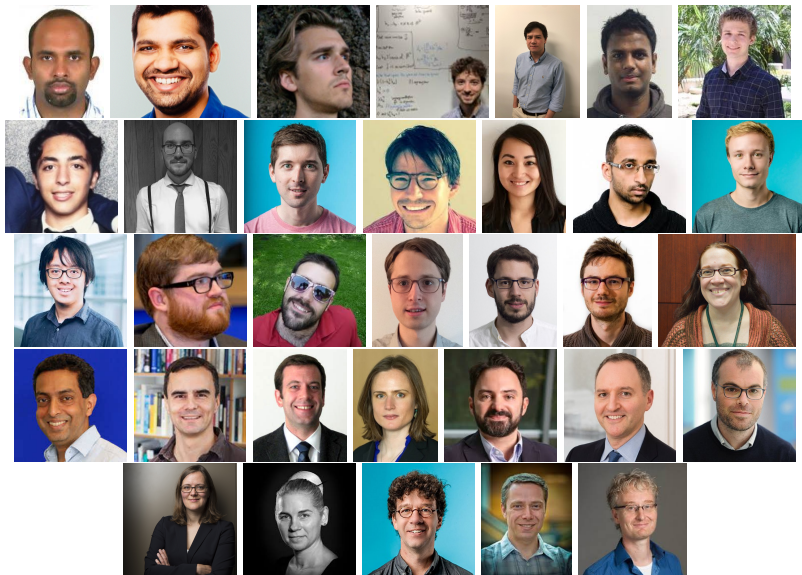
- Few-shot generalization on 4 unseen configurations
- Success: solve all 10 (6 training + 4 test) tasks
- **Meta learning: blue**
- **Independent (GP-MPC): orange**
- **Aggregated experience model (no latents): green**

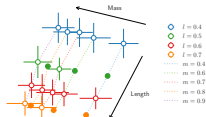
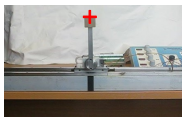
▶▶ **Meta RL generalizes well to unseen tasks**



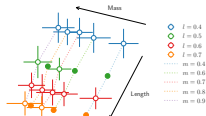
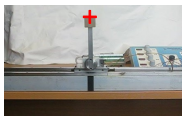
- Generalize knowledge from known situations to unseen ones
  - ▶ **Few-shot learning**
- Latent variable can be used to describe how similar tasks are
- Significant speed-up in model learning and model-based RL

# Team and Collaborators





- **Data efficiency** is a practical challenge for autonomous robots
- Three pillars of data-efficient reinforcement learning for autonomous robots
  - 1 **Model-based reinforcement learning** with learned probabilistic models for fast learning from scratch
  - 2 **Model predictive control** with learned dynamics models accelerate learning and allow for safe exploration
  - 3 **Meta learning** using latent variables to generalize knowledge to new situations
- **Key to success:** Probabilistic modeling and Bayesian inference



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ありがとうございました

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$$f \sim GP(0, k), \quad \text{Training data: } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}$$
$$\mathbf{x}_* \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

- Compute  $\mathbb{E}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)]$



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$$\boldsymbol{\beta} := (\mathbf{K} + \sigma_n^2 \mathbf{I})^{-1} \mathbf{y} \quad \blacktriangleright \text{independent of } \mathbf{x}_*$$

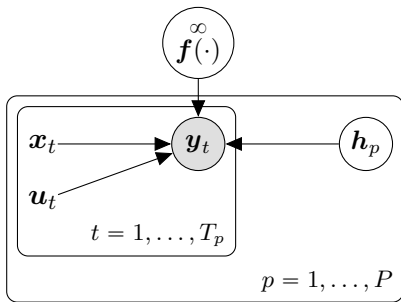
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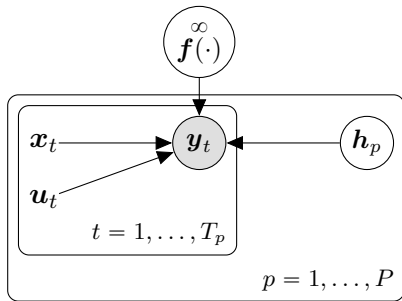
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- If  $k$  is a Gaussian (squared exponential) kernel, this integral can be solved analytically
- Variance of  $f(\mathbf{x}_*)$  can be computed similarly



$$f(\cdot) \sim GP$$

$$p(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_p p(\mathbf{h}_p), \quad p(\mathbf{h}_p) = \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

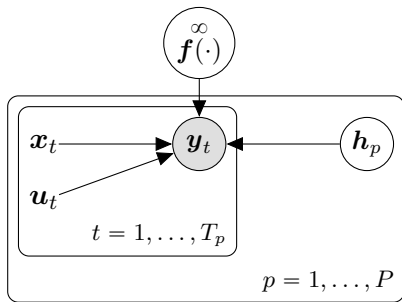


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$$p(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_p p(\mathbf{h}_p), \quad p(\mathbf{h}_p) = \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

$$p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, f(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U}) = \prod_{p=1}^P p(\mathbf{h}_p) \prod_{t=1}^{T_p} p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p, f(\cdot)) p(f(\cdot))$$

$$\mathbf{y}_t = \mathbf{x}_{t+1} - \mathbf{x}_t$$



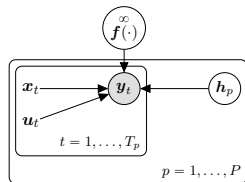
Mean-field variational family:

$$q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H}) = q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot))q(\mathbf{H})$$

$$q(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_{p=1}^P \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{h}_p | \mathbf{n}_p, \mathbf{T}_p),$$

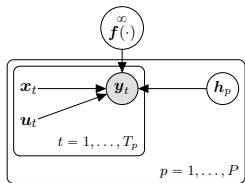
$$q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)) = \int p(\mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{f}_Z) q(\mathbf{f}_Z) d\mathbf{f}_Z \quad \blacktriangleright \text{SV-GP (Titsias, 2009)}$$

$$ELBO = \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \left[ \log \frac{p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, \mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U})}{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \right]$$





$$\begin{aligned}
 ELBO &= \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \left[ \log \frac{p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, \mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U})}{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \right] \\
 &= \sum_{p=1}^P \sum_{t=1}^{T_p} \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p) q(\mathbf{h}_p)} \left[ \log p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{f}_t) \right] \\
 &\quad - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{H}) || p(\mathbf{H})) - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)) || p(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)))
 \end{aligned}$$



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 ELBO &= \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \left[ \log \frac{p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, \mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U})}{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \right] \\
 &= \sum_{p=1}^P \sum_{t=1}^{T_p} \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p) q(\mathbf{h}_p)} \left[ \log p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{f}_t) \right] \\
 &\quad - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{H}) || p(\mathbf{H})) - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)) || p(\mathbf{f}(\cdot))) \\
 &\hspace{15em} \text{Monte Carlo estimate} \\
 &= \sum_{p=1}^P \sum_{t=1}^{T_p} \underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p) q(\mathbf{h}_p)} \left[ \log p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{f}_t) \right]}_{\text{closed-form solution}} \\
 &\quad - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{H}) || p(\mathbf{H})) - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{F}_Z) || p(\mathbf{F}_Z))
 \end{aligned}$$

